

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA



2015

GENERAL BOARD **BUSINESS DOCKET**

April 11-14 • Hilton Kansas City Airport
Kansas City, Missouri

Last Revised: April 9, 2015 9:42 PM



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Welcome Letter from Sharon Watkins

March 13, 2015

Dear General Board,

God's blessings as we continue to move through this season of Lent – and beyond to the celebration of Christ's resurrection!

The Moderator Team and OGMP staff look forward to being with you in just a month. There is a lot of reading here – and worshipful work to prepare for. I hope you will be in prayer for our time together.

In this General Assembly year, our first priority will be to consider matters for Assembly. Ministry reports are part of that business. They tell of remarkable witness for Christ's sake. Please read them and rejoice at what we are doing together through them.



Please be familiar with the General Assembly resolutions before you arrive in Kansas City. At General Board, each one of you will be assigned to a small group. Each small group will be responsible for one or more resolutions. Please know which group you are in, and read your assigned resolution(s) with particular care.

This year we will also continue with the work we began in 2014 on matters of mission and governance. The Mission First! proposal is for a pilot process focusing on God's mission for our Church. In addition to the proposal, we will soon post a Frequently Asked Questions document (FAQ) and brief summary of the Mission First! proposal.

Above all, thank you for your willingness to serve in this way. Our work together in Kansas City will be intense and meaningful as we seek to participate in God's transformation of this world in to a place of wholeness.

If you have questions or need other information, please contact the OGMP staff.

Blessings,

Sharon



Agenda

Saturday, April 11

Time	Item	Room Assignment
3:00 PM	Task Force for Hispanic Ministry Concerns	Osage A
4:00 PM	Governance Committee Meeting	Osage C
4:30 PM	Tech Support in Plenary	Kansa Ballroom
5:00 PM	Plenary Opening Worship and Blessing of New Members Approval of the General Board Agenda Approval of Consent Agenda 2014 General Board Minutes GB-15-0922 Regional Allocation for Tennessee GB-15-0923 Regional Allocation for Oklahoma GB-15-0925 Regional Allocation for Virginia GB-15-0927 Confirmation of GCOM Membership GA-1516 Council of Colleges and Universities GA-1517 Council on Theological Education	Kansa Ballroom
5:30 PM – 6:15 PM	Setting the Context - Sharon Watkins GMP	Kansa Ballroom
6:30 PM	DINNER	Shawnee A
7:30 PM	Mission First Small Groups - Session #1 (orientation to the document)	Small Group 1 – Salon B Small Group 2 – Salon A Small Group 3 – Salon D Small Group 4 – Salon E Small Group 5 – Salon F Small Group 6 – Osage C Small Group 7 – Salon C Small Group 8 – Osage A



Sunday, April 12

6:00 AM – 8:45 AM	BREAKFAST	Breakfast Buffet in Hotel Restaurant 6:00A – 11:00A
9:00 AM	Mission First! Small Groups – Session #2	Small Group 1 – Salon B Small Group 2 – Salon A Small Group 3 – Salon D Small Group 4 – Salon E Small Group 5 – Salon F Small Group 6 – Osage C Small Group 7 – Salon C Small Group 8 – Osage A
10:00 AM	Depart for Worship at Country Club Christian Church (11:00 AM service)	
12:30 PM	Lunch at Country Club Christian Church	
1:30 PM	Load buses for Hotel	
2:30-4:30	Small Group GA Resolutions/General Assembly Committee	Small Group 1 – Salon B Small Group 2 – Salon A Small Group 3 – Salon D Small Group 4 – Salon E Small Group 5 – Salon F Small Group 6 – Osage C Small Group 7 – Salon C Small Group 8 – Osage A
4:45 PM	Plenary Business Items: Report: Resolutions requiring amendment Additional Business Receipt of the General Ministry Reports Regional Presentations (30 mins) Receipt of the Regional Reports	Kansa Ballroom
6:00 PM	Dinner	Shawnee A
7:00 PM	Business Committee Meeting (to address resolutions) Optional - Disciples of Christ Historical Society – Q&A	Osage B Kansa Ballroom

Monday, April 13

6:00 AM – 8:15 AM	BREAKFAST (Business Committee if needed)	Breakfast Buffet in Hotel Restaurant 6:00A – 11:00A
8:30 AM 8:45 AM	Morning Devotion (in small groups) Mission First! Small Groups – Session #3	Small Group 1 – Salon B Small Group 2 – Salon A Small Group 3 – Salon D Small Group 4 – Salon E Small Group 5 – Salon F Small Group 6 – Osage C Small Group 7 – Salon C Small Group 8 – Osage A
10:15 AM	BREAK	
10:45 AM	Plenary Report out on MissionFirst! Small Groups GB-15-0930 Change in Location of 2017 General Assembly	Kansa Ballroom
11:30 AM	Administrative Committee Working Lunch re MissionFirst!	Salon C
12:30 PM – 1:30 PM	LUNCH	Shawnee A
2:00 PM 3:15 PM	Plenary Business Committee Report Action on Resolutions Order of the Day: GB-15-0929 Report of the Cultural Competency Task Force	Kansa Ballroom
3:30 PM	BREAK	
4:00 PM	Plenary Order of the Day: GB-15-0928 Report of the General Nominating Committee GA-1533 Report of the General Nominating Committee For Officers of the General Assembly GA-1535 Ratification of Administrative Committee Action Continued action on Resolutions Business Committee Report on MissionFirst! (Final)	Kansa Ballroom
5:30 PM	DINNER	Shawnee A
6:30 PM	Governance Training with Todd Adams	Kansa Ballroom



Tuesday, April 14

6:00 AM - 8:45 AM	BREAKFAST (bring your luggage to Salons C & E for storage)	Breakfast Buffet in Hotel Restaurant 6:00A – 11:00A
9:00 AM	Plenary Recognition of leadership transitions: General Board Members, Regional Ministers and General Ministry Presidents	Kansa Ballroom
9:30 AM	Additional Business GB-15-0924 Regional Allocation for Pennsylvania GB-15-0926 Regional Allocation for Illinois/Wisconsin GA-1531 Report of the General Assembly Committee of the General Board GA-1532 Time and Place for 2019 General Assembly Other Committee reports (if needed) Letter to General Board from Hispanic Pastoral Commission Resolution Process Small Groups Discussion	
10:30 AM	Closing worship & General Board Offering Adjourn (Load buses by 11:15 am at front entrance of hotel)	

Minutes of the 2014 General Board

February 8-11, 2014

Indianapolis, Indiana

Sheraton Indianapolis City
Centre-Downtown

Glen Miles, Moderator
Paul Tche, Moderator-Elect

Joan Bell Haynes
First Vice Moderator

Tony Rodriguez
Second Vice Moderator

Overview of the General Board Meeting

The General Board met in a very cold Indianapolis for their annual gathering. The meetings were led by our Moderator, Dr. Glen Miles, who was ably assisted by Second Vice Moderator, Tony Rodriguez and Moderator-Elect, Rev. Paul Tche. Due to ongoing health issues with her husband, First Vice Moderator, Rev. Joan Bell Haynes was unable to join us in person in Indianapolis, but did participate through prerecorded video and video conferencing. General Minister and President Dr. Sharon Watkins, and Associate Vice President and Administrative Secretary of National Convocation, Dr. Timothy James, led the Board in worship throughout the meeting. On Sunday morning, we were blessed to hear Rev. Jose Morales, Regional Minister in the Central Rocky Mountain region, preach on "Exuberant Modesty."

With this being a non-General Assembly year, the 2014 General Board was able to focus its worshipful work on three items:

- Exploration of the Identity Initiative Materials

On Sunday morning, the Board was introduced to the online Identity Initiative materials by Dr. Robert Welsh, President of the Council on Christian Unity and Cheryl Williams, Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications in the Office of General Minister and President. The full Board viewed a compilation video of everyday Disciples reflecting on the concepts of movement, wholeness, welcome and table. The Board was then divided into eight small groups, with each group assigned a single concept to discuss. This was followed by further discussion in the small groups about ways to instill the Identity Initiative into the life of the Church. Each small group gave a brief report about their discussions to the full plenary.

- Covenantal Dialogues with the General Ministries

Led by the Covenantal Dialogue Committee, small groups engaged the General Ministries in the Covenantal Dialogue Process Sunday and Monday afternoons. The Covenantal Dialogue Committee reported back an overview of these dialogues to the full plenary on Tuesday morning.



Exciting and hopeful things that came out of the discussions included: ministries that have experienced challenges in recent years are now experiencing recovery and in some instances are beginning to thrive under new leadership, renewed emphasis on mission and restructuring of resources; a number of successful partnerships have been formed between general ministries and between general ministries and other expressions of the church (i.e. Pension Fund & Lexington Seminary, HELM & Hope Partnership, NBA & regions).

Areas and challenges where further work may be needed included: some ministries need to further clarify their mission and streamline organization and processes to better meet current reality and challenges; further clarity is needed regarding responsibility, accountability and authority within the context of covenant; while improvement was acknowledged, communication between the general ministries themselves as well as between the three expressions of the church – general, regional and local – still needs to be optimized.

- Current & Future Role of the General Board

Beginning with her State of the Church address on Saturday evening, our General Minister and President, Dr. Sharon Watkins, challenged the Board to begin imagining what the Church might look like if we clarify the difference between mission discernment and action versus governance in order to free up energy and flexibility for mission. Dr. Watkins called the Board into conversation about imagining the General Board as the place where mission discernment and planning takes place and the Administrative Committee (or Administrative Council) becomes the place where governance takes place.

During the Monday morning small group conversations, each group was given the following questions to discuss:

- 1) Having read the one page summary, invite your small group to consider the following questions:
 - a. What excites you?
 - b. What concerns you?
 - c. What possibilities do you see?
 - d. What questions need to be answered?
- 2) Would your small group support moving forward with a process “to envision a place to have a whole-church conversation on God’s mission for Disciples today; and, to create a mechanism to hold the church accountable to that mission?”
- 3) If the General Board were to move forward with an action from this meeting to recommend appointing a team to move this conversation toward a specific proposal for presentation to the 2015 General Board, what suggestions do you have for those who might be involved? And, what should be included in that process?

All eight small groups affirmed their support in moving forward with a process. A motion was written and passed by the General Board on Monday evening (please see Monday’s Business of the General Board below) to authorize the

next steps in this conversation.

Business of the General Board – Saturday, February 8, 2014

Agenda

VOTED to approve the 2014 General Board Agenda

Consent Agenda

VOTED to approve the Consent Agenda

2013 General Board Minutes
Report of the General Assembly of the Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ) Including the Office of General Minister
and President

Business of the General Board – Sunday, February 9, 2014

GB-14-1406 Council of Colleges and Universities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Among the highlights from 2013, the Council was given the responsibility for interpreting, developing resources and promoting the 2013 Special Day Thanksgiving Offering, which is designated for colleges and theological institutions.

Report received

GB-14-1408 Council of Theological Education

Core message of report was that these schools are assets and treasures for a church in the midst of profound change, transition and transformation. Within these schools live traditions of Disciple-dedicated scholarship in history, theology, scripture, ethics, counseling and preaching in worship, education, justice and peace-making.

Report received

GB-14-0883 Report of the General Nominating Committee Regarding Boards, Committees and Commissions



VOTED the members to the appropriate Boards, Committee or Commission as designated in their respective reports:

- Christian Church Foundation
- Division of Overseas Ministries
- Reconciliation Ministry
- United Christian Missionary Society
- Week of Compassion

VOTED to confirm the following members to the following General Ministry boards:

- Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources including its subsidiaries Disciples Church Extension Fund and Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation
- Disciples of Christ Historical Society
- Higher Education and Leadership Ministries
- National Benevolent Services
- National Christian Missionary Convention
- National Convocation
- Pension Fund

VOTED to elect the Administrative Committee's Class of 2016:

- Chris Dorsey
- Dawn Robinette
- Young Lan Kim
- Danny Gulden

RECEIVED Regional Ministry Reports

GB-14-0850 Alabama-Northwest Florida

GB-14-0851 Arizona

GB-14-0852 Canada

GB-14-0853 Capital Area

GB-14-0854 Central Rocky Mountain

GB-14-0855 Florida

GB-14-0856 Georgia

GB-14-0857 Great River

GB-14-0858 Greater Kansas City

GB-14-0859 Illinois-Wisconsin
GB-14-0860 Indiana
GB-14-0861 Kansas
GB-14-0862 Kentucky
GB-14-0863 Michigan
GB-14-0865 Montana
GB-14-0866 Nebraska
GB-14-0867 North Carolina
GB-14-0868 Northeastern
GB-14-0869 Northern California-Nevada
GB-14-0870 Northwest
GB-14-0871 Ohio
GB-14-0872 Oklahoma
GB-14-0873 Oregon
GB-14-0874 Pacific Southwest
GB-14-0875 Pennsylvania
GB-14-0876 South Carolina
GB-14-0877 Southwest
GB-14-0878 Tennessee
GB-14-0879 Upper Midwest
GB-14-0880 Virginia
GB-14-0881 West Virginia

Business of the General Board – Monday, February 10, 2014

GB-14-0885 Task Force

VOTED

to create a task force. Nine to eleven members will be appointed by the General Minister and President and the Moderator in consultation with the College of Regional Ministers and the General Cabinet and will include representation from all three expressions of the church and be representative of our full diversity.

The task force will facilitate and implement a focused interactive conversation and a broadly consultative process about how we as one church, discern God's mission for Disciples today and organize to accomplish that mission.

From that conversation, the task force will bring a specific proposal/action to the April 2015 General Board that creates an ongoing mechanism for whole-church mission conversation and a mechanism to hold the church accountable to that mission.

**Business of the General Board, Tuesday, February 11, 2014****GB-14-0886 Indemnification Clause Added as Section 11 of the Standing Rules of the General Board.**

VOTED to add Section 11 to the Standing Rules of the General Board. This section provides for an Indemnification Clause which defines who is covered by our Directors and Officers insurance.

GB-14-0887 Disciples Mission Fund – Oklahoma Region

RECEIVED the report from the Christian Church in Oklahoma where they announced the Oklahoma Regional Board's decision to reduce the retained allocation of Disciples Mission Funds given by the region's congregations to 49% for 2014. Report also stated upon achieving a new fundraising target for the Annual Fund of \$80,000, the Oklahoma region will return to the retained allocation of 41.5702% recommended by the General Board. In the interim, the region will seek to make additional annual reductions.

GB-14-0889 Report of the Covenantal Dialogue Committee

RECEIVED the report of the Covenantal Dialogue process which took place during the General Board meeting as well as the following General Ministry reports.

GB-14-1402 Central Pastoral Office of Hispanic Ministries

GB-14-1403 Christian Board of Publications

GB-14-1404 Christian Church Foundation

GB-14-1405 Disciples Church Extension Fund and Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation

GB-14-1406 Council of Colleges and Universities

GB-14-1407 Council on Christian Unity

GB-14-1408 Council on Theological Education

GB-14-1409 Disciples of Christ Historical Society

GB-14-1410 Disciples Home Missions

GB-14-1411 Disciples Women

GB-14-1412 Division of Overseas Ministries

GB-14-1413 Higher Education and Leadership Ministries

GB-14-1414 National Benevolent Association

GB-14-1415 National Convocation

GB-14-1416 North American Asian/Pacific Disciples

GB-14-1417 Pension Fund

GB-14-0888 Insurance Board as a Recognized Ministry Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

VOTED to approve the Insurance Board as a Recognized Ministry Partner, in recognition of their mission and ministry support of the overall mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Insurance Board will report to the General Board and General Assembly through Church Extension Financial & Missional Resources, beginning in 2015.

GB-14-0884 Amendments to the Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry (TFPCOM)

RECEIVED Amendments to the TFPCOM submitted by the General Commission on Ministry (GCOM) to the General Board were explained. The vote to approve the amendments will take place by mailed paper ballot due to time constraints on submitting items to the General Board as dictated by GCOM rules had not been met.

There being no further business before the General Board, closing worship was held and the meeting was adjourned.



Committee & Groups Membership

Administrative Committee (Friday, April 10, 9:00 AM ; Saturday, April 11, 9:00 AM)

Todd Adams
Bill Bailey
Delores Carpenter
Jinsuk Chun
Sharon Coleman
Chris Dorsey
William Edwards
John Goebel
Joan Bell Haynes

Danny Gulden
Tim James
Young Lan Kim
Glen Miles
John Mobley
Fernando Morales
Edie Rice-Sauer
Dawn Robinette

Tony Rodriguez
Eli Rolon
Beth Sullivan
Kerry Swindle
Paul Tche
Tanya Tyler
Sharon Watkins
Cherilyn Williams

LISTING OF GENERAL BOARD COMMITTEES AND SMALL GROUPS ***2015 GENERAL BOARD MEETING***

Group 1	Resolution: GA-1524
Group 2	Resolutions: GA1518; GA-1525
Group 3	Resoulitons: GA-1519; GA-1527
Group 4	Resolution: GA-1521
Group 5	Resolution: GA-1522
Group 6	Resolution: GA-1520
Group 7	Resolution: GA-1523
Group 8	General Assembly Committee

Committee Membership by Last Name

First	Last	Small Group	Committee
Todd	Adams	Group 3	Governance
Greg	Alexander	Group 7	
Thad	Allen	Group 5	Mission Finance
Mark	Anderson	Group 4	
Bill	Bailey	Group 1	Administrative Committee
Sylvia	Barr	Group 7	Counsel & Mediation
Dwayne	Bell	Group 8	General Assembly
Denise	Bell	Group 5	
Joan	Bell Haynes		Administrative Committee
Pat	Bishop	Group 5	Covenantal Dialogue
Chuck	Blaisdell	Group 2	Covenantal Dialogue
Robyn Fickes	Bles	Group 4	GMP's Vision Advisors
Kevin	Bowers	Group 3	Counsel & Mediation
Vera	Burton	Group 8	General Assembly
Timothy	Butler	Group 1	Mission Finance
Lataunya	Bynum	Group 4	
Einstein	Cabalteja	Group 5	Governance
Dolores	Carpenter	Group 5	Administrative Committee
Robert	Cayton	Group 5	Covenantal Dialogue
Jinsuk	Chun	Group 5	Administrative Committee
Monique	Crain Spells	Group 1	Counsel & Mediation
Judy Allen	Dalton	Group 5	Governance
Brian	Daly	Group 4	Covenantal Dialogue
Eleanor	Davis	Group 5	Covenantal Dialogue
Ronald	Degges	Group 7	
Sandie	Dell	Group 7	Covenantal Dialogue
Don & Susan Gonzales	Dewey	Group 8	General Assembly
Beth	Dobyns	Group 1	
Pat	Donahoo	Group 6	Governance
Christopher	Dorsey	Group 2	Administrative Committee
Kelli	Driscoll	Group 1	Governance
Teresa	Dulyea-Parker	Group 1	Audit
Shannon	Dycus	Group 7	Covenantal Dialogue
William	Edwards	Group 6	Counsel & Mediation
Brenda	Etheridge	Group 1	Counsel & Mediation
Ruth	Fletcher	Group 1	GMP's Vision Advisors
Abigail	Frings	Group 6	Covenantal Dialogue
Jennifer	Garbin	Group 5	Covenantal Dialogue
Yvonne	Gilmore	Group 2	Governance
Mary Anne	Glover	Group 6	
John	Goebel		Mission Finance

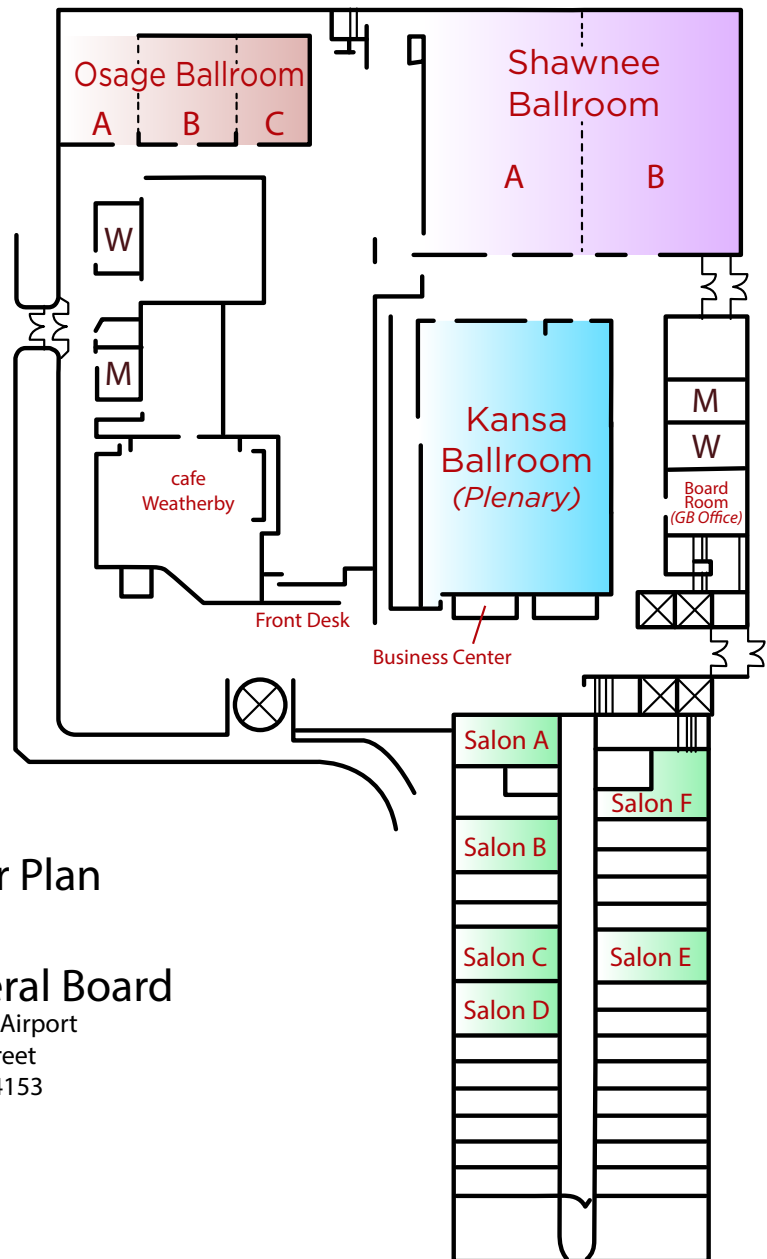


Lonora	Graves	Group 3	Covenantal Dialogue
Danny	Gulden	Group 4	Administrative Committee
Phyllis	Hallman	Group 6	Covenantal Dialogue
Rick	Hamilton	Group 7	
Caroline	Hamilton-Arnold	Group 6	
Jim	Hamlett	Group 3	Audit
Richard	Hamm	Group 6	
Fred	Harris	Group 5	Mission Finance
Wanda	Hedenberg	Group 8	General Assembly
Chris	Hobgood	Group 4	
Pamela	Holt	Group 3	
Jeff	Hon	Group 2	Covenantal Dialogue
John	Humbert	Group 1	
Cheryl	Jackson	Group 1	Governance
Tim	James	Group 6	Counsel & Mediation
Eugene	James	Group 8	General Assembly
Mark	Johnston	Group 8	General Assembly
Barbara	Jones	Group 3	Mission Finance
Paxton	Jones	Group 2	Governance
Julia Brown	Karimu	Group 1	Covenantal Dialogue
Gary	Kidwell	Group 2	Covenantal Dialogue
Young	Kim	Group 2	Administrative Committee
Mary	Larsen	Group 3	Governance
Jennifer	Larson	Group 7	Counsel & Mediation
William	Lee	Group 3	Governance / Counsel & Mediation
Lynnette	Li	Group 7	Governance
Sotello	Long	Group 1	
Coretha	Loughridge	Group 7	
Brad	Lyons	Group 4	
Thomas	Mason	Group 4	Governance
William	McConnell	Group 3	Covenantal Dialogue
Sandy	Messick	Group 4	Covenantal Dialogue
Glen	Miles		Governance
John	Mobley	Group 3	Administrative Committee
Janet	Moore	Group 3	Governance
Kathleen Kline	Moore	Group 3	Mission Finance
Fernando	Morales	Group 6	Administrative Committee
Regina	Morton	Group 4	
Matthew	Myer Boulton	Group 3	
Linda	Necker	Group 4	Mission Finance
Ronny	Nowell	Group 7	Governance
April	Oristano	Group 4	Covenantal Dialogue
Sarah	Page Jones	Group 6	Governance
Katrina	Palan	Group 4	
Lee	Parker	Group 2	Counsel & Mediation
Lew	Pearce	Group 3	Covenantal Dialogue
Robert	Perry	Group 6	

Dean	Phelps	Group 6	Mission Finance
Laura	Phillips	Group 8	General Assembly
Huberto	Pimentel	Group 6	
Laura Jennison	Reed	Group 6	Governance
Norman	Reed	Group 6	
Rick	Reisinger	Group 7	
Edie	Rice-Sauer	Group 3	Administrative Committee
John	Richardson	Group 4	Governance
Bernice	Rivera-Martinez	Group 8	General Assembly
Dawn	Robinette	Group 4	Administrative Committee
Antonio (Tony)	Rodriguez		Administrative Committee
Juan	Rodriguez	Group 2	Mission Finance
Eliezer	Rolon	Group 7	GMP's Vision Advisors
Donna	Rose-Heim	Group 7	
Penny	Ross Corona	Group 6	
Ishmael	Sanchez	Group 1	Mission Finance
Minnie	Smith	Group 7	Mission Finance
Bill	Spangler-Dunning	Group 8	General Assembly
Richard	Spleth	Group 3	Mission Finance
Beth	Sullivan	Group 8	General Assembly
Kerry	Swindle	Group 7	Administrative Committee
Paul	Tche		Administrative Committee
Beth Chalker	Thomason	Group 2	Governance
Karen Georgia	Thompson	Group 4	GMP's Vision Advisors
Taulau	Tupua	Group 8	General Assembly
Tanya	Tyler	Group 7	General Assembly
Hector	Velazquez	Group 3	Counsel & Mediation
Guy	Waldrop	Group 6	
Sharon	Watkins	Group 5	GMP's Vision Advisors
Robert	Welsh	Group 1	GMP's Vision Advisors
Terrye	Williams	Group 7	Covenantal Dialogue
Rodney	Williams	Group 8	General Assembly
Dennis	Williams	Group 6	Governance
Doug & Cathy	Wirt	Group 6	Mission Finance



Hotel Floor Plan



Hotel Floor Plan

2015 General Board

Hilton Kansas City Airport
8801 NW 112th Street
Kansas City, MO 64153

Hilton Kansas City Airport
8801 NW 112th Street
Kansas City, MO 64153

BUSINESS ITEMS



**GENERAL BOARD****Business Item #GB-15-0922**

Title: Disciple Mission Fund Percentage Division

Origin: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee

Because the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada establishes Regions as one of the expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) whose “primary purpose is twofold: (1) to extend the ministry of Christ in mission, teaching, witness, and service among the people and social structures of the region; and (2) to establish, receive, and nurture congregations in the region, providing help, counsel, and pastoral care to members, ministers, and congregations in their mutual relationships, and relating them to the worldwide mission and witness of the whole church”, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee has taken action to maintain the current percentage distribution of Disciples Mission Funds received from Tennessee congregations.

We believe that strong, viable Regions are crucial for the implementation of the twofold purpose as established by the Design. It is the role of Regions to provide ministries in such a way that strong, viable congregations are developed with a strong sense of ministry within their communities, the regional church, the general church and the world-wide mission of the whole church.

Therefore, the Regional Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee took action to propose that beginning with the 2015 budget year, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee would continue to receive 50% of all giving from Tennessee congregations to Disciple Mission Fund.

By consensus, the Tennessee Regional Board agreed that this decision would be communicated to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) by the deadline established for the submission of business items to the 2015 meeting of the General Board.

The General Board Recommended Allocation is: 45.1902%
Tennessee Allocation is: 50%

Recommended action by the General Board:

- Receive this report from the Tennessee Region
- Affirm that the “Tennessee Disciples Mission Fund” is consistent with and within the guidelines of GB-08-0583
- Inform OGMP Treasury Services of the action

General Board**Business Item #GB-15-0923**

Title: Disciple Mission Fund Oklahoma Region

Origin: The Oklahoma Region

Background information:

Since the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada establishes Regions as one of the expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) noting that “the primary purpose of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Regions is twofold: (1) to extend the ministry of Christ in mission, teaching, witness, and service among the people and social structures of the region; and (2) to establish, receive, and nurture congregations in the region, providing help, counsel, and pastoral care to members, ministers, and congregations in their mutual relationships, and relating them to the worldwide mission and witness of the whole church”, the Oklahoma regional church has taken action to maintain the current percentage distribution of Disciples Mission Fund gifts so that we can continue to be a strong, viable Region that responds to the needs of congregations and the whole regional church membership.

Since it is necessary to communicate with the General Board the desire of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma to continue to receive 49% of Disciple Mission Funds intended for use in the Oklahoma regional church, beginning in 2013, the Regional Board took action to propose that beginning with the 2015 budget year, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma would continue to receive 49% of all giving from Oklahoma congregations to Disciple Mission Fund.

By consensus, the Oklahoma Regional Church Board agreed that this decision would be communicated to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) by the Regional Minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma by the deadline established for the submission of business items to the 2015 meeting of the General Board.

The General Board recommended allocation is: 41.5702%
Oklahoma allocation: 48%

Recommended action by the General Board:

- Receive this report from the Oklahoma Region
- Affirm that the “Oklahoma Disciples Mission Fund” is consistent with and within the guidelines of GB-08-0583.
- Inform OGMP Treasury Services of the action

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0924**

Title: Disciple Mission Fund Pennsylvania Region

Origin: The Pennsylvania Region

Background information:

The Pennsylvania General Board allocation is 65.0902%. The region of Pennsylvania since 2006 has established an alternative allocation of 69% retained by the region. The Pennsylvania Region desires to continue the alternative allocation. The 2015 regional budget containing this alternative allocation was passed by the regional board.

Recommended action by the General Board:

- Receive this report from the Pennsylvania Region
- Affirm that the “Pennsylvania Disciples Mission Fund” is consistent with and within the guidelines of GB-08-0583.
- Inform OGMP Treasury Services that the Pennsylvania Region has made this change.

General Board**Business Item #GB-0925**

Title: Disciple Mission Fund designations procedure in Virginia Region

Origin: The Virginia Region

Background information:

In order to fulfill our responsibility to budget and administer Regional finances in such a way as to fund the current and future mission and ministries of the region and of the whole church, the 2014 Regional Board and Regional Assembly affirmed the continued use of the 2006 Virginia Plan.

In 2006, the Virginia Regional Assembly voted to implement “The Virginia Disciples Fund” in which congregations would be encouraged by the region to select from three funding options. These options determine how congregations in the Virginia Region financially resource ministry and mission through the Disciples Mission Fund. The three options include: the General Board’s Allocation, the Regional Assembly’s recommendation or to establish their own allocation.

This process provides an opportunity for all congregations to reflect on their giving to mission and ministry beyond the local congregation. It also provides the opportunity to ensure congregations are educated on the historic principle of common mission funding information sent to congregations from the Region.

The three suggested options for congregations in the Virginia Region include:

The **General Board’s** allocation:

To the Region	42.8%
To General Ministries	47.3%
To Higher Education	9.9%

The **Region of Virginia’s** suggested allocation

To the Region	57%
To General Ministries	36% <i>(which includes a 7% designation to OGMP)</i>
To Higher Education	7%

The third option is for the congregation to establish an **allocation formula** by filling in the percentage amounts below:

To the Region
To General Ministries
To Higher Education

**Recommended action by the General Board:**

- Receive this report from the Virginia Region
- Affirm that the “Virginia Disciples Mission Fund” is consistent with and within the guidelines of GB-08-0583.
- Inform OGMP Treasury Services to work with the Virginia Region to contact all congregations in the region to verify their continued allocation choice
- Note that the Region will continue to utilize, through SunTrust Bank, a lock box where congregations will be encouraged to submit DMF and Special Day offerings and that automatic distribution will be made to OGMP Treasury Services in a timely manner prior to the 8th of each month
- Note that some congregations will continue to submit DMF and Special offerings directly to OGMP Treasury Services

GENERAL BOARD**Business Item #GB-15-0926**

Title: Disciple Mission Fund Percentage Division

Origin: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois/Wisconsin

Background Information:

The Christian Church in Illinois / Wisconsin has historically utilized the process of establishing their own allocation formula within the guidelines of the Mission Funding System. In 2011, the regional board took a major step toward the General Board's recommended allocation. In 2013, the region is holding the percentage in hopes of taking the final step of .8192% in 2015. The Illinois / Wisconsin Region has reached this goal and is pleased to report that in 2015, the region is returning to the General Board allocation.

General Board Recommended Allocation: 40.1902%

Recommended action by the General Board:

- Receive this report from the Illinois-Wisconsin Region
- Inform OGMP Treasury Services of the action

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0927**

Title: Confirmation of 2016-2017 General Commission on Ministry Members

Origin: General Minister and President

Background

The General Commission on Ministry was created by General Assembly resolution in 1993. According to the resolution, the members of the General Commission on Ministry are appointed every two years by the General Minister and President and confirmed by the General Board.

Recommended Action:

The General Board confirms the appointment of the following people to the General Commission on Ministry for 2016-2017.

Members

Cynthia Adcock
J.GregoryAlexander
Ann Dotson
Pamela Holt
Eugene James
Paxton Jones
Belva Brown Jordan
Sandra Messick
Rossy Ricart
Glen Stewart
Hyoung Chel (Tom) Yang

Ex-Officio with Vote

Ron Degges
Saundra Michael-Bowers
Timothy James
Holly MillerShank
Newell Williams

Ex-Officio without Vote

Howard Bowers
Jinsuk Chun
Huberto Pimentel
Sharon Watkins

General Board**Business Item #GB-15-0928**

Title: Report of the General Nominating Committee Regarding Boards, Committees and Commissions Elected or Confirmed by the General Board

Origin: General Nominating Committee

The General Nominating Committee met for the purpose of reviewing the reports submitted by the General Ministries, Reconciliation Commission and the Week of Compassion Committee. Letters were issued to each ministry with comments regarding the board composition.

The General Nomination Committee review process includes: Racial / Ethnic Diversity (increases to 30% minimum in 2015); Clergy / Laity; Gender; Age and Geographic Diversity. Having completed our review the General Nominating Committee makes the following motion:

The General Board ***Elects*** the following members to the appropriate Board, Committees, or Commissions, (noting that the full list for each ministry is contained in a separate document.)

- Christian Church Foundation Board
- Week of Compassion Committee
- United Christian Missionary Society
- Division of Overseas Ministries
- Disciples Home Missions
- Council on Christian Unity
- Reconciliation Commission

The General Board ***Confirms*** the following members to the appropriate Board, Committees, or Commissions, (noting that the full list for each ministry is contained in a separate document.)

- Disciples of Christ Historical Society
- Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources including subsidiaries
Disciples Church Extension Fund and Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation
- Pension Fund
- Higher Education and Leadership Ministries
- North American Pacific Asian Disciples
- National Christian Missionary Convention
- National Convocation
- National Benevolent Services



General Board at-large Class of 2019:

Jackie Bunch (B, L, F 60+ OH)
 Janetta Cottner (B, C, F, 60+, MI)
 Alison Enari (A, C, F, 30-39 IN)
 Sarah Himaya (A, L, F, 18-22 CAN)
 Angela Kaufman (W, C, F 40-49 SW)
 Fernando Morales (H, C, M 50-59 FL)
 Bernice Riveria-Martinez (H, L, F 50-59 OR)
 Lori Tapia (H, C, F 30-39 AZ)

7 are female, 1 male; 3 are lay leaders, 5 are clergy;
 2 African Americans, 2 Asian Pacific Islanders, 3 Hispanics and 1 Caucasian
 Ages: 23-29, 30-39 (2), 40-49, 50-59 (2), 60+ (2)

Continuing class for GB from GNC:

Abigail Frings, (C, L, 18U IL/WI)
 Taulau Tupua, (A, L, 18-22 PSW)
 Sarah Jones, (C, L, 18-22 VA)
 Lynette Li, (A, L, 23-29 IN)
 Dolores Carpenter, (B, C, 60+ CapArea)
 Laura Ann Phillips, (C, C, 30-39 GKC)
 Rodney Williams, (B, C, 40-49 GKC)
 Terrye Williams, (C, C, 50-59 VA)
 Young Lan Kim (A, C, 40-49 PSW)

7 are female, 2 male; 4 are lay leaders, 5 are clergy;
 2 African Americans, 3 Asian Pacific Islanders, and 4 Caucasian
 Ages: 18U, 18-22 (2), 23-29, 30-39, 40-49 (2), 50-59, 60+

The General Nominating Committee also is tasked with selecting from the membership of the General Board a class of members for the **Administrative Committee** who will serve from the close of General Assembly 2015 through the close of General Assembly 2017.

Class of 2017:

Bernice Rivera Martinez (H, L, F 50-59 OR)
 Fernando Morales (H, C, M 50-59 FL)
 Angela Kauffman (C, F, C 40-49 SW)
 Young Lan Kim (API, C, F, 50-59 PSW)
 Jen Garbin (C, F, C, 40-49 CAN)

Of the elected class:

4 are female, 1 male; 1 lay leader, 4 are clergy;
 1 Asian Pacific Islander, 2 Hispanics and 2 Caucasians
 Ages: 40-49 (2), 50-59 (3)

They join the continuing class of 2016:

Dolores Carpenter (B, F, C, 60+ CAP Area)

Dawn Robinette (W, F, L, 50-59, FL)

Tanya Tyler (B, F, C, 50-59, KY)

Danny Gulden (W, M, C, 30-39, GA)

The membership includes:

1 man and 3 women, 3 clergy and 1 lay person;

2 racial / ethnic persons (2 African Americans)



Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources

Erick D. Reisinger and Gilberto Collazo, Co-Executives

Action on the Class of 2017

General Board Action: Confirmation

JoAnne Kagiwada	California, Northern-Nev	Lay	Female	Asian American	70+	2017 Re-elect
Rachel Bell	Tennessee	Lay	Female	African American	30-39	2017 Re-elect
Willie Garcia	Northeastern	Lay	Male	Hispanic	60-69	2017 Re-elect
Neil Topliffe	Michigan	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	70+	2017 Re-elect
Jean Vandergrift	Northeastern	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2017 Re-elect
Chris Bowers	Illinois and Wisconsin	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2016
Denny Williams	Arizona	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A
David Hedgepeth	Arizona	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2016 N/A
Lois Artis	Capital Area	Clergy	Female	African American	60-69	2016 New
Don Dewey	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2015 N/A
Dolly Mills	Kentucky	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	40-49	2015 N/A

Disciples Church Extension Fund

Erick Reisinger, President

Board of Directors

Action on the Class of 2017

Action by the General Board: Confirmation

Neil Topliffe	Michigan	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	70+	2017 Re-elect	3
Willie Garcia	Northeastern	Lay	Male	Hispanic	60-69	2017 Re-elect	2
Robin Hedgeman	Ohio	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	2017 New	2
Chris Bowers	Illinois and Wisconsin	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	3
Denny Williams	Arizona	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	3
Lois Artis	Capital Area	Clergy	Female	African American	60-69	2016 N/A	4
Sheri Jackson	Kentucky	Lay	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2015 N/A	4
Tamara Rodenberg	Southwest	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	40-49	2015 N/A	2
Andres Morgado	(Ecumenical Partner)	Lay	Male	Hispanic	50-59	2015 New	2

Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation

Gilbert Collazo, President

Board of Directors

Action on the Class of 2017

General Board Action: Confirmation

JoAnne Kagiwada	California, Northern-Nevada	Lay	Female	Asian American	70+	2017 Re-elect	2
Rachel Bell	Tennessee	Lay	Female	African American	30-39	2017 Re-elect	2
Jean Vandergrift	Northeastern	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2017 Re-elect	2
Marta Harms	Florida	Lay	Female	Hispanic	60-69	2017 Re-elect	2
David Hedgepeth	Arizona	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2016 N/A	3
Candyce Black	South Carolina	Lay	Female	African American	30-39	2016 N/A	0
David Nolan	Southwest	Lay	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2016 N/A	0
Dolly Mills	Kentucky	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	40-49	2015 N/A	1
Marvin Owens	Capital Area	Clergy	Male	African American	50-59	2015 N/A	0

Division of Homeland Ministries

Ronald J. Degges, President

Board of Directors

Action on the Class of 2021

Action by the General Board: Election

Katherine Raley	Central Rocky Mountain	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	25-29	2021 Re-elect	2
Charles Chuck" Tooley"	Montana	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2021 New	2
Tom Cooley	Southwest	Lay	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2021 New	2
Sandy Messik	Northwest	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2021 New	2
Juan Rodriguez	Florida	Clergy	Male	Hispanic	60-69	2021 New	5
Rhonda Cole	South Carolina	Lay	Female	African American	40-49	2019 N/A	4
Mayon Marcelino	Canada	Lay	Male	Asian American	18-24	2019 N/A	4
Jeremy Skaggs	Oklahoma	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2019 N/A	4
Xochitl Alvizo	Northeastern	Lay	Female	Hispanic	30-39	2019 N/A	2
Candyce Black	South Carolina	Lay	Female	African American	30-39	2019 N/A	0
Donna Davis	Great River	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2017 N/A	0
Valerie Melvin	North Carolina	Clergy	Female	African American	40-49	2017 N/A	0
Dale Richmond	Kansas	Lay	Male	Caucasian	70+	2017 N/A	0
Derrick Perkins	Mid-America	Clergy	Male	African American	30-39	2017 New	0
Reuben Sancken	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	25-29	2017 New	0

United Christian Missionary Society

Board of Directors

Julia Brown Karimu, President

Reporting Year 2017

General Board Action: Confirmation

Nedella Foster	Oklahoma	Lay	Female	African American	70+	2017 New	1
Chris Furr	North Carolina	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	25-29	2017 New	1
Don Gillett, II	Kentucky	Clergy	Male	African American	30-39	2017 New	1
Lakinsha Swinton	South Carolina	Lay	Female	African American	25-29	2017 New	1
Chad Cline	Southwest	Lay	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2015 Re-elect	4
Rebecca Littlejohn	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	30-39	2015 N/A	4
Madelyn Logan	Virginia	Lay	Female	Caucasian	70+	2015 N/A	4
Tommy Potter	Southwest	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2015 Re-elect	4



Disciples of Christ Historical Society
 Todd Adams, Interim President
 Board of Trustees
 Action on the Class of 2017
 Action by the General Board: Confirmation

Siobhan Lopez	Pacific Southwest	Lay	Female	Hispanic	30-39	2017 New	0
James Johnson	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	70+	2017 New	0
Charisse Gillett	Kentucky	Lay	Female	African American	40-49	2017 New	0
Thad Allen	West Virginia	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2017 New	0
Bob Williams	Southwest	Lay	Male	African American	60-69	2017 New	0
Marsha Smith	Southwest	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2017 New	0
Archie Jenkins	Georgia	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2016 New	1
Janis Sherick	Arizona	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	2
Lynnette Li	Indiana	Lay	Female	Asian American	30-39	2016 N/A	1
David Ayers	(Ecumenical Partner)	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	30-39	2016 N/A	1
Miles Kleinert	Tennessee	Lay	Male	Caucasian	17 and below	2016 N/A	1
Bill Newton	Tennessee	Lay	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2015 New	0
Richard Cherok	(Ecumenical Partner)	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2015 N/A	8
Peter Morgan	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	70+	2016 Ex officio	0
Mary Lou Kegler	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Female	African American	60-69	2016 Ex officio	0
Edie Rice-Sauer	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2016 Ex officio	0

Notes:

The DCHS board asked the Administrative Committee to appoint three members to the board for two years as the General Church's representatives during the time in which DCHS reinvents itself. Peter, Mary Lou and Edie are those members appointed by the AC.

Pension Fund
 Board of Directors
 Jim Hamlett, President
 Reporting Year 2019
 General Board Action: Confirmation

Deborah Lewis	Georgia	Lay	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2018 Re-elect	2
Preston Adams	Indiana	Clergy	Male	African American	50-59	2018 Re-elect	6
James P. Johnson	Indiana	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2018 Re-elect	1
William Lee	Virginia	Clergy	Male	African American	50-59	2017 Re-elect	3
Janet Long	Ohio	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2017 Re-elect	3
Charlene Butz	Upper Midwest	Lay	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2017 Re-elect	3
Brenda Cline	Southwest	Lay	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2017 New	0
Thaddaeus Allen	West Virginia	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2017 New	0
Kelly Bauer	Kansas	Lay	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2016 N/A	1
Laura Reed Gelarden	Indiana	Lay	Female	Caucasian	40-49	2016 N/A	8
Peggy Brittan	Southwest	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	2
Darnell Robertson	Ohio	Lay	Male	African American	60-69	2016 N/A	8
Antonio Rodriguez	Florida	Lay	Male	Hispanic	40-49	2016 N/A	8
John Farley	Capital Area	Lay	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2015 N/A	10

Week of Compassion
Advisory Committee
Vy Nguyen, Executive Director
Reporting Year 2019
General Board Action: Election

Cindy Kim	Illinois and Wisconsin	Lay	Female	Asian American	40-49	2019 New	0
Cornelius Lloyd	Georgia	Clergy	Male	African American	30-39	2019 New	0
Mark Briley	Oklahoma	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	30-39	2018 N/A	0
Judi Frost	Illinois and Wisconsin	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2018 N/A	0
Susan Gonzalez Dewey	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Female	Hispanic	50-59	2017 N/A	1
Richie Sanchez	Florida	Lay	Male	Hispanic	40-49	2017 N/A	1
James Rapp	Southwest	Lay	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2016 N/A	2
Cheryl Sybrant	Great River	Lay	Female	Caucasian	40-49	2016 N/A	2
Jose Morales	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Male	Hispanic	30-39	2015 N/A	3
Melinda Keenan Wood	Florida	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	40-49	2015 N/A	3
Sharon Watkins	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	0 Ex officio	0
Julia Brown Karimu	Indiana	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	0 Ex officio	0
Chimiste Dorsicar	Indiana	Lay	Male	African American	50-59	0 Ex officio	0
Lee Parker	Virginia	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	0 Ex officio	0
April Johnson	Indiana	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	0 Ex officio	0

Christian Church Foundation

Gary Kidwell, President
Board of Directors
Action on the class of 2017
General Board Action: Election

Tanya Tyler	Kentucky	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	2017 New	0
Sharon Worley	Central Rocky Mountain	Lay	Female	Caucasian	70+	2017 New	0
Gloria Feliciano	Northeastern	Lay	Female	Hispanic	50-59	2017 Re-elect	3
Linda Hull	Florida	Lay	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2017 Re-elect	3
Todd Reed	Kentucky	Lay	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2017 Re-elect	3
Samuel Robles, Jr.	Florida	Clergy	Male	Hispanic	30-39	2017 Re-elect	3
Josue Torres	(Ecumenical Partner)	Lay	Male	Hispanic	60-69	2017 Re-elect	6
Dean Buffington	Oregon	Lay	Male	Caucasian	70+	2016 N/A	1
Teresa Dulyea-Parker	Illinois and Wisconsin	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2016 N/A	1
Rick Ikeda	Oregon	Lay	Male	Asian American	50-59	2016 N/A	1
Joanne VerBurg	North Carolina	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	1
Joan Bell-Haynes	Capital Area	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	2016 N/A	7
Elizabeth Topliffe	Michigan	Lay	Female	Caucasian	40-49	2016 N/A	7
Rodney Witte	Central Rocky Mountain	Lay	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2016 N/A	7
Robert Bock	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	70+	2015 N/A	2
Ted Waggoner	Indiana	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2015 N/A	2
Debra Clayton	Kansas	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2015 N/A	5
John May	North Carolina	Lay	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2015 N/A	5
Bob Williams	Southwest	Lay	Male	African American	60-69	2015 N/A	5
Fred Harris	Capital Area	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2015 N/A	8
Suzanne Webb	Mid-America	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2015 N/A	8



Council on Christian Unity

Robert Welsh, President

Board of Directors

Action on the Class of 2017

Action by the General Board: Election

Danny Gulden	Georgia	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	30-39	2017 New	0
LaTaunya Bynum	California, Northern-Nev:	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	2017 New	0
Luis Gierbolini	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Hispanic	30-39	2017 Re-elect	3
Daniel Satterfield	Tennessee	Lay	Male	Asian American	25-29	2017 Re-elect	3
Karen Thompson	(Ecumenical Partner)	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	2016 N/A	1
Robyn Bles	Kentucky	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	30-39	2016 N/A	2
Kris Culp	Idaho, South	Lay	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2016 N/A	0
Kory Wilcoxson	Kentucky	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2016 N/A	4
Darla Goodrich	Mid-America	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2015 N/A	2
Teresa Crist	Central Rocky Mountain	Lay	Female	African American	18-24	2015 N/A	1
Victoria Archie-Bohanon	Ohio	Lay	Female	African American	60-69	2015 N/A	2
Chimiste Doriscar	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Haitian	40-49	2015 N/A	2
Sharon Watkins	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	0 Ex officio	9
Julia Brown Karimu	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	0 Ex officio	5
Ron Degges	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	0 Ex officio	4
Chris Dorsey	(Ex officio)	Lay	Male	African American	30-39	0 Ex officio	0

Division of Overseas Ministries

Julia Brown Karimu, President

Board of Directors

Action on the Class of 2018

General Board Action: Election

Phyllis Ann Hallman	Arizona	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2018 Re-elect	3
John R. Kleinschmidt, III.	Kentucky	Lay	Male	Caucasian	30-39	2018 Re-elect	3
Zenobia Mayo	Oklahoma	Lay	Female	African American	60-69	2018 Re-elect	3
Marilyn Whittaker	Virginia	Lay	Female	African American	50-59	2018 Re-elect	3
Diana Brown	Oklahoma	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2017 N/A	1
Stephanie Buckhannon Crowder	Illinois and Wisconsin	Clergy	Female	African American	40-49	2017 N/A	4
Ismael Sanchez	Northeastern	Clergy	Male	Hispanic	50-59	2017 N/A	1
Ryan Cullumber	Pacific Southwest	Lay	Male	Caucasian	30-39	2016 N/A	1
Nancy Lear	Kansas City, Greater	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	1
Esther Lee	Southwest	Lay	Female	Asian American	25-29	2016 N/A	7
Donald Sherman	Florida	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	5
Cheryl Diane Smith	Michigan	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	2016 N/A	2
Dale Braxton Sr	Alabama-Northwest Flor	Clergy	Male	African American	50-59	2015 New	0
Deborah Swift-DeWitt	Tennessee	Lay	Female	African American	50-59	2015 N/A	1
Rick Spleth	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2015 N/A	2

Christian Board of Publication

Board of Directors

Brad Lyons, President

Reporting Year 2017

General Board Action: Confirmation

Charles Buck	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Male	Pacific Islander	50-59	2017 New	1
Rob Robuck II	Great River	Lay	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2017 New	1
Tanya Tyler	Kentucky	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2017 Re-elect	6
Charles Blaisdell	Central Rocky Mountain	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2016 N/A	4
Don McCreary	Kansas City, Greater	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	70+	2016 Re-elect	2
Nadine Burton	Great River	Clergy	Female	African American	40-49	2016 New	0
Katie F. Johnson	Tennessee	Lay	Female	Caucasian	18-24	2015 New	2
Eliezer Rolon	Tennessee	Lay	Male	Other	30-39	2015 New	2
Sharon E. Watkins	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	0 Ex officio	8

Higher Education and Leadership Ministries

Chris Dorsey, President

Board of Directors

Action on the Class of 2018

Action by the General Board: Confirmation

H. Ben Bohren	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2018 Re-elect	4
Beau Underwood	Mid-America	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	30-39	2018 Re-elect	4
Yvonne Gilmore-Essig	Illinois and Wisconsin	Clergy	Female	African American	30-39	2018 Re-elect	4
Bill Bailey	California, Northern-Nevada	Lay	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2018 Re-elect	4
Jean Ellen Cowgill	Capital Area	Lay	Female	Caucasian	25-29	2017 N/A	0
Manuel Collazo	Florida	Lay	Male	Hispanic	50-59	2017 N/A	5
Billie Lynch	Florida	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2017 New	0
Santiago Pinon	Southwest	Clergy	Male	Hispanic	40-49	2017 New	0
Tom Wood	Mid-America	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	1
J. Marshall Dunn	Capital Area	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	6
Khalia Williams	Georgia	Lay	Female	African American	25-29	2016 N/A	2
Kenneth Garren	(Ex officio)	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2016 Ex officio	1
Pamela Sparks	Southwest	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2016 New	0
JoAnne Kagiwada	California, Northern-Nevada	Lay	Female	Asian American	70+	2015 N/A	7
Edwin Strong, Jr.	Mid-America	Lay	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2015 N/A	7
Vicki Batzka	Kentucky	Lay	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2015 N/A	2
Gary Peluso-Verdend	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	40-49	2015 Ex officio	2
Lonora Graves	California, Northern-Nevada	Lay	Female	African American	30-39	2015 New	0



North American Pacific Asian Disciples

Board of Directors

Jinsuk Chun, Executive Pastor

Reporting Year 2018

General Board Action: Confirmation

John Donggook Roh	Illinois and Wisconsin	Clergy	Male	Asian American	50-59	2018 Re-elect	4
Deanna Scobbie	Illinois and Wisconsin	Lay	Female	Asian American	25-29	2018 Re-elect	4
Janet Casey-Allen	Indiana	Clergy	Female	Asian American	50-59	2016 Re-elect	2
Ron Degges	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2016 Re-elect	2
Susan Gonzales Dewey	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Female	Hispanic	50-59	2016 Re-elect	2
David Lian	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Asian American	30-39	2016 New	0
Aaron Park	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Male	Asian American	50-59	2016 Re-elect	2
Salesa Fatu	California, Northern-Nevada	Clergy	Male	Pacific Islander	50-59	2016 Re-elect	2
Shirley Kinoshita	California, Northern-Nevada	Lay	Female	Asian American	60-69	2016 New	0
Yehwa Choi Lee	Southwest	Lay	Female	Asian American	50-59	2016 New	0
Chungseong Kim	Georgia	Clergy	Male	Asian American	50-59	2016 Re-elect	2
Johon Wu	California, Northern-Nevada	Clergy	Male	Asian American	50-59	2016 New	0
Jinsuk Chun	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Asian American	50-59	2018 Ex officio	4
Sharon Watkins	Indiana	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2017 Ex officio	3

National Benevolent Association

Board of Directors

Mark Anderson, President

Reporting Year 2018

General Board Action: Confirmation

Suzanne Quenette	Southwest	Lay	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2018 New	0
Barbara Scamman	Northwest	Lay	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2018 New	0
William Jennison	Northwest	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	60-69	2018 New	0
Lisa Legeer	Florida	Lay	Female	Caucasian	40-49	2017 N/A	3
Mary Lou Kegler	Kansas City, Greater	Clergy	Female	African American	60-69	2017 N/A	3
Andrew Taylor-Peck	Tennessee	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	30-39	2017 N/A	3
Robert Patterson	Southwest	Lay	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2017 N/A	4
Suzanne Webb	Mid-America	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	60-69	2016 N/A	3
Willie Garcia	Northeastern	Lay	Male	Hispanic	60-69	2016 N/A	3
Jackie Bunch	Ohio	Lay	Female	African American	60-69	2016 N/A	3
Joseph Kidwell	Southwest	Lay	Male	Caucasian	30-39	2016 N/A	6
Bob Cooper	Central Rocky Mountain	Lay	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2015 New	1
Belva Brown Jordan	Oklahoma	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	2015 N/A	8
Kerry Swindle	Arizona	Lay	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2015 N/A	4
Todd Adams	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	40-49	0 Ex officio	5

Reconciliation Ministry

Commission

April Johnson, Minister of Reconciliation

Reporting Year 2017

General Board Action: Election

Cristina Marcela Kurtek	Pacific Southwest	Lay	Female	Hispanic	25-29	2017 Re-elect	2
Thomas E. Morgan	Alabama-Northwest Florida	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2017 Re-elect	2
Jennifer Kottler	Northeastern	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2017 Re-elect	2
Al Lopez	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Male	Hispanic	30-39	2017 New	0
Tera Daniels	Southwest	Lay	Female	African American	50-59	2016 N/A	0
Soo Yun	Pacific Southwest	Lay	Female	Asian American	30-39	2016 N/A	3
Yarlynn Collado	Florida	Lay	Female	Hispanic	25-29	2016 New	0
Mayon Marcellino	Canada	Lay	Male	Pacific Islander	25-29	2015 N/A	1
Dwight Bailey	Illinois and Wisconsin	Clergy	Male	African American	60-69	2015 N/A	1
Patricia Williams	Ohio	Lay	Female	African American	50-59	2015 N/A	3
Margaret Pride	Mid-America	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	2015 N/A	3
Timothy James	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Male	African American	50-59	0 Ex officio	7
Huberto Pimentel	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Male	Hispanic	50-59	0 Ex officio	7
Jinsuk Chun	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Male	Asian American	50-59	0 Ex officio	2
Sharon Watkins	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	50-59	0 Ex officio	7
Doug Wirt	(Ex officio)	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	50-59	0 Ex officio	0

National Christian Missionary Convention

Board of Trustees

Dale Braxton, President

Reporting Year 2019

General Board Action: Confirmation

Jesse Jackson	Oklahoma	Clergy	Male	African American	40-49	2016 Ex officio	6
Patricia Penelton	Mid-America	Lay	Female	African American	60-69	2018 Ex officio	6
Felicia Wright	Southwest	Lay	Female	African American	25-29	2016 N/A	6
John Tiggie	Virginia	Lay	Male	African American	60-69	2016 N/A	6
Preston Adams III	Indiana	Clergy	Male	African American	40-49	2018 N/A	6
Vallilda Berry	South Carolina	Lay	Female	African American	60-69	2018 Re-elect	4
Irvin Green	Ohio	Clergy	Male	African American	60-69	2018 Re-elect	4
Patricia Parker	Great River	Clergy	Female	African American	40-49	2018 Re-elect	4
Rachel Bell	Tennessee	Lay	Female	African American	40-49	2016 N/A	4
Eric Brown	Ohio	Clergy	Male	African American	50-59	2016 N/A	6
Sheryl Nelson	Alabama-Northwest Florida	Lay	Female	African American	60-69	2016 Re-elect	4
Tiffany Murphy	North Carolina	Lay	Female	African American	25-29	2016 Re-elect	4
Timothy James	Indiana	Clergy	Male	African American	60-69	0 Ex officio	11



National Convocation
Board of Trustees
 Timothy James, Administrative Secretary
 Reporting Year 2020
 General Board Action: Confirmation

Jesse Jackson	Oklahoma	Clergy	Male	African American	40-49	2017 N/A	3
Patricia Penelton	Mid-America	Lay	Female	African American	50-59	2019 N/A	5
Felicia Wright	Southwest	Lay	Female	African American	25-29	2016 N/A	2
John Tiggie	Virginia	Lay	Male	African American	60-69	2016 N/A	6
Rachel L. Bell	Tennessee	Lay	Female	African American	40-49	2016 N/A	2
Eric Brown	Ohio	Clergy	Male	African American	50-59	2016 N/A	4
Sheryl Nelson	Alabama-Northwest Florida	Lay	Female	African American	60-69	2016 N/A	4
Tiffany Murphy	North Carolina	Lay	Female	African American	25-29	2016 N/A	6
Preston Adams, III	Indiana	Clergy	Male	African American	40-49	2018 N/A	6
Valildra Berry	South Carolina	Lay	Female	African American	50-59	2018 N/A	4
Irvin Green	Ohio	Clergy	Male	African American	50-59	2018 N/A	6
Patricia Parker	Great River	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	2018 N/A	4
Antonio Redd	Virginia	Clergy	Male	African American	30-39	2018 N/A	2
Arnold Hayes	Tennessee	Lay	Male	African American	60-69	2018 N/A	2
Wanona Redd	Virginia	Lay	Female	African American	50-59	2018 N/A	2
Yowanda Bowens	Indiana	Lay	Female	African American	40-49	2018 N/A	4
Dee Long	South Carolina	Lay	Female	African American	50-59	2018 N/A	4
Irie Session	Southwest	Clergy	Female	African American	50-59	2018 N/A	4
Milton Bowens	Oklahoma	Lay	Male	African American	50-59	2020 New	4
Perry Spencer, Jr.	Pacific Southwest	Clergy	Male	African American	30-39	2020 New	4
Ken Brooker Langston	Capital Area	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	50-59	2020 New	4
Delesslyn Kennebrew	Tennessee	Lay	Female	African American	30-39	2020 New	4
Sharon E. Watkins	Indiana	Clergy	Female	Caucasian	60-69	0 Ex officio	0
Ronald Degges	Indiana	Clergy	Male	Caucasian	50-59	0 Ex officio	0
Sheila Spencer	Indiana	Lay	Female	African American	40-49	0 Ex officio	0
Chesla Nickelson	Indiana	Clergy	Female	African American	30-39	0 Ex officio	0
R. Wayne Calhoun	Indiana	Clergy	Male	African American	50-59	0 Ex officio	0
Timothy M. James	Indiana	Clergy	Male	African American	60-69	0 Ex officio	0

General Board

Business Item #GB-15-0929

DATE: April 6, 2015

TO: The Administrative Committee of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

FROM: Cultural Competency Task Force aka The Dream Team (Cynthia Hale, Teresa Dulyea-Parker, Gary Kidwell, Ted Waggoner, Sam Ramirez, April Johnson, and Regina Morton, facilitator)

The General Minister and President, The Moderator, The Immediate-past Moderator, and leaders of the racial ethnic constituencies recommended/approved the task force membership.

This task force was charged to respond to GB-13-0848 – Supplemental Document to the Executive Search Process: The Administrative Committee draft a supplemental document to the Executive Search Process to provide cultural orientation and preparation to boards and/or organizations issuing calls to persons from historically underrepresented groups.

Based on the task force research and findings, this document recommends action steps to create a welcoming and supportive environment in which **ALL** new ministry/organization executives, irrespective of nationality, race, age, sexual orientation or gender, can successfully guide the respective ministry/organization in fulfilling God's vision and mission.

Cultural competence within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is a call to work together with an understanding of and appreciation for people of different cultural backgrounds, in recognition that all of God's people are created in God's own image and equally valued. The image of God we see reflected through those of different cultures has many different interpretations, based on a plan that we do not fully understand. Our call is: a) to see the image of God in the differences from our culture, as well as in the similarities; b) to build an appreciation and understanding of the various cultural differences we encounter; c) to accept those whose cultural image of God is not our own; and d) to encourage each other to live into all God created us to be.

KEY OBSERVATIONS



A. **Some** people in the underrepresented groups including women come to leadership positions in historically white/male dominated institutions with an inherent uncertainty about their abilities to succeed and if they will be welcomed, even when they are extremely well-qualified and experienced.

B. Broken and unacknowledged ministry cultures produce broken search processes.

C. Institutional preparedness is critical to the success of the call.

D. The selection of the candidate is not the end of the ministry's responsibility to the executive or the receiving organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Pre-search

The governing body is encouraged to call an interim executive to help the ministry accomplish the following tasks:

- 1) Clarify vision, mission, and values.
- 2) Conduct a formal cultural assessment that includes key stakeholders. The following attached resources are recommended: Cultural Competency Self-Assessment/The Cultural Proficiency Continuum Self-Assessment and Cultural Competency Continuum. Use an experienced facilitator recommended by the Minister of Reconciliation to conduct this assessment.
- 3) Conduct an anti-racism audit. The following attached resource is recommended: Institutional Self-Assessment/Anti-Racism Audit Questionnaire. Use an experienced facilitator recommended by the Minister of Reconciliation to conduct this assessment/audit.
- 4) Assess the financial sustainability of the ministry.

5) Develop an executive compensation package that is equitable. (Preferably, executives' salaries should be greater than those they supervise.)

6) Dismantle and/or identify potential barriers or hindrances to the success of the new executive.

B. Search

Based upon the work and learnings from the pre-search, the search team is encouraged to:

- 1) Use the current Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Executive Search Process.
- 2) Develop the job description and ministry profile in relationship to the organization/ministry vision, mission, and values.
- 3) Include intentional delineation of skills and experiences required.
- 4) Identify soft skills of the position (i.e. conflict management, listening, cultural sensitivity, and developing one-to-one relationships, etc.).
- 5) Meet or have conference calls with the screener to more fully articulate the vision, mission and goals of the organization and the skills preferred/required of the applicants.

3. Post-search

A. The search committee's continued responsibilities include:

- 1) Preparing the dominant culture to receive and empower the new executive.



- 2) Continuing as the Pastoral Relations Committee (Refer to Revised GUIDELINES for the Pastoral Relations Committee, revised May 2014) or recommending other candidates in consultation with the new executive.
- 3) Connecting the new executive to peer groups, i.e. fraternities, sororities and business/social groups. This is especially helpful for persons from historically underrepresented groups including women.

B. The governing board responsibilities include:

- 1) Engage a personal coach in consultation with the new executive. A personal coach works with the new executive to set goals and objectives. A personal coach is an accountability partner.
- 2) Engage an organizational mentor in consultation with the new executive, who holds a position within the ministry and possesses formal power and influence. She/he can interpret the culture and help the organization understand and fully utilize the gifts of the new executive. The organizational mentor also helps the new executive to understand the gifts and concerns of the organization. The organizational mentor **should not** supervise the new executive.
- 3) Connect the new executive to peer groups, i.e. fraternities, sororities and business/social groups. This is especially helpful for persons from historically underrepresented groups including women.
- 4) Develop a continuing education plan to help equip the executive for the position.

- 5) Assure regular performance/assessment reviews of the executive, the governing board, and the vision and mission of the ministry.

F. Healthy parting process

1. Healthy parting processes include honest dialogues, exit interviews, and celebrations.
2. In the event that the executive or the governing body discovers that this is a relationship that is not advancing the ministry's vision and mission, the governing body should engage in an exit process that values both the executive and the organization.
3. Many times rumblings are heard far and near when an executive or ministry is about to implode. Discuss in advance how to address such rumblings for the well-being of the executive and ministry/organization.

Recommended Action:

The General Board receives the report from the Cultural Competency Task Force.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0930**

Title: Change in Location of the 2017 General Assembly

Origin: Administrative Committee

Background

On March 26, 2015, Governor Mike Pence signed into law Indiana SB101, known as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. SB101, in combination with Indiana's lack of civil rights protection for some citizens, creates an environment in which attendees of the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) could be denied services based on a business owner's religious beliefs.

The Administrative Committee met via conference call on March 29, 2015, and adopted AC-15-2243 which calls for the 2017 General Assembly to be moved out of Indianapolis. This business item also called for Moderator Glen Miles, in accordance with Paragraph 58 of *The Design* to convene the General Board to ratify the Administrative Committee's action.

Recommended Action

That the General Board ratify the Administrative Committee's decision to move the 2017 General Assembly out of Indianapolis.

Further,

1. The General Board, acting in accordance with Paragraph 55 of *The Design*, authorizes the cancellation of the 2017 General Assembly contracts with the City of Indianapolis and associated hotels;
2. The General Board authorizes the Office of General Minister and President to work to present an alternative host city or cities to the April 2015 General Board meeting;
3. If a new host city cannot be identified by the April 2015 General Board meeting, the General Board authorizes the Administrative Committee to complete the selection process in conjunction with the General Assembly Committee of the General Board, and bring the decision for a new host city to the 2015 General Assembly for adoption.

RESOLUTIONS





GA-1518
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)
BLACK LIVES MATTER: A MOVEMENT FOR ALL

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, prioritizes becoming a pro-reconciling/anti-racist church that recognizes the systemic and symptomatic pathologies present in America since slavery resulting in the fact that Black men are killed by police four times more than any other race, and represent a disproportionate portion of America's prison population by mass incarceration; and

WHEREAS, during the last biennium our nation and church have been reminded of this reality by the police killing of unarmed Black men; Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, Eric Garner in Staten Island, NY, and Tamir Rice in Cleveland, OH, just to name a few; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) convened in Columbus, Ohio, July 18-22, 2015, acknowledges that this issue is not only domestic but has become a global concern which has produced protest marches and demonstrations in Paris, France; London, England; Israel/Palestine; Tokyo, Japan and Toronto, Canada; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 General Assembly, in our quest to embody Christian unity, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, believes that God has called us to be a faithful , growing church that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality, and a passion for justice, (Micah 6:8); and

WHEREAS, the 2015 General Assembly would be obedient to Jesus who said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you;" (John 15: 12) declares the Black Lives Matter is Movement for All, seeks to give value to the lives of black men, while acknowledging and remembering the murders of Officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos in Bronx, New York; the staff members killed in the terrorist attack on the Charles Hebdo Satirical Paper and Jewish Market in Paris, France; the more than two thousand civilians killed in the Boko Haram massacre in Nigeria, Africa; and so many more lives that are threatened by the xenophobic rhetoric, racial and religious profiling of Asians, Hispanics and Middle Easterners;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Columbus, Ohio, July 18-22, 2015, will support Black Lives Matter: A Movement For All, by joining the cause, sharing awareness, supporting and encouraging our congregations, where the opportunity avails, to be safe space and sanctuary for peaceful protesters, participate in and host sacred conversation and dialogue on race relations and inclusion, and be spiritual allies in prayer, for God to enable the pursuit of justice through those who will take a stand and lift their voice for justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly, immutably joined together in the woven chord of humanity, will not ignore this opportunity to embrace the new generation of

peaceful protesters, non-violent demonstrators and young leaders who come from all races creating America's cross cultural movement, who are also victimized yet socially conscious and committed to change, enabling the world becoming a better place for all to live; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly joined to worship at Columbus, Ohio, thank s God for the mission revealed in Christ who said, "The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly." (John 10: 10); will not sit idly by and be silent, but give value and credence to Black Lives Matter: A Movement For All that is alive, active and ongoing for the sanctity of all human life; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will live into our mission imperative to "be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving, and serving from our doorsteps 'to the ends of the earth'".

The National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Supported by:

Centennial Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) St. Louis, Missouri

Rev. Derrick Perkins, Senior Pastor

The National Pastoral Office of Hispanic Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev Dr. Huberto Pimentel, National Pastor

The North American Pacific Asian Disciples of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Rev Dr. Jinsuk Chun, National Pastor

The Disciples Peace Fellowship

Rev. Jim Higginbotham and Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn, Co-Moderators

Quotations taken from the Mission Imperative of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



GA-1519
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)
COMMEMORATING 100 YEARS SINCE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

WHEREAS, Matthew 2:16-18 describes the massacre of all the first born males, ordered by Herod, after the Magi ignored his direction to report to him about the place of Jesus' birth:

*When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated,
and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were
two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.
Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:*

*'A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'*; and

WHEREAS, Rachel's weeping and lamentation was a recognition that her children had perished, and those whom Herod ordered killed would never have the chance to thrive. Even so, Jesus "came that they have life, and have it abundantly," with justice and with peace; and

WHEREAS, history is replete with the tragedy of victimization of innocents by those in power; and

WHEREAS, Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish author who introduced the term "genocide" in his 1944 book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, had in mind the tragedy that befell the Armenians in 1915 and beyond, as well as the Holocaust of Jews in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s; and

WHEREAS, 2015 marks the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) in the Ottoman Empire, during which 1.5 million Armenians, Syrian Orthodox, and other minorities were killed, more than 1 million displaced between 1915 and 1923 following the arrests on April 24, 1915 of Armenian intellectual leaders in Constantinople; and

WHEREAS, missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, an historical component body of Global Ministries, already working primarily among the Armenian community in Anatolia for a century, witnessed, documented, raised funds for relief of those who were suffering and who managed to resettle—many in northern Syria—and advocated for an end to the massacres with local and international officials; and

WHEREAS, Global Ministries continues to maintain close relationships with Armenians ecumenically and globally, most particularly with the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and the Armenian Missionary Association of America—relationships that have had mutual impact among Armenians and among members of our church; and

WHEREAS, surviving Armenians and their descendants who are still impacted by memory and consequences of the events, and many others, continue to seek recognition of the Genocide by

Turkey, the US, and other governments of the world as a form of affirmation, of acknowledgement of truth, and of historical justice, asserting that time alone is not a remedy;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, July 18-22, 2015, mark the occasion of the centennial commemoration of the Armenian Genocide with lament for the lives that were lost, and for the lack of recognition by governments of the world, most notably Turkey and the US, of the historical event of the Genocide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) gives thanks for the faithful witness and presence of the Armenian Christian community, and offers prayers for its continued strength particularly as it is affected by the ongoing crisis in Syria, where many Genocide survivors resettled; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) expresses its abhorrence when peoples and communities are made victims of violence, particularly when based on race, ethnicity, creed, or any other aspect of identity. Taken to the ultimate manifestation, such victimization constitutes genocide, a crime that should be prevented, halted, recognized, and acknowledged, in order to protect the communities, and offer recognition of the injustice it represents.

Division of Overseas Ministries



GA-1520
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)
CONCERNING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

WHEREAS, environmental racism is an affliction where residential, work, recreation, and school communities comprised of predominantly minority and low-income people are intentionally or unintentionally targeted or excluded by any practice or policy that negatively affects air, water, soil, or natural spaces; and

WHEREAS, environmental justice has been researched since the 1980's, and contemporary studies show that it is easy to predict the placement of hazardous waste facilities¹, the creation of food deserts², and the lack of natural space³ by looking at the concentration of minority and low-income areas across the country; and

WHEREAS, the afflicted communities, primarily those of racial minorities, lack local representation or national protection, and are made victims of environmental racism's various forms, including greater probability of exposure to environmental hazards; uneven negative impacts from environmental procedures and policies; targeting and zoning of toxic facilities; segregation of minority workers in hazardous jobs; little access to or insufficient maintenance of natural spaces; and disproportionate access to environmental services;⁴ and

WHEREAS, Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, refers to the entire cosmos as God's sacred creation and calls followers of Christ to care for creation and care for neighbors; and

WHEREAS, Jesus preached compassion to all people, and tasked us, his followers, with ministering to and caring for all persons in all communities (Acts 10:15); and

WHEREAS, General Assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since the 1967 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in St. Louis, MO

¹ Bullard, Robert, Paul Mohai, Robin Saha, and Beverly Wright. "Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty 1987—2007 A Report Prepared for the United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries." http://www.ucc.org/justice/advocacy_resources/pdfs/environmental-justice/toxic-wastes-and-race-at-twenty-1987-2007.pdf

² Bower, Kelly, Roland Thorpe, Charles Rohde, and Darrel Gaskin. "The Intersection of Neighborhood Racial Segregation, Poverty, and Urbanicity and Its Impact on Food Store Availability in the United States." <http://www.michigannutritionnetwork.org/sites/default/files/content/main-content/mnn-events/trainings/2-race-neighborhoods-impact-on-food-choices.pdf>

³ Wolch, Jennifer, Jason Byrne, and Joshua Newell. "Urban Green Space, Public Health, and Environmental Justice: The Challenge of Making Cities 'just Green Enough'." <http://urbansustainability.snre.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Making-cities-just-green-enough.pdf>

⁴ Taylor, Dorceta, "Environmental Racism" <http://www.pollutionissues.com>

have adopted resolutions and reports affirming the responsibility of the followers of Christ to pro-reconciliation/anti-racism; and

WHEREAS, General Assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since the 1971 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Louisville, KY have adopted resolutions and reports affirming the responsibility of the followers of Christ to care for God's creation; and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 2012, a number of ministries (known now as the Justice Table), along with our church-wide pro-reconciliation/anti-racism initiative, agreed that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) should focus collaborative efforts around four major areas including Care for Creation; and

WHEREAS, environmental racism brings together matters that concern the people of God: the stewardship of God's earthly creation, the dignity of the human person, God's preferential option for the poor, the affirmation of community and the desire for the common good, and fairness and equitable treatment for all children of God;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, July 18-22, 2015, invites and encourages all Disciples' congregations, organizations, ministries and institutions to address environmental racism in their communities through research and education,⁵ thoughtful engagement and prayerful action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada are encouraged to support national, state or provincial legislation which prevents the further marginalization of people from their community; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that all congregations, ministries, organizations and institutions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will diligently strive to faithfully care for all of God's creation and work for justice for all of God's people.

Green Chalice, A Partnership Ministry
of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky
and Disciples Home Missions

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) In Kentucky
Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Team

Supported by:
Disciples Justice Action Network

⁵ To research the location of dirty energy and waste facilities in your area, visit the Energy Justice Network at <http://www.energyjustice.net/map>. To connect with your state affiliate, visit the Interfaith Power and Light at <http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/about/state>. Learn more about environmental justice from National Resources Defense Council at http://www.nrdc.org/reference/topics/environ_justice.asp.



Further Background

Environmental racism has been the subject of a growing number of academic studies. In one such study, commissioned by the United Church of Christ in 2007⁶, it is reported that racial disparities in the distribution of hazardous wastes are greater now than ever before. The study's analysis of census data from the year 2000 revealed that most people who live within three kilometers of one of our nation's 413 commercial hazardous waste facilities are identified as racial and ethnic minorities. While studies such as these report that three out of five African Americans and Hispanics and approximately 50 percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans live in communities containing at least one uncontrolled toxic waste site,⁷ the adverse effects of environmental racism are not limited to the placement of these facilities. This affliction is felt in the dearth of affordable grocery stores with healthy foods and fresh produce.⁸ It is felt by children who grow up without access to parks and natural spaces, vital for physical, public,⁹ emotional and spiritual health.¹⁰

While this is a cause for the concern and action of all compassionate citizens, it is a particularly powerful issue for those of the Christian faith. Since the work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1960's, the Christian Church has dedicated itself to addressing racism wherever it exists in our society and our institutions. This is in keeping with our faithful mission, as Jesus taught in the Parable of the Good Samaritan and elsewhere, to care for all our neighbors, regardless of race, income, or life circumstances. It is becoming clear that, in caring for our neighbor, we must repair creation on which we all depend for life.

Given the systemic reality of environmental racism in the United States, taking action to address it will have widespread effects. It will empower disadvantaged people to take back their communities. It will improve physical, emotional and spiritual health and the financial burdens that come with such hardships. It will help keep families in their homes and neighborhoods. Congregations across the United States and Canada can take action by:

- researching the pervasiveness of environmental racism in their area;

⁶ Cf. "Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty 1987—2007 A Report Prepared for the United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries," cited above.

⁷ Checker, Melissa. "Race-ing the Environment." *Polluted Promises Environmental Racism and the Search for Justice in a Southern Town*. New York: New York UP, 2005. 13. Print.

⁸ In addition to previous citations, please see the following for more information: Beaulac, Julie, Elizabeth Kristjansson, and Steven Cummins. "A Systematic Review of Food Deserts, 1966-2007." *Preventing Chronic Disease*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 15 July 2009. Web. 8 Feb. 2015. <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2722409/>>.

⁹ Cf. "Urban Green Space, Public Health, and Environmental Justice: The Challenge of Making Cities 'just Green Enough'," cited above.

¹⁰ Louv, Richard. *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Algonquin Books. 2012. Print.

- joining creation, racial and economic justice movements;
- funding and supporting creation, racial and economic justice work in organizations and academic institutions;
- lobbying state/provincial and federal elected officials for stronger enforcement of environmental standards and petitioning for new legislation designed to address the affliction of affected communities; and
- supporting and voting for candidates sensitive to and supportive of creation, racial, and economic justice.

Other resources include:

United Church of Christ: http://www.ucc.org/environmental-ministries_environmental-racism

Association of American

Geographers: <http://www.geog.umn.edu/faculty/squires/courses/bse3001/PulioEnvironmentalRacismWhitePrivilege.pdf>

Energy Justice Network: <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/>

Environmental Justice and Environmental Racism: An Annotated Bibliography and General Overview, Focusing on U.S. Literature, 1996-

2002. http://www.academia.edu/395112/Environmental_Justice_and_Environmental_Racism_An_Annotated_Bibliography



GA-1521
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)
SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION FROM THE GENERAL BOARD ON GUN VIOLENCE

Two resolutions were submitted on the topic of gun violence. According to 2.5.3 of the Special Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly (rev. 2011) which state: *“The General Board shall submit a substitute Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution to replace multiple resolutions on the same subject;”* a substitute resolution, in this case written by General Board Small Group 4, will be brought to the plenary in place of the two submitted resolutions.

Should the General Assembly vote to not adopt the substitute resolution, the original resolutions will be brought to the Assembly in the order they were received in accordance with 7.5.4 of the Special Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly which states: *“If a substitute business item is replacing multiple business items on the same subject and fails, the originals come before the General Assembly in the order in which they were received by the Office of the General Minister and President.”*

(Sense-of-the-Assembly)
GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA
(Received 12/10/2014)

WHEREAS the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada seeks to follow Jesus' way of peace making while surrounded with violence in our homes, in our schools and churches, and in our towns and cities, making no place safe; and

WHEREAS, a litany of tragedy reverberates in our hearts – the names of schools and communities where gun violence has taken innocent lives in numbers hard to comprehend – Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, Aurora, Tucson, and in less-publicized individual acts of violence; and

WHEREAS, intimidation, distrust and fear across our great diversity (especially between racial and ethnic groups, and those with differing sexual orientations and gender identities) promote guns as an ultimate source of security, while scripture tells us God is our refuge and strength (Psalm 46:1), Jesus commands us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44), and the Church is called to be one body, making no distinction (Galatians 3:28); and

WHEREAS we recognize that a culture of violence, individual exceptionalism and easy access to guns elevate the threat and reality of homicide and suicide, affecting men, women, youth, and families as a health issue; and

WHEREAS we understand that the right to own a gun includes social responsibility and is subject to reasonable constraints; and

WHEREAS Disciples of Christ have not explicitly addressed gun violence in a General Assembly within the past 25 years, while the National Council of Churches, the United Church of Christ, and other communions have called for action to end gun violence:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Columbus, OH, July 18-22, 2015, urge the many expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to prayerfully examine our collective and individual relationships to a pervasive culture of gun violence, and commit to reconciling the cultural divides that perpetuate it through mutual respect and forgiveness; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this General Assembly calls on Disciples to model and teach grace-filled, love-based action and non-violent conflict resolution to each other and to our communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this General Assembly calls on Disciples to collaborate selectively with individuals and groups working to reduce gun violence in America; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that this General Assembly calls on Disciples to promote emergency response plans in the event of an active shooter on our properties, and to assist in response to mass shootings cooperating with local emergency management agencies.



(Sense-of-the-Assembly)
FACING THE DEPTHS OF GUN VIOLENCE
(Received 01/19/2015)

WHEREAS, the United States is suffering from an epidemic of gun violence, with nearly 100,000 people shot and 32,000 dying each year, including more than 17,500 children and teens shot and 2,500 dying;ⁱ and

WHEREAS, among developed countries the US ranks second behind Estonia in per capita homicides; Finland, ranked third, has a rate less than half of that in the US; and the overall rate in other developed countries is less than a quarter of that in the US;ⁱⁱ and

WHEREAS, a litany of tragedy reverberates in our hearts – the names of schools and communities where gun violence has taken innocent lives in numbers hard to comprehend – Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, Aurora, Tucson – while shootings in lesser numbers barely make the headlines in our violence-numbed culture; and

WHEREAS, there is a clear, racialized difference in the ways white Americans and Americans of color have been granted the right to bear armsⁱⁱⁱ, and communities of color are much more likely to become victims of gun violence^{iv}, often at the hands of law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, current cultural divides – between geographic regions, across political affiliations, and between racial groups – help perpetuate cultural perceptions of distrust and insecurity, in which a need for physical protection is assumed and guns are promoted as a source of security^v; and

WHEREAS, scripture tells us that God is our refuge and strength (Psalm 46:1); and

WHEREAS, Jesus commands us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44); and

WHEREAS, the Church is called to be one body, making no distinction of race, nationality, legal status, or gender (Galatians 3:28); and

WHEREAS, the National Council of Churches^{vi} and other communions have called for action in ending gun violence; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has committed to become a pro-reconciling, anti-racist church;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Columbus, OH, July 18-22, 2015, urge the many manifestations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to prayerfully examine the

pervasiveness of gun violence within our communities; to commit to resisting the cultural perceptions of insecurity that intensify it and to reconciling the divides that perpetuate it; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that congregations within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and all other manifestations, be encouraged to promote dialogue, cooperation, and action that moves toward a reduction of gun violence in our communities and nation, and to consider making clear their commitment by openly declaring their properties gun-free zones, especially where state and local laws do not already do so.

Disciples Peace Fellowship

ⁱ Brady Campaign, www.bradycampaign.org/sites/default/files/Gun-Death-Injury-Stat-Sheet-5-Year-Average-2012-Updates-October-2014.pdf

ⁱⁱ Stray, Jonathan, "Gun Violence in America", *The Atlantic*, www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/02/gun-violence-in-america-the-13-key-questions-with-13-concise-answers/272727/

ⁱⁱⁱ The history of gun control of guns has historically had a racial component. This includes pre Constitutional, pre Civil War, and Jim Crow era laws; actions by unregulated militia in Reconstruction South who, under a number of names, put a priority on seizing guns held by recently free slaves; and a more recent history of open carry demonstrations employed by both Black Panther Party and TEA Party activists to demonstrate their objection to government intrusion into private lives with racially different responses by legislatures, judges, and law enforcement. See Winkler, Adam, *Gun Fight: The Battle over the Right to Bear Arms in America*.

^{iv} Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, with data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>

^v Open carry and concealed carry laws are often introduced, supported, and celebrated by politicians and advocates based on a presumption that guns are important and appropriate as protection against undefined dangers. See for example (www.harryreid.com/ee/index.php/sportsmen/rights and www.sfgate.com/news/article/Guns-will-be-allowed-in-national-parks-3259298.php).

^{vi} <http://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness/2010/gun-violence.php>

**GA-1522****(Sense-of-the-Assembly)****A CALL FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND REUNIFICATION IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA**

WHEREAS, St. Paul assures us “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Eph. 2:14). As Jesus Christ broke down the walls of hostility that divide God’s people, we too are called to seek reconciliation and peace; and

WHEREAS, Koreans attained freedom from Japanese occupation on August 15, 1945, upon Japan’s defeat in World War II, and the Korean peninsula was subsequently divided into North and South at the 38th parallel by U.S. and Soviet troops as a military expediency, which did not lead to a unified peninsula but a war in June 1950; and the Korean War, which claimed 4 million lives and divided 10 million families, ended on July 27, 1953, with the signing of an Armistice Agreement and creation of a demilitarized zone between North and South Korea, and yet after sixty years a formal Peace Treaty has never been reached, leaving the peninsula and its people divided by fear and hostility, and subject to recurring incidents of violence; and

WHEREAS, communities and families separated by the Korean War and subsequent division between the North and South desire reunion and reconciliation before generations pass without ever seeing or knowing the fate of loved ones; and separated families have rarely been able to communicate or visit across the border, but rather have been kept distant, disconnected, and often are used as leverage in political negotiations; and

WHEREAS, 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of Korea’s liberation from Japanese occupation (1910-1945), yet the Korean people are still not free from the occupation of extensive militarization and from Cold War international politics that have been often viewed as antagonistic and intensified in recent years as North Korea has conducted nuclear weapons tests and South Korea has been the apex of a U.S. policy to “pivot” or reposition arms and forces into the Pacific; and

WHEREAS, for more than 60 years the U.S. has led sustained economic sanctions on North Korea, continues to wield wartime operational control of South Korea’s military, and has considered deploying the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile system in the country to intercept missiles from North Korea, China and Russia, further threatening the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia¹; and

¹ Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, the commander of United States Forces Korea (USFK) confirmed the fact that there was consideration to deploy the THAAD system by US military authorities. For further information, cf. a CBS News article on June 3, 2014 at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/u-s-proposes-advanced-missile-defense-system-in-south-korea>; National Council of Churches in Korea issued its public statement to object any attempt to deploy the THAAD in South Korea on September 4th, 2014. (<http://www.kncc.or.kr/>)

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) maintains a close partnership with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), which is lived out through the shared ministry and fellowship of numerous Disciples members and congregations, as well as through the programmatic work of the Council on Christian Unity, the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD), and the Common Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ; and which together with the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK), the Korean Christian Federation of North Korea (KCF), and the World Council of Church 10th Assembly meeting in 2013 in Busan, Korea, have called on the international community to advance a new era of commitment to work for peace and reunification in the Korean peninsula;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Columbus, OH, July 18-22, 2015, faithfully joins our ecumenical partners, especially the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and the National Council of Churches in Korea, (1) in affirming the “Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula” that was adopted by the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches²; (2) in supporting the communique that was issued by the WCC International Consultation on Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula at the Ecumenical Institute in 2014³; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly, recognizing that 2015 is the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Korea from occupation at the end of Second World War, even as the Korean peninsula remains occupied by militarization and nuclear weapons, calls upon the U.S. government and international community (1) to commence a new process of peace-building across the Korean peninsula that includes a commitment by all parties to replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953 with a permanent Peace Treaty, finally bringing an end to the state of war, and (2) to express their commitment to end provocative military exercises on the peninsula, to reduce military expenditures, and to eliminate nuclear weapons on the peninsula, establishing a model for peace and demilitarization in North East Asia; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly calls upon our church to dedicate itself to accompany our Korean partners in their efforts to seek the reconciliation and restoration of families and communities long divided by conflict and hostility, so that social, spiritual and psychological healing can occur between the people of Korea; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the US and Canada continue to support ecumenical engagements toward peace and reconciliation of the Korean Peninsula, including promoting the campaign to finally replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953 with a Peace Treaty and the commitment to recognize and

² cf. WCC Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula, November 8, 2013, (<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/adopted-documents-statements/peace-and-reunification-of-the-korean-peninsula>)

³ cf. WCC Communique, June 19, 2014 (<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/justice-peace-and-reconciliation-on-the-korean-peninsula>)



resource the Sunday before August 15, Korean Independence Day, as the *“Sunday of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula.”*

Council on Christian Unity
North American Pacific/Asian Disciples

GA-1523
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)
BECOMING A PEOPLE OF WELCOME AND SUPPORT TO
PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

WHEREAS, Scripture affirms that all people are created in the image of God and share with all others in the worth that comes from being unique individuals (Genesis 1:26-7); and

WHEREAS, Scripture affirms that as Christians we are many members, but are one body in Christ each with different gifts, called by Jesus to love neighbors as ourselves and called to the ministry of reconciliation and wholeness within the world and within the church (2 Corinthians 5:18); and

WHEREAS, Scripture affirms that as Christians we are called to be compassionate, rejoice in hope, care for the needs of others, weep with those who weep... (Romans 12:9-15); and

WHEREAS, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), 20% of adults experience a mental illness in a given year and 20% of teenagers experience a severe mental illness in the United States,¹ and, according to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, 20% of adults experience a mental illness and 10-20% of teenagers experience a mental illness in Canada²; and

WHEREAS, according to the Canadian Mental Health Association, suicide accounts for 24% of all deaths among 15-24 year olds and is one of the leading causes of death in both men and women from adolescence to middle age in Canada³, and, according to National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), mood disorders are the third most common cause of hospitalization for adults ages 18 to 44, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death. and the second leading cause of death for ages 15 to 24 years in the United States⁴; and

WHEREAS, loved ones of people who have a mental illness are also affected and need support; and

WHEREAS, recovery is not a cure; but “a deeply personal, unique process..., a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life even with limitations caused by the illness and involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one’s life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness⁵”; and

WHEREAS, according to NAMI, recovery is not only possible but probably for people⁶ because, with a combination of pharmacological and psychosocial treatments and support, 70-

¹ <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/any-mental-illness-ami-among-adults.shtml#sthash.LZTrcN2k.dpuf>

² <http://strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca/the-facts/>

³ <http://www.cmha.ca/media/fast-facts-about-mental-illness/#.VMr1LUcgjO4>

⁴ <http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>

⁵ <http://www.mhrecovery.com/definition.htm>

⁶ http://www.nami.org/content/navigationmenu/find_support/consumer_support/recovery.htm



90% of people with a serious mental illness have significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life⁷; and

WHEREAS, people who have a mental illness often do not seek help because they fear the associated stigma,⁸ do not know how to access services and/or can't afford services (especially therapy); and

WHEREAS, a recent study from Baylor University, concluded, "clergy, not mental health professionals, are the most common source of help sought in times of psychological distress⁹"; and

WHEREAS, because church leaders (clergy and lay) often do not know how to be supportive of people affected by mental illness nor do they know how possible recovery is, church leaders need to become more knowledgeable so they can fight stigma, be supportive of recovery, and provide information about mental health, recovery and available resources for treatment;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, July 18-22, 2015, calls upon all expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada to strive to become a people of welcome and support to all God's children despite their mental health status; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, July 18-22, 2015, calls upon the Disciple Home Missions to encourage and help enable the education of church leaders (lay and clergy) by putting on its website and in print information to enable regions and congregational leaders to fight stigma, be supportive of recovery, educate church members about mental health, and provide information on available resources in order that people affected by a mental illness will experience welcome, support and recovery.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona

⁷<http://www2.nami.org/gtsTemplate.cfm?Section=Newsroom&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=31161>

⁸ <http://consumer.healthday.com/mental-health-information-25/anxiety-news-33/the-stigma-associated-with-mental-illness-remains-a-key-barrier-to-health-care-685196.html>

⁹ <http://www.baylor.edu/mediacommunications/news.php?action=story&story=53644>

GA-1524
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)
CALL FOR A CHURCH-WIDE TASK FORCE ON THE
SENSE-OF-THE-ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION PROCESS

WHEREAS, being and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ includes prayerful consideration and faithful action regarding contemporary issues in the light of Scripture, faith, reason, and experience; and

WHEREAS, moral, ethical or religious matters confronting the church, our two nations, and/or the world are important in the life of the church, requiring spiritual discernment and informed engagement; and

WHEREAS, the current Sense of the Assembly Resolution process provides few, if any, resources to congregations and pastors and few opportunities for meaningful dialogue by the majority of those who attend General Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, the exact status and purpose of Sense of the Assembly resolutions are often misunderstood by the media and by our own members to be official doctrine, stances or statements; and

WHEREAS, this misunderstanding can cause unnecessary confusion and dissension among and within our congregations; and

WHEREAS, our church, as it endeavors to be a movement for wholeness in a broken and fragmented world, has an opportunity to model alternative ways of talking about important issues with one another, ways that are inclusive, holistic and theologically grounded; and

WHEREAS congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and a Task Force of the denomination's Administrative Committee have faithfully worked over the past biennium on an alternative approach to how the church might engage in moral, ethical or religious matters confronting the church, our two nations, and/or the world; and

WHEREAS, our ecumenical partners, in addition to a number of our denominational ministries, have expressed concern about the ways in which some of the changes under consideration by this Task Force might negatively impact our ecumenical work, including but not limited to our partnership with the United Church of Christ through our combined Global Ministries; and

WHEREAS, Business Resolution 9522 ("Our Common Social Witness"), adopted by the 1995 General Assembly meeting in Pittsburgh, PA (see attached), affirms social witness as an expression of "the whole church," and locates "the important functions of advocacy, information, and action in matters of peace and justice" in the Office of the General Minister and President, Disciples Home Missions, and the Division of Overseas Ministries;



THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada meeting in Columbus, OH, on July 18 - 22, 2015, reaffirms Business Resolution GA 9522 and its authorization of the use of pastoral judgement by the Division of Overseas Ministries, Disciples Home Missions, and the Office of the General Minister and President in representing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada in matters of justice and witness; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that this same General Assembly calls for the Office of General Minister and President, Disciples Home Missions, Division of Overseas Ministries, to convene a balanced broad-based and inclusive task force that shall include representatives of, but not limited to, these three ministries, the Council on Christian Unity, the General Board, historic justice and peace advocacy groups in the church, the three racial / ethnic ministries, and diverse congregations throughout our two nations for the purpose of bringing to the 2017 General Assembly, meeting in Indianapolis, IN, a jointly sponsored process for discussion of and education about important religious, ethical and social issues.

First Christian Church, Edmond, Oklahoma

Supported By:
Disciples Justice Action Network

ADOPTED

No. 9522**(Operational Business Item)****SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION
OUR COMMON SOCIAL WITNESS**

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

WHEREAS, our Christian living is both personal and social, calling for discipline in our private lives and in our life together; and

WHEREAS, the church has the responsibility to carry on the tradition of the Biblical prophets who denounced sin whether in the religious community or in public life, who called out for justice, and who promised hope on the other side of judgment; and

WHEREAS, we as members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are called upon to speak clearly about God's justice and to live into God's promised hope, and to do this in all of our manifestations: congregational, regional, and general; and

WHEREAS, we have historically understood that the Office of General Minister and President, the Division of Homeland Ministries, and the Division of Overseas Ministries have been the primary voices of the social conscience of the general manifestation of the church regarding advocacy for the oppressed, working for peace and justice at home and around the world, and effectively providing avenues for the witness of the whole church;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), meeting in Pittsburgh October 20-24, 1995, reaffirms the crucial importance of our Christian social witness, and that in concert with the whole church there be lodged in the Office of General Minister and President, the Division of Homeland Ministries, and the Division of Overseas Ministries the important functions of advocacy, information and action in matters of peace and justice, so that prophetic voices of the church might continue to find expression;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of General Minister and President, the Division of Homeland Ministries, and the Division of Overseas Ministries be requested to:

1. Identify staff persons and resources to fulfill this role,
2. Encourage and resource congregations, regions and other general units and institutions of the church to bear prophetic witness,
3. And share in social witness with ecumenical and interfaith partners and people of common concern.



GA-1525
(Item for Reflection and Research)
A CALL TO END SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Proposal for Reflection and Research:

That the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting July 18-22, 2015 in Columbus, Ohio, accept “A Call to End Solitary Confinement” as an item for Reflection and Research during the 2015-2017 biennium. This reflection and research process would be accountable by report to the Administrative Committee, the General Board, and the 2017 General Assembly.

This process would encourage the church to engage in reflection, prayer, education, and possible action around the practice of solitary confinement of incarcerated youth and adults. Disciples’ congregations and prison and jail ministries will serve as venues where discussion, discourse and discernment can occur as we examine and explore the issue of solitary confinement.

Such a process may include:

- 1) The development of a Study Document for use by the entire church to discern a response to solitary confinement of our sisters and brothers who are incarcerated; and
- 2) The exploration of possible actions by congregations and ministries to end prolonged solitary confinement in our criminal justice system.

Background:

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, on any given day, roughly 80,000 incarcerated adults and youth are held in solitary confinement in the United States.² However, this figure likely fails to capture the breadth of the use of prolonged solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails, and does not include those held in solitary confinement in immigrant detention. Given the lack of data made publicly available by state Departments of Correction and the Federal Bureau of Prisons about the use of prolonged isolation, including the total numbers of those held in Administrative Segregation and protective custody, the numbers are likely much higher. For instance, in California, the American Friends Service Committee found in 2008, on any given day, there were more than 14,600 people in solitary confinement units when totals included women and men held in Administrative Segregation and protective custody.³ In addition, whole institutions are locked down for months at a time, in which inmates are confined to their cells for 22 to 23 hours. Most recently, in North Carolina, at the Scotland Correctional Institution, nearly 800 men had been on indefinite lockdown for over eight months.⁴

While in isolation, individuals are locked in a cell for 22 to 24 hours a day with no meaningful human contact—an hour alone in a cage or dog run may be permitted. Prisoners face these conditions for months, years, even decades. Cells are small, often windowless and without access to natural light, typically between 48 and 80 square feet. Access to books, phone calls,

visitation and programs are often severely limited. Food is pushed through a slot in the solid steel door.

Many studies have documented the detrimental psychological and physiological effects of long-term isolation.⁵ According to several state and national studies, at least half of all prison suicides occur in solitary confinement.⁶ Nationally recognized expert Dr. Stuart Grassian documented that nearly a third of the prisoners he evaluated experienced perceptual distortions, in which objects appear to change size or form⁷. This is particularly alarming since this symptom is more commonly associated with neurological illnesses, such as brain tumors, than with primary psychiatric illness.⁸

People of color in the United States face incarceration at profoundly disproportionate rates.⁹ A recent report from The Sentencing Project states that “African-American males are six times more likely to be incarcerated than white males and Hispanic males are 2.5 times more likely.”¹⁰ According to a 2011 survey sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, “nationwide, the residential placement rate for black youth was more than 4.5 times the rate for white youth, and the rate for Hispanic youth was 1.8 times the rate for white youth.”¹¹ Limited data reported on racial ethnic identity and solitary confinement suggests that solitary confinement disproportionately impacts people of color.¹² Data from 2011 from New York suggests “non-white prisoners are substantially overrepresented in the highlighted facilities; statistical testing confirms that the difference is statistically significant.”¹³

In the United States, solitary confinement is used in public and privately contracted local, state, and federal facilities. Regardless of the facilities’ classification, the United States federal government is responsible for ensuring compliance with CAT (Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment) at all facilities in the territory. From 1996 to 2001, sociologists Daniel Mears and William Bales examined the length of time Florida prisoners spent in isolation. Their study found a notably higher rate for supermax placement of people of color.¹⁴ Data from the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision about its use of solitary confinement reveals that African Americans are more likely to receive SHU (special housing unit) sentences, and to receive longer SHU sentences, as compared to individuals of other racial and ethnic groups. For example, in June 2011, African Americans accounted for approximately 62% of the prisoners held at Upstate and Southport correctional facilities, where inmates with the longest SHU sentences are generally incarcerated. In contrast, approximately 49% of the general prison population is African American.¹⁵

State departments of correction utilize “Security Threat Group” and gang validation processes that drive dramatically disproportionate placement of prisoners of color into supermax units, calling into question the legitimacy of these policies. Inherent racial bias in security classification is a significant driver in the disproportionate placement of prisoners of color in solitary confinement. In 2012, the American Friends Service Committee found that two supermax facilities for men in Arizona, SMU I and Browning Unit, had a disproportionate prevalence of people of color in solitary confinement most pronounced for Latino and Native



American prisoners. 51% of the supermax prisoners were Latino compared with 41% of the general prison population in Arizona.¹⁶

In some supermax units these percentages were especially high. Excluding the death row population from the Browning Unit population (decided judicially and not by the discretion of the ADC), the Latino population jumped to over 59%.¹⁷ In stark contrast, the white male prisoner population in supermax facilities constituted only 25%, and in the general prison population, it was 39%.¹⁸

Because youth are still developing mentally and physically, traumatic experiences like solitary confinement can exacerbate, or create for the first time, short and long-term mental health problems and severely heighten risk of suicide.¹⁹ Though several states have issued an outright ban on the punitive solitary confinement of youth, including Alaska, Connecticut, Maine, Oklahoma and West Virginia, the placement of youth in solitary confinement is not subject to a prohibition in most states and the federal system, and the practice persists widely. Federal and state legislation to address the practice has been introduced in recent years, indicating widespread national concern to see this practice brought to an end.

There are realistic and reasonable alternatives to prolonged solitary confinement. Shifting from a punitive approach to one that prioritizes restorative and rehabilitative ends is critical to ending the widespread use of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, jails and detention centers. A matrix of punishment without access to meaningful social interaction, job training, and education must be replaced by opportunity for access to such necessary resources for human flourishing. Alternative strategies for staff training in violence reduction, pro-social behavior, and alternative responses rooted in de-escalation techniques are being adopted by some departments of correction accompanied by reductions in isolation, use of force, and incidence of violence. Rather than placement in solitary confinement, the creation of alternative treatments and community settings for incarcerated people with mental illness are also critical.²⁰

The demonstrated success of ending the use of prolonged solitary confinement is evident among several states that have proven there are safe, humane alternatives.²¹ Mississippi experienced a decline in violence within its prisons after it drastically reduced its use of solitary confinement by 85% in one supermax unit; Mississippi eventually closed the facility altogether.²² Maine and Colorado have made significant reductions in the use of solitary confinement without jeopardizing prison safety.²³ Former Maine Department of Corrections Commissioner Joseph Ponte explained in a 2011 interview about Maine, “Over time, the more data we’re pulling is showing that what we’re doing now [through greatly reducing the use of solitary confinement] is safer than what we were doing before.”²⁴

In the United States, the continued widespread practice of holding prisoners, disproportionately people of color,²⁵ in prolonged solitary confinement in U.S. prisons constitutes torture, in violation of CAT; article 1 prohibits policies and practices that “constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.” Article 2 states that “no exceptional circumstances

whatsoever” may be used to justify the use of torture. Article 4 requires that each State Party “ensure that all acts of torture are offenses under its criminal law” and be “punishable by appropriate penalties which take into account their grave nature,” yet the prevalent use of torture persists in United States prisons with impunity. In May 2006, the UN Committee Against Torture instructed the United States to “review the regimen imposed on detainees in super maximum prisons, in particular, the practice of prolonged isolation.”

In May 2013, a U.S. Government Accountability Office report, “Improvements Needed in Bureau of Prisons’ Monitoring and Evaluation of Impact of Segregated Housing,” found that the United States Federal Bureau of Prisons “has not assessed the impact of segregated housing on institutional safety or the impacts of long-term segregation on inmates,” despite a 17% increase in its use of solitary confinement between 2008 and 2013. The Federal Bureau of Prisons confines about 7% of its 217,000 inmates in segregated housing units for about 23 hours a day.²⁶ According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, on any given day, roughly 80,000 incarcerated adults and youth are held in solitary confinement in the United States.²⁷ This figure likely fails to capture the breadth of the use of prolonged solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails, and does not include those held in solitary confinement in immigrant detention.

For these reasons, we call the Administrative Committee to explore ways for the church to (1) engage in a study about the effects of prolonged solitary confinement upon individuals; (2) explore alternative restorative justice practices which seek rehabilitative outcomes instead of the widespread, punitive use of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, jails and detention centers; (3) educate the church on ways to bring awareness of this human rights concern and avenues for relief in their communities, and (4) explore avenues whereby the Disciples of Christ join its sister faith-based partners in calling for an end to the widespread use of prolonged solitary confinement in the United States.

New Life in Christ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Mission Behind Bars and Beyond
National Benevolent Association



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GA-1526
(Operational, Policy and Organizational)
RESOLUTION TO CELEBRATE AND REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TOWARDS THE
VISION OF PLANTING 1,000 NEW CONGREGATIONS BY 2020

WHEREAS, God has called Disciples to start 1,000 Disciples congregations in 1,000 different ways by the year 2020; and

WHEREAS, since 2001, courageous Disciples leaders are answering this call by planting more than 850 new churches in North America, congregations that worship in 27 languages, bringing 60,000 new people to Christ; and

WHEREAS, Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation partners with Disciples Regions and Areas to recruit, equip and nurture new church leaders as they guide new congregations into God's mission; and

WHEREAS, it is through this partnership and the mighty courage and commitment of new church planters and their families that the new church movement serves as a primary source of growth in the denomination and as a major contributor to the racial/ethnic diversity of our congregations; and

WHEREAS, to those who believe the new church movement is waning, Hope Partnership offers the following:

[video – edited Pentecost Offering video, without reference to the offering]

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting July 18-22, 2015 in Columbus, Ohio, will encourage Disciples congregations, Regions, Areas and the wider Church to recommit to the critical mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to start new congregations through our financial support, church-initiated projects, the recruitment and training of gifted planters and with prayerful support for the courageous leaders who plant vital new faith communities.

Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation



Historical Rationale for New Church Resolutions in the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

- There is a recorded tradition of New Church Resolutions proposed and approved from at least as far back as 1978. (see attached copy of Resolution No. 69)
- Anecdotal evidence also indicates that New Church Resolutions may go back as far as 1968.
- Since 2001, New Church Ministry (now Hope Partnership) has submitted to every General Assembly a New Church Resolution that encourages the establishment of new churches, along with a list of new churches formed since the last General Assembly.
- Many Regional assemblies also approve a New Church Resolution celebrating new churches started since their last Regional assembly.
- All Regional Ministers approve the list of new churches that accompany the resolution put before the General Assembly.
- The New Church Resolution is in keeping with the 2020 vision.
- Our New Church Planters deserve this kind of recognition of their sacrifice and hard work.
- The developing of new congregations is an important expression of evangelism by the General Assembly, and that this resolution requires participants to recommit themselves to the task of starting churches.

No. 69

CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CONGREGATIONS

APPROVED by the General Assembly

Background Information:

Biblically and theologically speaking the community of Christians called congregation or church is truest to its nature when it is interracial and intercultural. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is committed to encouraging the development of these kinds of congregations.

Reports from congregations indicate slow growth in the integration of congregations. One very practical aspect in the current scene is that congregations tend to reflect the racial and cultural characteristics of the surrounding community. The life style developed by the congregation tends to appeal to certain individuals resident nearby as well as others within a reasonable commuting distance. It is equally beside the point to refuse to consider new congregational establishment in certain areas simply because the area residents are of one predominant race or culture. The unchurched in those areas need church relatedness just as badly as any other persons.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—like most mainline Protestant bodies—has yet to mount an effective evangelistic thrust toward the masses of Blacks in the urbanized areas. The main all-Black Protestant bodies have proven that the most effective evangelistic efforts among Black people have been through Black leadership. This is also true within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This usually means the development of a predominantly Black congregation. While the resolution is concerned with the overall need for establishment of new congregations, Hispanic, Anglo, as well as Black, this exhibit would point out, specifically the need for new congregations among, with and for Blacks.

WHEREAS, it is a matter of historic record that the establishment of new congregations is a primary cause of growth in the life of church; and

WHEREAS, over the past fifteen years the record of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada in the establishment of new congregations, especially in the establishment of Black or Hispanic congregations, has been inadequate; and

WHEREAS, even in those metropolitan areas where there is a high concentration of Blacks, there have been only eight Black congregations established since 1955; and

WHEREAS, even in those rural and less populated areas where many Blacks reside, there have been only six new Black congregations established since 1960; and

WHEREAS, over the last (1971-75) Quadrennium the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada has not activated a strategy for the establishment of new congregations with particular attention to Black or Hispanic congregations; and

WHEREAS, the present demographic studies indicate the need for the establishment of new Black, Hispanic and Anglo congregations, in such numbers as to require joint efforts of local, regional and the General Church in research, in site location, and in finance; and

WHEREAS, any joint effort will require financial support of the evangelistic concern reflected in the establishment of new congregations; and

WHEREAS, financial resources from each region are distributed in accordance with agreements reached in the negotiating conferences within each region; and

WHEREAS, regions, the Board of Church Extension, the Division of Homeland Ministries and local communities have responsibility for helping fund new congregations; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of new congregations is the work of the whole Church, regions without immediate opportunity to establish new congregations within their own region could, by agreement, channel funds through general units for such a purpose;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly call upon the regions, the Board of Church Extension, and the Division of Homeland Ministries, to engage in a consultation concerning a strategy, including needed financial support, for establishing new congregations in the United States and Canada, especially among the Blacks and Hispanics; and that the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) be asked to convene the first meeting of the consultation letting units involved pay their own expenses to the consultation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a report of the actions and progress in the development and efforts at carrying out of the strategy shall be reported at the 1976 meeting of the General Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in the negotiating conferences in the years 1977, 1979, 1981 that the establishment of new congregations shall have clear and definite consideration.

**GA-1527****(Operational, Policy and Organizational)****REQUEST TO THE GENERAL BOARD TO LAUNCH A NEW SPECIAL OFFERING DESIGNATED AS:
SACRED HOOP SPECIAL OFFERING**

WHEREAS, the historical institutionalized mistreatment of American Indians of North America combined with the continuing prevalence and escalation of enculturated racism against American Indians has resulted in a perpetual state of hopelessness and despondence among Native Americans in all aspects of contemporary life, from the reservation to the inner cityⁱ; and

WHEREAS, research facilitated by the American Psychiatric Association clearly reflects that 1) “more than twice as many AI/ANs (American Indians/Alaska Natives) live in poverty than the total US population”, 2) AI/ANs have a significantly lower life expectancy than the U.S. average, 3) “infant mortality is higher than the U.S. population,” 4) have a significantly higher risk of being victims of violent crime, 5) have a significantly higher death rate from disease, and 6) death from alcohol-related causes is 6 (six) times higher than the U.S. national averageⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that during the period of 2005-2009 (latest available statistical data) “the highest suicide rates were among American Indians/Alaska Native males,” and that among all female race/ethnicity (including Non-Hispanic White females) American Indian/Alaska Natives had the highest suicide rate, and total suicide rates for AI/ANs, both male and female respectively, were higher than the suicides among the entire U.S. White populationⁱⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS, the CDC also reports that among teenagers during the 2005-2009 reporting period (latest available statistical data) the rate of suicides for American Indian/Alaska Native teens was three times higher than the national average^{iv}; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church Disciples of Christ denomination as a whole has historically made little missional effort towards sharing the living message of hope in Christ with the American Indian/Alaska Native peoples of North America^v; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church Disciples of Christ now has the promising opportunity to build a long-term, sustainable, and culturally competent missional ministry bridge across the chasm between the denomination and the American Indian/Alaska Native peoples that will endure for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, the Sacred Hoop Native American Ministry (Disciples of Christ) has established, through the cooperation and support of the Christian Church Foundation, Sacred Hoop Native American Ministry Endowment (a permanent fund in which the principle can never be used); and

WHEREAS, Sacred Hoop Native American Ministry is the only remaining Native American Ministry within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination and receives no funding from any Disciples Mission Fund source;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Christian Church Disciples of Christ denomination does hereby create the *Sacred Hoop Special Offering*; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this special offering will be administered annually on the first Sunday of the month of May, during the American Indian time of new life and new beginnings, and that this annual special offering shall begin the first Sunday of May 2016; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the facilitation and administration of this special offering shall be conducted by the Disciples Mission Fund, with the support of the Treasury Services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all proceeds and revenues collected from this special offering shall be deposited in the Sacred Hoop Native American Ministry Endowment administered by the Christian Church Foundation; the interest income therewith to be used by the Sacred Hoop Native American Ministry (Disciples of Christ) to recruit and train culturally competent ministers and to establish and support Native American community-based missional ministries throughout North America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairman of the Governing Council (Board), or other such designated representative of the Governing Council (Board), of the Sacred Hoop Native American Ministry (Disciples of Christ) shall provide a report of the missional ministry to the denomination at each subsequent General Assembly; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Board shall submit this resolution to the General Assembly for affirmation.

Sacred Hoop Native American Ministry (DOC)

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GA-1528
(Operational, Policy and Organizational)
CHANGE IN REGIONAL BOUNDARIES:
GREAT RIVER AND ALABAMA/NORTHWEST FLORIDA

WHEREAS, First Christian Church, Meridian, Mississippi, is geographically closer to congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Alabama / Northwest Florida region; and

WHEREAS, *The Design* states:

22. Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) perform within their established boundaries the function of the church related to their two-fold purpose of mission and nurture:

27. Identifiable geographic, cultural, sociological, and political factors provide boundaries, which the church may use to establish its own regional structures

- (1) by which the church carries out regionally its ministry of mission and nurture;
- (2) in which congregations and ministers find their primary relationships of mutual support and encouragement;
- 3) which provide opportunities for regional fellowship, worship, and assembly for the consideration of matters of mutual concern;
- (4) which help to relate the three expressions of the church - congregational, regional, and general - to one another in the functioning of the whole church; and

WHEREAS, the official board and congregation of First Christian voted to affiliate with the Alabama/Northwest Florida Region; and

WHEREAS, the regions of Great River and Alabama/Northwest Florida have voted in agreement with the congregation to release and accept the congregation; and

WHEREAS, *The Design* also states:

29. In the development of any new regional boundaries, existing regional organizations shall remain intact, subject to modification by mutual consent of the regions involved, in the light of the corporate judgment of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as expressed through the General Assembly. The process of reshaping regional boundaries (even if only one congregation is affected) includes the participation and approval of the parties involved, the Administrative Committee, the General Board, and the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, this request was presented to and affirmed by the Governance Committee of the General Board at its meeting on April 12, 2015;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the regional boundaries of the Great River Region and the Alabama/Northwest Florida Region shift such that Meridian Mississippi, be included in the Alabama/Northwest Florida Region.

The Governance Committee of the General Board in consultation
with First Christian Church, Meridian, Mississippi,
the Great River Region and the Alabama/Northwest Florida Region



GA-1529
(Operational, Policy and Organizational)
CHANGE IN REGIONAL BOUNDARIES:
MID-AMERICA AND GREATER KANSAS CITY

WHEREAS, Cleveland, Missouri and Pleasant Hill, Missouri, relate to Kansas City, Missouri, in terms of culture, commerce, education and recreation; and

WHEREAS, *The Design* states:

22. Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) perform within their established boundaries the function of the church related to their two-fold purpose of mission and nurture:

27. Identifiable geographic, cultural, sociological, and political factors provide boundaries, which the church may use to establish its own regional structures

- (1) by which the church carries out regionally its ministry of mission and nurture;
- (2) in which congregations and ministers find their primary relationships of mutual support and encouragement;
- 3) which provide opportunities for regional fellowship, worship, and assembly for the consideration of matters of mutual concern;
- (4) which help to relate the three expressions of the church - congregational, regional, and general - to one another in the functioning of the whole church; and

WHEREAS, the official boards and congregations of First Christian Church, Cleveland, Missouri and First Christian Church, Pleasant Hill, Missouri have voted to affiliate with the Greater Kansas City Region; and

WHEREAS, the regions of Mid-America and Greater Kansas City have voted in agreement with the congregations to release and accept the congregations; and

WHEREAS, *The Design* also states:

29. In the development of any new regional boundaries, existing regional organizations shall remain intact, subject to modification by mutual consent of the regions involved, in the light of the corporate judgment of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as expressed through the General Assembly. The process of reshaping regional boundaries (even if only one congregation is affected) includes the participation and approval of the parties involved, the Administrative Committee, the General Board, and the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, this request was presented to and affirmed by the Governance Committee of the General Board at its meeting on April 12, 2015;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the regional boundaries of the Greater Kansas City Region and the Mid-America Region shift such that First Christian Church, Cleveland, Missouri and First Christian Church, Pleasant Hill, Missouri, as well as future new congregations in Cass County¹, be included in the Greater Kansas City Region.

The Governance Committee of the General Board in consultation with
First Christian Church, Cleveland, Missouri
First Christian Church, Pleasant Hill, Missouri
the Mid-America Region and the Greater Kansas City Region

¹ First Christian Church, Harrisonville, MO is also located in Cass County. At this time FCC remains with the Mid-America region.



GA-1530
(Operational, Policy and Organizational)
CHANGE IN REGIONAL BOUNDARIES:
KANSAS AND GREATER KANSAS CITY

WHEREAS, Second Christian Church, Atchison, Kansas relates to MOKAN Fellowship of African-American Churches, which is part of the Greater Kansas City Region; and

WHEREAS, the congregation found a greater connection to the region through the MOKAN Fellowship; and

WHEREAS, *The Design* states:

22. Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) perform within their established boundaries the function of the church related to their two-fold purpose of mission and nurture:

27. Identifiable geographic, cultural, sociological, and political factors provide boundaries, which the church may use to establish its own regional structures

- (1) by which the church carries out regionally its ministry of mission and nurture;
- (2) in which congregations and ministers find their primary relationships of mutual support and encouragement;
- 3) which provide opportunities for regional fellowship, worship, and assembly for the consideration of matters of mutual concern;
- (4) which help to relate the three expressions of the church - congregational, regional, and general - to one another in the functioning of the whole church; and

WHEREAS, the official board and congregation of Second Christian Church voted to affiliate with the Greater Kansas City Region; and

WHEREAS, the regions of Kansas and Greater Kansas City have voted in agreement with the congregation to release and accept the congregation; and

WHEREAS, *The Design* also states:

29. In the development of any new regional boundaries, existing regional organizations shall remain intact, subject to modification by mutual consent of the regions involved, in the light of the corporate judgment of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as expressed through the General Assembly. The process of reshaping regional boundaries (even if only one congregation is affected) includes the participation and approval of the parties involved, the Administrative Committee, the General Board, and the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, this request was presented to and affirmed by the Governance Committee of the General Board at its meeting on April 12, 2015;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the regional boundaries of the Christian Church in Kansas and the Greater Kansas City Region shift¹ such that Second Christian Church, Atchison, Kansas be included in the Greater Kansas City Region.

The Governance Committee of the General Board in consultation with
Second Christian Church, Atchison, Kansas
Greater Kansas City Region and the Christian Church in Kansas

¹ First Christian Church, Atchison, KS remains part of the Christian Church in Kansas as would any new church starts in Atchison County.



**GA-1531
REPORT FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL BOARD**

The General Assembly Committee of the General Board has a two-fold responsibility. First – the General Assembly Committee replaced the former Time and Place Committee and thus will be bringing a separate business item to approve the location and date of the 2019 General Assembly.

The second responsibility is to follow up on approved or referred resolutions which contained actionable items from the previous General Assembly and report back to the current General Assembly.

Remainder of report will be completed at the General Board meeting by the General Assembly Committee and presented on Tuesday, April 14, 2015.



GA-1532
(Operational, Policy and Organizational)

REPORT OF THE TIME AND PLACE COMMITTEE

The 2019 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will be held in _____ on _____.

General Board



GA-1533
(Operational Business Item)

REPORT OF THE GENERAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE
For Officers of the General Assembly

For First Vice Moderator



Tom Perring, PhD is Professor of Entomology at the University of California, Riverside (UCR), where he studies and teaches about insects in agriculture. In addition to research and teaching, he has held various leadership positions over his 31-year tenure at UCR. These include Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Associate Vice-Provost of Undergraduate Education, Director of University Honors, and Director of Off-Campus Academic Experiences (including Education Abroad and the Washington DC Internship program). He has worked closely with students in all of these positions in addition to serving as the undergraduate and graduate faculty advisor for the Entomology Department.

Tom is an active member in the Pacific Southwest Region (PSWR), coming to the region via a winding path of spiritual, educational, and musical growth. He was raised in the Catholic Church in Enid Oklahoma, where his love of singing became a driving force for learning to play the guitar. He worshipped at various churches during his undergraduate years at Oklahoma State University, and graduate school in Lubbock Texas. He headed to Lincoln, Nebraska for his Ph.D., and became a member of the Lincoln United Methodist Church where he was called into youth ministry, particularly song leadership. In 1983 he moved to California to take a faculty position at UCR. He joined the First Christian Church Orange (FCCO), where he met and married Cathy McDaneld, a life-long member. Tom and Cathy, who have been married for 28 years, are still active in the life of FCCO, serving over the years as Vice Moderators, Chairs of the Board of Elders, and as members of the Diaconate. Their children Kimberly and Mark, and their spouses live nearby in LA and Santa Ana and they maintain close ties to FCCO as well.

Since moving to California, Tom has participated in numerous youth and adult spiritual events. He has directed and counseled numerous summer camps for high school students, led music at youth, women's and men's weekend retreats, and coordinated and led music at regional assemblies. He has participated in the Chapman University Disciples on Campus retreats and been involved in the music program at the annual Founder's Day celebration. He loves playing and singing songs with important messages, but his real passion is to get others to sing along, since "there is nothing better than good harmony." In addition, Tom has held several leadership positions in the PSWR, serving on the Camp and Conference Committee, and as the chair of the Outdoor Ministry Committee. Perhaps his most cherished position is being elected as an "Honorary Disciple Woman," by the women of the PSWR.

For Second Vice Moderator

Mary Lou Kegler resides in Kansas City Missouri, and is a member of Swope Parkway United Christian Church in Kansas City. She retired several years ago as a manager from the Department of Health and Human Services. Mary Lou has held several leadership positions in the church, Evangelism Committee, Elder Board, Disciples Women Chair, and sings in the choir.

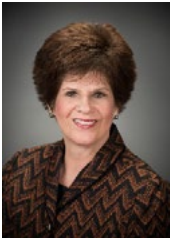
A breast cancer over comer, she loves to speak publically about her “mountain top experience.” She insists -- “Having a very positive attitude saved me, my faith sustained me, and positive influences in my life keeps me.” Her passion is advocating for those that cannot advocate for themselves.

An ordained minister, she currently serves on the Ordination & Standing Committee of the Greater Kansas City Region. She also serves on the Black Disciples Endowment Fund, National Benevolent Association boards, and was recently asked to serve on the Disciples of Christ Historical Society board, as an Administrative Committee Representative. She has previously served on the board of the Disciples Home Missions. During her time on the Disciples Home Mission’s Board, she served as its chair. She received her training at Central Baptist School of Theology in Kansas City.

She is the proud mother of two adult children, three grandchildren and one grand dog. She loves to dance and enjoys discussing current events.



For Moderator-Elect



Susan Morris is a proud fourth generation member whose father was the Reverend Donald Hogan. Hogan served pastorates in Butler, Pennsylvania, Abingdon, Illinois and Kearney, Nebraska. Morris is active in a three expressions of the church.

Susan currently is a member of the Mission First taskforce and is a past Board member and Chairman of the Pension Fund, overseeing retirement and investment funds for clergy and lay personnel. Morris also served as a member of the Board of Trustees for Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as well as a Board member for Church Extension, the planning and financial unit of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Locally, she is a past Moderator of the First Christian Church, Omaha, Nebraska congregation, where she has held numerous other leadership positions.

Susan, President of Heritage Services, has been involved with numerous capital campaigns, totaling over \$550 million, including the \$107 million capital campaign to build the Holland Performing Arts Center in Omaha, Nebraska. In addition, she led the campaign for the TD Ameritrade Stadium home of College World Series as well as funds to support Joslyn Art Museum and the Durham Museum.

Morris also implemented new educational programs, unique to the fund-raising community, providing training to over one hundred fund raising professionals, as well as assisting Boards of Directors to recognize and appreciate the challenges of not-for-profit leadership. She has consistently validated the need for cooperation among not-for-profits demonstrated by a work philosophy of counseling and guiding many diverse organizations, locally and nationally.

Prior to coming to Heritage Services, Morris was the Foundation Manager for Clarkson Foundation and Director of Development for Children's Hospital Foundation and College of Saint Mary. She is a graduate of Wayne State College, with a degree in Music Education.

For membership on the General Board**July 2015 to July 2019**

(Nominated from the General Nominating Committee)

Jackie Bunch (AA, L, F 60+) Ohio
 Janetta Cottner (AA, C, F, 60+) Michigan
 Alison Enari (API, C, F, 30-39) Indiana
 Sarah Himaya (API, L, F, 18-22) Canada
 Angela Kaufman (W, C, F 40-49) Southwest
 Fernando Morales (H, C, M 50-59) Florida
 Bernice Riveria-Martinez (H, L, F 50-59) Oregon
 Lori Tapia (H, C, F 30-39) Arizona

Of the persons being nominated:

4 laywomen
 3 are clergywomen
 1 clergyman
 7 are racial ethnic persons
 (2 African American, 3 Hispanic, 2 Asians/Pacific Islander,)
 1 is 22 or younger

The Continuing Class of 2017:

3 laywomen
 1 layman
 3 are clergywomen
 2 clergyman
 5 are racial ethnic persons
 (2 African American, 1 Hispanic, 2 Asians,)
 3 are 22 or younger

NEW MEMBERS FOR THE GENERAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Nominated from the Administrative Committee of the General Board

For election through the 2017 General Assembly

Kyung Min Daniel Lee (NCAL/N) A, C, M 50-59
 Vera Burton (OH) B, L, F 60+
 Cheryl Jackson (IL/WI) B, L, F 40-49
 Danny Gulden (GA) W, C, M 40-49
 Andrea Brownlee (UMW) W, C, F, 30-39

Of the five-person class of 2019:

2 laywomen
 2 clergyman
 1 clergywomen
 3 are racial ethnic persons (2 African American, 1 Asian/Pacific Islander)



Continuing members of the General Nominating Committee through the 2015 General Assembly include:

Kelli Driscoll (OK) W, C, F, 30-39
 Xose Escamilla (PSW) H, C, M 30-39
 Sylvia Tiznado (AZ) H, C, F, 40-49
 James Campbell (CAP) B, L, M 50-59
 Nathan Higginbotham (CCSW) W, L, M 70-79

Of the five-person class of 2017:

2 laymen
 1 clergyman
 2 are clergywomen
 3 are racial ethnic persons (1 African American, 2 Hispanics)

In keeping with *The Design* of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the members of the Corporation of the Division of Disciples Home Missions and the Corporation of the Division of Overseas Ministries were elected by the General Board at its April 2015 meeting. They are reported here to comply with the Bylaws of the two divisions:

DISCIPLES HOME MISSIONS

The General Board **elected** the following persons

Katherine Raley	Central Rocky		
Charles "Chuck"	Mountain	Caucasian	2021
Tooley"	Montana	Caucasian	2021
Tom Cooley	Southwest	Caucasian	2021
Sandy Messik	Northwest	Caucasian	2021
Juan Rodriquez	Florida	Hispanic	2021

Continuing Class

Rhonda Cole	South Carolina	African American	2019
Mayon Marcelino	Canada	Asian American	2019
Jeremy Skaggs	Oklahoma	Caucasian	2019
Xochitl Alvizo	Northeastern	Hispanic	2019
Candyce Black	South Carolina	African American	2019
Donna Davis	Great River	Caucasian	2017
Valerie Melvin	North Carolina	African American	2017
Dale Richmond	Kansas	Caucasian	2017
Derrick Perkins	Mid-America	African American	2017
Reuben Sancken	Indiana	Caucasian	2017

DIVISION OF OVERSEAS MINISTRIES

The General Board **elected** the following persons

Phyllis Ann Hallman	Arizona	Caucasian	2018
John R. Kleinschmidt, III.	Kentucky	Caucasian	2018
Zenobia Mayo	Oklahoma	African American	2018
Marilyn Whittaker	Virginia	African American	2018

Continuing Class

Diana Brown	Oklahoma	Caucasian	2017
Stephanie Buckhannon	Illinois and		
Crowder	Wisconsin	African American	2017
Ismael Sanchez	Northeastern	Hispanic	2017
Ryan Cullumber	Pacific Southwest	Caucasian	2016
Nancy Lear	Kansas City, Greater	Caucasian	2016
Esther Lee	Southwest	Asian American	2016
Donald Sherman	Florida	Caucasian	2016
Cheryl Diane Smith	Michigan	African American	2016
	Alabama-Northwest		
Dale Braxton Sr	Florida	African American	2015
Deborah Swift-DeWitt	Tennessee	African American	2015
Rick Spleth	Indiana	Caucasian	2015



MISSION FIRST!

Executive Summary
MISSION FIRST! PROPOSAL
2015 General Board

- (1) Mission First! is a proposal that will help the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):
- a. experience God's call to mission,
 - b. periodically renew its mission priorities,
 - c. identify key mission directions by which Disciples will be known in coming years
 - d. create more responsive, mission-focused structures of governance in its general life and ministry.

Mission First! proposes:

- a. Listening for God's call at the grass roots through "Mission Gatherings"
- b. Harvesting information from the Mission Gatherings in a Mission Council that will:
 1. lead to mission-focused collaboration between and among general and regional ministries and institutions of higher education
 2. foster accountability to each other and to the wider church
- c. Assigning whole church governance duties to a Governance Board
- d. Continuing to embody our denominational commitments to diversity and inclusion.

Mission First! will free resources for mission and ministry by reducing the cost of our governance and focusing administrative tasks.

- (2) The 2015 General Board is being asked:
- a. To approve the Mission First! concept.
 - b. To approve a pilot of Mission First! in 2015-2017. The model will be tested and evaluated, with a revised model to be presented to the 2017 General Board meeting for its consideration and action.
 - c. To cancel its 2016 meeting in order to provide the necessary funding of the pilot and evaluation process, including the pilot Mission Council.



Report of the Mission Council Task Force - January 2015

MISSION FIRST! A Call to Mission and a Model

Background:

The General Board in April 2014, approved GB 14-0885, directing Moderator, Glen Miles, and General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins, to appoint a task force to facilitate a consultative process “about how we as one church, discern God’s mission for Disciples today and organize to accomplish that mission.” Disciples have long believed that we can do more together than we can apart. Tony Rodriguez, Second Vice- Moderator, served as chair. The names of the Task Force members are attached¹. The task force proposes **Mission First!** as a call to and a model for shared focus in mission.

God’s Call to Mission

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only son...” (John 3:16)

“Mission is a movement from God to the world ... To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people.”²

Mission First! addresses the need to find a shared focus on God’s mission in the world. It seeks to help Disciples identify the next set of mission priorities. It creates a space for strengthening the connections among congregations, regions, general ministries, higher education and key partners in mission locally and globally.

Mission First! also seeks to improve the way we engage in, and hold our Church in all its expressions accountable to God’s mission together.

*In Christ’s name and by his grace
We accept our mission of witness and service to all people.
We rejoice in God, maker of heaven and earth,
and in God’s covenant of love which binds us to God and to one another.”*
Preamble to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

The **Mission First!** proposal seeks to help the Church:

- Claim its roots as a relational and covenantal church among its members, congregations, and ministries;
- Resource, engage and empower congregations for mission;
- Create space for new, shared, and emerging mission-focused partnerships;
- Develop a nimble and responsive governance board for the church; and,

¹ See Appendix 1.

² [David J. Bosch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missio_Dei), *Transforming Mission*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991, 389–390. Via http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missio_Dei

- Establish new partnerships for mission among existing ministries for shared work and ministry.

Addressing the 2014 General Board, Sharon Watkins challenged the Board and our whole church: “The time has come to lighten our load and tighten our focus – on mission! I am inviting our Church, in all its expressions, to join in a Church-wide conversation on God’s mission for Disciples today - and to establish new mechanisms that would hold us accountable to that mission.” As the year 2020 nears, it is time to listen for God’s continuing call through our shared life and to seek together answers to the question: Where is God calling Disciples next in our mission and ministry?

The **Mission First!** model involves four inter-connected elements:

- (a) holding intentional conversations, called **Mission Gatherings**, across the life of the Disciples of Christ to learn from each other how the Church is experiencing and living out God’s mission today and could be living God’s mission in the future;
- (b) establishing a **Mission Council**, to listen, discern, and identify key areas/directions of mission activity for a specified period of time, to focus our common life in mission together as a Church. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will be known by the impact of these key mission directions;
- (c) developing a **plan of implementation** involving congregational, regional and general ministries working in close collaboration and partnership. The implementation will include a strategy for engagement and communication with church-wide membership. Ministries will give leadership to and coordinate the implementation of a particular mission direction; and,
- (d) establishing a new **governance** structure that can convene and act in a timely manner and reflects current best practices in non-profit governance providing oversight and accountability in implementing the mission directions.

The heart of the proposal is that we focus on God’s call to engage in mission, and discover our place as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through that mission, both in the context of the US and Canada and within the global and ecumenical witness of the church today.

This proposal is an affirmation that mission is a gift from God, an invitation to participate in God’s redemptive and restorative work toward wholeness. Thanks be to God, we are called!



A Model for Testing and Evaluation

The following paragraphs describe a model to help Disciples hear God's call to mission in our communities and world and to create strategies for collaborating in mission. The testing, evaluation and revision will take place from 2015 to 2017. A refined model will be presented to the 2017 General Assembly for action.

Four Components of the Model

A. Mission Gatherings

Mission Gatherings will provide an opportunity for our whole church in all our varied communities to share the joys and challenges of being God's people in mission. The focus of Mission Gatherings will be to listen and respond to how God is currently working in the world through the various expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and gather information for identifying common themes that unite the Church in mission.

The Gatherings will be opportunities to make connections, discover synergies, and encourage mission initiatives among those who have come together to share. For example, Mission Gatherings may take place at regional and racial/ethnic assemblies, women's events, the general assembly, constituency gatherings, children and youth camps and conferences, colleges and university settings, as well as specially planned, geographically dispersed mission conversations.

The vision for Mission Gatherings is that input and experience will be offered from congregations, regions, general ministries, higher education and other ministry partners, through small group discussion in formats appropriate to the specific context and culture. Mission Gatherings will engage the church through a consistent set of questions and uniform evaluation tools that help the Mission Council discover common themes and emerging areas for shared ministry.

B. Mission Council³

The goal of the Mission Council is to set before the church a vision for mission large enough to capture the imagination of Disciples and realistic enough to be embraced.

The Council will plan and encourage the Mission Gatherings. Based on the rich learning from the Mission Gatherings, the Mission Council will identify one to four key mission directions for shared ministry.

The Mission Council will facilitate communication, connection, and collaboration among the ministries of the Church and will encourage the ministries of the church to develop implementation strategies for the key mission directions.

³ See Appendix 2 for composition of the Mission Council

C. Implementation Plan

Once the one to four mission directions have been identified by the Mission Council, an implementation plan will be developed for each mission direction by congregational, regional and general ministries working in close collaboration and partnership. The implementation will include a strategy for engagement and communication with church-wide membership, identifying budget resources to carry out the plan, and offering leadership and coordination.

The General Assembly will continue as the widest expression of the Church, gathering biennially for mission resourcing, worship and business. The Mission First! process will influence General Assembly themes, topics and educational resources. In the future, the General Assembly may offer an opportunity to hold a Mission Gathering, providing intentional time for conversation and engagement.

D. Governance Board⁴

Mission First! will establish a new structure, the Governance Board, to assume responsibilities on behalf of the General Assembly. Working in collaboration and cooperation with the Mission Council, the Governance Board will take any required action related to the common mission directions.

As a smaller representative body of the General Assembly, the Governance Board will bring together the governance roles of the current General Board and Administrative Committee in order to carry out the responsibilities and business of the general expression of church and to support Mission First!

Recommendations to the 2015 General Board:

1. Approve Mission First! concept
2. Approve pilot for 2015-2016
3. Cancel 2016 General Board meeting
4. Assign duties to the Administrative Committee for 2016. (Expected duties include: General Nominating Committee report to elect Administrative Committee members and ministry boards, receiving General Ministry and Regional Reports, approval of general ministry documents)
5. Authorize the Moderator, in consultation with the General Minister and President, to appoint a Pilot Implementation Team to help with pilot project management as outlined in the proposal
6. Appoint Mission Council to work in 2016
7. Assign the task of review and evaluation of the 2016 pilot to the Governance Board (aka Administrative Committee) with the expectation that a report and recommendations will be made at the 2017 General Board meeting

⁴ See Appendix 3 for the composition of the Governance Board



- 171 8. Forward a resolution to the General Assembly 2015 which includes the following:
- 172 a) A call to the whole Church to participate in a Mission Gathering during 2016
- 173 b) A report of the General Board actions:
- 174 1. Appointed Mission Council for the pilot
- 175 2. Canceled its meeting in 2016 and assigned its duties to the
- 176 Administrative Committee
- 177 3. By adopting the pilot, has approved the Administrative Committee to be
- 178 the Governance Board for the pilot
- 179 4. The intention is that one or more Key Mission Directions will come to
- 180 the 2017 General Assembly for consideration
- 181 5. After review and evaluation of the pilot, the General Board will make
- 182 appropriate recommendations to the 2017 General Assembly for
- 183 consideration
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Appendices

Appendix 1:

The **Mission Council** will be composed of forty-six (46) members:

- Four (4) General Assembly Moderator Team
- Eighteen (18) congregational representatives elected by the General Assembly including two from the Governance Board, one approved by each of the Racial/Ethnic ministries, and two under the age of 25
- Ten (10) regional representatives, representing regions of varied size and location
- Two (2) representatives from Higher Education (one from Theological Education and one from the Council of Colleges and Universities)
- Eight (8) General Ministry representatives:
 - Six (6) from ministries whose mission can be characterized as programmatic including one from: Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries (DOM), Division of Homeland Ministries (DHM), Council on Christian Unity (CCU), Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM), National Benevolent Association (NBA), and HOPE Partnership for Missional Transformation
 - One (1) from Disciples Women (DW)
 - One (1) from Disciples Men (DM)
- Three (3) representatives from the racial/ethnic ministries: one each from National Convocation (NC), North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD), and the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries (CPOHM)
- The General Minister and President

The Church, through the Office of the General Minister and President, will provide for the expenses of the forty-six (46) members of the Mission Council.

The Mission Council will meet under the Open Meetings Policy of the church. Individuals attending under the Open Meetings Policy will attend at their own expense or the expense of the ministry inviting them to participate.

Appendix 2

The **Governance Board** will consist of a diverse group of persons, broadly representative of the Church, with gifts in administration related to mission implementation.

The Governance Board will be composed of twenty-four (24) members:

- four (4) members of the Moderator Team
- fourteen (14) members at large, serving on rotating four year terms
- two (2) from the college of regional ministers
- two (2) from the general ministry cabinet
- one (1) General Minister and President (non-voting)
- one (1) Parliamentarian (non-voting), appointed by the Moderator



The Church, through the Office of the General Minister and President, will provide for the expenses of the twenty-four (24) members of the Governance Board.

The Governance Board will meet under the Open Meetings Policy of the church.

Appendix 3

Budget Information

Combined 2015 General Board and Administrative Committee - \$80,300.00

Projected Mission Council Costs - 2016

Mission Council	\$26,000.00
Governance Board/Admin Committee	20,000.00
Consultant (Mission Gathering Design)	8,000.00
Pilot Implementation Team	<u>8,000.00</u>
	\$62,000.00

Appendix 4: Mission Council Task Force Members:

1. Antonio Rodriguez (chair) – M, L, H, FLA (50-59)
2. Thaddaeus Allen – M, C, W, WV/PA College Regional Ministers (40-49)
3. Lizzy Beach – F, L, W, PSW (30-39)
4. Rachel Bell – F, L, AA, TN (30-39)
5. Delores Carpenter – F, C, AA, Cap Area (60+)
6. Jinsuk Chun – M, C, A, IN – Cabinet (50-59)
7. Susan Morris – F, L, W, NE – (50-59)
8. Bernice Rivera-Martinez – F, L, H, OR/SI (50-59)
9. Deanna Scobbie – F, L, A, IL/WI (20-29)
10. Mark Surles – M, L, W, PSW (40-49)
11. Robert Welsh – M, C, W, IN – Cabinet (60+)

Glen Miles – Ex Officio – M, C, W, GKC (50-59)

Sharon Watkins – Ex Officio – F, C, W, IN (60+)

Todd Adams (staff) – M, C, W, IN (40-49)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Mission First!

Mission First! is a proposal to:

- (a) help the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) experience God's call to mission,
- (b) periodically renew our common mission priorities,
- (c) coordinate our response to God's call.

What will Mission First! do?

The prayer is that Mission First! will lead Disciples of Christ to experience again God's call to a mission of love (John 3:16). It seeks to help Disciples congregations, regions, general and higher education ministries create shared strategies to fulfill our part in God's wider mission.

What is Mission First! in a nutshell?

Mission Gatherings will help the Church experience God's call to mission.

A Mission Council will harvest information from the Gatherings, identify key mission directions, and help ministries coordinate strategies to fulfill the key mission directions.

A Governance Board will carry out the governance tasks of our common life.

Why now?

The context of our ministry together has changed markedly in the fifteen years since our last major visioning process, 2020 Vision. Changes in the church and in our context for mission call for us to collaborate closely in order to fulfill our part in God's mission of love for the world.

How do congregations participate in the process?

Congregations will have more input than ever through Mission Gatherings. They can also be involved in implementation of the ministry directions, either by developing their own strategies or participating in regional or general ministry initiatives.

Who designs the Mission Gatherings?

A specially called group will design the first Mission Gatherings in consultation with general, regional and congregational leaders.

Will all the Mission Gatherings be the same?

The process for Mission Gatherings will vary depending on context, location, timing, etc. A carefully designed set of questions will be used in all settings to generate usable information for the Mission Council.

Who receives and processes the information from the Gatherings?

The Mission Council is responsible for harvesting information from Mission Gatherings. A process will be developed to help us listen well and identify the key directions that emerge.

**What if my region doesn't have a Mission Gathering – how is my input into the visioning received?**

The Mission Gathering design will include opportunities for all who want to participate. It will pay particular attention to including the input of traditionally underrepresented groups, including youth and global partners.

Why do we need to change the structure?

God's call to mission – and God's call to follow through on that call – need to be heard in a fresh way by Disciples. We need a clearer way to coordinate our response to God's call and to be accountable to one another for fulfilling our part of God's mission.

What are the advantages of new structure?

By distinguishing between the gifts of administration and mission discernment, we can do a better job at both. People will use their spiritual gifts to serve the whole church more effectively.

Will the Mission Council and Governance Board adequately represent our diverse church?

The Mission Council and the Governance Board will both be representative of the racial/ethnic, age, gender, clergy/lay and geographical diversity of the church. In addition, the Mission Gatherings will provide especially wide and diverse input, as they will be held in settings such as regional, racial/ethnic and youth assemblies.

Who chooses the members of the Mission Council and Governing Board?

The General Cabinet will choose general ministry representatives. The College of Regional Ministers will choose regional representatives. The General Nominating Committee (GNC) of the Church, made up of congregational representatives, will nominate at-large representatives who will be approved by the General Assembly. The GNC will ensure that both bodies fulfill our church commitments to diversity and inclusion.

How does the regional church participate in the process?

Regions will help shape Mission Gatherings and be represented in the Mission Council and the Governance Board. They will develop and collaborate in creating strategies to fulfill the mission directions.

How are we going to measure engagement during the Mission First! pilot?

In order to gauge the effectiveness of Mission First! we will catalogue initiatives among the congregational, regional, general and other ministries. We will also collect stories that show congregations and ministries finding new vitality through mission engagement. We will look for Disciples making a visible difference in their communities.

How will we define accountability for the results?

Regional, general and educational ministries, in collaboration with the Mission Council, will develop strategies for fulfilling the mission directions, including easily identified standards to ensure accountability. The Governance Board will be

responsible to help ministries fulfill their own intentions. Congregations will have the opportunity to initiate response and/or to participate with other ministry strategies as they feel called.

What is the ultimate result?

The ultimate result is we are Disciples of Christ fulfilling our calling, as a movement for wholeness, to be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.



Mission First! Small Group Process

Pre-Meeting

1. Receive Report and Proposal from Mission Council Task Force
2. Receive Executive Summary and FAQ

First Session GB – GMP Context setting for meeting includes framing the Mission First! report

Saturday Evening Small Groups – 30-40 minutes

1. Get Acquainted - Prayer
2. Review Purpose of Mission First! discussions: to determine what in the proposal works as is, what questions need to be answered, what needs fixing before it can be adopted

Sunday Morning Small Groups – 60 Minutes

1. Prayer – (5 minutes)
2. Discuss: Having heard about this process and read about it, what are the things that make you say “About time!! Yes!! Ready to do this part!! Let’s go!!” (10 minutes)
3. What about this plan gives you concern, and how could that concern be moved through? (35 minutes)
4. Make assignments to draft wording to improve the proposal (5 minutes)
5. Prayer for continued illumination (5 minutes)

Monday Morning Small Groups

1. Devotion (15 minutes)
2. How would you envision interpreting this new venture to your context in regions, congregations and ministries of the church? (30 minutes)
3. What are your thoughts about the timeline of the pilot? (15 minutes)
4. What specific changes to the report will this small group present to the General Board for vote? (40 minutes)
5. Prayer (5 minutes)

Monday Morning Plenary – Small Groups report changes they will be suggesting. Suggested changes go to Business Committee for consideration and possible amendment of the proposal.

Monday Afternoon Plenary – Business Committee brings revisions to the GB for discussion and vote.

GENERAL MINISTRY REPORTS





GA-1501

**General Assembly
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Including the Office of the
General Minister and President**
Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President
Glen Miles, Moderator

Joan Bell-Haynes; First Vice Moderator; Antonio Rodriguez, Second Vice Moderator
Paul Tche, Moderator-Elect

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada
1099 N. Meridian St., PO Box 1986, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1986
Telephone (317) 635-3100

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***We are Disciples of Christ***, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.  
*As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table*  
*as God has welcomed us.*

**Our Vision** is to be a faithful and growing church that demonstrates  
true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice. *Micah 6:8*

**Our Mission** is to be and share the good news of Jesus Christ,  
witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth. *Acts 2:8*

**Our Imperative** is to strengthen congregations for this mission

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*Called by God's covenant of love, the **Office of the General Minister and President***
(OGMP) convenes the church in mutual accountability for witness and service.

The senior staff of the OGMP, led by Associate General Minister and Vice President, Dr. Todd A. Adams, consists of Sharon Coleman, Assistant Vice President for Operations; John Goebel Assistant Vice President for Finance; Cherilyn Williams, Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communication; Beth Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the General Minister and President. Dr. Timothy James, Associate General Minister and Administrative Secretary to the National Convocation completes the senior staff team. Chris Higgins serves as Director of Digital Media and General Assembly Production. Assisted by dedicated administrative professionals, this team supports the work of the General Assembly (GA), General Board (GB), and Administrative Committee (AC); interprets, promotes, receives and receipts Disciples Mission Fund (DMF); coordinates general church communication; and undergirds the ministry of the General Minister and President (GMP).

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### **Mission First!**

The General Board in April 2014, approved GB 14-0885, directing Moderator, Glen Miles, and General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins, to appoint a task force to facilitate a consultative process "about how we as one church, discern God's mission

for Disciples today and organize to accomplish that mission.” Tony Rodriguez, Second Vice- Moderator, served as chair.

Mission First! addresses the need to find a shared focus on God’s mission in the world. It seeks to help Disciples identify the next set of mission priorities. It creates a space for strengthening the connections among congregations, regions, general ministries, higher education and key partners in mission locally and globally.

Mission First! also seeks to improve the way we engage in, and hold our Church in all its expressions accountable to God’s mission together. The task force proposed Mission First! to the 2015 General Board as a call to and a model for shared focus in mission.

### **General Minister and President**

In a time of renewed energy related to Civil Rights and racial justice, sparked by 2014 events in Ferguson, Missouri, the General Minister and President traveled twice to Ferguson. The General Cabinet of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), met there to share in a day-long conversation and dialogue with local Disciples pastors. The focus was on exploring how the wider church can walk alongside our local churches to respond and offer a meaningful Christian witness in situations such as those experienced in the United States in light of the events in Ferguson and other parts of the country. In keeping with our church’s Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Priority, the Cabinet calls on all Disciples congregations to “seek out willing partners in conversation from communities and churches of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to explore more fully the implications of inequality and racial injustice for our lives as Christians. These sustained conversations must have as their focus the dignity of all persons, and we must commit ourselves to praying together for understanding and healing.”

The General Minister and President counseled with regions, general and other ministries in times of transition, serving on the search committee for Council on Christian Unity, Week of Compassion and National Hispanic Pastor. She worked with Canada, Capital Area, Central Rocky Mountain, Greater Kansas City, Great River Region, Nebraska, Northern California/Nevada, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee regions in their transitions toward interim and settled regional ministers. She officiated at regional covenanting services for new regional ministers in Georgia, Northern California/Nevada, and Oklahoma.

The GMP serves as the Church’s primary ecumenical representative (paragraph 51d, *The Design*). GMP Watkins has served as Vice Chair of the NCC Governing Board in 2014-2015. She also serves on the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), in her role as Program Guidelines Committee Chair of the WCC Central Committee.

The Justice Table (executives of ministries with major justice or advocacy components) continued to meet for coordination of efforts in four areas: hunger and poverty, women



and children, immigration reform, creation care. Related to the latter, the GMP became part of the leadership circle of Blessed Tomorrow, a coalition of diverse American faith leaders committed to “walking more gently on the earth and inspiring others to lead on climate solutions”. She worked with Disciples Home Missions, the Kentucky Region and the Green Chalice ministry to create a plan of action to involve more Disciples congregations in efforts to “connect Christian faith, spiritual practice and creation consciousness in order to demonstrate the fullness of God’s shalom” (Green Chalice mission statement).

As approved by the Administrative Committee, GMP Watkins spent her sabbatical leave in two parts: from July 29 – September 8, 2013, and February 24 - April 6, 2014. She used the time to complete the manuscript for her book *Whole: A Call to Unity in our Fragmented World* published in 2014 by Chalice Press.

### **Communication Ministries**

Since early 2014, Communication Ministries and the Council on Christian Unity have collaborated on the *Identity Initiative* to help members understand more fully the unique set of characteristics that make up the Disciples of Christ ethos. In addition to staff and board members travelling to at least eight regional gatherings, Quadrennial Assembly and two of the three racial/ethnic assemblies, Chalice Press joined the effort to promote an all-church read of Dr. Watkins book *Whole: A Call to Unity in a Fragmented World* published in June. Special four-week study guides were written to supplement the book. Stories and links in *Disciples News Service* (general interest weekly e-mail), *Disciples Together* (bimonthly pastor e-mail) and Facebook and Twitter spread the word about the studies and materials.

Video projects for 2014 included a four-part *Landscape for Mission* study, several greeting videos for the General Minister and in early 2015, a video introduction of Mission First!, a proposed process for identifying the Church’s next mission foci. In addition, an animated video and a live-action video were produced for General Assembly promotion. Other projects included an animated video explaining Disciples Mission Fund and one on how to become a Disciples pastor (in cooperation with General Commission on Ministry).

Also during the spring and summer of 2014 the disciples.org website migrated to a different content management system. The 2015 General Assembly site served as a test/practice case before taking the main site to the new platform.

General Assembly promotion began in summer of 2014 and has continued with special e-mails, a Facebook and Twitter presence and numerous mentions in *Disciples News Service* and *Disciples Together*. There have been save-the-date postcards, posters to select congregations and an ad-financed preview guide to individuals who have attended the last three assemblies. Revenue is anticipated from expanded advertising opportunities in e-mails before and during the General Assembly as well as the post-assembly news product.

The Communicator Forum of the general ministries, moderated by CM staff, has stepped up to assist ministries without a communications professional to help put together their 2015 General Assembly oral reports. Part of the effort includes production of uniform short intro videos that will also be used for the disciples.org website, the youth program at the General Assembly and the HELM seminarian's conference. Continuing activities include weekly production of *Disciples News Service* and a bimonthly collaboration with other general ministries and partners on the *Disciples Together* e-mail; social media posts and monitoring; supporting the communication efforts of ministries, particularly those with smaller staff numbers; maintaining the websites, disciples.org and ga.disciples.org; and assisting the General Minister and others with communication planning.

A new Facebook group was introduced for sharing ideas. Disciples Exchange now has more than 800 members. Topics range from practical "how-to" advice to theological discussions.

### **Finance and Treasury Services**

OGMP finished with an operating loss in 2014 for the first time in 7 years. There were several contributing factors:

- a. DMF decline in operating income;
- b. Expenses related to the move, depreciation etc;
- c. An employee returning to OGMP healthcare that was unbudgeted;
- d. New mortality rates for the post-retirement healthcare liability and electing to book the increased liability in one year, rather than pushing the expense down the line; and
- e. Incurring expenses related to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society (travel, staff, legal etc.)

To help offset the loss and ensure 2015 finishes in the black we are:

- a. Taking a full-time position where the person is retiring and converting it to part-time;
- b. Receiving cost-recovery dollars for the AGMVP's dual role with the Historical Society;
- c. Further cuts were made to employee benefits, saving over \$50,000 on healthcare costs; and;
- d. Recommending a change in auditors for 2015 saving between \$6,000 and \$9,000 per year for the engagement period.

OGMP Treasury Services continues to expand its accounting services. Currently, we have partnerships in providing integrated accounting with: (9) entities of OGMP, (5) ministries: Council on Christian Unity, Christian Church Services, National City Christian Church Foundation, College of Regional Ministers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society



and (11) regions: Illinois-Wisconsin, Indiana, Upper Midwest, Kentucky, Greater Kansas City, Capital Area, Florida, Georgia, Northwest, 6 of 7 entities of Mid-America, Pennsylvania, which started January 1<sup>st</sup>. OGMP TS continues to provide a needed service that is saving financial resources between \$10,000 and \$40,000 per year per entity.



**MINUTES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

**February 7, 2014**

**Amended October 24, 2014**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**Sheraton Indianapolis City  
Centre-Downtown**

**Glen Miles, Moderator  
Paul Tche, Moderator-Elect**

**Joan Bell Haynes  
First Vice Moderator**

**Tony Rodriguez  
Second Vice Moderator**

**In Attendance: Bill Bailey, Sylvia Barr, Jinsuk Chun, Brenda Etheridge, Caroline Hamilton-Arnold, Timothy James, Glen Miles, Fernando Morales, Vy Nguyen, Norman Reed, Rick Reisinger, Edie Rice Sauer, Tony Rodriguez, Eli Rolon, Glen Stewart, Beth Sullivan, Kerry Swindle, Paul Tche, Sharon Watkins, Todd Adams – Staff, Cherilyn Williams – Staff.**

**Not in Attendance: Joan Bell Haynes, Mary Anne Glover**

**Overview**

The Spring Administrative Committee opened with worship and communion. Due to the health concerns of her husband, Rev. Joan Bell Haynes, First Vice Moderator, was unable to attend the meeting. She was greatly missed and prayers for her husband, Oscar Haynes, were lifted.

Moderator Glen Miles welcomed the Committee and gave time to its members to bring the committee up-to-date on themselves as well as express what they were looking forward to and what they were anxious about as they approached the Administrative Committee and General Board meetings.

**Business of the Administrative Committee**

**Agenda**

**VOTED**

to approve the agenda of the meeting as amended, to include discussion of the Mission Council Concept

**Consent Agenda**

The following items were removed from the Consent Agenda and calendared for immediately after the Consent Agenda vote.



**AC-14-2208 Designation of the General Board Offering**  
**AC-14-2213 Election of Administrative Committee**  
**Member to the Hispanic Pastoral**  
**Commission**

**VOTED** to approve the remaining item on the Consent Agenda

**2013 Fall Administrative Committee Minutes**

**AC-14-2208 Designation of the General Board Offering**

**VOTED** to designate the General Board Offering be taken in support of Disciples Mission Fund

**AC-14-2213 Election of Administrative Committee Member to the Hispanic Pastoral Commission**

**VOTED** to elect Dawn Robinette to the Hispanic Pastoral Commission for 2014 – 2015, pending her election to the Administrative Committee on Sunday, February 9, 2014.

**AC-14-2212 Change to the Administrative Committee Standing Rules, Section 9.3.2**

**VOTED** to approve changing Section 9.3.2 of the Standing Rules for the Administrative Committee to be consistent with the bylaws of the Hispanic and Bi-Lingual Fellowship in that two members of the Pastoral Commission are to come from the membership of the Administrative Committee, not the General Board.

**GB-14-1401 General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including the Office of General Minister and President**

**RECEIVED** the report of the General Minister and President. In her verbal report, Sharon highlighted: the transition taking place at Week of Compassion; the General Commission on Ministry report; the first report by Disciples Center for Public Witness and that they have assumed responsibility for the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative from the National Council of Churches; the five-year evaluation of the Center for Faith & Giving will take place in 2015 by the Administrative Committee; the second half of Sharon's sabbatical will include Brite Divinity School's 10-day study trip to Cuba.

## Introduction of the Mission Council Concept

Robert Welsh, president of the Council on Christian Unity joined the Committee for this discussion.

Discussion of the Mission Council Concept as introduced and described by Sharon Watkins and Robert Welsh. Key highlights of discussion:

- General Board would become the Mission Council whose responsibility would be to lead the church through discernment of our mission and the planning to carry it out.
- Administrative Committee would become Administrative Board to handle governance of the church.
- Idea came out of the General Cabinet Retreat – but this is a whole church matter.
- Looking at an aggressive timeline, otherwise we would have a four-year delay until 2017.
- Question of accountability of general church will be addressed as concept goes forward.
- Must make sure that how this would impact the merger agreement is taken into consideration. NCMC needs to become part of the conversation as early as possible in the process.
- Determined that we must reconsider our action from the 2013 Fall Administrative Committee meeting concerning the proposal presented to the Committee by the Council on Christian Unity.

**MOTION**                      **Reconsideration of AC-13-2204: A Proposal Regarding the Council on Christian Unity (CCU), the General Board (GB) and the Office of General Minister and President (OGMP)**

**VOTED**                      to reconsider **AC-13-2204**

**AC-13-2204**                      **A Proposal Regarding the Council on Christian Unity (CCU), the General Board (GB) and the Office of General Minister and President (OGMP)**

**VOTED**                      to postpone this item, pending the outcome of the Mission Council discussions at General Board and beyond

Glen Stewart asked it be noted in the minutes that the Administrative Committee thought the proposal regarding CCU, GB and OGMP was a great idea and still thinks it is a great idea.

**Administrative Committee plenary adjourned into Executive Session to discuss a real estate matter, then adjourned for lunch.**

**AC-14-2207      2013 Unaudited Financial Statement**

RECEIVED    the unaudited financial statement for 2013 was received.

Due to the early date of the 2014 Spring Administrative Committee, it was not practical to complete the audit in less than 30 days from the year-end close. The audit will be completed in the normal fashion and the Audit Committee will meet with our auditors to receive and review the audit. The Audit Committee will forward their review and recommendation to Administrative Committee, at which time a conference call will be scheduled to include a question and answer time and to receive the audit.

**Updates on the Resolution and Cultural Capacity Task Forces**

Both task forces are still in the process of being named. As soon as they have been filled, they will begin their work.

**Review of General Board Agenda**

Sharon Watkins walked through the General Board Agenda with the Administrative Committee.

**AC-14-2206      Accepting the Insurance Board as a Recognized Ministry Partner of the Church**

**VOTED**      to recommend to the General Board to accept the Insurance Board as a Recognized Ministry Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Insurance Board will report to the General Board and General Assembly through Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources, Inc., beginning in 2015.

**2015 General Assembly Update**

Todd Adams reviewed the progress which has been made meeting on the 2015 General Assembly in Columbus Ohio, since the fall Administrative Committee meeting and answered questions from Committee members.

**AC-14-2209      General Assembly Items for Research and Reflection**

**VOTED**      to refer both **GA-1323, Incarceration, Justice and Restoration in the United States** and **GA-1324, Reflection on Christian Theology and Polity, the Christian Doctrine of Discovery and the Indigenous Voice**, to the committee which is developing the Justice educational opportunities for the 2015 General Assembly.

**Role of the Administrative Committee Members at General Board**

Committee members were given an overview of their role at General Board, including their small group leadership during the Identity Initiative discussions on Sunday morning and the discussion on Monday morning regarding the Current and Future Role General Board. Committee members were given time to plan for these leadership roles with their co-leaders.

With no further business before the Administrative Committee, the meeting was adjourned with a word of prayer.



**MINUTES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
October 24-25, 2014  
Disciples of Christ Historical Society  
Nashville, Tennessee**

**Glen Miles, Moderator  
Paul Tche, Moderator-Elect**

**Joan Bell Haynes  
First Vice Moderator**

**Tony Rodriguez  
Second Vice Moderator**

**In Attendance: Bill Bailey, Joan Bell Haynes, Jinsuk Chun, Chris Dorsey, Danny Gulden, Young Lan Kim, Glen Miles, Fernando Morales, Edie Rice Sauer, Dawn Robinette, Tony Rodriguez, Eli Rolon, Glen Stewart, Beth Sullivan, Kerry Swindle, Paul Tche, Sharon Watkins, Todd Adams – Staff, Sharon Coleman – Staff.**

**Not in Attendance: Delores Carpenter, Timothy James, Tanya Tyler**

**Overview**

**Friday, October 24, 2014 - Business of the Administrative Committee**

**Agenda**

**VOTED**

to approve the agenda as amended to include the Report of the Resolution Task Force as an Order of the Day at 2:30 PM CDT on Friday, October 24, 2014 and the Report of the Cultural Competency Committee as an Order of the Day at 10:15 AM CDT on October 25, 2014.

**Consent Agenda**

**VOTED**

to approve the Consent Agenda, which included the following business items:

**2014 Spring Administrative Committee Minutes  
(amended to include names of those present and  
absent)  
AC-14-2219 Establishing the Price for the 2015 Year  
Book & Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of  
Christ)  
AC-14-2221 Audit Engagement  
AC-14-2222 Report on Maintaining 501(c)3 Status with  
the IRS  
AC-14-2210 Cultural Capacity Task Force Members**

**AC-14-2211 Administrative Committee Resolutions Task Force Members****AC-14-2225 Racist Language Audit Task Force Members****Ratification of AC-14-2214 Membership in NVOAD****(Approved by Administrative Committee via conference call on June 9, 2014)****AC-14-2224****Report of the General Assembly Including the Office of General Minister and President****RECEIVED**

the report of General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins. Highlights of the report brought to our attention include: additional streams of income above what is received from DMF; report on Treasury Services now partnering with 18 ministries in addition to OGMP; Communication Ministries work with the Identity Initiative in conjunction with Council on Christian Unity; management of our shared spaces of ministry through Christian Church Services; the reports of the three ministries (Center for Faith and Giving, Reconciliation Ministry and Week of Compassion) who report through OGMP but are not of OGMP.

**MOTION**

**It was moved and seconded that the Administrative Committee adjourn into Executive Session to receive a legal update.**

**VOTED**

to approve the motion to adjourn into Executive Session to receive a legal update.

**The Administrative Committee adjourned into Executive Session at 11:20 AM CDT.**

**The Administrative Committee adjourned from Executive Session at 12:30 PM CDT for lunch.**

**The Administrative Committee reconvened into Executive Session at 1:37 PM CDT to continue their legal update.**

**The Administrative Committee adjourned from Executive Session at 2:09 PM CDT, reconvening into Plenary Session.**

**MOTION**

**It was moved and seconded that the Administrative Committee adjourn into Executive Session to receive AC-14-2220 Housing Allowance Report**

**VOTED**

to approve the motion to adjourn into Executive Session to receive **AC-14-2220 Housing Allowance Report**.

**The Administrative Committee adjourned into Executive Session at 2:11 PM CDT.**

**The Administrative Committee adjourned from Executive Session at 2:15 PM CDT, reconvening into Plenary Session.**

**Order of the Day****AC-14-2234****General Assembly Process for Engagement in Theological Reflection on Ethical, Moral and Justice Issues****RECEIVED**

the report of the Administrative Committee Resolution Task Force as presented by task force chair, Caroline Hamilton-Arnold. Highlights from the Administrative Committee's discussion of the report include:

- Emphasis that we are trying to create a space for conversation which may lead to statements from the church that evolve from a place of respect for all viewpoints.
- Question – do these topics ever go to the General Assembly plenary?
- Question - how does the General Assembly address justice issues that emerge after the deadline?
- Question – if we shift the discussion of justice issues to educational forums at General Assembly, then people have to pick which to attend. How does a person have input on all of the issues in this type of setting?
- If we are trying to control the message, we aren't going to get there. Part of the process is to live in the uncomfortable spaces at times. That's part of living in community.
- Question – who gets to determine what the prophetic edge of the church is?
- Question – will it devalue the point of the General Assembly – to just be part of the conversation? A person can wait for the conversation to come to them.
- Question - does the possibility of multiple Public Witness statements dilute the voice of the church?



The committee was asked to address further questions and comments in writing to Caroline Hamilton-Arnold for the task force's consideration.

**AC-14-2226**

**OGMP Administrative 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 OGMP Administrative budget.

**AC-14-2227**

**Communication Ministries 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Communication Ministries.

**AC-14-2229**

**Promotions 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Promotions.

**AC-14-2228**

**Treasury Services 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Treasury Services.

**AC-14-2230**

**Year Book and Directory 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for the Year Book and Directory.

**AC-14-2231**

**Center for Faith & Giving 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for the Center for Faith & Giving.

**AC-14-2232**

**Week of Compassion 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Week of Compassion.

**AC-14-2233**

**Reconciliation Ministry 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Reconciliation Ministry.

**AC-14-2216**

**Funds Transfer to Special Project Reserves**

**VOTED**

to transfer \$17,500 from the Temporarily Restricted Fund to the Special Project Reserves to cover expenses rising from the Mission Council Task Force and the pro-reconciliation/anti-racism training of three members from the Racist Language Audit Task Force.

**AC-14-2217****Investment Policy Change****VOTED**

to approve the changes to the Investment Policy of the Office of General Minister and President (as grammatically amended) to include provisions for receipt or inheritance of properties which contain active mineral right leases or management.

**AC-14-2215****Changes to the OGMP Employee Handbook****VOTED**

to approve the changes to the OGMP document retention policy and the clarification and expansion of healthcare options for OGMP employees.

The Plenary session concluded with the chair of the Mission Council Task Force, Second Vice Moderator, Tony Rodriguez, asking Committee members to re-read **AC-14-2235 Report of the Mission Council Task Force** in preparation for Saturday's discussion.

**Saturday, October 25, 2014 – Business of the Administrative Committee****AC-14-2237****Naming Three Members of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society Board****VOTED**

to approve a motion made by Sharon Watkins and seconded, to name three members to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society (DCHS) Board who will represent the broader church during this time of transition. The three people proposed are Mary Lou Kegler, Peter Morgan and Edie Rice-Sauer.

This action is in response to a DCHS Board of Directors motion approved during their most recent meeting (October 22-23, 2014) asking the Administrative Committee to name three members to their Board.

**AC-14-2235****Mission First: Mission Council Task Force Report****RECEIVED**

the report of the Mission Council Task Force, presented by Second Vice Moderator, Tony Rodriguez and General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins.

The discussion and questions which ensued from the report focused on:

- The size of the Mission Council (MC) and Administrative Board (AB) – some felt the MC would be too big to function while others were concerned the

smaller size of both the MC and AB would not permit a valid representation of the whole church. For example – in proposed make up of both bodies, youth and young adults are missing

- Would the increased work of the AB increase the number of times it would have to meet in a given year and would the whole process create more work for the Moderator Team, thus making it difficult to attract the people we need in leadership.
- Would need to examine the efficiency of our structure to see if we are able to function within smaller governing bodies.
- How would we hold the congregations accountable to the process and how would they hold the regions and general ministries accountable.

Additional comments, questions and suggestions may be forwarded to Tony Rodriguez

**AC-14-2223**

**Cultural Competency Task Force Status Report**

**RECEIVED**

The report was received by the Administrative Committee.

**AC-14-2218**

**2013 General Assembly Items for Reflection and Research**

**VOTED**

to approve the workshops listed in the report for the 2015 General Assembly as part of the implementation of the two items for reflection and research approved at the 2013 General Assembly in Orlando.

**AC-14-2236**

**2015 General Assembly Report**

**RECEIVED**

This verbal report was received by the Administrative Committee.

**MOTION**

**It was moved and seconded that the Administrative Committee adjourn into Executive Session to continue discussion surrounding a legal update.**

**VOTED**

to approve the motion to adjourn into Executive Session to continue the discussion surrounding a legal update.

**The Administrative Committee adjourned into Executive Session at 10:48 AM CDT.**



**The Administrative Committee adjourned from Executive Session at 11:44 AM CDT, reconvening into Plenary Session.**

**AC-14-2238                      Affirmation of General Minister and President's Actions**

**VOTED**                      to approve a motion made and seconded which affirms the actions of the General Minister and President regarding the Disciples of Christ Historical Society as reported to the Administrative Committee in Executive Session.

**AC-14-2239                      Communications Plan for Disciples of Christ Historical Society Transition**

**VOTED**                      to approve a motion made and seconded which instructs the General Minister and President to convene the church's leadership for input in the development of a communications strategy to keep the entire church informed of the transition process taking place at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

**AC-14-2240                      Affirmation of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society Board of Director Decisions**

**VOTED**                      to approve a motion made and seconded which states that the Administrative Committee of the General Board recognizes, affirms and supports the Board of Directors of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society as they work on behalf of the Historical Society and the wider church to ensure that the important mission of the Historical Society continues.

There being no further business before the Administrative Committee, First Vice Moderator Joan Bell Haynes led the closing communion service and the meeting was adjourned.

**Christian Church Services, Inc.**

PO Box 1986  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-713-2414

Todd A. Adams, Executive Director  
Sharon E. Watkins, President  
Gary Kidwell, Board Chair

Christian Church Services is the umbrella corporation that coordinates the shared services of the Disciples Center. Since the last General Assembly, CCS has overseen the negotiations, build out and relocation of the Disciples Center. The new space provides a modern, efficient and collaborative work environment, while saving the church over \$3MM, when compared to the actual costs of remaining at 130 E. Washington St. The exterior, surrounded by glass, creates a light and open feel. The costs for each ministry will remain fixed over the life of the lease. The new offices include complimentary employee and visitor parking.

CCS is pleased to collaborate with Ambrose Properties and Compass Construction, both of which are minority-owned businesses (MBE). Additionally, Parallel Design group, who oversaw the layout, decoration and furnishings, is a certified women-owned business (WBE).

Christian Church Services currently contracts with the Office of the General Minister and President for Treasury Services and Building Management. The services provided by OGMP continue to save the General Ministries in excess of \$200,000 per year. Gary Kidwell served as board chair for 2013-2014. Rick Reisinger was elected board chair for 2015-2016. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President continues as President.



**Report to the Administrative Committee  
And General Board  
Center for Faith and Giving**

**Administrative Summary**

**Director:** Bruce A. Barkhauer, Minister for Faith and Giving

**Standing Committee:** Dennis Williams (chair), Robin Hedgeman, Erin Wathen, Eric Farris, (vacancy). Sharon Watkins, Gary Kidwell, Ron Degges serve Ex-officio.

**Our Vision:** *To create a culture of generosity across the life of the whole church*

**Our Mission:** *To provide resources that teaches stewardship as a spiritual discipline and whole life response to the generosity of God.*

**A Brief Word from our Director:**

This ministry has been the most exciting venture of my life, and it has without a doubt been the highest fulfillment of my 30 year calling in the service of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is a privilege to engage in this work on a daily basis and a delight to witness others discover the joy that is to be found in practicing generosity

**Our History:**

The Center for Faith and Giving was the final component in the merger of Church Finance Council with the General Assembly – the result of passing Operational Business Item 0734 *Concerning the Reorganization of Governance/Accountability, Church Treasury Service, Stewardship Education, and Promotion* at the Fort Worth General Assembly 2007. Under the provisions of the resolution, Treasury Services, Mission Fund Promotion and Stewardship became a part of the General Assembly and are supervised by the Office of General Minister and President.

At the recommendation of the Administrative Committee, stewardship education was to be housed in a newly created Center for Faith and Giving which would relate to the Church through the Office of General Minister and President. The Standing Committee appointed by the Administrative Committee discerns the mission and program of the Center and recommends the Center's budget to the Administrative Committee.

The Standing Rules have been amended to include two additional representatives, one from the Christian Church Foundation, and one from the Division of Homeland Ministries; each serving ex-officio. Gary Kidwell and Ron Degges currently are serving as the representatives from their respective ministries.

It was determined at the time the Center for Faith and Giving was created that it would be reviewed by the Administrative Committee after the first five years of operation, for the purpose of evaluating the mission, effectiveness, and the continuing need for this work. You are receiving this report as a part of that predetermined process and the criteria developed for this discussion.

### **Our Beginnings:**

This ministry truly was a “start-up” endeavor. From the need to acquire office furniture and stationary, to the staking out of a vision and mission, this work began with a white sheet of paper and world of possibilities. Logo creation, website development, resource gathering, relationship building, and need assessment started immediately when the Director reported for work on February 1, 2010. A five year plan<sup>1</sup> was quickly developed, embraced by the Standing Committee, and endorsed by the Administrative Committee within the first 45 days of the Director’s start date. A structured set of statements about the Center and its identity were included along with well-defined and measurable goals and a time line for assessing progress. This enabled us to move from “endless possibilities” to focus and clarity in the midst of many variables in a short amount of time.

In short, the majority of the goals established by this plan have been met or exceeded since the work of the Center began.

- Established relationships with Regions
- Provided Resources for theological education to seminaries
- Developed stewardship materials for congregational implementation
- Engagement with all of the racial/ethnic constituencies
- Built partnerships within the General Ministries
- Created additional funding sources beyond DMF
- Improved the ability of the whole church to talk about stewardship as a faith discipline and spiritual issue – moving it beyond the realm of simple fundraising
- Utilize existing and establish new ecumenical partnerships around the work of generosity
- Develop a method of critical evaluation of the ministry’s resources and effectiveness
- Grow new leaders for the ministry of stewardship as an additional resource for the whole church
- To be good stewards - faithfully managing the resources entrusted to us

### **--The Next Five Years:**

The Center in the next five years will “build out” from its strengths. A commitment has already been made to resource development during our next biennium. As we begin to look ahead, we envision a shift toward more targeted travel by the Director. By moving from a “shotgun to a laser” approach, we will allow for both time and financial resources to be more deeply invested in the creation of new, web accessible materials. It is important, as a matter of stewardship, to utilize an approach of lower cost/higher value selection of events to which we send the Director in the future.

#### **◇ 2015**

- Freshen the appearance of the website and update static content
- Complete graded camp curriculum



- Complete Academy curriculum – 10 Disciple affiliated members fully certified by year end
- Annual campaign materials tied to RNCL Year B with at least 350 sales. This will include a bonus resource section on electronic giving
- Sponsor GA Resolution/or create a study document to lift up the priority of stewardship and generosity conversation across the whole church
- Develop new video content for the website (30 units to be added by 2018)
- Continue to broaden our diversity. There is a strong personal commitment from the Director and a sense of priority from the Committee to strengthen our partnerships with our racial ethnic ministries.

◇ **2016**

- Five Regions utilizing camp material (in some form)
- 20 additional Academy certified (expanding to include UCC)
- UCC resourcing 4 Regional Educational Events and 1 Combined Disciple/UCC National Event
- Annual campaign materials tied to RNCL Year C with at least 400 sales plus \$2,500 investment from UCC as joint publication. Bonus materials on narrative budgeting
- Increase by 2 the number of Disciple or UCC related seminaries engaged in some form of stewardship and personal financial education. Develop partnership with HELM
- Seek greater participation in biennial events of NAPAD and Obra Hispania.
- Start resource creation for stewardship priority (if passed at 2015 Assembly)
- Build the Stewardship network – hold first event.
- Host 5 regionally accessed webinars on narrative budgeting
- Establish a fund within the Christian Church Foundation for program development for stewardship related ministries. (Funds will be sought from individual donations)
- Continue to resource Regions via Assemblies (as invited and able to meet criteria)
- Continue video development

◇ **2017**

- Annual Stewardship Campaign materials tied to RNCL Year A, done jointly with UCC with at least 450 sales. Bonus materials to include generational giving resource.
- Release first resource packet at 2017 Assembly tied to the 2015 resolution (if passed)
- Continue Academy certify 20 (Disciple/UCC)
- Address funding Issue to extend the viability of CFG through completion of 2019.
- Five additional Regions utilizing Camp Curriculum (in some form)
- Host Stewardship Network event (likely tied to GA)



- Continue video development and initiate translations where appropriate.
- Further develop electronic access to the Director as a congregational consultant
- ◇ **2018**
  - Partner with Academy for Young Preachers to offer category and some meaningful award for stewardship preaching excellence.
  - Develop high school level personal finance materials for distribution.
  - National Event for Stewardship Network partnering with UCC
- ◇ **2019**
  - Adapt to newly identified needs and resource delivery methods.
  - Prepare for review meeting with Administrative Committee in the spring of 2020.

Final report available after April 2014 AC.



**College of Regional Ministers  
Report to the General Board  
April 11-14, 2015**

President, Denny Williams  
President-Elect, Cathy Myers Wirt  
First Vice President, Teresa Dulyea-Parker  
Second Vice President, Sotello Long  
Secretary, Juan Rodriguez

*"The College of Regional Ministers was formed in response to the theological and ecclesiological imperatives attendant to the office of regional minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)."... the office of regional minister is "one of the clearest areas where the ministry of oversight (episcopate) finds expression within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)." – Preamble of the Constitution of the College of Regional Ministers*

*The College of Regional Ministers (CRM)* meets annually for study and discernment to address items of fundamental importance for the church's mission, faith, order and practice. The College also meets for a working meeting on issues that are urgent and important in the life of the church and the world. In 2014 the College met in response to a consensus that journeying together into deeper spiritual and intentional collaborative partnerships provided the most important ways to be effective in our calling, and more supportive of one another as colleagues in strengthening congregations and the whole church.

This has called us to intentional work in three areas.

First, to have the practice of deeper, more intentional spiritual connection as a part of our time. In December 2014, as a part of the Colleges meeting, we included a pilgrimage to Cane Ridge and worship there as a part of our time together. It provided both a spiritual and historical connection to our Disciple calling and ministry.

Second, the college has sought intentional collaboration with General, Higher Education and Constituent partners. This has included encouraging and participating in a Team Leadership Conference with these partners around issues of structure and mission in the whole church, collaborative conversations with Hope Partnership around transformation and meeting and conversations at Lexington Theological Seminary.

The College has also worked with the OGMP in providing consultation and support to regions in pastoral and structural transition. During the past year these have included Oklahoma, Southwest, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Northern California, Central Rocky Mountain and Kansas City Regions.

The College partners closely with the General Commission on Ministry (GCOM), to coordinate the implementation of the Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) approved by the General Assembly in 2009 and to provide needed updates to our system for Search and Call for pastoral leadership.

Finally, The College continues to work towards the mission priorities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

These efforts have included regional and collaborative programs in developing new congregations, providing for vital transformative ministries in our congregations and the work of calling, training and supporting transformative Disciple leaders. Our meetings in 2014 have included developing best practices in these areas for Regional Ministers and Moderators, creating an updated Regional Minister Website and video meetings around important topics, and intentional collaboration around most effective ways to work with congregations and leaders. The College's Anti-Racism team continues to provide for training, awareness, resourcing and witness to anti-racism and reconciliation within the college and in our regions.

We celebrate the calling we have together to give witness to a God who calls us to a common ministry to create wholeness in a fragmented world.

**DISCIPLES CENTER for PUBLIC WITNESS**

Ken Brooker Langston, Executive Director  
Five Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20005  
202-797-0113 - [disciplescenter@verizon.net](mailto:disciplescenter@verizon.net)  
[www.disciplescenter.org](http://www.disciplescenter.org)

**OVERVIEW:** The Disciples Center for Public Witness is doing very well. We continue to consolidate institutionally, support our work financially, and expand programmatically. Our denominational, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships are strong and getting stronger. And our unique partnership ministries are directed by incredible people doing incredible work. In addition, our volunteers continue working hard to increase the public presence and organizational capacity of the Center; and our internship program continues to increase in numbers and financial support.

**BACKGROUND:** The Disciples Center for Public Witness was founded in the Christian Church Capital Area as a ministry for the entire denomination. Our mission is to inform, connect, and empower Disciples and other people of faith for ecumenical and interfaith justice advocacy in the United States and Canada. Through workshops, conferences, internships, internet advocacy, grassroots activism, and meetings with policy makers, the Center promotes more thoughtful, more prayerful, and more effective public policy advocacy among all people of faith, especially the members, activists, and leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Center is now a recognized organization within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through our relationship with the Office of the General Minister and President. And we continue to gain strength in organization and mission from our relationships with various general ministries, regions, congregations, and individual supporters.

Although located primarily at National City Christian Church in the Christian Church Capital Area, the Center also has a presence in New York through its relationship with Park Avenue Christian Church, and in Canada through its relationship with its sister ministry, the Disciples Centre for Public Witness.

**CENTER MINISTRIES AND PROJECTS:** The Disciples Center for Public Witness is actively involved in a number of public policy issues and concerns, giving special attention to those issues and concerns that have been addressed by our church's General Assemblies, but also working alongside our ecumenical and interfaith partners on areas of shared concern.

In 2004, our **Health and Wholeness Ministry** focused mainly on the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid expansion in the states, and continuing access by all women to reproductive health care. Our **Economic Justice Ministry** had as its primary focus public policy that affects families--and especially children--living in poverty. And our **Gender Justice Ministry** focused on equal pay, domestic violence, and reproductive justice. Work also continues in the areas of worker justice, creation care, and religious freedom.

New projects currently being developed are (1) an ecumenical conference on environmental racism; and (2) an interfaith network of religious leaders and grassroots advocates who support public education.

**PARTNERSHIP MINISTRIES:** The Center has three partnership ministries as part of its overall ministry: Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Human Rights Ministries, and the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative. The first two partnership ministries are with Disciples Home Missions and the third partnership ministry is with our ecumenical partners in other mainline denominations, national faith-based organizations, and state and local ecumenical councils.

**Refugee and Immigration Ministries** (RIM) became a partnership ministry when Disciples Home Missions moved this ministry's office from Indianapolis to Washington, DC. Its primary focus in terms of public policy advocacy has been to promote the General Assembly's commitment to just and humane immigration reform. Working with ecumenical and interfaith partners, the Director of RIM has met with government officials, organized prayer vigils, and given leadership to a number of public rallies and peaceful protests. (She has even been arrested a couple of times for civil disobedience as a form of prophetic witness against immigration policies that divide families).

**Human Rights Ministries** (HRM) monitors and works on a number of important issues: torture, capital punishment, gun violence, human trafficking, and the rights of both Native Americans in the United States and the First Nations in Canada. But HRM's main focus has been criminal justice reform: juvenile justice, fairness in sentencing, solitary confinement, mass incarceration, and the rights of returning citizens. On many of these issues, HRM is now working closely with both Reconciliation Ministries and the new prison ministry program of the National Benevolent Association (NBA).

**The Ecumenical Poverty Initiative** (EPI) was originally a program of the National Council of Churches, but when that ecumenical body decided to move away from programmatic work, the Center was approached about our interest in this program, and, because of our desire to see it survive and



thrive, EPI became an ecumenical ministry of the Center. Since that time, EPI has continued its emphasis on ending poverty, especially among our children, and, to help achieve this goal, it continues to bring together partners from diverse Christian denominations, organizations, and ministries.

**INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:** This past summer, the Center had **five interns**. Two interns from Washington College in Chestertown, MD, were part of a program for academic credit in which they studied the role of religion in public life in relation to issues of their choice. (One intern chose public education, and the other one chose the war on terrorism). An intern from St. John's College in Annapolis, MD, worked on religion and environmental racism. And an intern from Connecticut University worked with EPI on faith-based responses to poverty issues. Our fifth intern was a Disciples Peace Intern co sponsored by the Center and Disciples Women. She went to various summer camps for young people to discuss both gender justice and interfaith cooperation. We look forward to continuing this undergraduate internship program next summer.

In addition, thanks to the generosity of the Oreon E. Scott Foundation, a Disciples seminarian will work with the Center as part of our newly founded **Oreon E. Scott Internship in Prophetic Ministry**. The purpose of the internship is to help empower seminarians to (1) relate Christian faith to justice-oriented public policy advocacy and (2) integrate faith-based justice advocacy into the overall vision, mission, and praxis of our church and our churches.

**CONFERENCES:** Our big conference every year is **Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice**, a conference in which nearly 1000 Christians from across the nation gather together to worship, attend workshops, network by issue, denomination and state, and visit their elected representatives. Held on March 21 -24, 2014, in Crystal City, VA, the theme for this conference was *Jesus Weeps: Resisting Violence, Building Peace*. As part of the conference, the Center joined with the United Church of Christ to sponsor a reception followed by a program on "Soul Repair" with Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock.

The planning for the 2015 Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference is already underway. The conference, which will be held on April 17-20, has as its theme, *Breaking the Chains: Mass Incarceration & Systems of Exploitation*. Ford Rowan, our Director of Human Rights Ministries, is part of the main planning group for this conference.

Among other conferences attended by members of the Center Advocacy Team and the Center's partner ministries were the National Convocation,

the Black Ministers Retreat, the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, the Quadrennial Gethering of Disciples Women, Equal Voices, and the Congress on Urban Ministry, this year co-sponsored by SCUPE and Interfaith Worker Justice.

**REMEMBERING THE SAINTS:** On July 31, 2014, Oscar Haynes, a founding member of the Center's Board of Governors, went home to be with his Lord and Savior. Ninety-eight years old at his passing from this world, Oscar was very well-known and very well-liked by persons of all backgrounds and generations throughout our denomination and beyond. We celebrate his incredible life of service to our church, and we rejoice at his presence among all the saints who now dwell more fully in the eternal life of our all-loving God.



**EUROPEAN EVANGELISTIC SOCIETY**  
**PO Box 24560**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana**  
**[www.eesinc.org](http://www.eesinc.org)**  
**317-299-0333**  
**Tony Twist, President**  
**2015 General Board Report**

The European Evangelistic Society (EES) established its Institute for the Study of Christian Origins in Tübingen, Germany in the early 1960s. Its purpose is to encourage and guide research in the earliest church and to focus the application of that research on the church today. Over the years the Institute has gained the respect of the faculty of theology at the University of Tübingen and as a result occupies a place of honor among scholars of the New Testament and early church history around the world.

The mission of EES in its 69 years of history has not changed. It remains: To develop leaders through higher learning to have a global impact by more effectively influencing their churches, cultures, and countries for Christ. This vision reflects the common mission priorities of the Disciples of Christ as a movement for wholeness that welcomes all to the Table and shares the Good News of Jesus Christ from “our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.”

The mission of EES is focused on this concern of leadership development necessary to realize the Four Priorities of the Church as outlined in the 2020 Vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). EES exists to develop international leaders for significant service. This includes leaders from Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.

Through the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins at the University of Tübingen, Germany, EES is actively involved in research supervision and publication. In conjunction with the Protestant faculty, a doctoral colloquium is offered in which international doctoral students have the opportunity for research supervision at a major European University. This mission expresses itself in three primary areas of ministry:

- To develop international leaders through advanced studies
- To assist emerging leaders in researching and publication of relevant national articles, books, and other materials
- To help encourage the establishment and development of churches, colleges, and agencies focused on evangelism and disciple making.

At the present time, the educational ministry at The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins, led by Director Dr. Beth Langstaff, continues to function alongside Eberhard Karls University, in Tübingen, Germany. The Institute has a long and productive relationship with the prestigious and influential University. The influence of this ministry has been felt all over the world, as international students have come to the University for academic purposes and have been a part of the Institute. It pursues basic New



Testament research, offers colloquia through the academic year, and engages in continuing dialogue with professors and students from around the world.

In order to serve more effectively as Bible college professors, presidents, mission directors, and in other high capacity positions, many from these networks will need the type of advanced preparation that EES can provide. The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins is being positioned to help develop dedicated leaders for significant service throughout Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.

On the basis of the respect earned by EES, the Institute has been able recently to sponsor, with the help of Tübingen's New Testament faculty and that of the University of Munich, two symposia with scholars from around the world. These meetings help to fulfill the mission of the EES to stimulate study of early Christianity among scholars so our movement to restore New Testament Christianity can be taken seriously at the highest level. The more recent of these was held September 30-October 1, 2014.

The 2014 symposium focused on the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. The English title is: "Make Disciples of all Nations": the Appeal and Authority of the Christian Faith in Graeco-Roman Times. Under the leadership of Dr. Beth Langstaff, Director of the Institute, Prof. Dr. Loren Stuckenbruck, of the Protestant theological faculty in Munich, and Prof. Dr. Michael Tilly, of the Protestant faculty in Tübingen, twelve outstanding scholars made helpful presentations on various aspects of early Christian evangelism. From the very beginning, the intent was to make the symposium an international gathering. In addition to Tübingen, these scholars came from such diverse places of learning as Dortmund, Wuppertal-Bethel, and Munich in Germany; Pretoria, South Africa; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Heiligenkreuz, Salzburg and Vienna in Austria; and Cluj, Romania.

The presentations (seven in German and five in English) spanned the time from the life and status of Jewish rabbis and their disciples to the missionaries from Syria who first took the gospel to China along the Silk Road starting in the third century. Dr. Peter Penner, from TCMI Institute, on the basis of his expertise as a missiologist, presented a lecture on Luke 24:44-49 to show a missiological hermeneutic used as a foundation for early Christian discipleship. Dr. Li Tang, a woman from China and an alumna of Emmanuel Christian Seminary, presented the results of her research on the earliest Christian mission to China. Dr. Loren Stuckenbruck, whose parents were the first missionaries sent by the EES to Tübingen, showed how some of the vocabulary of early Christian missions was also used in Jewish apocalyptic literature.

This international gathering, focusing on our work of making disciples, served to encourage us all to take seriously this commission of our Lord and to support with prayers and resources those who are engaged in the work around the world. Our hope is that God will use the symposium to stimulate and encourage His servants everywhere. All twelve of the symposium presentations will appear later this year in a book published in Tübingen by Mohr-Siebeck Publishers and thus will be available to all



interested scholars, especially teachers of the New Testament, early church history, and missiology.

Although EES does not work specifically in any one congregation, it seeks to promote the cause of reconciliation throughout the world by developing leaders who will demonstrate our commitment to the idea of a faithful, growing church that exhibits true community, deep Christian spirituality, and a passion for justice. The work of EES in Germany at the University of Tübingen is truly a multi-cultural community. Since 2000, doctoral colloquium presentations have been given by visiting professors and doctoral students from Australia, Canada, Germany, Finland, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Africa, The United Kingdom, and the United States. EES seeks to be an international witness for the Christian gospel in one of the most significant theological settings in the world. In keeping with the original vision of the European Evangelistic Society, the goal is to see churches thriving and flourishing throughout the world by equipping capable leaders to serve.

EES is characterized by a deep and abiding interest in the oneness of the Body of Christ. That interest has not changed with the passing of over sixty-five years of ministry. The European Evangelistic Society is one of the few ministries among Stone-Campbell churches that has historically sought to work among all three streams of the American expression of this ideal. For over half a century, the dream of a united Church, bound by its commitment to the New Testament as the revelation of God about the person of Jesus Christ, has been the unchanging focus of its mission.

## THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

*Paxton Jones, Chairperson*

The General Commission on Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is composed of up to sixteen members appointed by the General Minister & President in consultation with various constituencies across the life of the church. In odd-numbered years, the General Minister and President may present a slate of members to the General Board for confirmation.

In 2014, the following persons served on the General Commission on Ministry: **Howard Bowers**, Office of General Minister & President, administrative staff; **Jinsuk Chun**, Executive Pastor of the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples; **Jorge Cotto**, pastor, Central Christian Church, Coral Gables, FL; **Ron Degges**, DHM President; **Ann Dotson**, Pastor, First Christian Church, Rowlett, TX; **Bill Edwards**, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Ohio; **Jacque Foster**, pastor, Compton Heights Christian Church, St. Louis, MO; **Timothy James**, Associate General Minister & Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation; **Barbara Jones**, Executive Regional Minister, Great River Region; **Paxton Jones**, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Kansas; **Belva Brown Jordan**, Assistant Dean, Claremont School of Theology; **Sandy Messick**, Regional Minister, Northwest Regional Christian Church; **Saundra Michael-Bowers**, Pension Fund Representative; **Holly Miller-Shank**, UCC Representative; **Huberto Pimentel**, National Hispanic Pastor, Central Pastoral Office of Hispanic Ministries; **Rossy Ricart**, laywoman, Iglesia Hermandad Cristiana, Indianapolis; **Glen Stewart**, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Tennessee<sup>2</sup>; and **Sharon Watkins**, General Minister & President, ex-officio. In addition, **Warren Lynn**, Director, Office of Christian Vocation, served on the Search & Call Committee to share information directly related to his work.

GCOM meets twice per year in Indianapolis. During its 2014 meetings on January 13-15 and August 18-20, GCOM addressed the following issues:

- **BEST VENDOR FOR SEARCH & CALL:** Extensive time was spent in the Search & Call Committee discussing whether SURAN is the best vendor for our S&C needs; a detailed list of needed questions/data to collect before making an educated decision was developed and shared with CRM's Tech Committee, which is assisting in this exploration.
- **ABILITY TO POST DISCIPLE CONGREGATIONAL OPENINGS ON THE UCC WEBSITE:** Such postings may be done IF the Regional Minister signs the permission form. Information regarding the process and links have been shared with CRM.
- **COLLABORATION WITH CRM:** GCOM and the College of Regional Ministers addressed together several concerns related to the new clergy and congregational profiles, professional classification codes, a standard length for commissioning clergy, how to best care for general and regional ministers when

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<sup>2</sup> Glen Stewart retired as Tennessee's Regional Minister on December 31, 2014, but remains on GCOM.



concerns are raised about their health/well-being, and notification when a prominent Disciple dies.

- **STANDING FOR CLERGY WHOSE STANDING IS LODGED WITH THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON MINISTRY:** Standing was granted in January to 162 clergy serving in general, senior regional, chaplaincy and missionary situations and in August to 7 clergy newly called to such positions.
- **APPROVED NEW MEMBERS OF RESPONSE TEAM:** A 12-member team was named two years ago to respond to allegations of misconduct by clergy whose Standing resides with GCOM; half of the membership rotates off every two years. Therefore six new members were approved for four year terms, subject to their agreeing to serve.
- **REPOSITORY FOR GCOM DOCUMENTS:** GCOM documents will reside in the Office of the GMP.
- **Completed updates on:**
  - a. GCOM website—accessible thru the general church website at [www.disciples.org](http://www.disciples.org)
  - b. *Ordination Guidelines and Services*
  - c. *Closing a Pastoral Ministry*
  - d. Self-Disclosure Form
  - e. Congregational Profile
  - f. Appeal Process and Misconduct Policies (reviewed annually)

**Future projects:**

- a. review the *Letter of Calling and Agreement*
- b. create video webinar orientation materials regarding S&C for Regional Ministers [CRM has taken the lead on this project]
- c. review of the *Ethical Guidelines for Congregational Conduct* (adopted by General Assembly in 1989)
- d. update the *Guidelines for the Pastoral Relations Committee*
- e. revise the Pension Fund's *When A Minister Dies* brochure for broader use

As always, we welcome your input, comments, questions, ideas, and concerns.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paxton Jones, Chairperson

NATIONAL CITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION

*Richard L. Hamm, Chairperson*

Stephen W. Gentle, Senior Minister

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## **Reconciliation Ministry**

Rev. April G. Johnson, Director

### ***Mission Statement –***

*Reconciliation Ministry advances the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)'s journey toward wholeness by empowering each expression of the Church to implement structural change to address historic fractures caused by racism and the systems that perpetuate it.*

### **Ministry Highlights:**

To the end of addressing our mission and the Church's journey toward wholeness, we share the following ministry highlights from 2014 to date.

#### **Education and Training:**

With almost a full year of the implementation of the revised Executive Search Model which stipulates search committees participate in anti-racism training, Reconciliation has facilitated a 40 % increase of events over the previous year. These opportunities and partnerships have unearthed a new awareness of the applied theology of our training model resulting also in an increase in identified training needs. The ministry has benefitted by increasing both the number and the capacity of trainers in anticipation of a larger demand. We facilitated events in Ontario, Canada; Central Rocky Mountain; and Virginia Regions as well as executive search events for Council on Christian Unity, Kansas City Region and Pension Fund. These are only a few of the opportunities for which Reconciliation and the requesting ministries benefitted. Our greatest benefit has been the introduction of additional adaptable modules to the analysis that allow our facilitators to provide content relevant to the ministry context and need. The evaluations from these events have pushed our model to adapt.

It is the objective of all our training modules to promote leader development and transformation through content that promotes individual and institutional self-examination.

#### **Mission Presence:**

Grants at work – Reconciliation Ministry partnered through our granting program with two programs intended to effect relationship-building and transformation. The grants provided seed money for a program to promote dialogue with SERF and SERF Convencion congregations as well to support service opportunities through Disciples Volunteering and HOPE partnership in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Participants in both programs will develop lifelong relationships that impact our ministry witness and practice.

Task Forces – Reconciliation has served as proctor and staff to the Task Forces on Removal of Racist Language and Cultural Competency to which the Board will receive reports in this meeting. Both task forces offer new guidelines for intentional inclusion of people of color in our ministries and our policies. To that end, we embrace the possibility that as the work and recommendations of these task forces progress we will be positioned to adopt new metrics for measuring the effectiveness of the Anti-Racism mission priority.

Leader Development/Ecumenical Partnerships – Reconciliation Ministry has committed in shared mission with our ecumenical partners to direct our efforts toward education and advocacy about race and criminalization – Mass Incarceration. We hosted and chaired a summit at the ELCA last Spring that was overwhelmingly successful bringing partners, formerly incarcerated and organizing networks to the same agenda. In collaboration with the National Council of Churches we were able to bring our shared influence to adapt the theme of this year's Ecumenical Advocacy Days to "Breaking the Chains: Mass Incarceration and Systems of Exploitation."



Check Point: The Border between Tijuana, Mexico and San Diego, CA  
(Obra Hispana – Action on Advocacy for Just Immigration Reform and Children)





Regional Training Event – Central Rocky Mountain  
(Regional Leader and Team Development/Strategy training.)



Banner Memorial to Michael Brown placed in shrubbery at site of shooting.  
Ferguson, MO (February 2015 Cabinet Meeting Tour of Ferguson)



**THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

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Julia Brown Karimu, Vice President  
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The United Christian Missionary Society continued to furnish financial support for the Division of Homeland Ministries, dba Disciples Home Missions (DHM), and the Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM), by investing and managing its endowment and permanent funds for the benefit of the two Divisions.

During 2013, there were 2 gift annuities released for a total of \$5,905.00 of residual value distributed. There was no life income agreement income to report. When gift annuities or life income agreements are released, the funds are either distributed outright to DHM and DOM or added to the permanent endowments of the Society depending on the beneficiary designation. The Society did not receive any restricted bequests.

The Society continued to be involved with ethical issues which related to its investments and was active with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). ICCR is an ecumenical organization of 17 Protestant denominations and approximately 200 Roman Catholic orders which cooperate concerning ethical and social concerns as expressed by actions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Society, which has eight trustees and four officers, has no active employees. Beginning in 1993, the Society contracted with the Christian Church Foundation, Inc. to perform the treasury services for the Society. The current officers of the Society are as follows: Ronald J. Degges, President; Julia Brown Karimu, Vice President; Kathy Watts, Corporate Secretary, and Lonna Owens, Treasurer. Four trustees are nominated by each of the two Divisions served by the Society. They are elected by the General Board of the church and serve a term of four years. Their responsibilities are to oversee and determine policies concerning the investments of assets owned by the Society. The protection as well as the income realized from these assets is of paramount concern for the trustees. Their invaluable service is recognized and this report is submitted on their behalf.

The Society distributed the following from the investment pool in 2013: DHM - \$624,062; DOM - \$848,705; and other entities - \$49,326.

The Society distributed the following from the investment pool in 2014: DHM - \$643,408; DOM - \$874,554; other entities - \$51,232.



**WEEK OF COMPASSION COMMITTEE**  
**Melinda Wood, Chair**  
**Vy Nguyen, Executive Director**  
**Mary Jacobs, Interim Resource Development**  
**Dawn Barnes, Transitional Program Associate**  
**P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206**  
**317-713-2442**  
**[www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org)**

Week of Compassion—the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—continues to serve and respond faithfully to human need and suffering in North America and around the world.

By offering hope, compassion, and healing to individuals and communities in need on behalf of the entire church, Week of Compassion continues to be the expression of wholeness in a fragmented world.

Week of Compassion has always been committed to working with and within communities even years after disasters occur, and that still holds true to this day. Week of Compassion continues to participate in long-term recovery efforts in Haiti to rebuild communities impacted by the 2010 earthquake. Our partner Church World Service is creating infrastructures for child protection and food security, and we are creating micro-credit and seed programs with our partner Agriculture Missions. To better support mothers and their children, we are also providing safe Motherhood kits that are used to reduce the risk of infection during childbirth through IMA World Health. With our partner Prosperity Catalyst, we are developing the space and resources for entrepreneurship training for women to rebuild their lives.

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria, Iraq, and surrounding countries continue to call Disciples to respond to the millions who are mired in violent conflict and who are now displaced within the region. At the end of 2014, there were more than 52 million refugees in the world—the highest since World War II—and almost half were children. For the first time in three decades, Afghanistan was no longer the country with the most refugees: Syria has now surpassed Afghanistan with nearly 3 million refugees. Week of Compassion has, through many partners, been actively responding to the needs of Syrian refugees throughout the region, as well as to the needs of the displaced religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq where internally displaced Iraqis increased from 1.8 million to 2.1 million by the end of 2014. Thanks to the work of many of our partners, Week of Compassion has been able to provide relief to these refugees not only by providing shelter, food, water, non-food items, and hygiene kits, but also by carrying out protection initiatives for women and children.

In Western Africa, the widespread outbreak of Ebola, one of the worst in recent history, destroyed many lives and significantly impacted many local economies within the region. Through our partnership with Global Ministries, Week of Compassion supported the work of many Disciples communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With

our partner IMA World Health, Week of Compassion was able to provide protective medical equipment for doctors to treat patients in Liberia and the DRC.

In Nigeria, many individuals, especially girls, have been kidnapped, communities have been destroyed, and towns and communities have been ravaged by Boko Haram. Through our ecumenical partner, the Church of the Brethren, Week of Compassion has been able to respond rapidly and provide relief, food, water, and shelter to many communities affected by this conflict.

Week of Compassion continues to work closely with our regional ministries to coordinate domestic emergency response by providing solidarity grants for congregations and communities who sustained damage and loss due to natural disasters. Week of Compassion is partnering with Disciple Home Mission's Disciples Volunteering, United Church of Christ's Disaster Ministries, Oklahoma Region of the Christian Church, and the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ to work towards the long-term recovery for the Oklahoma City area and to transform the area into a mission site for volunteers. Week of Compassion is also partnering with the Oklahoma Council of Churches to fund a long-term program designed to offer emotional and spiritual support to individuals and families after a disaster. In the fall of 2014, the Joplin, MO's mission sites, which came into existence following the 2011 tornado, closed. These sites hosted hundreds of volunteers who helped rebuild the Joplin community.

The conflicts in Central America led to many unaccompanied children crossing the U.S. borders in 2014, and these numbers will continue to increase. Many of these children cross thousands of miles to reach the southern borders of the U.S. in order to escape extreme violence and poverty in their homeland. WoC has been coordinating with our partners at Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Church World Service, and Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries to provide counseling, shelter, food, and legal services for these unaccompanied children.

Across North America and around the world, severe weather patterns are negatively affecting many communities. It is clear that our planet and climate are changing rapidly, leading to alarming new weather patterns and extreme shifts in our environment that will continue to affect communities around the world. The northeastern areas of the United States have been particularly hard-hit this winter by extreme cold weather and severe storms, while the southwestern parts of the United States are suffering from severe droughts that NASA is calling "megadroughts." Droughts are also impacting other regions of the world like Namibia and Central America, which are devastating crops and food supplies for many communities. In the Philippines and South Pacific, strong typhoons are becoming a regular occurrence, while many parts of Asia are now experiencing extreme flooding. Week of Compassion stands strong and will continue to respond to many of these communities.

In 2014, Week of Compassion and Disciples Volunteering developed a new partnership with Society of St. Andrew to help end hunger by mobilizing Disciples volunteers to glean nutritious produce from farmers' fields and orchards after the harvest to help feed



families. Many Disciples congregations are actively serving Equal Exchange coffee, tea, and chocolate in their worship communities to help farmers have fair and equal wages for their crop productions.

Week of Compassion is able to do this ministry because of the generous support from many of our congregations and individuals within the life of the church. Week of Compassion responds where we are needed when families and communities experience natural and human-made disasters. Through this life-saving ministry—when we put our Compassion in Action—our church serves as an important, visible sign of our witness to Christ in the world, so that we can say: “Week of Compassion around the world around the year.”

**WORLD CONVENTION  
(CHRISTIAN - CHURCHES OF CHRIST - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

*Gary Holloway Executive Director/General Secretary*

PO Box 50998, Nashville, TN 37205-0998 USA

Phone/Fax: +1 (615) 298-1824 Email: [office@worldconvention.org](mailto:office@worldconvention.org)

Home Page: <http://www.worldconvention.org>

The board of the World Convention with members from nine countries met in Nashville, Tennessee, USA, April 1-3. God worked powerfully in that meeting, opening new pathways and possibilities for the ministries of World Convention.

The board approved a more succinct mission statement for World Convention:

**In Christ, all are reconciled to God and to each other, and in the Spirit, God calls us to proclaim this good news throughout the world. World Convention (Christian-Churches of Christ-Disciples of Christ) embodies and encourages fellowship, understanding, and common purpose within this global family of churches and relates them to the whole Church for the sake of unity in Christ Jesus.**

World Convention seeks to fulfill this mission by connecting our churches everywhere, every day. We connect through an email newsletter, through our website, in personal visits, and many other ways. One way we seek to connect our churches is through a Global Gathering. After much prayer and discernment, the multinational board of World Convention has decided with much disappointment and regret that its next Global Gathering, scheduled for 2016, will not be held in South Korea as planned. This decision was prompted by challenges within the leadership of the churches in South Korea. World Convention is thankful to God for the growth of the churches in South Korea. Our prayer is that we might hold a Global Gathering there sometime in God's future.

The board received a moving invitation from churches in India to hold a Global Gathering there. We are overjoyed to announce that the board accepted that invitation, and our next Global Gathering will be in New Delhi, India, January 12-15, 2017. The World Convention board also elected Ajai Lall as its new President. Ajai is the founder of Central India Christian Mission. Gerson Vicente de Souza of Brazil was elected as a Vice President.

The board also approved structural changes to streamline its work and broaden its composition to reflect the diversity of our churches globally. The board unanimously approved a proposal to begin creation of two bodies: a Board of Governance that will provide fiduciary accountability and decision-making functions, and a Board of Guidance that will advise the other body. The board appointed a Governance and Guidance task force to give proposals to the entire board regarding the composition



of those boards, including terms, the role of officers, and other matters. In addition, board members have been added from India, Poland, Swaziland, Ghana, and the United States.

The board appointed a Christian Unity committee to explore ways that the World Convention can more fully participate in the wider ecumenical movement with global, regional, and national entities, in close association with the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council.

### **Year Book and Directory**

Office of General Minister and President

1099 N. Meridian Street, Ste. 700

Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Howard E. Bowers, Editor

[hbowers@disciples.org](mailto:hbowers@disciples.org)

The Year Book and Directory provides the annual listing of ministries recognized as part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Year Book also maintains a listing of those congregations, regions, general ministries, and Disciples' related organizations and institutions and certifies to the Internal Revenue Service that they are capable of receiving tax deductible contributions.

Each year, the Disciples are augmented by new congregations recognized by their respective regions. In 2014, 20 (3 congregations are listed as "emerging" and not yet Year Book Listed) new congregations were officially recognized. The following are the number of new congregations per region:

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Alabama-NW Florida       | 2 |
| California-Nevada, North | 1 |
| Canada                   | 1 |
| Florida                  | 1 |
| Georgia                  | 3 |
| Great River              | 1 |
| Indiana                  | 2 |
| Kansas                   | 1 |
| Kansas City              | 4 |
| Mid America              | 1 |
| Oregon                   | 1 |
| Southwest                | 1 |
| Tennessee                | 1 |

The Year Book also works with regions to maintain an accurate listing of congregations by acknowledging congregational losses in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). During 2014, 104 congregations were removed from the official list of congregations. one was a duplication of a formation congregation, 45 congregations were, 42 congregations withdrew, 15 congregations had the region withdraw recognition of their status, 1 congregation was removed through the process outlined in GA 9516.

Of those congregational losses, 38 were formation congregations: 16 closed, 6 withdrew, 15 were removed from regional under care status, 1 was a duplicate.

The Year Book also lists ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This listing is provided by the Office of Search and Call in Disciples Home Missions. 6,850 ministers were listed with denominational standing. Of that number, 2,153 (31.4%) were listed as retired (1080 active retired) and 2,250 (32.8%) are listed as pastors of the more than 3,400 congregations.



## GA-1502

**Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries**

Rev. Dr. Huberto Pimentel, *National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries*  
 Mrs. Brenda Rossy, *Administrative Assistant*  
 1099 N. Meridian St, Suite 700, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1986  
 Office: 317-713-2584, 2583 Fax: 317-635-3700

[www.obrahispana.org](http://www.obrahispana.org)

**2015 Report****I. Mission:**

The *Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries'* (CPOHM) mission is threefold: to offer pastoral care to Hispanic ministers and congregations; to advice and counsel the different manifestations of our denomination about Hispanic ministries; and to be an advocate for Hispanic people, congregations and issues.

**II. Personnel**

The CPOHM currently has two persons working: the National Pastor and an *Administrative Assistant* to assist, manage, communicate, do development, financial, and programs to more than 200 Hispanic churches.

**III. Pastoral Commission for Hispanic Ministries Members (2014-16)**

The members of the Pastoral Commission for Hispanic Ministries are:

**Joel Saucedo**

*Moderator, National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship (NHBF)*

**Servando Perálvez**

*Past Moderator, NHBF*

**Sammy Ramírez**

*Moderator Elect, NHBF*

**Lori Tapia**

*First Vice-Moderator*

**Lorna Hernández**

*Secretary, NHBF*

**Milly Sempritt**

*Sub-Secretary, NHBF*

**Guillermina Perálvez**

*Representative at Large*

**David Cortés**

*Representative at Large*

**Alicia Rodríguez**

*Moderator, SE Convention*

**Absent**

*Representative, SE Convention*

**Rosy Ricart**

*Moderator, MW Convention*

**William Almodóvar**

*Representative, MW Convention*

**Martín Tapia**

*Moderator AZ Convention*

*Representative AZ Convention*

**Sammy Ramírez**

*Moderator Pacific Convention*

**Silvia Vázquez**

*Representative Pacific Convention*

**Servando Peralez**

*Moderator SW Convention*

**Mariana Peña**

*Representative SW Convention*

General Board Representatives**Absent**

*Regional Minister*

**Theresa Dulyea-Parker**

*Regional Minister, IL-WI Region*

**Dawn Robinette**

*General Board Representative, Detroit, MI*

**Eliezer (Eli) Rolón**

*General Board Representative, Nashville, TN*

**Héctor Velázquez**

*Representative of the Hispanic Board of Director – Obra Hispana*

Ex-Officio Members**Sharon Watkins**

*General Minister and President CCDC in USA and Canada*

**Huberto Pimentel**

*National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries*

Invitees of the National Pastor

Plácido Vega – Northeast

Edith Mendoza – Kansas City



#### **IV. Theological Education**

CPOHM in joined partnership with Brite Divinity has celebrated the following program:

CPOHM co-sponsored the 2014 session of the *Brite Institute for Latino/a Ministries*, which was held on June 8-13 2014. Over 60 students participated in this event. One important goal in the Summer Latina/o Program is to better equip lay pastors with theological and practical pastoral studies that will help them comply with the new study requirements for all licensed pastors in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This is a four day and three hour class module. Students will accumulate in one class a total of 12 hours of continuous studies. The Summer Latino Program was structured in 3 courses opportunities in the morning session and 2 courses opportunities in the afternoon session

- A. Pastoral Care of Marriage and Family from a Hispanic Perspective – Rev. Dr. Luis Bernard
- B. Protestant Heritage from a Hispanic Perspective– Dr. Carmelo Álvarez
- C. The women their call and the church – Dr. Zaida Maldonado
- D. Spirituality, Worship & Christian Mission – Dr. Carlos Cardoza
- E. The Psalms and the Pastoral Care – Dr. Greg Cuellar
- F. Ruth, Migration & Latin Hermeneutics – Dr. Timothy Sandoval

As far as our understanding and the communication from Brite Divinity President, Dr. William Newell, the Summer Latino Program will no longer be offered. The will be reaching out to the Region to explore some possibilities.

The Christian Theological Seminary Sumer Theological Program was not offered on 2014 due mainly to lack of participation and other factors.

The Certificate of Ministry Program (CMS) is another program joint effort with Disciples Seminary Foundation in Los Angeles and San Diego, California, offered in Spanish for the Commissioned Hispanic Pastors and Lay Leaders. Rev. Xosé Escamilla is the Director of the program.

The Certificate of Ministerial Studies (“CMS”) is designed for adults who are interested in an introduction to the kind of studies found in seminary and is for the purpose of completing the educational requirements for licensed or commissioned ministry, learning more about advanced theological education, enrichment for lay leaders, or any combination of reasons. CMS is a unique program focused on contextual learning for ministry today. Part of the richness of the CMS is that individuals bring their personal experiences and/or professional considerations to the program. The purpose of CMS is, above all, to give its participants a basic theological framework for evaluating and developing knowledge for ministry and at the same time consider the contributions and knowledge that each person brings to the program.

As I moved in a transition toward ending my tenure on April of 2016, my heart is burden by the closing of two great theological educational opportunities for our pastoral and lay leaders in our Hispanic churches.

I want to express my gratitude to Brite Divinity and Christian Theological Seminaries for the initiative of offering a serious and critical theological learning experience in the past years. Many internal factors like: Budget-money, lack of participation, Board decisions, and internal issues within the academic institutions were some factors within others that lead to the closing of the Summer Latino Theological Programs. We are in debt and have gratitude to this distinguish Disciples Seminaries and pray in the hope tough times will bring new venues and other Theological Summer Latino Programs in the near future. We are determined to seek out for help from our Disciples partner’s in mission, as we will envision the future of theological education in new ways.

CPOHM is committed to grant scholarships for M.Div. seminarians

CPOHM has allocated \$4,130 for scholarship support. Each seminarian under the care of a Commission on Ministry is granted +/- \$40.00 per credit hour in an ATS Seminary. There are 8 Hispanic Seminarians studying in Disciples Seminaries and other ATS Seminaries where there is no Disciples Seminary presence. The allocation for 2011 will be 2/3 of 2010 due to the economic impact to our CPOHM.

#### **V. The CPOHM & the Church-at-Large**

CPOHM supported the goals and vision of our Church:

1. Pro-Reconciliation: The National Pastor is part of the *Reconciliation Commission*.



2. New Church: CPOHM supports the growing number of Hispanic new congregations and networking with *New Church Ministries*. We are requesting from NC Ministries a conversation on how to improve and make clear the transition of new Hispanic Churches to the Obra Hispana.
3. Transforming congregations: The different educational ventures of the CPOHM seek to empower and transform our existing congregations, particularly by helping our ministers to be better pastoral leaders.
4. Forming and reforming leadership: CPOHM continues its emphasis on leadership development, as demonstrated by the programs developed in 2014. CPOHM also organizes and resources ministerial retreats, workshops and assemblies for Latino and Latina ministers. Many of these workshops and Seminars take place during Hispanic Convention Assemblies and others during pastoral visits from the National Pastor where some Hispanic churches group together for a Saturday Workshop.
5. The Hispanic Board of Directors approved on the December Board meeting of 2014, a document named: Identity, Mission and Witness. This document has the intention for prayer, dialogue and reflection on our identity, the Mission of God and the Witness in our communities. A massive Email was sent to all the pastoral body with specific instruction's and a video link that explain how to use and have a better understanding on the purpose of the document. "Obra Hispana" will have as a goal to engage in the Mission discussion during 2015. It will also be the main discussion on our next Hispanic Assembly on Coral Gables Christian Church on July 14-16, 2016 (Theme: Chosen with an Identity, mission and Witness). Another practical document was sent to the pastoral body: "The seven marks of a Hispanic Disciples Church" that will help them with their identity, Mission and Witness.

#### **VI. Audited Annual Financial Statements**

No audit for 2014. On our Hispanic Board of Directors meeting, Nancy Pickell, the person who handles the CPOHM finances explained in details the financial challenges and projections for Hispanic Ministries. A significant cut in the projected Budget for 2015 reveals new ways to continue Hispanic Ministries (As the expected ending income projected for 2014 is of 222,125. in 2014, we are projecting an income budget of 206,233 for 2015).

#### **VII. Conclusion**

CPOHM is committed to serve the growing Hispanic Disciples constituency. We are confident the changes in leadership will energize our ministry, enabling the CPOHM to better serve our Church as a whole.

#### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.



OFICINA PASTORAL CENTRAL PARA  
**MINISTERIOS HISPANOS**  
CENTRAL PASTORAL OFFICE FOR  
**HISPANIC MINISTRIES**

**Request to the General Board of  
the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

January 5, 2015

Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins  
General Minister and President

Rev. Glen Miles  
Moderator

Rev. Joan Bell-Haynes  
First Vice Moderator

Tony Rodriguez  
Second Vice Moderator

May the grace of God fill you with wisdom and perseverance in our mission to empower the local churches of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

After careful analysis, conference calls and meetings, the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through its Hispanic Board of Directors and the Pastoral Commission wish to express some significant concerns to the General Board of the Church with the purpose of creating a Task Force Committee that will address the following issues in dialogue, prayer and concrete action:

1. Our first concern points to greater clarity in the Design regarding the Ethnic Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We believe that much of the confusion at the General, Regional and Local level of the church regarding Ethnic ministries is related to a vague description in line 69 of the Design, which seems to express reporting and representing purposes only. The petition for the creation of a Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries (CPOHM) was a cry for justice, visibility, empowerment, and dignity within the structure of the CCDC. The petition came from the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It was and continues to be a declaration meant to inform the church that we are more than a fellowship group. We believe that we are an integral and significant part of the CCDC. We are an intricate part of what makes the diversity in the general church look real. We strongly believe that line 69 gives some visibility, but fails to give adequate empowerment and dignity to these specialized ministries. Therefore, we recommend further definition and augmentation of the role of the Ethnic Ministries in the Design.



2. Our second concern is related to the duties and responsibilities of the National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries. The difficulties that we have experienced in the past and continue to experience today, develop when General and Regional ministries ignore what was approved by the General Board and The General Assembly in 1991 as stated in pages 14-15 of the project; or fail to see the structural and relational importance of the CPOHM. Reasons for these behaviors may not be intentional. The reality is that there is no place within the structural, governance, or administrative documents of the CCDC where the role and boundaries for National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries are clearly established in covenant with the whole CCDC. (See project document, pages 14-15; number 8,9 and 13) Therefore, we recommend a conversation that revisits formally establishing the role and boundaries for the National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries according to project documents (pages 14-15, #8,9 and 13).
3. Our third concern is in regards to the limited representation of each Ethnic Ministry on the General Board and the accountability of ethnic representation on the Administrative Committee of the GMP. When considering Hispanic candidates, we recommend that the General Minister and President submit nominations for the Administration Committee through the Board of Hispanic Ministries for approval.
4. Our fourth concern is in regard to the complete absence of the Hispanic Conventions of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Design of the CCDC, at the general and regional level. We recommend organizational changes and transitions in ministerial leadership across the life of our Disciples of Christ movements in USA and Canada. A good example of our recommendation is the following existing agreement of the CONSERF Regions:

"The numerous organizational changes and transitions in ministerial leadership across the life of our Disciples of Christ movement in the U.S. and Canada led to our March 1st, 2014 meeting at "*Primera Iglesia*" in Fort Walton Beach, FL. The following Disciples were present:

Representing *LA CONVENCION*:

Alicia Rodriguez, Vilson Hurtado, Wanda Morales, David Cortes, Efrain Rivera and Lydia Jiménez, (guests- José & Ana Díaz, Israel Martínez).

Representing SERF:

John Mobley, Glen Stewart and Juan Rodriguez

Representing the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries:

Huberto Pimentel

Our reflection and dialogue led to a commitment to the following:

- Becoming equal partners by rejecting colonialism in our thinking and work
- Disseminating the “Working Definition of Our Relationship” and working toward its inclusion in all our planning and in our governing documents
- Seeking ways to be actively present with each other at meetings and assemblies, making sure a voting representative of La Convencion is present at the Regional Board meetings of Regions that already have a representative in place
- Sharing information, calendars and resources
- Making sure information about the “Working Definition of Our Relationship” and “CONSERF PARTNERS DIALOGUE” finds a prominent place in the agendas of our next scheduled meetings of La Convencion and SERF and that it is communicated to: all SERF Regional Ministers, all congregations of “*La Convencion*”, all Regional Boards, all Regional Fellowships, The Office of the General Minister and President, The Office of our Minister of Reconciliation, and the “*Convenciones*” of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship.”

5. Our fifth concern is related to the process of establishing new Hispanic congregations, and the role of the Regions, Hope Partnership, National Pastor and the Hispanic Conventions. The CPOHM and the Hispanic Conventions need to be included in every step of the process. We recommend an active role and mutual inclusion in the approval of new churches as mentioned and stated in the project (IV Strategies, B, 1., (8). Informing the CPOHM (National Pastor) and Moderators of the Hispanic Conventions via Emails only, is not the best policy to establish real mutuality and equal partners in ministry.
6. Our sixth concern is related to forming a more specific role in the use of DHM resources (educational, theological etc.). We recommend assigning designated monies for creating materials in Spanish, using the expertise of Hispanic Scholars or Hispanic Pastors in areas of need according to the request of the National Pastor through the Hispanic Conventions.

Lastly, we would like to challenge the General Board to begin to think in terms of Specialized Ministries as opposed to Ethnic Ministries. The term Specialized Ministry speaks to a particular cultural context within ecclesial needs in the US and Canada whereas the term Ethnic Ministry speaks to the human tendency to label marginalized communities as “other.” We are at a different time and context since historical conversations which birthed our current design, centralizing our church governance into General, Regional, local levels. In order to accomplish our mission towards wholeness, we need to decentralize ministry to meet our Specialized Ministry needs geographically.

Resisting change and fear involved in having any conversations regarding restructure, works to perpetuate the historical systemic racism that tends to fracture covenantal relationships. In order to meet this challenge we recommend, design change conversations that include voices from Specialized Ministries which can lend their years of experience and particular gifts to our current opportunity to take positive steps in our journey to be one.



We respectfully request that the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) create a task force to study the best way to address our concerns and recommendations. Furthermore, we suggest that Moderators of the Ethnic Ministries, "Specialized Ministries", be included on this task force, and Regional Ministers with significant number of ethnic churches in their constituencies should also be included, as well as representation of HOPE and DHM. We pray that the Holy Spirit leads us to accomplish concrete written changes that express our mutual desire to work together in our common mission towards wholeness.

In Christ,

Joel M. Saucedo  
Moderator of the Hispanic Board of Directors

Alicia Rodríguez  
Moderator of the South East Hispanic Convention

Martin Tapia  
Moderator of the Arizona Hispanic Convention

Servando Peralez  
Moderator of the Southwest Hispanic Convention  
Past Moderator of the Hispanic Board of Directors

Rosy Ricart  
Moderator of the Midwest Hispanic Convention

Sammy Ramirez  
Moderator of the Pacific Southwest Hispanic Convention  
Moderator Elect of the Hispanic Board of Directors

Lori Tapia  
Vice Moderator of the Hispanic Board of Directors

Lorna Hernandez  
Secretary of the Hispanic Board of Directors

Carmen Milagros Sempritt  
Sub-Secretary of the Hispanic Board of Directors

Guillermina Peralez  
Member at Large of the Hispanic Board of Directors  
President of the Hispanic Women's Ministry

David Cortez  
Member at Large of the Hispanic Board of Directors

Sylvia Vazquez  
Representative - Pacific Southwest Hispanic Convention

William Almodovar  
Representative - Midwest Hispanic Convention

Marcela Gutierrez  
Representative - Arizona Hispanic Convention

Hector Velasquez  
Hispanic Board Representative to the General Board  
Chairperson of the Committee on Restructure

Cc. Rev. Jinsuk Chun  
Executive Pastor of N.A.P.A.D.

Rev. Timothy James  
Associate General Minister and  
Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation

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<sup>i</sup> Note: The final draft for the request of this petition was reviewed and approved by the Hispanic Board of Directors and Pastoral Commission on December 6, 2014





## GA-1503

### CHRISTIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION

**Invite. Equip. Send.**

Bradley E. Lyons, *President and Publisher*

483 E. Lockwood, Suite 100, St. Louis, MO 63119

Website: [www.ChalicePress.com](http://www.ChalicePress.com)

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

CBP's mission is to publish resources inviting all people into deeper relationship with God, equipping them as disciples of Jesus Christ, and sending them into ministries as the Holy Spirit calls them. Every resource we offer and everything we do is part of our effort to live into God's invitation.

Offering the Chalice Press, TCP Books, and Lucas Park Books imprints, CBP does not receive support from Disciples Mission Fund. We operate almost entirely on the sales of products and services we develop.

Continuing declines in Disciples and other mainline Protestant denominations, coupled with sweeping changes in the publishing and book-selling industry, make our mission especially challenging, but we again finished the year with a modest profit that was better than our budget projected. The continued economic recovery, industry surveys showing recreational and inspirational reading is as popular as ever, and our growing reputation as a publisher that challenges the way our society views faith and church help us remain hope-filled and exciting about our mission.

#### **New, Recent, and Upcoming Titles from Chalice Press & TCP Books 2014-2015**

##### Disciples Identity

**Whole: A Call to Unity in Our Fragmented World** (Sharon Watkins)

##### Mission

**The Earless Man from Chile: Mission Stories of Healing and Resilience** (Elena Huegel)

**Help and Hope: Disaster Preparedness and Response Tools for Congregations** (Amy Gopp and Brandon Gilvin, ed.)

##### Spiritual Formation

**Banned Questions about Christians** (Christian Piatt, ed.)

**Never Pray Again: Lift Your Head, Unfold Your Hands, and Get To Work** (Aric Clark, Doug Hagler, Nick Larson)

**Be Holy: Find Identity / Find Belonging / Find Purpose** (Brian Christopher Coulter)

**Post-Traumatic Church Syndrome: A Memoir of Humor and Healing in 30 Religions** (Reba Riley)

**Femmevangelical: The Modern Girl's Guide to the Good News** (Jennifer D. Crumpton)

**Meant to Be: A Christian Feminist's Guide to Loving Yourself, Accepting Your Faith, and Changing the World\*** (Melanie Mock and Kendra Irons)



**Sacred Wounds: Religious Injury, Spiritual Abuse, and Healing\*** (Teresa Pasquale)Congregational Life**Invitational Ministry: Move Your Church from Membership to Discipleship**

(Laurene Bowers)

**Coming Home: Ministry That Matters with Veterans and Military Families** (Zachary Moon)**Organic Student Ministry: Trash the Pre-Packaged Programs and Transform Your Youth Group** (Stephen Ingram)**Holy Currencies Exchange\*** (Eric H.F. Law)Religion and Culture**The Mainliner's Survival Guide to the Post-Denominational World** (Derek Penwell)**Defrocked: How a Father's Act of Love Shook the United Methodist Church**

(Franklyn Schaefer with Sherri Wood Emmons)

**Forward Together: A Moral Message for the Nation** (William J. Barber II with Barbara Zelter)**Pre-Post-Racial America: Spiritual Stories from the Front Lines** (Sandhya Jha)**Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community** (Leah Gunning Francis)Family and Faith**Seamless Faith: Simple Practices for Daily Family Life** (Traci Smith)**Blessed Are the Crazy: Breaking the Silence about Mental Illness, Family, and Church** (Sarah Griffith Lund)Congregational Leadership and Professional Development**Recovering Hope for Your Church: Moving Beyond Maintenance and Missional to Incarnational Engagement** (Edward Hammett)**For Ministers about to Start... or about to Give Up** (Travis Collins)**Exorcising Preaching: Crafting Intellectually Honest Worship** (Nathan C. Walker)**Leading in DisOrienting Times: Navigating Church and Organizational Change**

(Gary V. Nelson and Peter Dickens)

**Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit** (Leah Schade)**Reaching People under 30 While Keeping People over 60** (Edward Hammett)Outdoor Ministries Curriculum**Power Up! Living in the Spirit** (InsideOut outdoor ministries curriculum #3)**Fearless Faith: Courage in Community** (InsideOut outdoor ministries curriculum #4)Academic**Bethany College: A Liberal Arts Odyssey** (D. Duane Cummins)**Human Development and Faith, second edition** (Felicity Kelcourse, ed.)

\* Title tentative as of February 2015

Chalice Press books and e-books are available at **ChalicePress.com**,  
**Cokesbury.com**, **Amazon.com**, and wherever books are sold.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from Christian Board of Publication and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

**GA-1504**

Christian Church Foundation, Inc.

Gary W. Kidwell, President  
1099 N. Meridian Street, Suite 700  
P.O. Box 1986  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1986  
(800) 668-8016

From its humble beginnings in 1961, the Christian Church Foundation has been singularly focused on the stewardship of accumulated resources. The Foundation exists to provide additional resources that grow and support ministry with legacy gifts and to help all Disciples ministry partners be more faithful stewards of their endowment funds.

Our mission is to support and expand the ability of all Disciples ministries to worship, witness and serve. We do this by identifying and resourcing donors who desire to make a difference through planned gifts, and by assisting Disciples ministries to be good stewards of their gifts through sound policies and prudent investment services.

The Foundation is growing and our financial position has never been stronger. Gifts, investment deposits, and strong investment returns led the Foundation to set a new record in 2014 as total assets under management reached \$618 million. Distributions from permanent funds and other gifts – including life-income gift terminations and donor-directed giving through the *Steward's Bank: A Donor-Advised Fund* – totaled \$8.4 million in 2014.

Named permanent funds at the Foundation now total \$167.1 million of the assets under management. Overall, permanent funds in 2014 provided \$6.1 million in income to Disciples ministries.

The numbers of donors creating legacy gifts through permanent funds at the Foundation continue to grow. These gifts bear witness to their deep love for their church. In 2014, the Foundation received \$8.2 million in new permanent fund gifts – including nearly \$800,000 from four legacy congregations that are using permanent funds to continue their ministries although they no longer gather together in worship. The \$8.2 million received in 2014 compares very favorably with our 10-year average of \$5.1 million.

Disciples also use the Foundation to make deferred gifts that first pay the donor or their designee income for life. The Foundation received \$2.3 million for charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts in 2014. Life-income gifts also allow Disciples donors to create legacy gifts that will bless the church in the future.

Just as the number of donors grows, so do the number of partner investment accounts in the Joint Investment Trust (JIT). Almost two-thirds of the assets under management –



\$406.6 million – are partner investment accounts. These accounts contain money owned by congregations, regions, general ministries, higher education institutions and other Disciples-affiliated ministries. In 2014, our ministry partners added \$18.8 million to those accounts. Our partners use this key stream of income in a multitude of ways, including seed money for new ministries, facility support and maintenance, enhanced outreach efforts to benefit the communities they serve, and much, much more. These vital dollars allow these ministries and institutions to amplify their witness and outreach. The Foundation celebrates the ministry that happens through these dollars.

The Foundation's JIT offers an investment solution for the church's long-term endowment assets. The JIT provides access to highly diversified and sophisticated investment portfolios that include an asset mix unavailable to any of us as single institutions. We are focused on the dual priority of providing funds for ministry and service while growing the invested funds to keep pace with inflation. Our investment pools have a proven track record of superior returns. Since 2003, we have lowered portfolio manager costs approximately 30% in all of our funds. These reductions have enhanced investment returns for all of our ministry partners.

Providing financial resources for ministry is just part of the Christian Church Foundation's investment services program. As a faith-based investor, the Christian Church Foundation seeks justice by engaging with companies for responsible corporate behavior. We believe that working with company management is the most effective agent for systemic change. In partnership with other faith-based investors, including the Interfaith Coalition for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), the Foundation influences change by being a responsible shareholder, voting proxies, and bringing a moral voice to corporations in their boardrooms. As a participant in the Foundation's long-term investment program, Disciples ministries have a voice in making the world a better and more just place.

The mission the church gave us 53 years ago still drives us today. As the Foundation continues to achieve new financial milestones, our focus will remain on helping Disciples make a difference forever. We take great care to insure that every initiative we undertake and every dollar we spend is in alignment with the Foundation's core purpose and moves us toward fulfilling our calling to the church.

Thank you for your partnership and we look forward to helping you and your ministry bear more fruit for God's mission in the world.

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### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church Foundation and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

**GA-1505****Church Extension Financial & Missional Resources, Inc.**

Inclusive of

**Board of Church Extension dba Disciples Church Extension Fund**

Erick D. Reisinger, President

and

**Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation**

Gilberto Collazo, President

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*“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” (I Corinthians 4:1-2)*

In 2014, Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF) and Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation, under the umbrella of Church Extension Financial & Missional Resources (Church Extension Resources), focused on stewardship – helping congregations and their leaders employ their creativity, courage and wisdom in new ways to become more effective stewards of their capital and people resources, so that lives inside their buildings and out in their communities are transformed through God’s ministry and mission.

Two things happen when DCEF and Hope Partnership live out our call to help strengthen congregations through services and programs that “work:” 1) congregations experience new or renewed purpose and vitality; and 2) DCEF and Hope Partnership earn the trust and confidence of the congregations and leaders we serve. As in the past year, DCEF and Hope Partnership will continue our commitment to earn and retain that trust by implementing carefully crafted strategies designed to help congregations succeed.

The following describes a number of those strategies and what successful stewardship looks like when they are employed:

**Disciples Church Extension Fund**

In 2014, Disciples Church Extension Fund spent many hours thoughtfully developing a four-year strategic plan designed, in part, to address a pressing reality for many congregations – church buildings that are too big, too expensive and that siphon away resources (financial and energy) better spent on ministry and mission. As part of the strategic planning process, DCEF studied trends impacting our denomination – population shifts to urban areas leaving large, under-used buildings behind; older urban churches no longer a demographic and/or ministry fit for their changing local neighborhoods; a decreasing interest in owning or ability to own permanent facilities, among others.

The implications of these changes for DCEF based on the types of capital needs congregations will have in the future (repurposing and access to facilities, disposal, relocation) are significant. In 2015 and beyond, DCEF will use our legacy of experience and expertise in building planning and funding in new ways to provide relevant services and counsel that help congregations make the best possible decisions regarding their space needs for current and future mission.

#### What will those services and counsel look like?

First and foremost, DCEF will play an advocacy role, encouraging congregations to explore new ways of thinking about the size, nature and purpose of their holy places. Through consultations and clergy gatherings, workshops, events and building planning and funding services, DCEF will bring the “ministry first” message to churches caught up in a long-time practice of designing their ministry for their building and not the other way around.

Through careful listening and with 21<sup>st</sup> century church-specific building assessment and planning expertise, DCEF will help congregations begin to question and resolve the types of new or reinvented space and place they need to meet their ministry needs, so that people’s lives in their communities can be transformed.

DCEF’s vision for new and reinvented holy places is the creation of ministry centers that are:

- Flexible spaces that can serve many functions and audiences in current use and after resale;
- Welcome places, inviting and accessible to all;
- Places for an experience of community, a place where Bible studies, book discussions, maybe job training, teen counseling, and more might take place – in other words, a place where people want to be;
- Spaces for worship, an essential experience for a congregation, that will be less likely in the future to be a single-purpose sanctuary; and
- Places (borrowed, rented, leased, owned and/or shared) from which to do ministry and mission that serve the needs of the wider community.



Services and resources in development in 2015 to support this vision of congregations as ministry centers include a building evaluation service that helps congregations assess their current facility to determine what it would cost to repurpose it for ministry; or if a congregation is considering purchasing a different space, what would be required to retool it for ministry needs.

Also under development starting in 2015 is a disaster-response service that will provide congregations with an immediate assessment after a disaster and guidelines that help them navigate the logistics of repair, possible relocation and insurance coverage. In addition to the potential for interest-free loans for disaster recovery, the service development team will incorporate into the service multi-ministry disaster response teams (Week of Compassion, Regions, DCEF, ecumenical partners, etc.), who would travel to sites to provide the service as soon as possible after a disaster.

Other resources being explored to assist congregations in reinventing and funding their facilities include an “idea” library of ministry centers, complete with pictures and floor plans, that are leaner, greener, more flexible and more mobile. Real estate and facility management resources and guidelines will also be added to DCEF’s toolbox and accessible to congregations electronically.

#### Partnership and relationship-building

Any past or future success for DCEF can be credited in great part to the overarching strategy of service in partnership with others. DCEF continues to operate in that context by connecting with and nurturing our relationships with Regions and Areas, general ministries, ecumenical organizations, educational organizations, building specialists and other key partners. The synergy that is created by bringing together the expertise, experience and resources of these partners serves our congregations at a level that we couldn’t hope to match on our own.

For example, other church extension funds are working to find ways to address similar issues facing Disciples congregations. In 2015, DCEF will deepen our relationship with the Episcopal Church Building Fund (ECBF) as a sponsor/participant in their “Jumpstart” and “Buildings for a New Tomorrow” events, which help churches across denominations explore solutions to their building issues through a new lens. In addition, DCEF is investigating how ECBF’s “Recasting the Vision” service might be provided ecumenically to benefit congregations who are discerning future direction for their buildings and mission.

Regional and Area partnership is key to helping congregations create a new vision for their buildings. In 2015, DCEF advisors’ role as relationship-builders will be enhanced as they work in assigned Regional and Area “zones” –



attending their zones' events, listening to concerns and needs particular to those zones, collaboratively creating gatherings for congregational lay and clergy leaders to explore solutions to building issues, and providing loan, investment and service opportunities to those who may benefit from them.

### Successful visionaries

Partnership and emphasis on helping congregations find new ways to use space and place for mission are reaping benefits in 2015:

- When Real Faith Christian Church in Clarksdale, Mississippi found its building project stalled through no fault of their own, DCEF convened a multitude of partners to help the church and its dynamic new leader refocus their energy and resources on completing the project so they can live out their call to serve a community-in-need. DCEF, Disciples Home Missions, Disciples Volunteering, Disciples Women, Reconciliation Ministry, the Great River Region, Hope Partnership, National Convocation, Week of Compassion, generous donors and the congregation itself are demonstrating the power found in collaboration and a common goal – stewardship of resources for mission.
- DCEF's strategic partnership with Christian Church Homes (CCH) is another example of how working to provide mission-driven space can change lives. By implementing a landmark lending agreement that enabled CCH to ramp up development and construction of affordable housing for seniors-at-risk, the two organizations enhanced the dignity and quality of life of hundreds of seniors across the country. In 2014, CCH recognized DCEF as their valued "Partner of the Year."

### Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation

Hope Partnership is committed to empowering and equipping lay and clergy leaders so that their congregations can be strengthened and people's lives inside the church and out in the community transformed. Since its formation in 2012, the ministry has provided collaborative processes and services that prepare leaders to guide their congregations through formation or transformation. In 2014, Hope Partnership implemented the first year of its strategic plan, designed to solidify and expand services to leaders, so they can be more effective stewards of their God-given creativity and courage and their congregations can experience renewed or new vitality and purpose. In 2015 and going forward, Hope Partnership is committed to connecting our services even more broadly with Disciples and ecumenical leaders.

### The value of partnership



As with DCEF, partnership is essential to effective stewardship for Hope Partnership, especially as it pertains to access for leaders to the processes and services that the organization offers. Hope Partnership continues to nurture relationships with Regional and Area ministers who play a vital role as ambassadors and recruiters for **The Journey**, Hope Partnership's comprehensive process for developing transformational leaders. Through their advocacy, leaders in their area come to understand how participating in The Journey's intensive "experience" retreats, coaching and peer groups can unleash their creativity and courage, resulting in new vitality for their congregations.

Examples of this advocacy can be found in the Great River Region's commitment to helping Hope Partnership provide access to The Journey for Mississippi Christian Missionary Convention church leaders, with funding from Reconciliation Ministry and Higher Education Leadership Ministries (HELM). In Los Angeles, the Pacific Southwest Region, Disciples Home Missions (DHM) and Hope Partnership, with funding from Reconciliation Ministry, are partnering to bring The Journey to Convocation churches there.

In other areas, a number of leaders are able to participate in these leadership development initiatives, thanks to funding from DHM study grants. The Coastal Plains Region is opening the door to Hope Partnership services for their congregational leaders, particularly for leaders of Hispanic congregations.

In addition to their collaboration on delivery of The Journey, Regional and Area ministers have been instrumental in identifying and encouraging leaders to participate in the Leadership Academy, an intensive week-long learning experience for leaders launching/affiliating a new church or transforming/affiliating an existing one. Academy participants share their wisdom in learning communities with participants from similar settings. These peer group conversations provide daily opportunities for practical application, relationship building and expressions of support.

### New Church

The stewardship of leaders and partnership are at the center of the Disciples new church movement, which is still very much alive. Since 2001, Disciples have started 850 new and affiliating congregations, with a 70 percent sustainability rate.

Through the **Leadership Academy** and other one-on-one contact, Hope Partnership's new church ministry team, in collaboration with Regions and Areas, provides new church leaders with assessment, training and coaching that will help them discern their call and equip them to lead their new faith communities in mission. They learn how to articulate mission, vision, values; set goals; and, importantly, determine if their new church's witness is a demographic fit for the community they're targeting. Coaches walk alongside planters during the early

years of their projects, providing encouragement and helping the leaders stay focused on their vision and goals.

Several cherished partners are leading the way with new churches. The Northwest Area of the Mid-America Region is particularly committed to recruiting and coaching new church leaders. Leaders in the Haitian commissioned ministers track, primarily in New York City, have Disciples Home Missions, the Northeast Region and Hope Partnership's new church ministry team to thank for the vitality and solvency of the new church leadership development efforts in that area.

Through the Pentecost Offering and other avenues, Hope Partnership continues to encourage the wider Church to become more involved in supporting courageous new church planters, whose vision and energy are so critical to the future of God's Church.

#### What does success look like?

One measure of successful leadership development is the replication of services that work. Hope Partnership's **New Beginnings** Assessment Service is an example of a service that has generated interest and actual licensing by other denominations. In addition to Disciples congregations, United Church of Christ and Presbyterian (USA) churches have signed on to New Beginnings to help them assess their strengths and opportunities as they seek to answer the all-important question, "What is God calling our congregation to do and be in this time and this place?" The service is an objective, tools-based approach to helping a congregation visualize and set into motion a shared vision.

In year two of Hope Partnership's strategic plan, the organization is working to expand the service ecumenically to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other potential partners, with the assistance of consultants specifically trained to work with New Beginnings congregations.

Success of **MissionPathways**, Hope Partnership's ministry-planning service that helps congregations map a path to their future vision, has resulted in a need for the organization to retool the service to keep up with demand for it. In 2015, Hope Partnership will pilot a new approach to delivering the service by engaging highly trained facilitators, who will guide congregations through the process using a customized curriculum available electronically for those particular congregations. MissionPathways resources include tools for exploring worship and ministry context, including demographic analysis; for taking stock of available property, financial and human resources; for plotting next steps, and more.

A second measure of successful leadership development is the most important of all – a transformed congregation responded to God's call for them with passion and purpose:



- When Memorial Christian Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan was discerning what was needed to bring purpose and renewed vitality to its ministry, they started with Hope Partnership's New Beginnings Service. The congregation courageously tackled the process that resulted in their decision to 1) relocate their congregation to a space that was better suited for their needs on a site closer to people who need what they felt God wants then to offer; and 2) commit as members to make mission and outreach a higher priority for the church in very concrete ways. The pastor reports, "At the very least, it has transformed the congregation to focus on faith-life rather than survival, which is what 'church' is supposed to be about."
- The pastor of Church of Christ Uniting in Lexington, Illinois, has witnessed the congregation's transformation as the result of their participation in The Journey. The small congregation is demonstrating its vitality through a community garden/food giveaway that engages the local school, neighbors, church members and more; an after-school program; a church/school/community fine arts center; a community exercise class; a free lunch program; and much more. Says the pastor, "God keeps blessing us with opportunities to serve, and that is what we are to be about. Our work identifies us as the people of God. Our ministry speaks for itself."

### **Moving forward**

In 2015, as always, Disciples Church Extension Fund and Hope Partnership are committed to a strategic effort to implement services and strengthen partnerships that help congregations and their leaders become the "stewards of God's mysteries" they are called to be. And, as always, key to the success of this effort are borrowers, investors and generous donors, whose advocacy and support undergird our ministries and make it possible for us to move forward as we strive to be trustworthy stewards of God's mysteries ourselves.

## **Insurance Board**

Timothy S. Harris, CPCU  
President and CEO

700 Prospect Avenue, 5th Floor, Cleveland, OH 44115

Telephone (800) 437-8830

Contact: [http://www.insuranceboard.org/contact\\_us/default.aspx](http://www.insuranceboard.org/contact_us/default.aspx)

Website: <http://www.insuranceboard.org/>

The Insurance Board is a financial ministry formed by the Conferences of the United Church of Christ in 1985 to provide risk management and insurance services to churches and related ministries, at a time when such coverage was costly and often difficult to obtain. For 30 years, the Insurance Board program has provided comprehensive risk management and insurance solutions for its participant churches. In 1991, the College of Regional Ministers endorsed the Insurance Board, and reaffirmed that endorsement in 2009. In 2014, the Insurance Board was formally approved as a Recognized Ministry Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Insurance Board is a 501 (c) (3) organization, and is governed by a board of twenty-one directors comprised of both clergy and lay individuals. Currently, there are twenty active board seats filled of which Mary Isbell (layperson, Southwest region); Duncan Draper (layperson, Indiana Region, and CFO of Disciples Pension Fund); and Rev. William “Bill” Edwards (Regional Pastor and President, Christian Church in Ohio) are Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) members. Additionally, the Insurance Board is actively working to add a board member from the board or staff of Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF), Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources (CEFMR), or Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation (HPMT). Annually, board terms change during the first quarter of each year, and the Insurance Board’s Board of Directors have already approved a resolution designating one board seat for this position.

As evidence of its fiscal soundness, the Insurance Board returned a net income of just under \$1,000,000 at the end of 2013. Although the 2014 results have not yet been audited, the Insurance Board anticipates a net income just over \$3,000,000 for the year ended 12/31/14. This income is channeled back into the program to improve its ability to further the insurance ministry. The Insurance Board is audited annually, and utilizes an independent actuarial firm to assess claim reserves each year. The Insurance Board also utilizes ‘A’ rated insurance companies that are among the largest in the industry. It also employs socially



responsible investing strategies in its investment policy, making it uniquely situated to serve the interests of the churches it serves. The Insurance Board plans for growth in 2015, and is passing on an average price reduction of 5.5% to its participant churches. A copy of the 2014 audit will be provided once completed this spring.

The Insurance Board considers diversity to be critical to its success and a reflection of its values, and embraces ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity on its board and staff. Of the twenty directors, four members are of African American descent, and two of Asian descent, while eight of the directors are women. The Insurance Board's nineteen staff members include four of African American descent (including the CEO), one of Asian American descent, with 63% of the staff being female.

In addition to staff, the Insurance Board utilizes more than 50 independent insurance agents throughout the United States. In 2014, after attending the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Columbus, OH, the Insurance Board added an African American, independent insurance agent, Rev. Christopher Goss, in Atlanta, GA, who is a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pastor.

The Insurance Board program also includes PC(USA) churches. The close ecumenical relationship among the three denominations – United Church of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and Presbyterian Church (USA) – serves as the basis for the partnership. The Insurance Board is well known for its insurance program, which provides one of the most comprehensive insurance products available to churches in the industry. The Insurance Board program enables churches to leverage the benefits of group buying power to obtain competitive pricing, broad coverage terms, and significant insurance limits. The program protects churches in all 50 states, and includes coverage for churches on the coasts and in Florida where windstorm insurance can be costly; provides an option for flood and earthquake coverage; offers considerable limits for sexual abuse and molestation; affords a 25% buffer for unintentional underinsurance; and contains umbrella limits up to \$30M per church. The breadth of coverage afforded under its program makes available limits that individual churches would not be able to obtain, or even afford, if attempting to negotiate on their own.

In support of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ministries, the Insurance Board, unlike a traditional insurance company, works to accept all churches and related ministries (within its three denominations). This is one of the most significant benefits the Insurance Board program affords. Only in rare or unique circumstances will the Insurance Board refuse to take on one of these risks, and then, only to ensure the health and long-term viability of the program for the remaining Insurance Board participants. In addition to churches, the Insurance Board program will cover camps, mission trips, senior housing, and other church related ministries. Where traditional insurance companies look for ways to say,

“No,” to these types of risks, the Insurance Board always looks for ways to accommodate them.

Currently, the Insurance Board program provides insurance to 14.5% of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregations, or roughly 523 churches, which includes churches from every Region except Idaho South. The overall program included 3,665 churches at the end of 2014. As the program grows, participants benefit from increased buying leverage and greater diversification of risk, which improves program stability by reducing the significant peaks and valleys often associated with traditional insurance company pricing.

Another tremendous benefit to being an Insurance Board member or participant is access to the extensive risk management and loss control services provided. All churches within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are automatically **members** of the Insurance Board program (a **participant** also purchases insurance through the program). Although participants receive additional benefits related to some of the resources, the services are designed to help educate all members and participants and assist them in managing and mitigating the risks of loss faced by their respective churches and affiliated ministries. Risk Management and Loss Control services cover a range of topics including:

- New laws regarding background check requirements in PA as a result of HB 435
- Background checks (subsidized for participants)
- Food Allergy and Intolerance Awareness
- Winterizing Your Church
- “Bounce House” risks
- Cell Phone Antenna Leases (how much they are worth to a church)
- Candle Safety
- Your Church as a Small Business
- Crisis Management
- Sexual Abuse Prevention (SafeConduct™ Workbench)
- Social Media
- Property Appraisals (subsidized for participants)
- Etc.

The library of resources is extensive and also includes videos and webinars. Many of the resources can be accessed through the website at [www.insuranceboard.org](http://www.insuranceboard.org). In further support of the mission and ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Insurance Board maintains a close business relationship with Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF). When a DCEF church purchases insurance through the Insurance Board, DCEF is very comfortable with the coverage and limits that are provided. We have also worked with DCEF to customize solutions for DCEF churches with outstanding loans on church properties. Additionally, although the Insurance Board has





access to a number of commercial credit facilities, the Insurance Board utilizes DCEF, as needed, to secure loans in the operations of its business.

We are blessed by our relationship with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and it is our hope that our Recognized Ministry Partner status will enable us to increase our visibility and allow us to extend our ministry to additional churches within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

South Austin Christian Church Fire

3/17/14

Loss in excess of \$700,000







**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources, Inc. and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

**GA-1506**

**TITLE:** Report of the Council on Christian Unity

**ORIGIN:** Robert K. Welsh, President

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Council on Christian Unity submits this report on its program and activities for the period from February 2014 – March 1, 2015.

**Major developments and highlights in our work and ministry this past year:**

As I review the work and ministry of the CCU over the past year, there are several significant highlights and new initiatives that have given direction our life as a general ministry as we seek to live out our mission in relation to congregations, regions and other general ministries “to encourage their partnership in our church’s efforts in the quest for the unity of all Christians as a sign of God’s love for the world”:

1. Continued to give major energy and effort to work on the Identity Initiative of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) , especially in relation to preparing congregational resource materials in English, French, Korean and Spanish (all resources have been posted on the Disciples website under “Our Identity”).
2. Giving leadership to planning and preparations for the 2015 General Assembly:
  - a. Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Disciples-UCC Ecumenical Partnership
  - b. Involvement in developing “learning tracks” on (1) the Global and Ecumenical Church; and (2) Seeking Justice.
  - c. Joining again with the Division of Overseas Ministries in a “Celebration of Unity and Global Witness” (with key focus on launching a Middle East Initiative) – with the speaker for our dinner: Rt. Rev. Munib Younan, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.
3. Representing the General Cabinet on a “Mission Council Task Force” that has worked Sharon Watkins in developing the concept/proposal of “**Mission First!**” for action at the 2015 meeting of the General Board.
4. As a member of the Executive Committee of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), I helped to plan the meeting of CUIC’s Coordinating Council in December, 2014, with a major focus on racial and social justice issues as key elements in our quest for visible unity.





5. Delivered the keynote addresses to “Ministers’ Gathering” at the Kentucky and Capital Area Regional Assemblies on the topic, “*The World is Too Strong for a Divided Church*,” and led workshops at those events highlighting our Identity Initiative.
6. As co-secretary of our International Commission for Dialogue between Disciples of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church, I planned and helped to organize our second session of our fifth phase of dialogue (2013-2018) on the theme “Christians: Formed and Transformed by the Eucharist” that took place in Rome, Italy, in June, and prepared the June 2015 session at Bethany, West Virginia.
7. Led three workshops on Disciples Identity at the NAPAD Convocation in Chicago in July, 2014.
8. Attended the Pepperdine Scholars Conference in May 2014 and the North American Convention of Christian Churches in Indianapolis in July 2014, to share in panel on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* within the Stone-Campbell tradition.
9. Participated and gave leadership to the Stone-Campbell National Dialogue meeting in Abilene, Texas in October, 2014, on the topic of “*New Church Establishment and the Emergent Church*.”
10. As General Secretary of the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC), I attended the Annual Meeting of the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions in Amersfoort, Netherlands in November 2014.
11. Gave major leadership to the preparations for an International Consultation on Believers Baptism that took place in Kingston, Jamaica on January 7-11, 2015, gathering representatives from the Baptist, Church of the Brethren, Mennonites, Pentecostal, Disciples, and Christian Churches/Churches of Christ.
12. Represented the Disciples at the annual meeting of Christian Churches Together in the USA in Houston, Texas, on February 11-13, 2015, to explore the topic of the immigrant communities’ impact in changing religious life in North America.
13. And finally, at the November 2015 meeting of the CCU Board, upon my recommendation, the decision was taken to launch a search process in early 2015 to name a “President-Elect” for the CCU in mid-2015, who would then have a significant time of overlap with me for some basic orientation to the work and involvements of the CCU, and to arrange for introductions with major leaders in the ecumenical movement. At the time of my retirement in 2016, that person will then become the next President of the CCU.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Council on Christian Unity and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

**GA-1507****Disciples of Christ Historical Society  
General Assembly Report**

1101 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Nashville, TN 37201

Rev. Dr. Todd A. Adams, Interim President

The mission of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society (DCHS) is to serve as the archive of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Stone-Campbell movement. Understanding that our mission is sacred and our strategy is not, the Disciples of Christ Historical Society has undergone significant changes since the 2013 General Assembly.

During spring 2014, as part of the routine audit analysis, it was discovered that DCHS was continuing a practice of excessive draws on Funds Functioning as Endowment (FFE). FFE are reserve funds placed in a long-term investment pool for the purpose of making prudent draws to support operating expenses. Prudent draws, as recommended by the Christian Church Foundation are 4-5%, determined by the investment pool within the Joint Investment Trust. In preparation for the 2011 General Assembly in Nashville, Dr. Carson had informed the church that DCHS would be taking additional draws to make necessary repairs on the Phillips Building. However, an additional review of the books has shown that as early as January 2008, DCHS was taking additional draws, reaching as high of 24.5% in 2013.

After discovering the enormity of the draws, General Minister and President Sharon Watkins requested a review of the last four years of board minutes and financial statements. The review raised several concerns:

- The board was being told the draws were 7-8% when the draws were 15-30%;
- The board was receiving the auditor's report via the President without conversation with the auditors;
- The audit presented by the President was inconsistent with the audit report ("squeaky clean" vs. a qualified opinion due to \$4MM in depreciation not being recorded, poor record keeping and the inability of the finance staff to produce a financial statement);
- The board was not receiving a management letter from the Auditors and the President was unaware of such a document;
- In spite of the noted financial difficulties, raises of 5% above the cost of living, plus a new car lease were granted by the board;
- Consideration was being given to purchasing a condo as a real estate investment, rental property or hospitality suite;
- Budgets were being presented so that the overruns of \$300 to \$600K were not apparent to the board; and
- Financial reporting was changed from year to year, making it difficult to track the impact on the assets.



After finding these and other concerns, Janet Long, Audit Committee Chair and Dr. Watkins, in consultation with Glen Miles, Moderator of the General Assembly, sought a meeting with Dr. Carson and Arnold Nelson, Board Chair. Dr. Carson requested the full DCHS board attend the meeting. During the meeting, it was evident that the board was unaware of the excessive draws or their fiduciary responsibility, including the audit process. During the days following the June meeting, it was discovered that without board authorization, a contract had been negotiated for the purchase of a condominium.

Recognizing that the church cannot afford to have a ministry fold due to mismanagement, Dr. Watkins and others took prompt and necessary action to protect the ministry. This included additional meetings with Dr. Carson, Rev. Nelson, the Moderator Team, and Audit Committee Chair. Additionally Watkins assigned Associate General Minister and Vice President Todd Adams to assist with the ongoing investigation.

On July 1, 2014, Todd Adams, Associate General Minister and Vice President, at the invitation of the DCHS board, began serving as the Interim President of DCHS. From July 1, 2014 (and continuing thru March 31, 2015), Dr. Adams led the board through an analysis of the operations, staff and facilities; reduced the staff; balanced the operating budget; facilitated the decision to relocate; secured new board members with financial / business expertise; brokered the pending sale of the T.W. Phillips Memorial Building; researched and recommended a restatement of DCHS' balance sheet to restore the fund balances to the restricted accounts; completed the RFP process for site selection partnering with Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia; and developed a plan for the relocation of the Archives. Additionally, Dr. Adams has overseen legal and insurance matters related to an employee dishonesty claim, legal matters including the purchase and sale of the aforementioned condominium, and closing the vehicle lease.

Today, the future of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society is now secure. In 2016, DCHS will be relocating the archive to a new, modern and efficient facility in partnership with Bethany College. DCHS will be located next to The Campbell Manson and the Renner Visitor's Center for Historic Bethany. After construction and relocation costs, DCHS anticipates adding over \$4MM to the operating reserves. The DCHS board voted to partner with the Christian Church Foundation and will negotiate a special provision over the funds. The Special Provision will provide an additional level of oversight and protection through the CCF Board, while properly documenting the donor or management restrictions. The Office of the General Minister and President will continue to provide Treasury Services.

At the March 2015 board meeting, the DCHS board adopted the attached Balance Sheet. The Christian Church Foundation staff assisted OGMP Treasury Services in determining the market value of the permanent funds based on 12/31/04 balances, market performance for the last ten (10) years, and CCF recommended draws. The balances in these accounts have been restored. Funds gifted to DCHS from 1/1/05 to

12/31/14 have been researched, documented and added to the balance sheet. The deficit in the operating reserve will be paid off through the sale of the building.

This fall the DCHS board in partnership with the church will review its current standing as a General Ministry of the church. At a minimum, DCHS will remain a recognized ministry partner with standing in and a reporting relationship to the General Assembly. DCHS will continue to receive funding through Disciples Mission Fund. The question before the board is, "How do we best fulfill our mission in today's digitally connected world and does DCHS need to remain a cabinet level General Ministry to do so?"

There are several positive outcomes for the church. First, the protocols put in place following the NBA bankruptcy worked. The 2005 changes to *The Design* have proven effective. Second, the cabinet and college created an executive management school for persons called to regional and general ministry staff. Finally, Dr. Adams, who is also a Certified Governance Trainer for BoardSource, has increased his teaching of "Financial Ethics and Best Practices" as well as "The Ten Responsibilities and Three Duties of Non-Profit Governance" among ministries of the church.

While the contents of the report reflect a tumultuous time in the life of a precious ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Stone-Campbell movement, the outcome is that the mission is secure and the ministry is strong.

**2015 Board of Directors:**

Thad Allen, West Virginia (2017)  
David Ayers, Churches of Christ (2016)  
Richard Cherok, North America Christian Convention (2015)  
Charisse Gillett, Kentucky (2017)  
Archie Jenkins, Georgia (2016)  
James Johnson, Indiana (2017)  
Mary Lou Kegler, Greater Kansas City / Administrative Committee representative (2016)  
Lynnette Li, Indiana (2015)  
Siobhan Lopez, Pacific Southwest Region (2017)  
Peter Morgan, Capital Area Region and Administrative Committee representative (2016)  
Bill Newton, Tennessee (2015)  
Janis Sherick, Arizona (2015)  
Edie Rice-Sauer, Northwest Region / Administrative Committee representative (2016)  
Marsha Smith, Southwest (2017)  
Bob Williams, Southwest and General Board Audit Committee member (2017)



**Disciples of Christ Historical Society**  
**Detailed Net Asset Activity**  
**As of December 31, 2014**

|                                         | 1/1/2014         | Income         | Expenses         | Transfers        | 12/31/2014       |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unrestricted Net Assets</b>          |                  |                |                  |                  |                  |
| Operating                               | 793,873          | 327,560        | (714,575)        | (675,332)        | (268,474)        |
| Fixed Asset Fund                        | 4,553,520        |                |                  |                  | 4,553,520        |
| <b>Board Designated Other</b>           |                  |                |                  |                  |                  |
| Museum Endowment Fund                   | 12,844           | 409            |                  | (13,253)         | -                |
| Equipment and Furnishing Endowment Fund | 52,347           | 1,663          |                  | (54,010)         | -                |
| Continuing Education Fund               | 27,898           | 886            |                  | (28,784)         | -                |
| Historical Material Preservation Fund   | 18,339           | 583            |                  | (18,922)         | -                |
| <b>Total Unrestricted</b>               | <b>5,458,821</b> | <b>331,101</b> | <b>(714,575)</b> | <b>(790,301)</b> | <b>4,285,046</b> |

\*Transferred to CCF in 2015

**Temporarily Restricted Net Assets**

*For Operations*

|                                              |         |        |         |          |         |
|----------------------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|----------|---------|
| C. Jayne & Thomas P. Hopson Fund             | 15,654  | 720    | -       | 192,597  | 208,971 |
| Peter & Lynn Morgan Endowment Fund           | 3,069   | 379    | -       | (3,146)  | 302     |
| Willis Jones Endowment Fund                  | 16,733  | 1,993  | -       | (2,993)  | 15,733  |
| Jeannette Byers Annuity                      | -       | 492    | -       | 5,728    | 6,220   |
| Dale & Betty Fiers Endowment Fund            | 26,336  | 2,397  | -       | (8,370)  | 20,363  |
| Lin & Inez Scott Cartwright Endowment Fund   | 86,969  | 8,715  | -       | (34,105) | 61,579  |
| Eva Jean Wrather Endowment Fund              | 262,716 | 25,524 | -       | (99,977) | 188,263 |
| Mildred W. Phillips Building Endowment Fund  | 13,694  | 5,844  | -       | 49,506   | 69,044  |
| Brown-McAllister Annuity                     | 25,350  | 3,062  | -       | (3,532)  | 24,880  |
| James & Dudley Seale Publications Endowment  | (6,762) | 723    | -       | 19,837   | 13,798  |
| Howard E. Short Periodicals Endowment Fund   | -       | -      | -       | 37,801   | 37,801  |
| Cherokee CC of Prairie Village, KS Endowment | -       | (88)   | -       |          | (88)    |
| Dietrich Bonhoeffer Confessing Church Endow  | 9,021   | 1,243  | -       | 621      | 10,885  |
| Henry Barton Robison Endowment Fund          | 5,118   | 511    | -       |          | 5,629   |
| Edward G. Holley Book Endowment Fund         | 7,820   | 872    | -       | (1,982)  | 6,710   |
| Watkins Reading Room Fund                    | 7,303   | -      | (7,303) |          | -       |
| Land Acquisition & Insurance Endowment Fun   | 14,662  | 998    |         | (15,660) | -       |

*For Research Interns*

|                                         |       |     |   |         |       |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|-----|---|---------|-------|
| Cannon-Benoit Internship Endowment Fund | 8,152 | 837 | - | (2,482) | 6,507 |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|-----|---|---------|-------|

*Annual recognition of a leader giving  
whole church leadership*

|                            |        |       |   |         |       |
|----------------------------|--------|-------|---|---------|-------|
| Wade Rubick Endowment Fund | 11,054 | 1,021 | - | (4,852) | 7,223 |
|----------------------------|--------|-------|---|---------|-------|

*For Scholarships for In House Research*

|                                            |        |       |   |         |        |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|-------|---|---------|--------|
| Carl Ketcherside Scholarship Endowment Fun | 14,986 | 1,874 | - | (1,310) | 15,550 |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|-------|---|---------|--------|

*For Lectures & Seminars*

|                                           |         |        |   |          |         |
|-------------------------------------------|---------|--------|---|----------|---------|
| Forrest H. Kirkpatrick Endowment Fund     | 125,528 | 13,914 | - | (32,845) | 106,597 |
| Joe A. & Nancy Vaughn Stalcup Seminar End | -       | 1,119  | - | (186)    | 933     |
| Forrest Reed Lecture Endowment Fund       | 18,612  | 2,112  | - | (4,270)  | 16,454  |

|                                     |                |               |                |               |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Total Temporarily Restricted</b> | <b>666,015</b> | <b>74,262</b> | <b>(7,303)</b> | <b>90,380</b> | <b>823,354</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|



**Disciples of Christ Historical Society  
Detailed Net Asset Activity  
As of December 31, 2014**

|                                                                                  | 1/1/2014         | Income         | Expenses         | Transfers      | 12/31/2014       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <b>Permanently Restricted Net Assets</b>                                         |                  |                |                  |                |                  |
| <i>For Operations</i>                                                            |                  |                |                  |                |                  |
| C. Jayne & Thomas P. Hopson Fund                                                 | -                |                |                  | 709,334        | 709,334          |
| Peter & Lynn Morgan Endowment Fund                                               | 5,147            | 1,000          |                  |                | 6,147            |
| Willis Jones Endowment Fund                                                      | 26,505           |                |                  |                | 26,505           |
| Roland & Kitty Huff Endowment Fund*                                              | 10,672           | -              |                  | 7,328          | 18,000           |
| Jeannette Byers Annuity                                                          | 10,000           |                |                  |                | 10,000           |
| Dale & Betty Fiers Endowment Fund                                                | 24,810           |                |                  |                | 24,810           |
| Lin & Inez Scott Cartwright Endowment Fund                                       | 99,000           |                |                  |                | 99,000           |
| Eva Jean Wrather Endowment Fund                                                  | 290,350          |                |                  |                | 290,350          |
| Mildred W. Phillips Building Endowment Fun                                       | 111,000          |                |                  |                | 111,000          |
| Brown-McAllister Annuity                                                         | 40,000           |                |                  |                | 40,000           |
| James & Dudley Seale Publications Endowmer                                       | 22,182           |                |                  |                | 22,182           |
| Howard E. Short Periodicals Endowment Fund                                       | 60,761           |                |                  |                | 60,761           |
| Cherokee CC of Prairie Village, KS Endowme                                       | -                | 27,000         |                  |                | 27,000           |
| Dietrich Bonhoeffer Confessing Church Endov                                      | 17,500           |                |                  |                | 17,500           |
| Henry Barton Robison Endowment Fund                                              | 5,794            |                |                  |                | 5,794            |
| Edward G. Holley Book Endowment Fund                                             | 10,787           |                |                  |                | 10,787           |
| Land Acquisition & Insurance Endowment Fui                                       | 16,741           |                |                  | (16,741)       | -                |
| <i>For Research Interns</i>                                                      |                  |                |                  |                |                  |
| Cannon-Benoit Internship Endowment Fund                                          | 10,000           |                |                  |                | 10,000           |
| <i>Annual recognition of a leader giving<br/>        whole church leadership</i> |                  |                |                  |                |                  |
| Wade Rubick Endowment Fund                                                       | 11,100           |                |                  |                | 11,100           |
| <i>For Scholarships for In House Research</i>                                    |                  |                |                  |                |                  |
| Carl Ketcherside Scholarship Endowment Fun                                       | 25,000           |                |                  |                | 25,000           |
| <i>For Lectures &amp; Seminars</i>                                               |                  |                |                  |                |                  |
| Forrest H. Kirkpatrick Endowment Fund                                            | 171,374          |                |                  |                | 171,374          |
| Joe & Nancy Vaughn Stalcup Seminar Endown                                        | 1,500            |                |                  |                | 1,500            |
| Forrest Reed Lecture Endowment Fund                                              | 26,452           |                |                  |                | 26,452           |
| <b>Total Permanently Restricted</b>                                              | <b>996,675</b>   | <b>28,000</b>  | <b>-</b>         | <b>699,921</b> | <b>1,724,596</b> |
| <b>Total Net Assets</b>                                                          | <b>7,121,511</b> | <b>433,363</b> | <b>(721,878)</b> | <b>-</b>       | <b>6,832,996</b> |

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Disciples of Christ Historical Society and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

**GA-1508**

DIVISION OF HOMELAND MINISTRIES  
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
DBA DISCIPLES HOME MISSIONS

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Board of Directors: Voting members of the DHM Board of Directors are: Xochitl Alvizo, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Candyce Black, Greenville, South Carolina; Rhonda Cole, Beaufort, South Carolina; Donna Davis, Pine Bluff, Arkansas; Dave Geenen, Rock Island, Illinois; Rueben Sancken, Indianapolis, Indiana; Alan Hilberg, Missoula, Montana; Mayon Marcelino, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada; Valerie Melvin, Greensboro, North Carolina; G. Lee Parker, Lynchburg, Virginia; Katherine Raley, Colorado Springs, Colorado; Derrick Perkins, St. Louis, Missouri; Dale Richmond, Wichita, Kansas; Richie Sanchez, Indianapolis, Indiana; Jeremy Skaggs, Woodward, Oklahoma; Marilyn Williams, Raleigh, North Carolina, Disciples Women Representative. Ex-officio Members without vote are the representatives to The United Christian Missionary Society: Chad Cline, Ft. Worth, Texas; Rebecca Littlejohn, La Mesa, California; Madelyn Logan, Mechanicsville, Virginia; Tommy Potter, Ft. Worth, Texas; Nedella Foster, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Chris Furr, Alexandria, Virginia; Don Gillett, II, Lexington, Kentucky; Lakinsha Swinton, Beaufort, South Carolina; Dan Crawford, Bakersfield, California, President of Men's Ministries; Patricia Donahoo, Executive Director, Office of Disciples Women; Timothy James, Associate General Minister and President/Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation; Huberto Pimentel, National Hispanic Pastor, Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries; Jinsuk Chun, Executive Pastor of North American Pacific Asian Disciples; Chimiste Doriscar, Student Intern for Haitian Disciples Ministries.

This is my seventh written report to the General Board and General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since I became President of Disciples Home Missions in October 2008. Seven occasions to reflect on our life together is minor when compared to the week-in and week-out reflection that takes place in our Regions and congregations. I estimate that during my time in pastoral ministry over the past 41 years, I delivered nearly 2,460 sermons, 745 of them from my pulpit in Southern California, from which I was called to serve in this position.

When I left that congregation to travel to Indianapolis, I asked the congregation to accept my heartfelt apology for all the distress and discomfort those sermons surely brought them. Somewhere along the way I took seriously the dictum that the role of the minister, or Regional or General Ministry leader for that matter, is to comfort the disturbed and to disturb the comfortable. Ministry at its best is always lived on the edge that leads to God's creation of something new and fulfilling for all God's people.

I am reminded of that story of the three busloads of Christians – Methodists, Presbyterians, and Disciples – that encountered fatal circumstances. The group of Methodists found themselves at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter asked, "On whose authority do you call to enter here?" The Methodists huddled together and with one accord said, "On the authority of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, the one who said, 'The world is my parish.'" St. Peter responded, "No, your answer is wrong. You Methodists go directly to hell."

The busload of Presbyterians looking on at the Methodists prepared for their response to St. Peter. They did not want to make the same mistake as the Methodists. So they thought, "Surely we have a longer history than the Methodists and our founder wrote the famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536." St. Peter asked the question, "On whose authority do you enter here?" The Presbyterians responded, "On the authority of John Calvin." St. Peter abruptly said, "Your answer, too, is wrong. You Presbyterians go directly to hell."

The busload of Disciples carefully studied the situation of both the Methodists and Presbyterians. They thought, "If not Wesley or Calvin, then the correct answer must be Campbell or Stone or maybe even the ecumenist, Ainslie." They were just about ready to give their response to St. Peter, when the Regional Executive from Virginia, the honorable Lee Parker, of [ccinva\\_rm@msn.com](mailto:ccinva_rm@msn.com) had a great idea. Lee said, "I learned about the ministry of Ron Degges while on the Search Committee for the new DHM President in 2007-2008. I know that he was granted standing by the Capital Area Region, and has had a long history of pastoral leadership, leading the DHM Search Committee and Board of Directors to call him to be President of Disciples Home Missions. Lee continued, "Let us cite as our authority, Ron Degges."

This busload of Disciples did what the Disciples never do – they reached a quick consensus – and replied to St. Peter's query, "On whose authority do you enter here?" They said, "On the authority of DHM President, Ron Degges." St. Peter, with open arms, said, "Come in and gather around the Table that has been prepared for you, my dear Disciples. If you have studied with Ron Degges, then you have already been through hell."

There is no question about it. Ministry gets hot and hellish from time to time. The unexpected happens. Where there are closed doors of opportunity, God through the Spirit opens new doors and windows of greater opportunity. As the Psalmist writes: "I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth . . ."  
[Psalm 43:19 NRSV].



Since my last report to you, Disciples Home Missions has been working on some new collaborative partnerships. We have become increasingly involved in the launch of a new effort to educate the American public on climate change called **Blessed Tomorrow**. This movement brings together some of the nation's preeminent religious leaders from the Evangelical, Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, and Mainline Protestant faiths, including our own Sharon Watkins, to engage our clergy and congregations on climate change.

On October 15, 2014, Executives from **Blessed Tomorrow** came to Indianapolis to visit with a Disciples Team on climate change, to explore the possibility of making a grant to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through Disciples Home Missions and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky to work through our Green Chalice Ministry to obtain 750 commitments of clergy and lay leaders over the next 12 months, to:

- To change my lifestyle to reduce my contribution to pollution
- To support recycling efforts
- To search for sustainable lifestyles
- To work for public policies which lead to a just and sustainable society
- To share these concerns with others and urge them to make this covenant

**Blessed Tomorrow** has received our grant proposal for an initial \$25,000 and has offered to assist us in writing grant proposals to other organizations and foundations. Members of the Disciples Team include: Sharon Watkins, Carol Devine, Greg Alexander, Robert Welsh, and me. I am thankful for the collaboration between the General Minister and President, Green Chalice Minister, Kentucky Regional Executive, Council on Christian Unity President, and Disciples Home Missions President on this initiative.

Another new partnership, whose seed was planted at the Orlando General Assembly in July 2013 and was launched in August 2014, is the **Real Faith Christian Church** project in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Partners in this project are Disciples Home Missions and Disciples Volunteering, Disciples Women, Disciples Church Extension Fund, Reconciliation Ministry, Week of Compassion, National Convocation, Disciples Great River Region, and Hope Partnership. Our united effort is three-fold: (1) To get the fellowship hall completed, (2) To secure a temporary permit for volunteers to work on the sanctuary, and (3) To complete the sanctuary so the congregation can worship there by Easter 2015!

Joshua Baird, our Director of Disciples Volunteering, has organized long-term volunteers to set-up a Mission Center on the grounds of Real Faith Christian Church. Our Office of Disciples Volunteering is scheduling congregational mission groups to participate in the project. Members of Disciples Home Missions Staff will travel to Clarksdale March 15-21, 2015 to spend a week of hands-on mission and to "get dirty for Jesus." I am delighted to report that Harley C. & Mary Hoover Price Foundation has awarded a contribution of \$25,000 to assist in the completion of the new facility.

This is one of our denomination's first efforts to come together across ministry lines to help a congregation in distress. I pray that it will not be our last. As we evaluate the effectiveness of this program, I think we will find other opportunities to serve in other Regions across the country where there is true collaboration between congregation, Region, and General Church.

Disciples Home Missions, Week of Compassion, the National Benevolent Association, and Church of the Brethren Disaster Services, have worked together to create a new position and initiative to help meet the needs of children affected by disaster. This project will provide a three year focus on expanding Children's Disaster Services in the Southeastern part of the United States and the Gulf Coast Region.

The work of the Gulf Expansion Project, as it has come to be called, has progressed since its launch in the spring of 2014. The goal is to train and certify upwards of 250 volunteers in Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana, to provide direct, hands on care to children in shelters and service centers after a disaster. These volunteers will be organized into rapid response teams to be the first caregivers responding after a disaster in their region.

Disciples Home Missions staff participating in the creation of this new collaborative effort are Joshua Baird, Olivia Bryan Updegrove, and Olivia Stewart Robertson. A meeting was held on October 31, 2014, to bring all participants up to date with progress made on the Gulf Expansion Project.

On October 23-25, 2013, Disciples Home Missions and the National Benevolent Association, called together 45 individuals representing 30 health and social service ministries affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to discover what kinds of resources, networks, and support would further the ministries of both established and emerging projects. As a next step, DHM and NBA staff met together in St. Louis, MO, April 30-May 1, 2014, with consultants Nancy James and David Odom of Duke Divinity School, to explore areas of ministry and mission in which both DHM and NBA might find a closer affiliation.

Richie Sanchez and Sheila Spencer were appointed by me to serve on an NBA Search Committee to identify two new Program Staff for the Disciples Care Exchange/Affinity Services position and the Incubator Initiative position. I am happy to inform you that the Rev. Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick has been selected to serve as the Disciples Care Exchange/Affinity Services Director and the Rev. Ayanna Johnson as the Director of the Incubator Initiative. I offer my gratitude to both Richie Sanchez and Sheila Spencer for their participation in this joint General Ministry Search Process. Now we go to the work of integrating the Disciples Exchange/Affinity position into the joint fabric of both DHM and NBA organizational life. Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick visited our DHM Offices in Indianapolis, Indiana on January 15, 2015 and spent a day with DHM staff members. She also met with Mission Center Directors and Affiliates at All Peoples Christian Center in Los Angeles, CA, February 11-13, 2015.



Our Family and Children's Ministry Team has made exemplary progress over this past year, leading to the development of a new web presence soon to be launched and strengthening our Ecumenical Partnership with the United Church of Christ. Unfortunately, due to economic conditions beyond their control, the Local Church Ministry arm of the United Church of Christ had to release Kate Epperly from employment. Upon word of the decision, I spoke with Olivia Bryan Updegrove, Olivia Stewart Robertson, and Ministry Associate, Jessica Kramer, about the breaking news, and offered my regrets to Kate Epperly. Kate was one of four national staff positions eliminated in this most recent round of staff reductions.

Ben Guess, Executive for Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ, and I will meet in the first quarter of 2015 to regroup and explore ways in which Disciples Home Missions and Local Church Ministries can work closer together into the future.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is assigned 8% of all refugees resettled through U.S. Church World Service. We have Disciple-related refugee resettlement offices in Phoenix, AZ; Los Angeles, CA; Sacramento, CA; Denver, CO; New Haven, CT; Miami, FL; Palm Beach, FL; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Indianapolis, IN; South Bend, IN; Louisville, KY; Lexington, KY; Grand Rapids, MI; Minneapolis, MN; Lincoln, NE; Omaha, NE; Greensboro, NC; Durham, NC; Concord, NH; Buffalo, NY; Rochester, NY; Syracuse, NY; Columbus, OH; Portland, OR; Lancaster, PA; Knoxville, TN; Austin, TX; Amarillo, TX; Dallas, TX; Fort Worth, TX; Houston, TX; Harrisonburg, VA; and Richmond, VA. Churches within a fifty mile radius of one of these resettlement offices are encouraged to sponsor refugees in their area. You will be glad to know that between April and October 2014 Disciples have helped resettle 719 refugees in 338 families.

News of the unaccompanied minor children flooding into the United States from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, has prompted our Refugee and Immigration Ministry to work daily with our ecumenical and interfaith partners to develop and compile information on root causes, church responses, children's needs, and advocacy campaigns to support the children. The Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, our Director of Refugee and Immigration Ministries, and Tana Liu-Beers, our Immigration Legal Counsel, are doing exemplary work educating and advocating for the refugee and immigrant community.

I am delighted to report that Disciples Home Missions has been blessed this past year with some legacy gifts to support our continuing work as a General Ministry of the Church. We received a \$25,000 gift from the Clyde Saunders Irrevocable Trust; an unrestricted gift of \$346,592.91 from the Lorene Perrigo Trust; a gift of \$88,949.18 from the sale of the Yakama Christian Mission property to support the struggles of indigenous people in the United States and Canada; and, the gift of a new permanent fund with the Christian Church Foundation in the amount of \$97,200 from the closing of the Cherokee Christian Church in Prairie Village, Kansas, to support the work of the General Youth Council and Young Adult Commission. In all, these gifts total \$557,742.09. I cannot help but lift up Clyde Saunders and family, Lorene Perrigo and family, the Yakama Christian Mission, and the Cherokee Christian Church for their



continuing commitment to the betterment of the church and world through Disciples Home Missions.

Our commitment to them must be to continue developing partnerships throughout the life of our church in all of its expressions -- general, regional, and congregational -- serving congregations, strengthening leaders, and making a difference in the world by revealing the light of Christ. I can think of no better or more focused mission than this.

We have much to celebrate at Disciples Home Missions. In this report, I can only give you highlights of the work we are doing. Our staff is dedicated to our mission and is hard working. They have braved my absence during a January through March 2014 sabbatical, the move to our new denominational headquarters in August 2014, and the continuing shifting of the sand in denominational life and mission.

From our ministries of Christian Vocation and Search and Call, Faith Formation and Christian Education, Women's and Men's Ministries, Youth and Young Adult Ministries, Chaplain's Ministries, our bi-monthly Constant Contact newsletter and *The Disciples' Advocate*, we are here for the focused purpose of equipping Disciples for Christ.

Every day brings new challenges and opportunities. Disciples Mission Fund giving continues to decline, churches continue to close their visible ministries or change their denominational affiliation, and far too many of our ministers either hang up their call to ministry and seek employment elsewhere or hang around the church with little energy to serve. Our congregations and their leaders need our help and support if God is going to do a new thing in and through us.

Many, many decades ago God did a new thing. On January 18, 1916, God sent Oscar Haynes into this world. Some of you may have known Oscar. He was a dedicated Disciple of Christ, especially dedicated to his church, his Region, and his denomination. He served on the Boards of Directors of both Disciples Men's Ministries and Disciples Home Missions, to name just a few. I have known Oscar since my first day on the job as a Disciples Minister. In recent years he would put his arm around my shoulders, lean over into my ear, and whisper, "Ron, have I ever told you that Disciples Home Missions is the heart of this church?" He believed in this ministry and spent his life supporting it. Oscar died on July 31, 2014. He was 98 years old. At his funeral, I learned that Oscar was not just my friend. Oscar was everybody's friend. Everybody loved Oscar.

My friend and colleague in ministry, Alvin Jackson, Senior Pastor of Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City and Co-Founder and Co-President of the Disciples Center for Public Witness in Washington, D.C., wrote a blog saying, "Oscar was one of the greats among us and we can never be quite the same without him. Maya Angelou's poem that she wrote and recited at the funeral of her friend James Baldwin seems most appropriate for my friend and the friend of many, Oscar Haynes."

From Maya Angelou's, **When Great Trees Fall**:

"When great trees fall,



rocks on distant hills shudder,  
lions hunker down  
in tall grasses,  
and even elephants  
lumber after safety.

“When great trees fall  
in forests,  
small things recoil into silence, their senses  
eroded beyond fear.

“When great souls die,  
the air around us becomes  
light, rare, sterile.  
We breathe, briefly.  
Our eyes, briefly,  
see with  
a hurtful clarity.  
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,  
examines,  
gnaws on kind words  
unsaid,  
promised walks  
never taken.

“Great souls die and  
our reality, bound to  
them, takes leave of us.  
Our souls,  
dependent upon their  
nurture,  
now shrink, wizened.  
Our minds, formed  
and informed by their  
radiance, fall away.  
We are not so much maddened  
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance of  
dark, cold.

“And when great souls die,  
after a period of peace blooms,  
slowly and always  
irregularly. Spaces fill  
with a kind of  
soothing electric vibration.  
Our senses, restored, never  
to be the same, whisper to us.



They existed. They existed.  
We can be. Be and be  
better. For they existed.”

Indulge me just a little longer. Many, many decades ago, God did a new thing. On March 18, 1921, God sent Harold Johnson into this world. Harold served on the staff of Disciples Home Missions, assisting in the training new ministers for new congregations and a consultant to the Consultation on Church Union. He is warmly remembered as the grandfather of the North American and Pacific Asian Disciples [NAPAD]. He traveled to Asia and met people who would become his interest for the remainder of his life. One of his interests was St. Francis of Assisi. He once made a pilgrimage to that part of the world where St. Francis lived and came back home transformed by the experience.

Harold Johnson died on September 6, 2014. He was 93 years old. On October 6, 2014, I received a letter from Dr. Harold and Mrs. Evelyn Watkins, former President of Church Extension. Hal and Evelyn write:

“Harold was a far more significant voice and change agent than was ever given his due. Many areas in the life of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) benefitted from his wisdom and work – education, youth, new congregation, leader development, regional, minorities just to mention a few.”

At his funeral, I learned that his favorite passage was, **The Prayer of St. Francis:**

“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy;  
O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

What does one say after such readings as these from Maya Angelou and St. Francis?

Nothing.



*Equipping Disciples for Christ*



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March 4, 2015

In 2014, I traveled a total of 47 days to be with chaplains in settings all the country. In January, I attended the annual Conference of Endorsers of Military and VA chaplains in Alexandria, VA, and then was able to represent our church as Chaplain (Colonel) Rhett Starnes received a Purple Heart Award at Fort Bragg, NC. Rhett had suffered from PTSD as a result of an explosion in Iraq some years earlier.

In April, I made a swing through the state of Virginia to visit both civilian and military chaplains, two of whom are Federal Prison Chaplains. In all, I visited more than a dozen chaplains in various cities, over the course of four days. The highlight of this trip was a special visit to Chaplain (Colonel, Retired) Maury Hundley, a 97-year old minister living in Roanoke, VA near his wife who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Maury is the oldest living chaplain who served in World War II. He hit the beach at Normandy on D-Day plus 30 and served with the Army in intense areas of fighting along the coast of Europe and into Germany. And he was there to see some of the concentration camps as well. The Army is memorializing him in their Chaplin Museum at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

Visits to Chaplains in South Carolina in May were particularly rewarding, as I witnessed the exchange of command at the Army Chaplain School from David Colwell (Colonel, now retired) and Lamar Griffin (Colonel). Lamar is one of our newest transfers to our church from the Southern Baptist Convention. With three more chaplains in the process of making the change over to our denomination, we will have as many as seven or eight in the period of less than two years who have found the Disciples of Christ to be a welcoming and supportive church in which they can do their ministry.

June saw a trip to Kentucky and Indiana where I visited chaplains and pastoral counselors on both sides of the Ohio River. Visiting with VA and military chaplains, my highlight was getting to speak with chaplains in training at Fort Knox, KY,



where they were serving the cadets in ROTC Summer Camp. Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Greg Thogmartin graciously hosted me and gave me a tour of the posts where 30 years ago I served as pastor at the historic Main Post Chapel. Earlier in the month, I was privileged to deliver the ordination sermon for Ralph Botte, new graduate of Wake Forest Divinity School and new chaplain in the Army Reserves.

July was a busy month at Fort Jackson again as I was joined by Reverend Ron Degges, President of DHM, as we attended the change of command for Chaplain (CAPT) Kyle Fauntleroy at the US Navy Chaplain School. While there, I was able to visit with a number of military and civilian chaplains. Later that month I traveled to Springfield to conduct the funeral of Colonel (Retired) Wayne George, husband of Chaplain LTC--US Army, (Retired) Linda George. Linda and Wayne had been members of my church in Columbia, SC and have been dear friends for a number of years.

Traveling back to Fort Jackson in November, I was present at the graduation of two new Navy Chaplains, Travis Armes and Jimmy Gawne, with Travis becoming an active duty chaplain with the Marines at Camp Pendleton, CA. First Christian Church hosted a luncheon for our chaplains in the area, and we had over 15 chaplains--military and civilian in attendance. Then in December I made one final trip to South Carolina to attend the graduation of Chaplain (CPT) Jonathan Fisher at the Army Chaplain School.

In all, I traveled 47 days last year of the 75 days for which I am contracted. In the coming year, we are hosting a retreat for chaplains and counselors in Columbus, OH, before the General Assembly, with Dr. Rita Brock keynoting our sessions and Rev. Ron Degges leading our worship. We will also have the chance to interact with the DHM Board members, as we share worship and meal times.

*Equipping Disciples for Christ*

both civilian and military ministry. As military chaplains retire, the number of serving Disciples in uniform continues to decline, and I am hoping that my trip to the Seminarians' Conference in March will enable me to tell the good news stories about what magnificent work our chaplains are doing. Our numbers hold steady around 300, as we continue to gain civilian chaplains--especially in hospitals and hospice settings. By God's grace, we shall continue to serve our fine clergy in specialized ministries in the way they deserve.

My focus will  
continue to be on  
recruiting qualified and  
dedicated chaplains for

**CHRISTMOUNT CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY, INC.**

Michael P. Murphy, Executive Director  
222 Fern Way, Black Mountain, North Carolina 28711  
(828) 669-8977 Fax (828) 669-6301  
E-mail: [info@christmount.org](mailto:info@christmount.org) Web site: [www.christmount.org](http://www.christmount.org)

**Mission Statement:** To provide opportunities in the heart of the mountains for Christian hospitality, rest for the soul, and renewal for the journey.

Christmount is the retreat, conference, and camp center for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. It's a place for education, spiritual renewal, church retreats, camps, family reunions, and many other types of events. In the spirit of the Disciples of Christ, the facilities are used by many Christian traditions, as well as families and non-profit groups. Christmount is also available for use by individuals and families.

In December, 2014, the first phase of a two-part construction project began, renovating the old dining room space in the Guest House, which had been used for a multi-purpose room. The space will be turned into a large conference meeting facility with the capability of being divided into two meeting spaces by use of moveable walls. Included in the project is an updating of all technical equipment for the conference rooms. The first phase will be completed in spring of 2015, with the second phase set to begin in late autumn and completed in early 2016.

The Strategic Plan for 2012 – 2016 continues to guide the governance of Christmount. An Administrative Board has replaced the Board, while a larger Council carries out ministry tasks such as revamping programs and working to increase awareness of Christmount throughout the Disciples world and beyond.

One of Christmount's newest ministry ventures is a partnership with Asheville Youth Mission to develop a Mission Camp in the eastern part of Buncombe County, NC. Youth groups looking for a more intense mission experience than Christmount's Work Camp will work in the community of Black Mountain and east Asheville in homes and with organizations that need assistance from volunteers.

Camp Lakey Gap for people on the autism spectrum is entering its sixth summer. This unique ministry offers residential camp experiences for children and adults who might not otherwise be able to go to camp. Christmount also continues to offer two weeks of Camp Sunshine, a camp for adults who are cognitively challenged, with volunteers coming from CYF groups who desire a different type of mission experience.

Christmount continues to welcome ministers on sabbatical, individuals seeking a place for personal spiritual retreats, family reunions, choir retreats, and church leadership retreats. There are also unique programs: the Festival of Biblical Storytelling, Oreon E.



Scott Clergy Conference, Elders and Deacons Workshop (co-sponsored by Lexington Theological Seminary), Marriage Enrichment Retreat, Post-College Retreat, Biblical Storytelling for Pastors, Discovery Weekend Women's Retreat, Music Workshop, Christmount Week, Storytelling in the Classroom for Teachers, and College Retreat.

Come to Christmount, where your renewal is our priority!

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General Youth Council  
Rev. Trayce Stewart

The General Youth Council continues to give voice to youth and their concerns across the life of the US and Canada. The council has intentionally reached out to Disciple ethnic minority groups to increase diversity to better reflect the changing landscape of North America and the church. The current GYC consists of 8 high school youths and 3 young adults. Through the continuing support of DHM, a contract position of liaison was also created for a young adult to facilitate work as we move toward to the 2015 General Assembly.

GYC continues to host it's bi-annual leadership week to formally introduce members to the larger church structure and leaders within the denomination. Through monthly conference calls, a mid-winter retreat and gatherings utilizing technology, the council continues to work on programming for General Assembly, regional gatherings and increasing participation in other Disciple events and ministries.

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**All Peoples Community Center (Est. 1942)**  
**822 East 20<sup>th</sup> Street Los Angeles, CA 90011 (213) 747-6357 Fax: (213)**  
**747-0541**

**[allpeoples@allpeoplescc.org](mailto:allpeoples@allpeoplescc.org)**

**[www.allpeoplescc.org](http://www.allpeoplescc.org)**

***Real Solutions. Real Heart. Real Service.***

All Peoples believes that social service programs should promote equality, unity, respect, and self-determination. Our primary goal is to establish a foundation to strengthen individuals, families and the community in South Los Angeles. Founded in 1942, by the Christian Church Disciples of Christ – United Christian Missionary Society is now a mission center of Homeland Missions of Christian Church.

The philosophy of All Peoples has been an emphasis on education as a tool for successful community building. Programs are integrated to include the entire family and the majority of individuals who attend the center utilize multiple services. The services provided are; day care, pre-school, comprehensive after school program, summer residential camp held at Loch Leven Camp and Conference Center, continuation high school, sports and recreation, parenting, parent support groups, domestic violence support group, individual/family counseling, Supplemental Food Distribution, legal clinic, employment services, health education workshops, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

There have been many highlights over the past two years that have had an impact on the Center and our role in the community. Partnership and collaboration are key components in meeting the needs of individuals and families. Therefore All Peoples prides itself in our ability to reach out and make connections to bring more resources to the neighborhood.

In 2013 we partnered with the Alliance for Healthier Communities. Our goal has been to change the culture within All Peoples and encourage staff, youth and families to embrace a healthier lifestyle. To accomplish our goals; we offered workshops on healthy eating, displayed posters made by staff with encouraging messages about nutrition and exercise; and changed our menu for community wide events to offer fresh fruits, “spa water”, whole wheat or grain, salads etc. Our mothers group added an evening Zumba class four nights a week.

Our community garden has continued to grow and expand. In 2013, our high school youth learned to build raised beds. They built five raised beds for residents who had previously maintained garden at All Peoples, thereby providing space for new families to come and utilize their space. A “Food Growers Network” has been established. Residents in the community will learn to share seeds, improve gardening skills and build a support system in the neighborhood. We continue to work with the





American Friends Service Committee as we learn and respond to food justice issues in our neighborhood.

Our next partnership is to provide services as American Jobs Center “access site” In a community with staggering unemployment rates as high as 40 %, we will seek employment for persons living in South Los Angeles. Partnering with L.A. Trade Tech College, Coalition for Responsible Community Development, Employment Development Department, and others, our overall goal is to serve more than 2,600 individuals seeking employment.

We appreciate the support from Disciples Men and Women and the effort of Disciples Home Mission to be faithful to the covenant established over 72 years ago.

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#### UrbanSpirit/KB Ministries Inc

UrbanSpirit continues its perspective-changing work of poverty education, with the focus on changing systems rather than treating symptoms of poverty in America.

Our primary teaching event is still our week-long poverty simulation event conducted in Louisville, which has drawn college and church groups from across the country. We also have worked with colleges and seminaries to offer course credit for “cross cultural” and “leadership training” requirements.

Our middle-school “social justice camp,” SoJust, is being held in Flint MI for the first time in August 2015, and we’re hoping to reach another region, another constituency. We’re also excited to engage the entire cohort of DHM Summer Interns in this SoJust event, as they regather in Flint for their end-of-summer debriefing. We love cross-over and collaboration!

Our primary challenge has been developing a model of sustainability that doesn’t require a full-time, year-round executive. Our founder and long-time director returned to parish ministry in 2014, with the expectation – and congregational endorsement – that she would continue her work with UrbanSpirit.

We continue to be an ecumenical center, with varying ties to Disciples, UCC, PCUSA and the Episcopal Church.



**YAKIMA CHRISTIAN MISSION**  
WHITE SWAN, WA  
LARRY CRIST, REPORTING  
LDCCCSF@GMAIL.COM

AS WITH MANY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS YAKIMA CHRISTIAN MISSION IS GOING THROUGH A PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANT TRANSITION. IN 2014 THE BOARD OF YAKIMA CHRISTIAN MISSION DIVESTED ITSELF OF THE PROPERTY THAT IT OWNED WHICH WAS A HOME AND LAND. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THAT SALE, DISCIPLES HOME MISSIONS SOLD THE PROPERTY IT OWNED WHICH INCLUDED THE LOG CHURCH, PARSONAGE AND OFFICE SPACE ALL OF WHICH SET ON FIVE ACRES OF LAND. THE PROCEEDS FROM THESE SALES HAVE BEEN PLACED WITH THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION AND THE EARNINGS WILL BE USED FOR FUTURE MINISTRY FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE YAKIMA VALLEY. WE ALSO HAVE MOVED ALL THE BOOKKEEPING TO DISCIPLES HOME MISSIONS WHICH MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SPEND MORE TIME IN THE COMMUNITY.

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HAS BEEN ABLE TO BE INSTRUMENTAL IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY SKATEBOARD PARK AND DEVELOPING NETWORKS FOR MINISTRY TO INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AND ELDERS. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALSO WAS ABLE TO IDENTIFY A LOCAL NEED AT THE WHITE SWAN FOOD BANK. OVER THE 2014 CHRISTMAS BREAK THERE WAS A NEED FOR LOCAL FOOD NEEDY CHILDREN AND WE WERE ABLE (THANKS TO DISCIPLES HOME MISSIONS) TO PROVIDE \$1000 GRANT. AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE FUTURE THERE IS A LOT OF ENERGY BEING DEVOTED TO RESOLUTION 1231, A PEACE INTERN FOR THE COMING SUMMER, VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION AND FEMA IN ALASKA, WINTER TALK (A CONVERSATION BETWEEN NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE PEOPLES ON AN ANNUAL BASIS) AND THERE WILL BE AT LEAST SIX GROUPS COMING FOR SAGE QUEST THIS SUMMER.

TRANSITIONS ARE NEVER EASY, IT TAKES TIME AND PATIENCE. PROGRAMS WITHOUT PROPERTY, RESOURCING WITH VERY LIMITED FUNDS AND A SHIFTING CULTURAL POPULATION ARE JUST A FEW OF THE SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES WE WILL BE ADDRESSING THE FUTURE. WE SINCERELY APPRECIATE YOUR MINISTRY ON OUR BEHALF AND ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS AS WE CONTINUE THIS INTERESTING JOURNEY.

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**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from Disciples Home Missions and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

**GA-1509**

Disciples Women  
Of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Disciples Women continue to address the four priorities of the 2020 Vision by informing new congregations about resources for women's ministries; providing resources to strengthen and transform women's ministries in existing congregations; training and developing leaders in women of all ages; encouraging and seeking to assure diversity through all aspects of women's ministries.

In response to the needs of women's ministries and efforts to continue to resource those ministries of the United States and Canada, we developed a new annual Bible study for ***Just Women Magazine*** written by Disciples Women scholars. The women have responded by increased demand for the Bible study necessitating a reprint of its first issue. We are now working on our third Bible study to be published early 2016. ***Just Women*** is the official study resource for Disciples women and is a quarterly publication.

Disciples Women shared sponsorship of a peace intern with Disciples Center for Public Witness to support and provide information to share concerning women's ministries in peace and justice. Cara McKinney served primarily during the Quadrennial Assembly in supporting the Civil Rights celebration.

Last summer over 1200 women gathered for the 2014 Quadrennial Assembly to worship, learn, network, celebrate, do hands-on mission, celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil Rights Act and walk against Human Trafficking in the streets of Atlanta.

- More than 350 women marched in the streets to demonstrate against human trafficking. The *Walk Against Trafficking* raised just over \$6,400 for [youthSpark](#), an Atlanta organization that works against human trafficking
- The *Masks for a Cause* had 37 entries and raised over \$1,000 for the [Wellspring Living](#) Program that provides trauma therapy to women who have been sexually abused.
- *City of Refuge* mission: 400+ books, 650 pieces of underwear, 550 pairs of socks, 840 hygiene items were taken to the women and children
- 2,200 pairs of eyeglasses were donated to the Lions Club
- Blessing Box offerings: \$ 9,363
- DW offerings: \$12,431
- DWEF offerings: \$11,589
- Continued emphasis on human trafficking was announced: [Breaking the Chains: Link by Link](#) that will be populated with resources on three areas: sex trafficking, labor/immigration trafficking and demand
- Nearly half of the women visited the [Martin Luther King Jr. History Center](#) on guided tours
- 80 workshops: on ministry tips to self-care to global concerns to autism

- Global Ministries had frequent talks in the exhibit hall by mission partners and a large contingent of visitors from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.
- [Minnie Vautrin](#), an Illinois Disciple who taught in China in the early 20th century, was remembered and honored for her protection of 250,000 Chinese people on the grounds of Gingling College during the Japanese invasion of Nanjing in 1937.
- More than 300 gathered at [First Congregational Church](#) (UCC) to remember the anniversary of the [Civil Rights Act](#), signed into law on July 2, 1964.
- *Mary Frances Early*, the first AA graduate student of the University of GA (1962) and *Joan C. Browning*, a freedom rider (1961) were both on hand to tell their first-person stories of the time leading up to the passage of the Civil Rights Act.
- Morning plenary sessions featured a focus on a biblical woman with a telling of her story and then a reflection ("unpacking") of the story by scholars followed by a "modern day story" and a time to reflect in small groups.
- Evening and Sunday worship had a series of dynamic speakers from the general expression of church as well as global and congregational perspectives.

Attendance has dropped from over 3000 through 2006 to just under 1900 in 2010 and just over 1200 in 2014. While the QA budget was based on this decline, registration dropped below that planned and resulted in a loss that drew upon funds expected for other women's ministries. GA registration has been tracking similarly decreasing numbers as have many other national church events in other denominations. Additionally QA always falls in the same year as constituency assemblies and women often have to decide between the two. We understand that there are many possible reasons for this decline and we understand the passion of the women who want to see QA continue into the future. Keeping all that in mind the executive committee will be spending time in discernment, dreaming, and brainstorming to consider the future of QA. We know that it will not look like past QAs and we embrace that reality knowing that there are other ways to include all the essential pieces of QA while completely re-imagining its look and feel.

Disciples Women are planning for General Assembly 2015. Inspired by the **Soar!** theme, we began last summer to invite the Church to fold peace cranes to add to our display at GA with a prayer written on each. Like the Japanese legend, our goal is to have at least 1,000 peace cranes with a prayer on each by the end of GA when we will gather to pray together for those blessings, intercessions, and guidance prayers; many groups and individuals have already contributed to this effort. Knowing that Disciples women are always on the move in mission and service we are currently collecting pictures and stories of women in ministry and mission through all sorts of social media by asking them to be noted with the hashtag #DWsoar. These efforts will be celebrated at the Disciples Women luncheon on Wednesday during GA. Officers of the Executive committee will be leading a Bible study on "Women of the Bible" on Sunday. There will be an aftersession for all women on Monday evening. A partnership has also been formed with Disciples Youth to assist in their mission activities that will be linked to their workshops. One of those workshops will be on Human Trafficking. We are gathering crochet hooks and plastic bags needing recycling to make mats/blankets to be given to people who are homeless and will be providing volunteers to help teach youth to



crochet and to support the mission effort. The Youth will also take time to fold peace cranes and add their prayers to end Human Trafficking to them; Disciples women will be on hand to teach and support crane folding. Disciples Women staff and officers will be available at their booth during General Assembly to talk about the changing ministries of women throughout the church and to hear more about needs for resources and mission support.

A new Executive Committee began its work at the 2014 QA. These officers reflect the diversity of the Disciples church and the women who are part of it. They are gifted and ready to make the necessary changes in women's ministries to reflect the needs of the transforming church. With this committee we have begun to make the necessary changes in meeting time and length to continue to make leadership more accessible to a wider group of women.

The Reverend Chesla T. Nickelson was called as the Program Director – Merger Staff person and began her ministry with Disciples Women the first day of QA. Chesla is open to the changes necessary for a healthy ministry and has already become an asset for this ministry.

The new social action emphasis for the next quadrennium was announced at QA 2014 which will be a focused rededication to working to end human trafficking. The new theme is "Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking: Link by Link". The links we will focus on are sex trafficking, labor trafficking and demand. The new web pages for this focus are being built every day as more information is contributed about resources and opportunities for mission. The executive committee is currently working on a portfolio of recommended efforts to support for those women who are raising funds and are not sure what to do with them. The funds so far have been supporting projects from buying smokers for villages in Ghana to inserts for bars of soap in hotels to reach trafficking victims when they are alone.

The Woman-to-Woman Worldwide (W2WW) journey in 2014 sent a delegation to France and Italy to discover the life of Protestant women in a highly secular and Roman Catholic society where they have been persecuted and marginalized for their Protestant beliefs. This group of fourteen had the opportunity to meet with women from a variety of churches to hear their stories of persecution, violence, and even social shunning. While France has a very strict understanding of the separation of church and state, our global ministry partners have helped find a way for this year's project to support one of the programs we visited in Paris where immigrant and victimized women find a way to move from homelessness to home ownership.

Our new Program Director is updating and improving our Leader Apprentice Program (LAP) to continue to provide leadership training for women of color. Past graduates are now serving at all levels of the Disciples church. Training is also provided at the annual gathering of regional leaders, interregional gatherings, and venues where staff are asked to assist.

Disciples women continue to contribute to the whole mission of the church through their ministries and giving. Funding for Disciples Women's Ministry is through a portion of what Disciples Home Missions receives from Disciples Mission Fund and through a portion of the giving through Blessing Boxes. These funds are budgeted and administered by the Disciples Women Executive Committee.

Disciples Women are on the move.

Respectfully,

*Pat Donahoo*

Patricia A. Donahoo  
Executive Director, Disciples Women

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from Disciples Women of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and forwards it to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

**GA-1510****DIVISION OF OVERSEAS MINISTRIES  
GLOBAL MINISTRIES**

1099 North Meridian  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204  
Julia Brown Karimu

President of the Division of Overseas Ministries and Co-Executive of Global Ministries

The Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ continue to share in a common witness in mission through Global Ministries. The vision of Global Ministries is that all of God's people and creation share in God's abundant life. The mission is to receive and share the Good News of Jesus Christ by joining with global and local partners to work for justice, reconciliation and peace. Global Ministries is grounded in five core values, which include the following: **presence** – manifesting God's love by living in intentional, committed relationships; **mutuality** – walking in hope with others in God's mission; **community** – building interdependence and unity among all God's children; **justice** – living out God's radical love by confronting powers that deny the fullness of life and the integrity of creation; and **peace** – embodying reconciling relationships with God, humanity and creation. Global Ministries is in the third year of a strategic plan, which encompasses the following directions: nurturing community, working for peace with justice, sharing the story and developing resources. These strategic directions enable the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) "to share the Good News of Jesus Christ from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth". This report will provide an update of the various ways in which the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ participate in God's mission in the world.

Global Ministries continues to participate in a ministry of presence and accompaniment. A total of 125 missionaries served in 45 countries in 2014, which included 43 fully supported missionaries. The number of fully supported missionaries has been on the decline in recent years due to the increase in expenses related to missionary support and the decline in revenue. Global Ministries had over 160 missionaries serving in 1996 compared to 43 in 2014. Global Ministries continues to receive more requests from partner churches for missionaries, as well, as more inquiries from Disciples and United Church of Christ members who are willing to serve than it has the capacity to respond to due to financial constraints. Therefore, in 2013 Global Ministries initiated a personalized fund raising model for the support of missionaries. This model allows for the identification of a missionary candidate who will work with his/her region, family, and friends to raise the funds for his/her appointment. There have been three successful appointments made as of this date: Kim and Eric Free, members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon are serving as missionaries in Mozambique and Ann Gregory, a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest is serving as a missionary with the Church of Christ in Thailand. Paul Turner, a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Pacific Southwest is a

candidate to serve with the Disciples of Christ Community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Global Ministries has nearly 300 overseas partner churches and church agencies located in over 70 countries. As a way to engage more thoroughly with a specific partner, Global Ministries has launched a regional/country initiative. The first initiative was related to the Congo and was launched at the 2013 General Assembly. This initiative enabled the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ to respond to the Resolution of 2011 which called for reflection and advocacy on issues confronting our partner church and church agencies in the Congo. The Disciples of Christ have been engaged in the Congo since 1899. The Congo Initiative involved a Bible study curriculum, health care focus, micro-credit programs, educational opportunities for women and girls, and people-to-people exchanges. It gave the members of both denominations an opportunity to understand the issues and priorities of the Disciples of Christ Community in the Congo and the Church of Christ in the Congo. The initiative concluded December 31, 2014, however Global Ministries' deep engagement with sisters and brothers in the Congo continues into the future. Hopefully, this initiative has sparked a renewed commitment to this historical partnership.

The next initiative will be launched at the 2015 General Synod and General Assembly and it will relate to the Middle East. The Global Ministries' Middle East Initiative will allow both the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ to focus on the region for an extended time. Through highlighting aspects of mission and partnership, the initiative will offer an opportunity for the church to become familiar with the range of denominational partners in the region and the issues they face and the context in which they face them. Both denominations will be able to draw on various resources and tools so that greater familiarity with the Middle East is possible, including the long legacy of Christian presence in the region.

### **Leadership Development**

Sixteen young adults served as global mission interns in 2013. The Global Mission Intern Program is designed for young adults between the ages of 21 and 30, who have completed their basic college degree, but have little or no professional experience. It provides an opportunity for young adults to experience the global church and to discern their future, which sometimes results in a call to the ministry or to other vocations. The young adults often become leaders in some aspect of the life of the church.

### **College of Mission Intern Program**

Charissa Ramey, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year seminarian at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis served as a College of Mission Intern. She updated partner information on the Global Ministries' web site related to Latin America and Africa and worked with the Global Mission churches. Nathan Robert Kibler, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year seminarian at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis served as a College of Mission Intern. He updated partner information on the Global Ministries' web site related to East Asia and the Pacific and worked on the REACH Curriculum. Chris Nkamba Ndjungu, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year





student at Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves, St. Louis, Missouri served as a College of Mission Intern. He worked on the Congo Initiative.

### **Anti-Racism Training**

The Division of Overseas Ministries Board of Directors completed 2 sections of anti-racism training led by Crossroads staff.

### **Personnel**

Sandra Gourdet retired after serving 42 years on December 31, 2014. Sandra worked as a Fraternal Worker (Global Mission Intern) in 1972 with the Community of the Church of Christ in Zaire. She served in Mbandaka as an English teacher. From 1975 to 1979, she was assigned to the Disciples of Christ Community of the Church of Christ in Zaire as a teacher. She taught from 1981-1988 at Bolenge. She served from 1993 – 1997 in administration and teaching with the United Church in Zimbabwe. In October, 1997, she was appointed to the Zimbabwe Synod of the United Church of Christ in Southern Africa, where she served as a women's worker, AIDS Orphan Coordinator and as a local pastor. In 1999, she was appointed to the Zimbabwe Synod of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa where she served as a consultant in education and women's development programs. Her last missionary assignment was with the National Council of Spiritual Churches in Haiti. She began her service as the Area Executive for the Africa Office in July of 2005 and concluded her service on December 31, 2014.

Nancy Pickell concluded her service with the Division of Overseas Ministries after serving as treasurer for over 13 years. She served with the Christian Church Foundation for 11 years as Assistant Vice President of Investments and Permanent Funds.

Angel Rivera-Agosto began his service as the Area Executive for Latin America and the Caribbean on September 1, 2014. Angel served five years as the Executive Secretary for the Puerto Rico Council of Churches, with mission and evangelism as his primary focus. He and his wife, Joanne previously served as Global Ministries missionaries to the Latin American Council of Churches.

LaMarco Cable was selected to serve as Area Executive for the Africa Office. His work experience includes serving as Deputy Director of Organizing for Bread for the World; Global Ministries' program associate for advocacy related to Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean; and Interim Mission Personnel Executive for Global Ministries. In addition, he served as a local pastor. LaMarco began his service on October 1, 2014 with French language training.

Lonna Owens is serving as treasurer for both DOM and the Disciples Home Mission. She has served as treasurer for the Disciples Home Mission for 25 years. She officially began her combined ministry on January 1, 2015.



**In Memoriam**

Patricia (Pat) Sanborn died October 10, 2014. Pat served for over 39 years as the administrative assistant in the Africa Office. She worked with the following Africa Area Executives: Robert Nelson, Dan Hoffman, Howard and Darlene Goodrich (interims), Goba Bonganjalo and Sandra Gourdet. She had a tremendous knowledge of the partners in Africa, as well as, love and respect for the people.

**FINANCE**

Nancy J. Pickell, Finance Executive

The Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM) revenue for 2014 is estimated to be over \$6 million. This would be nearly \$1 million less than in 2013 based on this estimate. It is too early to really know the actual revenue for the year or to be able to share the significant fluctuations in revenue but as of this report the figures and projections are showing a decline in revenue.

Of the total revenue, some is designated for special programs, projects, endowment contributions and capital and new church funding. Approximately 25% is from Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ as part of the funding of our joint work together as Global Ministries. The balance of the revenue comes from Disciples Mission Fund (DMF), investments of DOM, United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS) endowment distributions, Christian Church Foundation (CCF) permanent fund distributions, operating fund gifts and miscellaneous income.

The DOM Endowment assets are invested with the CCF in the Beasley Growth Fund and the Campbell Multi-Strategy Fund. Annually DOM takes a draw, which is 5% of the average prior 20-quarter rolling market value of the total investment. This draw is used to support operations and designated spending based on the restriction of the endowment. In 2014, this draw was \$604,712 (*compared to \$618,793 in 2013*).

An independent audit is performed annually of the financial records and accounting systems of DOM. A complete audit will be provided for the Yearbook upon completion of the audit and report to the audit committee of the board. The audit committee will address any material internal control weaknesses found during the audit and suggested improvements to internal controls in the management letter to the board. In the past 14 years there has been no material internal control weaknesses found to report.

**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Jane Sullivan-Davis, Executive  
David Owen and Tom Morse, Program Associates

**Special Giving and Ministry with Donors**

In 2014 the Global Ministries Resource Development Office continued to engage members, churches, and all expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ to connect in global mission through their special giving for



the work of Global Ministries. The priorities for special giving categories for both direct and planned gifts were the following:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Priority: Unrestricted Gifts
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Priority: Gifts for Missionary and Long-Term Volunteer Support, including gifts for new missionary appointments
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Priority: Restricted Gifts for donor-specified partner programs or theme-based designations

In 2014, Global Ministries received special gifts, unrestricted and restricted, through the offices of the Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM) in Indianapolis and Wider Church Ministries (WCM) in Cleveland. In addition, both DOM and WCM received new gifts to existing DOM and WCM endowment funds, bequests, and planned gift residuals.

In 2014, one new DOM endowment fund was established. The ***Morse Family Endowment*** was established with the Division of Overseas Ministries at the request of former mission personnel to China, Tom and Lynnea Morse, in order to provide resources for missionary support and for the overall work of Global Ministries.

### **Promotion, Appeals, and Special Campaigns**

In April 2014, the Global Ministries Spring Appeal went out to approximately all constituent households that had not opted out of mailings, including Disciple and UCC constituents. The Indianapolis Year-End Appeal was mailed to constituent households that are not UCC in November (the unified Annual Appeal from the UCC national setting went to UCC constituents as part of a joint national UCC appeal).

Resource Development continued working with other Global Ministries staff in the development and implementation of new fundraising approaches for mission personnel support. In 2014, three cases were worked on, with two departing for their appointments during the year:

- Kim and Erik Free, members of First Christian Church Portland Oregon, departed for a four-year term of service with the United Church of Christ of Mozambique in March 2014.
- Anne Gregory, Disciple pastor from the Upper Midwest Region, departed for a three-year term of service with the United Church of Christ of Thailand in December 2014.
- In October 2014 fundraising efforts began to support Paul Turner, member of Abundant Life Christian Church Los Angeles, California for a four-year term of service with the Community of Disciples of Christ in the Congo (CDCC).

In 2014 the Global Ministries Office of Resource Development coordinated special giving promotions throughout the year through its Special Projects, Alternative Christmas, Congo Initiative special projects, and donor events hosted by individuals, board members and former missionaries.

Resource Development staff worked with fundraising efforts initiated by constituents, and visited individual donors and donor congregations/regions, sometimes in the company of one of the Global Ministries Co-Executives, persons in mission, or home-based staff colleagues.

### **AFRICA**

Sandra R. Gourdet, Area Executive

It has been a privilege and genuine honor to serve as the Africa Executive in Global Ministries for more than nine years. It has afforded me the opportunity to experience first-hand the many examples of congregations in transformation, the establishment of new churches, leadership development and how our brothers and sisters cope with the many injustices that are often the legacy of colonial rule and domination. Our brothers and sisters across the continent of Africa faced many challenges during the year, but many of the difficulties were seen as opportunities for growth and a renewed commitment to their witness and their faith in the midst of troubling times. Across the board, there was visible evidence of increased leadership development, the establishment of new congregations, the transformation of congregations to serve the needs of the community and renewed efforts to stand for justice and peace. As churches in America, we were privileged to be invited on the journey to reaffirm our own commitment to the wholeness of one church.

The year 2014 saw many of our global partners serving the needs of the community and standing for justice and peace. It is important to highlight the work in Ghana where the Council of Churches has played a monumental role in exposing the injustices of child trafficking while providing assistance for families as children are reintegrated into society. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church has created not only a safe haven for street children but also educational opportunities for many of them. The lives of young teen mothers have been transformed through the skills' training offered to them by the church. The lives of many around the country have been transformed through the environmental ministries promoted by the church, especially the tree-planting program and reforestation.

In Lesotho, health care and education remain priorities for the church as it provides a holistic ministry to its many members. Providing clean water to remote communities will always be a challenge as well as an opportunity for church partners in Mozambique. Along with this goal, agricultural projects that provide food, employment and sustainability are key elements in transforming communities. In spite of the perpetual instability in Zimbabwe, the church has worked hard to maintain its emphasis on leadership development, agricultural projects and theological studies.

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges that confronted our partners in 2014 in West Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa) and Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) was the deadly disease Ebola. The way that the church and religious organizations reached out to families infected and affected was phenomenal. In Sierra Leone, where the death toll topped the 6000 mark, the church played a major role in



both preventive and curative care. In both Congos, the church sent teams to the tropical equatorial forest to help contain the disease in one area to prevent it spreading throughout the country.

In Swaziland, the church is actively involved in community care points where food and assistance are provided to low-income or no-income communities. Even more pleasing has been the participation of the youth in the development of the church. The goal articulated for a Youth Conference organized by the youth leadership of the Kukhany'Okusha Zion Church held the latter half of the year was to equip young leaders for the ministry and development of the church faced with challenging issues. The church has excelled in providing leadership development opportunities for the youth through the trilateral agreement with the TEEC in South Africa, Global Ministries and Kukhany'Okusha Zion Church.

The Organization for African Instituted Churches (OAIC) based in Kenya saw theological education in the African Independent Churches as transformational and necessary for its member churches. Theological education has always been done through mentorship and apprenticeship and has many times not been documented. With new challenges facing the AICs, a need for an appropriate theological curriculum that can recover, articulate and document their theology based on their context, mission and identity have been an essential part of the organization's work. The OAIC also placed a lot of emphasis on training women. This focused on training on health issues that included HIV/AIDS and cancer, leadership, the role of women as stewards, communication and crisis management in the family, the role of the mother as a doctor in the family and the role of women in the church.

Given a world that craves peace and justice, the role of the Programme for Christian and Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) has been a balm in the midst of many contentious situations on the continent. Committed to Christian constructive relations with Muslims for sustainable peace in society and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims towards the holistic-development of the human family and the environment, PROCMURA spoke out against Boko Haram's kidnapping of over 200 girls in Nigeria earlier this year. The organization continues to work with its partners in Nigeria to give support as needed in the country and to promote peace.

Many of our African partners excel in establishing new congregations, which are necessary as the number of members increase. 2014 has been no different. In Angola, building and rebuilding church temples to accommodate new members remains a priority. In the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), the church leadership traveled to rural areas to ordain new ministers, open a health care center that has been named in honor of Mrs. Pat Sanborn and encourage refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo who have established themselves in the country. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa), 138 new members were baptized in December in the Mbandaka, of which twenty four traveled by canoe to the site where the baptism ceremony was being held.

The Congo Initiative which expanded a period of eighteen months and concluded in December 2014 is a microcosm of what we do as a church. It allowed us to work in companionship with our partners in Congo and congregations in the USA on transformational ministry, leadership development, meeting the needs of communities and standing for justice and peace. Some of the highlights were exchange visits, insight into how the war and scramble for mineral resources has impacted the lives of the people, accompaniment with women who have been used as weapons of war, supporting health care, agricultural and water programs, scholarships to encourage leadership development and many other aspects of ministry. As we move from the Congo to the Middle East in 2015, it is clear that the work in the Congo will continue although the specific initiative has ended.

Our partners across the continent have appreciated the partnership with Global Ministries and received our missionaries and global mission interns. Although our numbers have fallen since 2013, we still have twelve committed individuals serving in six countries as missionaries, global mission interns and long-term volunteers.

The year was challenging and often there were times when it seemed as if there were not enough hours in a day to do the work, but God was completely faithful and will continue to be so as a new era of leadership begins in the Africa Office in 2015.

## **EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

Xiaoling Zhu, Area Executive

### **The Pacific**

The churches in the Pacific came together this summer in the spirit of Wansolwara (Pidgin English for One Salt Water – a terminology now commonly used in the Pacific to define the oneness of the people of the Pacific who share the same Pacific ocean). During the Regional Ecumenical Program meeting in Nadi, Fiji, the General Secretaries of churches in the Pacific affirmed their oneness through ecumenical support and helping each other not only ecclesiastically, but also politically, socially, and economically. The church has found ways it can contribute to the wellbeing of the Pacific citizens, irrespective of culture, race, denomination, or religion. Wansolwara is not only about the affirmation of having the one-salt-water as a common factor that binds them together, but also the affirmation of oneness through the image of God. It is the affirmation of oneness through creation. Taking into consideration the amount of ethnic tension that has transpired in the Pacific in the last twenty years, the church is continuing to work to find theological common ground.

### **China**

Thirty-four children at the Elim Orphanage, Xuchang, Henan welcomed their new school year. The orphanage couldn't have a full house of seventy children because of the lack of funding. Since the surrounding wells are polluted, they dug a 30 meter and a 160 meter well for water, but both were still polluted. With the support of Week of Compassion and Global Ministries, a 700-meter well was dug. Safe drinking water, as a result, will be provided to 100,000 people in the surrounding area thanks to this well,



and the income is to be added to the orphanage's self-support. It is a long term sustainable project and was appropriately named the Elim Orphanage Living Water Project.

The "3 Change 1 Demolish" policy (change old residential areas, change old industrial areas, change villages in the mist of the city, and demolish buildings violating building codes) is carried out throughout China. In Zhejiang Province, this government action affected religious places. In the last several months, one church and many oversized crosses were torn down in Zhejiang Province. The China Christian Council (CCC) presented a statement that challenged the actions in Zhejiang Province. It is still unclear who gave the order other than a provincial leader. The Asia Pacific Forum, which includes all U.S. mainline denomination representatives, had a conference call on August 19<sup>th</sup> and issued a letter to the China Christian Council to share concerns and prayers.

The book *Far, Far Away in Remote Eastern Tibet, The Story of Dr. Albert Shelton and His Colleagues from the Disciples of Christ (1903-1950)*, stories about missionaries, was published in June 2014. It included more than 467 old photos and stories about our missionaries who served in Tibet 110 years ago. Authors Aidong Zhao and Xiaoling Zhu were invited to give a special presentation: *Across Ethnic, Cultural, and Religious Barriers: The American Doctor Albert Shelton in Eastern Tibet, 1903—1922* at the first Sino-US Young Scholars Conference, in Xian, China, during the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China on September 6-7, 2014. Former President Jimmy Carter gave the opening speech at the celebration.

During World War II, the Japanese army killed 300,000 people in Nanjing, China in six weeks starting on December 13, 1937. Disciples had six missionaries in Nanjing at the time: Searle Miner Bates, Lewis S. C. Smythe, Minnie Vautrin, James McCallum, Richard Freeman Brady and Grace Bauer, who stayed in Nanjing during at great risk to their own lives. They joined the International Safety Zone Committee, providing medical and other services, and saved more than 250,000 people. The China Center TV Station (CCTV) video crews came to interview missionary families, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Historical Society and church leaders. A five-part documentary *Nanjing Memory 1937* was shown nationwide in December 2014 in China.

### **Hong Kong**

Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP) was a civil disobedience campaign launched in Hong Kong. In the course of the 2014 Hong Kong electoral reform, OCLP tried to pressure the PRC Government into granting an electoral system which "satisfies the international standards in relation to universal suffrage" in Hong Kong. OCLP announced the commencement of Occupy Central on September 28<sup>th</sup>, in the midst of the heated week-long class boycott organized by Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS) and Scholars. The student strikes developed into a wave of demonstrations, which led to civil disobedience and an occupy movement of unprecedented scale. The protests gradually developed into a non-centralized occupy movement spreading to



several areas of Hong Kong through December 15, 2014. Public opinion on the student movement was divided into two opposite groups. The divisions have deeply infiltrated into the whole society, as well as every family unit, and the healing could take many years.

The Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, a partner of CGMB located in Hong Kong, has been engaged in various environmental programs for quite a long time. The APAY Resource Group on Climate Change (RGCC) is comprised of members who have a special interest in climate change and actively involve themselves in studying the aspect of lobbying and advocacy on climate change, sharing resources and information in this aspect and support the APAY in taking possible steps in this area. The RGCC is engaged in monitoring the developments in the Climate Change Negotiation process, and follows the activities of various UN and other international organizations working in this field. The YMCA members, especially the youth, act as a resource group sharing information and ideas on the recent trends of climate change; take effective steps to disseminate information to the various YMCAs involved in various programs to combat climate change; and support YMCA initiatives at regional, national and local levels to mitigate the suffering from climate change and reduce carbon emissions.

### **Taiwan**

From April 22<sup>nd</sup> thru April 25<sup>th</sup>, over 650 representatives from different Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) presbyteries and local churches convened together at Tainan's Chang Jung Girls' Senior High School, to discuss and evaluate various proposals within the annual meeting of PCT's 59th General Assembly. The major theme of this annual meeting was: Stretch Deep, the Roots of Gospel in Country and Tribe! Live out of the Faith of Church and Become the Sign of Hope! 2015 will be the sixtieth memorial anniversary of the indigenous mission, so many indigenous images and flavor permeated the program of this annual meeting agenda, including the opening ceremony, morning prayers, indigenous ministry workshops, and a celebration evening of indigenous culture. The PCT is preparing for the celebration of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015.

### **Japan**

The Empowerment of Immigrant Women in Fukushima operated by the Empowerment of Immigrant Women Affiliated Network (EIWAN) and the National Christian Conference for Promotion of a Basic Law for Foreign Residents (GAIKIKYO) is supported by Global Ministries and One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). The goal is to utilize achievements of network gains through past activities to carry out activities in cooperation with local community residents to offer support and education for immigrant women in Fukushima, where the nuclear disaster took place with 9,117 foreign residents, and to help them become financially independent and gain problem-solving ability. The Japanese government has not provided services to the approximately 2 million foreigners who live in Japan. This program aims to offer immigrant women, who tend to be excluded from foreign resident support, proper advice and accompanying support to help them learn concrete steps to solve existing problems. Many workshops were provided, such as



self-care, heritage language education, disaster prevention and multicultural cooperation. At the same time, the Fukushima Forum was established.

Article 9, seen as the core of the post-war "Peace Constitution," rules that the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and cease from using the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes. Prime Minister Abe wanted to repeal Article 9 and expand its military power. China and South Korea are against this. The National Christian Council in Japan held the 4<sup>th</sup> Interfaith International Conference on Article 9 from Dec. 1-5, 2014.

### **Philippines**

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), the strongest ever recorded in history hit the central Philippines. With a maximum sustained wind of 235 kph and gustiness of 275 kph, it ravaged the island of Leyte and Samar, the northern part of Cebu, Panay and Palawan before it exited towards the West Philippine Sea. Tacloban City in Leyte experienced the heaviest brunt of the disaster--the strong wind that caused a gargantuan storm surge obliterated the entire urban center. A couple of months after Typhoon Yolanda devastated the Visayas and Southern Luzon, the number of fatalities in its wake continued to climb, reaching 5,818 with 1,759 missing, in the latest update issued by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) in January 2014. The economic cost is likewise appalling — according to the report, the damage caused by Yolanda \$660 million, 580,481 houses were destroyed, and 587,625 were damaged. Zach Wolgemuth (OGHS), Vy Nguyen (WOC) and Xiaoling Zhu visited the disaster areas, and together with the UCCP staff worked on a rehabilitation plan to help people in the disaster communities. Global Ministries, OGHS and WOC provided fishing boats and rice seeds for people in those areas to have community self-supporting industries as well as rebuilding their homes.

### **South and North Korea**

The 8.15 (August 15th) Joint Prayer Worship for Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula was held at the Bong Su Church in Pyongyang with the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK) and the Korean Christian Federation (KCF).

The project began with the proposal of the Declaration on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula at the World Council of Churches (WCC) Busan Assembly, and then the process for action agreed upon at the Bossey, Switzerland International Consultation on Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula on June 17-19, 2014. The NCCK led a delegation of 19 people from member denominations and affiliate organizations who participated in the program in Pyongyang from August 13-16, 2014. Both sides stated, "We should not forget that we are one people and one blood even if we are divided by foreign powers. Jesus said there will be blessings for those who work for making peace in the Sermon on the Mount. So we Christians, who have a calling for peace and unification, should reject all machinations of war which conspire with foreign powers, and we should rise up for the peace and reunification of this country. Carrying out the 6.15 Declaration and the 10.4 Declaration is the way toward peace and the way that our people might live. This joint meeting beseeches God, so that the peace and reunification would be realized immediately in this country. "



On December 22, 2014, approximately 60 police officers seized Mintongsun Peace Church in Kimpo, South Korea, and searched the whole church compound, including the sanctuary and the day care center. The search lasted for more than 10 hours during which the police took down the cross and dismantled the altar. For the past decade, the church senior pastor Rev. Lee Jeok has devoted himself to the peace mission in the Mintongsun area. In solidarity with local people and civil societies he has actively participated in the peace movement opposing reconstruction of the Aegibong tower that has provoked conflicts between North and South Korea. On January 30th, five police officers, including the commissioner of the SMPA, visited NCKK headquarters and made an official apology for the intrusion into the church. Global Ministries works closely with NCKK for justice, peace and reunification in the Korea Peninsula.

### **In Memoriam**

Dr. Janice Engsberg, 66, died on August 22, 2014. Dr. Engsberg went to China in 1988 and taught at the School of Journalism and Communication, Xiamen University in Xiamen, China until 2006 when she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. She was honored as one of two National Model Foreign Experts annually in China in 1990s. Her colleagues and students loved her so much they created a web site called "We Love Ying Jan 英健," ([http://blog.sina.com.cn/we\\_love\\_jan](http://blog.sina.com.cn/we_love_jan)) after she left China. During her last stage of illness, Xiamen Teachers Foundation donated \$20,000 for her medical treatment. Dr. Engsberg once worked for UCC National Office and was one of CGMB's excellent mission personnel.

Alden Ewart Matthews, 93, died on October 8, 2014. Mr. Matthews, born in Chicago the son of missionary parents moved to China in infancy and grew up speaking Mandarin Chinese and later mastered Japanese. He became a missionary and worked as a pastor and an administrator for the United Church of Christ in Japan for over four decades. Mr. Matthews was the author of his 2007 autobiography, *My Three Worlds*, chronicling his life in China and Japan.

## **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Angel L. Rivera-Agosto, Area Executive

The year 2014 has been one of transition in the Latin America and the Caribbean Office. Felix Ortiz concluded his ministry with the Global Ministries July 31, 2014. He served 5 years with the Disciples of Christ in Paraguay; 10 years as a program consultant for the Disciples of Christ Development Committee in Haiti; four years as a regional representative of Church World Service in the Caribbean and Mesoamerica and 11 years as Area Executive for the region. Angel L. Rivera-Agosto, a former missionary with Global Ministries began his service as the Area Executive for Latin American and the Caribbean on September 2, 2014.

The new area executive has entered this ministry by contacting Partners and missionaries all around the *Abya-Yala (the Great Motherland, kuna* indigenous people's referral to the whole Latin American continent) to acknowledge the challenges, dreams



and hopes of the people and the ways of practicing the core values of Global Ministries, which include; mutuality, accompaniment and solidarity. The input received from different parts of the continent show that the present Latin American situation is one of crisis, understood, in one part, as a menace to the well-being of the countries and its peoples, but, in the other part, as signs of opportunity growing up from progressive governments, organized civil society and a renewed conscience in partner churches, ecumenical organizations and people of good will to build a “renewed creation” from between what Francis Fukuyama have dared to say “the end of history” of humanity.

The year 2014 brought new challenges on violence and peacebuilding In **Colombia**, as the attention remains focused on the ongoing peace talks between the government and the FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), Colombia's largest guerrilla group. Global Ministries' partner, the Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia has been providing pastoral care, advocacy and accompaniment to victims, families and children in the midst of the conflict. Also, they provide support to the Historical Memory and Political Advocacy Program, an initiative designed to preserve the history of the civil war and to analyze its root causes. In addition, they are providing theological education and accompaniment/support to the work of the Christian Women's Network for Life and Peace (Red de Mujeres Cristianas por la Vida y Paz). These efforts do not come without consequences. The end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015 brought to the attention of the church death threats of at least four Presbyterian pastors and some other community leaders by paramilitary groups. Even so, churches and partners continue deeply committed into reaching peace with justice in Colombia.

In **Mexico**, the Theological Community of Mexico has been responding to violence and working on peace building in response to the Ayotzinapa crisis, which occurred in Guerrero, Mexico. On September, 2014, the world was shocked by the sudden disappearance of 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Normal School near Tuxtla, Guerrero in Mexico. The students were protesting unjust education reforms and seeking to secure scholarships and student aid. The majority of these students come from very poor and marginalized areas of Mexico. The Dean of the Theological Community and the Area Executive interviewed relatives, friends of the disappeared students, as well as fellow church ministers and social activists related to this crisis. The interviews confirmed that the Ayotzinapa tragedy raised issues of constant violations of human rights in Mexico, primarily against women and students. Praying for peace with justice and expressing our solidarity is our expression of accompaniment in this particular moment. As part of the attention to Ayotzinapa Crisis, the Theological Community of Mexico organized a panel where representatives from several Christian organizations reflected on the root causes of the crisis and proposed alternatives for the witness and accompaniment of the churches at the international level. From the discussions shared on that panel and from the interviews with the families and friends of the disappeared, the LAC Office has produced three videos to be used for education and advocacy within our churches in the United States as a way to deepen the solidarity with this cause.

La Mesa Conjunta (the Joint Table) in **San Luis Potosí, Mexico**, has changed almost all of its leadership in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Mexico, the

Confraternity of Evangelical Churches (Disciples of Christ) in Mexico and the Congregational Church of Mexico. Rev. Leobardo Flores was elected as new Chairman of the Table and Rev. Lisania Sustaita is the new Education and Formation Coordinator. Global Ministries' long term volunteers working in Mesa Conjunta, Doug Smith and Kate Moyer, have been leading workshops under the auspices of the Mesa in individual churches at the ICDC seminary (SEBA) and during the Mesa Summer Education Program at the CICE seminary grounds (Centro de Estudios Teologicos). They have been visiting churches of the three organizations lifting up the historic relationship between the churches in the two countries and celebrating the expansion of the Obra Hispana in the U.S. and the ministries of the Mexican churches. They assisted Rev. Sustaita in assessing current training opportunities and developing new options for clergy and lay leadership development for the three "organizations" of the Mesa and helping the Mesa to develop a training program for U.S. church leaders in the language and culture of Mexico. The program offers intensive Spanish instruction and multiple opportunities to practice use of the language and learn about the lives of churches and church members with housing provided in the CICE headquarters city of San Luis Potosi.

There is also a change in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in **Puerto Rico**. Three of our partners elected new authorities. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico elected a new General Pastor after a year of consultation. Rev. Miguel Antonio Morales became the sixth General Pastor of the church, since its new church design, in 1984. Since 1995, Reverend Morales has been the Pastor of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Buena Vista, Bayamón. Secondly, the Puerto Rico Council of Churches (PRCC) named its Interim Executive Secretary after the resignation of Rev. Angel L. Rivera-Agosto. Rev. Héctor Soto-Vélez was elected by the PRCC Board of Directors by unanimous vote. Reverend Soto is an experienced Methodist pastor, who previously served in the PRCC as its President for 6 years. The Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico elected its first woman President since its foundation in 1919. Dr. Doris García-Rivera came from the mission field, working for the Baptist International Ministries in Costa Rica and Mexico for the last 20 years. A scholar in Old Testament and Missiology, Dr. García brings experience in education among indigenous communities and peasants in Latin America and will give a refreshed perspective to theological education in Puerto Rico. In a time of deep social crisis, characterized by high crime rate, unemployment and social violence, churches and ecumenical institutions in Puerto Rico face enormous challenges to witness the fullness of life and peace with justice within its society.

The South-to-South Exchange, in the context of the Congo Initiative, was an opportunity to develop a dialogue between the churches in **Haiti** and the Community of the Disciples of Christ in the Congo (CDCC). Rev. Patrick Villier, as president of the Haitian Council of Churches, CONASPEH, along with four of CONASPEH's bishops, reflected with two leaders of the CDCC, Rev. Elik Bonanga and Rev. Clement Mputu, president and vice-president respectively. They reflected together on the scope and dynamics of the partnership between both ministries as well as an update of what is needed in Haiti regarding the pending projects such as the trade school for youth and adults.



CONASPEH's new trade school is scheduled to start in the first semester of 2015. It will teach carpentry, electrical, plumbing, welding, and computer programming. Also in **Haiti**, Polycarpe Joseph, Ecumenical Foundation for Peace and Justice's Executive Director, reported the plan for the House of Hope Orphanage, that will result in doubling the capability of housing. They already provide lodging for a hundred and fifty street children and they are hoping to house three hundred women and children.

Proyecto Caminante continues its service with children who are at risk of being drawn into prostitution as a result of the culture associated with the tourist economy in the **Dominican Republic**. Caminante seeks to help develop the self-esteem of these children by teaching Christian values through education and recreational activities. Also, Caminante works closely with the families, churches, and the community to raise awareness regarding the complexity of this problem. Henry Brewer-Calvert, a Global Ministries intern assists Caminante in its after-school program and hosting international mission pilgrimages to the country. Andrew Davis, a short-term volunteer completed his service as a videographer and producer of video materials to communicate the ministry of Caminante in Dominican Republic.

In **Chile**, after the earthquake in 2010, the Pentecostal Church of Chile, along with Global Ministries' missionary Elena Huegel, continue their efforts developing and sharing a very valuable work about conflict transformation, trauma healing and resilience development work at the Shalom Center and especially in the recovery efforts afterwards. They organized Mediación (a mediation, conflict transformation, peacebuilding, and trauma healing program for youth in two areas of the Maule Region of Chile) as a preventive response to the possibility of adolescents "acting in" with violence toward themselves or "acting out" with violence toward others after the collective trauma of the earthquake and the tsunami.

It is crucial to continue assuming a deep-rooted challenge of being "*the church as the horizon of God's love*," as Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero described it so clearly. The Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galeano, would describe horizons on a very brief but profound reflection: "*Utopia is on the horizon. I move two steps closer; it moves two steps further away. I walk another ten steps and the horizon runs ten steps further away. As much as I may walk, I'll never reach it. So what's the point of utopia? The point is this: to keep walking.*" The goal is to walk to horizons, resist oppression, celebrate life, and have faith in the One who told us "*I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" Matthew 28:20b.

## MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE

Peter Makari, Area Executive

"You have power; we have dreams." A member of an Egyptian delegation visiting Washington, DC in October offered this powerful statement, a clear reminder of the United States' position in the world. The context was an Egyptian-American Dialogue Initiative, co-sponsored and organized by the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) and Global Ministries. CEOSS is one of our Egyptian partners, a

community development organization actively promoting interfaith and intercultural relations. The Dialogue Initiative brought together Egyptians and Americans representing religious, non-governmental, and governmental organizations, as well as journalists and other opinion-makers, and included Christians and Muslims from both countries. The statement made by an Egyptian Muslim woman journalist reminded us that power dynamics are never equal. As representatives of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Rev. Julia Brown Karimu and Peter Makari recognized this inequality, and affirmed our church's determination to listen always to partners, and to engage in mutual relationships, working to restore human dignity to people no matter their circumstance. This dialogue initiative strove to break down stereotypes of race and religion, promoting reconciliation between nations and people, through direct contact and frank conversation. We know that, at the end of the week-long encounter, power dynamics remain fraught with national agendas, political interests, and ideological biases, but through the Church and communities of faith, other types of relationships can be forged that are stronger and more enduring.

One way that such pro-reconciliation relationships become manifest through the mission of God in the church is through advocacy. As a result of decades, even centuries, of engagement in the world, we know what our partners are saying about particular issues, and are able to amplify those voices in the halls of power. Advocacy on Middle East issues has continued to be robust. In 2014, issues that Global Ministries has provided a voice of presence and peace with justice were Israel/Palestine, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. The roots of our faith are in Bethlehem, and from there, Israel/Palestine and beyond. Today, the struggle for Palestinian sovereignty rights, statehood, and an end to the occupation continues. Throughout 2014, Global Ministries has helped to bring the voice of Palestinian Christians and partners to the forefront, including participating in a letter calling for a cease-fire during the Gaza war, and encouraging members of our churches to contact their elected representatives in Washington, DC with a monthly "3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday Middle East Action Alert," an ecumenical initiative raising a particular aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for advocacy on a regular basis. Early in the year, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), with its Global Ministries partner the United Church of Christ, joined 60 organizations in urging the US not to impose new sanctions on Iran, knowing the impact sanctions have had on the people of that country, and skeptical of the impact they have had on the actual target. The letter "warn[s] that Senate passage of new Iran sanctions would critically endanger the possibility of a diplomatic resolution to the nuclear standoff with Iran, increasing the likelihood of a nuclear armed Iran and an unnecessary and costly war." Those nuclear negotiations continue, and prayers are offered for successful outcomes. Iran's neighbor, Iraq, reemerged in the national debate as well. Global Ministries joined a letter urging the Administration to consider means other than military intervention to counter the impact of the Islamic State group (also known as ISIS), and also participated in a multi-religious coalition condemning the attacks on Christians and other communities by ISIS there.

In Syria, the situation has only continued to deteriorate. According to the United Nations, more than 12 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance. That is more than half of the population. More than 3 million have fled seeking refuge in





neighboring countries and elsewhere, and over 7 million are internally displaced. The Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins participated in January in an urgent and special meeting of Christian leaders from Syria and around the world organized by the World Council of Churches. That delegation issued an “urgent call to action for a just peace in Syria.” The statement was delivered to the Geneva II talks on Syria via the then-United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. Also in January, a letter to President Obama from 17 Christian churches and organizations, including Global Ministries urged the United States and all parties “to prioritize peace over their own geopolitical agendas; to stop supplying weapons to any armed actor; to press for a cease-fire; to support civil society organizations committed to peace; and to work vigorously towards a political solution.” Global Ministries has supported the humanitarian efforts of several partners in the Middle East, including Syria itself, Lebanon, and Jordan, to address the vital needs of victims of the conflict in Syria and, more recently, as it has spread (back) to Iraq. Special funds from the Week of Compassion and the Division of Overseas Ministries have made a humble contribution to the effort to try to promote wholeness in a very fragmented region.

In addition, Global Mission Interns (GMIs) have been assigned to work with partners in Jordan and Lebanon in their response to the humanitarian crisis. This program, which supports leadership development, global engagement with the church by young adults, and ministries of presence with partners, boasted the placement of several outstanding GMIs with partners in the Middle East and Europe in 2014—seven to be exact—from Hungary to Armenia, Lebanon to Jordan and to Israel/Palestine, and Morocco. Such a presence can be a reconciling witness through the Church. And visitors from partners to the US can have a similar impact on members of our churches here. The Quadrennial Assembly was blessed by the presence of guests from the Middle East and Europe, as Nora Carmi offered a reflective and personal Bible study, drawing on her context as a Palestinian Christian, and spoke about her work with Kairos Palestine; and Szabina Sztojka, a young Roma woman from Hungary helped to get beyond popular images of the Roma (Gypsy) people, through an interactive presentation about the work of the Reformed Church in Hungary.

In September and October, the Middle East and Europe office led and facilitated a Global Ministries trip to the Middle East. The delegation spent two weeks in the region to meet with partners, learn about the context of their work and witness, and experience the realities in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine. It was also an opportunity to express a visible presence of solidarity with partners as they respond to emergency situations in the region, including the Gaza war and the ongoing Syrian crisis. The delegation was led by the Rev. Julia Brown Karimu, Co-Executive for Global Ministries and President of the Division of Overseas Ministries, and included DOM/Global Ministries Board members Stephanie Crowder and Phyllis Hallman as well as Global Ministries staff. The visit exposed the delegation to the day-to-day reality in the region, as well as the issues that underlie those realities. The visit culminated with the participation of the delegation in a major international conference organized by our partner, the YWCA of Palestine entitled, “Women’s Freedom, Peace, and Dignity in Palestine: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for Accountability.” Such a visit of

solidarity and presence nurtures deep relationships that help to reconcile the world, and helped us to anticipate the launch its next area focus, the Middle East Initiative, at General Assembly.

“You have power; we have dreams.” In the mission of God, and through the church, we all have dreams, and we can help to realize the dreams of people everywhere through presence, mutuality, community, justice, and peace.

### **SOUTHERN ASIA**

Deenabandhu Manchala, Area Executive

Deenabandhu Manchala began his service as the Area Executive for Southern Asia on May 1, 2014. He worked previously with the World Council of Churches where he served as the co-coordinator of the Just and Inclusive Communities Program. He has spent the last five months understanding the nature, content and various tasks involved in the position, in addition to exploring new possibilities of engagement.

Global Ministries work in Southern Asia is as vast and varied as the region itself. It involves sustaining relationships with some churches which have historical connections, administering endowments, facilitating conversations on sale or management of properties and institutions as well as initiating and nurturing partnerships for justice and peace with a variety of partners in nine countries - **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, East Timor, Laos, Thailand, and Indonesia**. Its engagement has not only been diaconal in the traditional sense but also transformative, catalytic and enabling communities and people. Rural health, providing educational opportunities to children from marginalized communities, theological education, and emergency relief and rehabilitation, have been the major areas of engagement. Besides administering scholarships as part of its vocation of human resource development, the Southern Asia office has also been engaged via the work of the mission personnel in India, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, India and East Timor.

**The Church of South India** launched a campaign in October 2014 with the theme, “Assure my future!” that invited its dioceses to take seriously the moral challenge of protecting the lives and rights of girl children. In the remote places in the south central Timor region, **the Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT)** is also involved in a similar program of equipping young girls who are forced to drop out of schools for lack of formal educational opportunities, with skills in tailoring and housekeeping as they migrate to far away urban centers and to other countries. In the South Indian city of Vellore, Pravaham, a community college equips young girls from single parent, rural Dalit families, with training in nursing care and computer skills to be able to make a living. In Vavuniya, Sri Lanka, **the Church of the American Ceylon Mission** runs a home for girls who have lost their parents and families during the prolonged war that ravaged the North eastern regions of Sri Lanka. In **Akhonpur, Bangladesh**, collectives of poor rural women are transforming their own lives and of their community through over a hundred micro-credit finance projects facilitated by the Churches Commission for Development in Bangladesh.



In a socio-cultural context where girls and women are seen and treated as liabilities and objects, and also terminated as fetuses or allowed to die as babies, Global Ministries' partners are not only striving to affirm and safeguard their dignity and rights but are also enhancing their capacities to transform their families and communities. Similar efforts are also being made to confront and overcome caste-based discrimination – a structurally and culturally embedded form of injustice that violates and deprives millions of people of their basic necessities on the basis of their descent, human trafficking, especially of children, and the displacement of Indigenous people for extractive industries and big dams.

In an extremely complex socio-economic and geo-political context which is also the home for some of the world's wealthiest as well as for millions of the poorest, the witness of the Asian churches cannot merely remain diaconal in the traditional sense of binding the wounds. It involves empowering the disempowered as well as confronting the powerful so that God's gifts of life with dignity and in peace may be a reality for all. Insisting on and initiating processes for advocacy for justice and against the life-denying forces that are deeply embedded in the cultures of many Asian societies and even churches, is where the Southern Asia office will direct its energies during the coming years. This seems necessary particularly in view of the implications of the forthcoming ASEAN and the increasing collaboration among South Asian nations for economic growth (SAARC - Indian Subcontinent). The ideological orientations of these two political entities point towards the danger of increased exploitation and abuse of human beings and nature – a moral challenge that the churches simply cannot afford to ignore. The recent travels of the Area Executive to India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia and East Timor have been helpful in reorienting existing partnerships with churches and institutions with a view to identify new possibilities for pursuing partnerships in these directions.

The content and patterns of Global Ministries' engagement in the future will be more concerted, focused and effective in pursuing its core values – healing and transforming presence, mutual learning and accompaniment, building just and inclusive communities, and working together for the goals of justice and peace, especially to the poor. Churches in the Southern Asia region are minority communities, often fragmented, and mostly in hostile contexts and with limited public space to make any significant difference. Some of our partner churches and organizations also have multiple overseas partners. Some in India and Indonesia are also affluent and resourceful. With most partners in such situations, Global Ministries, as a partner from outside, must be aware of its own limitations and explore ways in which its critical presence can make a difference, nurture a spirit of partnership among churches for justice and peace, and attempt those that can be done in partnership with others.

#### **MISSION PERSONNEL**

Catherine Nichols, Executive

Lorna Hernandez, Coordinator, People-to-People Program

#### **Mission Personnel**



As a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, the Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries participates in a ministry which attempts to break the divide among God's children by partnering with overseas partner churches in the sending and receiving of missionaries. The exchange of people and their gifts unites people across geographical, racial, gender, and economic barriers. Other important aspects of this ministry include the presence of missionaries in congregations as they share the ministries of the partner churches and the people to people pilgrimages, which offer individuals and congregations opportunities to cross boundaries and share the love of God as they receive the love of God from those they encounter.

Through the Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, missionaries are participating in ministries of Critical Presence in 45 countries around the world. They are engaged in a variety of ministries such as theological education, leadership development, community and development work, human rights, health ministries, children's ministries, and pastoral ministries.

A total of 125 missionaries served in 45 countries in 2014, which included 43 fully-supported missionaries, 16 global mission interns, 26 long-term volunteers, and 40 associates. In addition, 35 individuals served as short-term volunteers.

Thirteen persons, including 3 re-appointees, were appointed to church and/or church-related institutions around the world. Terms varied from fully supported to long-term volunteer staff. This distribution by area of total appointments was Africa 5; East Asia and the Pacific 1; Europe 0; Latin America and the Caribbean 4; Middle East 2; Southern Asia 1.

Four new global mission interns were supported by Week of Compassion funds. They are: Nathaniel Bailey, Jordan; Henry Brewer-Calvert, Dominican Republic; Lauren Kabat, Peru; and Tyler Reeve, Morocco. Five new long-term volunteers (one year and longer) were appointed in 2014: Andrew Sheraton-Cooper, Lesotho; Scott Couper, South Africa; and Santos Par Vasquez, Guatemala; Linda James, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Alex Bartis, Costa Rica.

There were 33 short-term volunteers (two weeks to eleven months) appointed in 2014 who served in 2014 or will serve in 2015. A list of names and term dates are available upon request.

The overseas associate category is a recognition normally given to members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ who are serving outside of the United States and Canada with a church, ecumenical institution or project that involves a ministry that is in accordance with the mission principles of the Common Global Ministries Board. There were four new associate appointments in 2014: Rosalind Gnat, Germany; George Dunwood, Morocco; Robert Jackson, Qatar; Gail Matheson, Turkey. One person concluded his term: Skip Dangers, Laos.



Seven individuals completed their service with the Common Global Ministries Board in the category of regular appointees: Loletta Barrett, Namibia; Xuyen Dangers, Laos; Tim Donaghy and Laura Jean Torgerson, Nicaragua; Tom and Kelly Gilson, Lesotho; and Tim Rose, Guadeloupe and Martinique.

Four Global Mission Interns completed their service in 2014: Julianna Nitz, Sri Lanka, Ashley Holst, Dominican Republic; Andrew Long-Higgins, Lebanon; Gabrielle Worley, Armenia. Four individuals completed their service as Long-Term Volunteers in 2014: Scott and Rebecca Hardin-Nieri, Costa Rica; Lydia Hill Johnson, Lesotho and Catherine Schrader, Paraguay.

### **Missionary Relationships**

From January 1 to December 31, 2014, seventy-nine missionaries were involved in a ministry of critical presence through missionary visits and relationship building: Scott Nicholson, Mexico (2 months), Jeffrey Mensendiek, Japan (5 months), James Wilson, Botswana (3 months), Jayanthi Wilson, Botswana (3 months), Erik Free, Mozambique (3 months), Kimberly Free, Mozambique (3 months), Gloria Vicente, Guatemala (1 month), Jeanette Salley, Haiti (3 month), Kristine Tisinger, South Africa (1 month), Phyllis Byrd, Kenya (2 months), Tim Rose, Guadeloupe (2 months), Aaron Wiggins, Fiji (2 months), Bruce Van Voorhis, Hong Kong (3 months), Julianna Nitz, Global Mission Intern, Sri Lanka (1 month), Scott Couper, South Africa (3 months), Susan Valiquette, South Africa (1 month), Zoltan Szucs, Hungary (2 months), Jeanette Salley, Haiti (4 days), Brenda Fulle, Short-term Volunteer, Thailand (1 day), Bob Ray, Short-term Volunteer, Japan (1 month), Joyce Ray, Short-term Volunteer, Japan (1 month), Ashley Holst, Global Mission Intern, Dominican Republic (2 months), Scott Couper, South Africa (3 months), Nicole Betteridge, Global Mission Intern, Laos (2 months), Laura Jean Torgerson, Nicaragua (4 months), Tim Donaghy, Nicaragua (4 months), Loletta Barrett, Namibia (3 months), Tim Fonderlin, Haiti (4 days), Diane Fonderlin, Haiti (4 days), Anil Henry, India (2 months), Teresa Henry, India (2 months), Xuyen Dangers, Laos (4 months), Martha Mensendiek, Japan (1 month), Ariel Royer, Jordan (1 month), Mark Behle, Lesotho (3 months), Don Westra, Honduras (1 month), Maryjane Westra, Honduras (1 month), Alison Stendahl, Turkey (3 months), Scott Hardin-Nieri, Costa Rica (1 month), and Rebecca Hardin-Nieri, Costa Rica (1 month).

We had Missionaries to the US and Canada that itinerated: Rev. Sudhansu Naik, Orissa, India (1 month); Rev. Dr. K. Jesurathnam, Bangalore, India (6 weeks); Lindo Ngwenya, South Africa (6 weeks); Olga Yan Pardo, Dominican Republic (6 weeks); Sztojka Szabina, Hungary, 2 weeks; Amena Cristovao, East Timor (1 month); Jean Pierre Djimbonge, Democratic Republic of the Congo (1 month), and Albino DaCosta, East Timor (2 weeks); Dr. Henriette Hubaret Lebang, Indonesia (1 week) and Nora Carmi, Palestine (2 weeks).

Missionaries itinerated either the Sunday before Quadrennial or the Sunday after. They included Gabrielle Worley, Armenia (1 visit), Xuyen Dangers, Laos (2 visits), Tim Donaghy, Nicaragua (1 visit), Laura Jean Torgerson, Nicaragua (1 visit), Anil Henry, India (1 visit), and Teresa Henry, India (1 visit).

Regular appointed Missionaries, Global Mission Interns, Long-term Volunteers, and candidates attending the Missionary Conference in Indianapolis were all assigned to speak in a congregation either the Sunday before or the Sunday after. This included Martha Mensendiek, Japan; Mark Behle, Lesotho; Alex Bartis, Costa Rica; Jerri Handy, Mexico; Marge Boyd, Mexico; Nathan Bailey, Jordan; Lauren Kabat, Peru; Santos Vasquez, Guatemala; Tom Liddle, East Timor; Monica Liddle, East Timor; Anne Gregory, Thailand; Nancy Longatan, Philippines; Daniel Longatan, Philippines; Paul Turner, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Rachel Pellett Gillette, Jamaica; Henry Brewer-Calvert, Dominican Republic; Andrew Long-Higgins, Lebanon; Tyler Reeve, Morocco; Andrew Shearer-Cooper, Lesotho; Lindley Kinerk, Sri Lanka; Susan (Andy) Jepson, Sri Lanka; Alison Stendahl, Turkey; Xuyen Dangers, Laos; Scott Nicholson, Mexico; Scott Hardin-Nieri, Costa Rica; Rebecca Hardin-Nieri, Costa Rica; Matthew Fehse, Philippines; and Chris Nkemba, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We had former missionaries speaking at the following United Church of Christ Annual Meetings: Ken & Betty Frank – Southern California Annual Conference; Donna Dudley – Illinois Annual Meeting; Fay Ann Blaylock – Northeast Annual Meeting; Tom Morse – Indiana/ Kentucky Annual Meeting; Julianna Nitz – Wisconsin Annual Meeting; and Linda Hanson – Iowa Annual Meeting.

From January 1 – December 31, 2014, 31 United Church of Christ Conferences and 27 Disciples Regions received visits. Of those visits, 212 were to UCC Congregations and 176 were to Disciples Congregations. (Four point seventy four congregations were visited per missionary unit.) There were a total of 748 missionary presentations made. (9 presentations were given per missionary unit with an average of 10 presentations per month of interpretation.)

### **People-to-People Pilgrimages**

The People-to-People Pilgrimage Program assists United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ congregations, regions and conferences to meet and walk in solidarity with our partner churches and organizations around the world. In 2014, the People-to-People office assisted with inquiries, provided educational materials and supported a total of 98 delegations. The office supported with planning and detailed assistance to 57 Global Ministries' mission pilgrimages to Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Middle East and Europe, and Southern Asia. The numbers of pilgrimages per area were: 7 to Africa, 2 to the Middle East and Europe, 4 to Southern Asia, and 44 to Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, this office has created new People-to-People resources: a Guide for Leaders and a Guide for Participants, two comprehensive planning tools for leaders and participants to help prepare delegations for a life changing mission experience. These resources can be ordered through the Global Ministries website.

## **GLOBAL ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION**

Derek Duncan and Shernell Edney, Program Associates



The Global Advocacy and Education Team engaged in networking and collaboration in 2014 with denominational, ecumenical and advocacy partners and with Global Ministries area offices on advocacy priorities of regional partners, including just peace, hunger/food security, and women's and children's rights. Opportunities to take action were highlighted weekly in Global Ministries' updates, on the website, and using social media. A variety of advocacy materials were produced or updated including web updates on Peace and Human Security and the International Day of Prayer for Peace, the Congo initiative and Congo Week, Conflict Minerals, Hunger and Food Security, and Gender-Based Violence. The advocacy team helped prepare action alerts this period on the Congo, Nigeria, Climate Change, immigration and unaccompanied migrant children, Syria, Iran and Israel/Palestine.

The Advocacy Team helped plan Ecumenical Advocacy Days in March 2014, "Jesus Weeps – Resisting Violence, Building Peace" which focused on the various ways forms and policies promoting violence can be transformed to politics which enable peace. Other engagements in 2014 included orientation for the Disciples Peace Fellowship summer interns, an advocacy workshop at Quadrennial Assembly in Atlanta, GA in June 2014, and a training on Global Advocacy for the Global Ministries Missionary Conference in Indianapolis, IN in August 2014.

### **Global Adult Curriculum**

In collaboration with the Mission Education and Interpretation team, the Advocacy Team is helping to create and launch a new curriculum to get adults involved in Global Mission. The REACH curriculum consists of a section dedicated solely to advocacy and teaching adults how they can become actively engaged in various areas of global justice mission. This is the "sister curriculum" to READY launched last year.

### **Congo**

The advocacy team was very instrumental in helping the Africa Office to meet the needs of the Congo initiative. Associates shaped the advocacy focus for the campaign, which provided action alerts for participants for a more robust and comprehensive U.S. policy toward the Congo, including protections against resource exploitation and violence against women. They further supported this by updating resources and maintaining networks within the ecumenical community. Both Associates hosted the Global Ministries special guest from the Congo, Mr. Jean-Pierre Djimbonge, for visits to New York City and the UN, lobbying on Capitol Hill in DC, a tour of Indianapolis, the CGMB board meeting in Cleveland and advocacy related venues.

The advocacy team increased awareness of Congo Week (October 2014), preparing action alerts and resources for congregations. We strengthened engagement with Friends of the Congo and ecumenical partners on advocacy regarding Congo elections and human rights, and highlighted opportunities such as the CELL OUT, Congo Swim, and participation in Lobby Days in Washington, DC.

### **Africa Christianity Rising: Stories from Ghana**

Director Jim Ault produced this documentary about the rise of Christianity in Africa, and specifically. The film proposes the question, “What does Christianity’s explosive growth in Africa mean for the world, the church, and us?” The Advocacy Team assisted in promotion and marketing of the set screening engagements of the documentary. There were two screenings in Indianapolis where GM staff and invitees attended: Central Christian Church on November 2, 2014 and Christian Theological Campus on Wednesday, November 16, 2014.

### **East Asia and the Pacific**

The advocacy team has engaged in an international ecumenical campaign for peace and reconciliation in Korea, which began at the World Council of Church 10th Assembly in Busan, Korea in November 2013 and was advanced this year at the WCC International Consultation on Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula in Bossey, Switzerland in June 2014. The Cleveland Associate helped organize an Ecumenical Korea Peace Conference in Atlanta, GA in May 2013; participated in a Korea Peace March and consultation in Washington DC in July 2014; and addressed the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD) annual meeting in Chicago, IL in August 2014. The advocacy team has joined with the Council on Christian Unity and NAPAD to increase Disciples engagement in Korea peace and reunification efforts.

### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

Advocacy highlights include Global Ministries response to the crisis in Summer 2014 concerning unaccompanied children and families crossing the Mexico-US border, many fleeing increasing violence and instability in Central American countries. With input from partners, advocacy included action alerts for immigration reform and deportation changes, and a background resource “Worth the Risk? Consider the factors behind the surge of unaccompanied children.”

### **Middle East and Europe**

The advocacy team focused on peace, human rights and demilitarization throughout the region. In preparation for the 2015-2016 Middle East Initiative, the Cleveland Associate participated in a Global Ministries delegation from September 20-October 4, 2014 to visit partners and projects in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine, and to attend a conference sponsored by the YWCA Palestine on “Women’s Freedom, Peace and Dignity in Palestine.” Advocacy highlights included security and humanitarian needs in Syria and Iraq, and supporting the latest independence efforts in Palestine. Other Middle East advocacy activities were action alerts, including the new 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday advocacy alerts on Israel/Palestine, and resourcing the Kairos campaign and the UCC Palestine/Israel Network.

## **MISSION INTERPRETATION AND CONSTITUENCY EDUCATION**

Jon Barnes, Executive

### **Curricula Development**



The Global Ministries youth curriculum READY (Revolutionary, Engaged and Driven Youth) has opened up opportunities for GM staff to engage directly with youth. In 2014, staff participated in Youth Retreats and camps in the Pacific Southwest Region/Southern California Conference, the Indiana/Kentucky Conference, and at various local churches. This curriculum has direct connections as we seek to be a pro-reconciling, anti-racist church, as well as in the area of leadership development. The curriculum is open-source and resources will continually be updated to keep the curriculum fresh and relevant.

In 2014, the Mission Education team began work on a new adult resource called REACH (Renewing, Engaging and Advocating Churches). This resource will contain three sessions and also be open-source and free on the website. It will take many of the issues raised in the READY curriculum and adapt them for an adult audience, enabling churches to think deeply about why and how Disciples and UCC engage in mission today. The Mission Education team expects to launch this curriculum on the web in spring 2015.

### **Congo Initiative**

Congo Initiative, launched General Synod and General Assembly in 2013, concluded in December of 2014. This was the first area focus and, for the Education team, involved the production of videos, the writing and translation of Bible studies, and the promotion of projects that were identified by Congolese partners. At the 2014 November Board Meeting, a celebration to conclude the initiative was led by Rev. Sandra Gourdet and Mission Education staff participated.

### **Middle East Initiative**

In 2014, preparations began for the next area initiative, focusing on the Middle East. Working under the leadership of Peter Makari, Executive for the Middle East and Europe, the Education team is assisting in the production of promotional materials, Bible studies, webinars and videos. This initiative will focus on a number of countries and issues within the Middle East and will officially launch at General Synod and General Assembly in 2015.

### **Weekly Global Ministries Updates**

The updates are reaching an average of 15,408 people per week. We continue to highlight weekly prayers, partner and missionary news, and ways to be involved with Global Ministries through advocacy and giving. In 2014, a new more attractive and user friendly format for the update was launched. Staff received many notes from those receiving the updates thanking them for the improvements.

### **Global Ministries Handbook**

In summer of 2014, work began on the production of a Global Ministries Handbook for congregational mission engagement. This book is being produced as a resource guide on international mission with general church members in mind. Each chapter is between 10 to 12 pages, written in a way that is accessible, and addresses concrete “best practices” so that churches/individuals may have tangible takeaways. Each



chapter will include a short study guide to help facilitate discussion within members of a mission committee, board of elders, or adult Sunday school class. While the most immediate audience would be members of the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), there is a need for this type of material for any person, group, or congregation from a mainline background. Because it is important that not only voices speaking from a North American context engage in the dialogue about this subject, authors representing various cultures, contexts, and faith traditions are being approached, with an intentional commitment to have at least half of the chapters written by international partners. The book is scheduled to be published in 2015 by Pilgrim Press.

### **Disciples Communicators Forum**

The General Ministries Communicators Forum continues to meet monthly. The forum works jointly on Disciples Together, a bi-weekly email that goes to Disciples Regional Ministers, Pastors, and Seminary Students. This email provides resources from the various general ministries to better equip and resource clergy for local parish ministry.

### **Staff Pairing with Disciples Regions**

The staff pairings with Disciples Regions continued in 2014, with staff participating in 29 out of 32 regional assemblies. With a number of changes in staff, the pairings have been reworked; however, no staff person has more than three regions to which they affiliate. Staff continues to work hard at building relationships and understanding between Global Ministries and Disciples Regions.

### **“Be A Global Mission” Region**

There continues to be a great deal of energy and potential for transformation around the establishment of Global Church Partnerships in Disciples Regions. For Disciples Regions and UCC Conferences desiring new connections with international partners, an effort is being made to assist them to map their own contexts before seeking partnerships. After gaining a deeper understanding of their own contexts for ministry, the Education team will work with Area Executives to facilitate relationships with partners who have similar contexts and issues. The hope is that these relationships can facilitate relationships of a “shared life” or “shared journey” and that partners will have very tangible gifts to offer our constituents as they share how the ministries in which they are engaged are transformative for their context.

### **Website Changeover**

Last year, the education team worked to redesign the Global Ministries website to better reflect our core values. Changes included a more partner focused design, more extensive use of large graphics, as well as reorganizing content categories for simplified navigation. Soon after this redesign, the education team learned that the web platform would be changing. During this process, much effort has been made to maintain the changes and enhance the website in the new platform.

## **GLOBAL MINISTRIES CHILD SPONSORSHIP**

Linda Lawrence, Program Manager



The Child Sponsorship program is an international ministry to provide assistance to children and elders of Global Ministries' partner ecumenical organizations. This ministry works in collaboration with the five areas of Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Division of Overseas Ministries and the United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries. Through sponsorships, Disciples and UCC members and local churches continue to provide financial assistance to children and elders for their basic health care, educations, accommodations, school tuition and supplies for many of the children in their own society and culture.

Over the years the Global Ministries Child Sponsorship gifts have helped to strengthen and further shape the future of God's family around the world. In 2014 approximately \$300,000 was collected and more than 200 children and elders were assigned sponsorships. While the contributions that come to partner organizations through the sponsorship program are very important to them, the services they provide to the children and elders is their first priority and challenge as well. Their primary objective is training the children to be self-sustaining as adults or helping elders to live out their last days in grace, love and dignity when they have been abandoned, or rejected.

Along with the Africa area executive, the program manager traveled to Zimbabwe and Botswana to observe the children's programs of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe (UCCZ) and the United Congregational Church of South Africa (UCCSA). Both churches have children ministries participating in the sponsorship program: the UCCZ with 13 local churches and a residential children's home (Daisy Dube) and the UCCSA with the Lephoi Centre for Blind Children. In collaboration, a short term venture with the New Hampshire Conference was established to enhance their partnership with the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe by sponsoring children from two local UCCZ churches. The Lephoi program has been energized through music. A former student returned and is now teaching the children music as a way of communication. During our visit at Lephoi, we saw over and over again that the children's disabilities were not inabilities. Music, crafts and basic skills learning were demonstrated all over the campus.

The program manager also visited the two children homes operated by the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI). The church oversees the Pringle Home for girls and the Mt. Olivet Home for boys. Recently the church made the change to homes to better address gender issues and concerns. Both homes act as a refuge for abused, homeless, rejected and neglected children in Jamaica. Under the UCJCI's care the staff works to provide the children a stable constructive family style environment, educational opportunities and possibilities of integrating them back into their homes.

Walking the journey together, partners have conveyed their appreciation and thanks to all Global Ministries constituents throughout the year for their generous aid to impoverished children and elders in other countries.



**The following are recognize ministry partners of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through the Division of Overseas Ministries.**

**RAMBO COMMITTEE**

Steve Minson, President  
Rambo Committee, Inc.  
1648 River Ridge  
Williamsburg, VA 23185-7546

The Rambo Committee, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation that has as its sole purpose the support of the work of Christian Hospital Mungeli, India, including its School of Nursing, the Rambo Memorial English Medium School, and the Springer Community College. During 2014, this support was primarily in three areas: seeking funds for capital construction and other projects to assist the Hospital deliver critically needed services to the people of Mungeli; developing partnerships between Mungeli and U.S.-based organizations; and facilitating the travel to Mungeli of persons interested in the work there.

The Rambo Committee is delighted to report significant success in raising funds. In December 2014, they were awarded a \$600,000 grant from the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program of the United States Agency for International Development. This sum, along with \$93,000 from the Rambo Committee, is being used to procure commodities that will expand desperately-needed medical services to mothers and children at Mungeli. The hospital is now in the process of acquiring a mobile health clinic for village outreach services, and equipping a new Maternal Ward, Labor Room, Neo-natal ICU, Operating Room for women, and Intensive Care Unit for women. Also, the Rambo Committee facilitated the execution of an agreement between Christian Hospital Mungeli and Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine establishing Mungeli as an international rotation site for Virginia Tech's fourth-year medical students. The first such students arrived in Mungeli in February 2014. Also, during 2014, through the tireless efforts of the Rambo Committee's Executive Director, Landa Simmons, we helped coordinated the visits of more than 3 dozen people to Mungeli, each bringing unique talents and perspectives.

**DISCIPLES AMATEUR RADIO FELLOWSHIP, INC.**

John Park Winkler, Jr, President  
8355 Harwood Road Apt #1314  
North Richland Hills, TX 76180  
660.464.2471

In 2014, the Disciples Amateur Radio Fellowship (DARF) awaited the delivery of the last 14 of 27 solar powered HF Communications stations to be installed in the 23 principle



Supervisory Posts and the general Secretariat of the Disciples Community of the Church of Christ in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The units were purchased in the United States in 2013 and added to a container of medical equipment and supplies destined for the hospital at Bolenge. We look forward to receiving word that those stations have been installed. When completed, this network will be the fourth generation of communications purchased by DARF for our work in Congo.

The Communications infrastructure project grew out of a DARF survey trip to DRC in 2006 at the request of the Disciples community. In 2010, a DARF team traveled to DRC and trained 50 church leaders to install and operate the eleven stations that had been purchased in the DRC, as well as the stations yet to be purchased.

DARF was organized in the 1950's under the leadership of Bob Nelson and Jim Sukioga at the United Christian Missionary Society and a number of Amateur Radio Operators who saw the potential for better communication with mission personnel. Over the years, DARF supplied radio equipment has been provided in Paraguay, the Congo, the Philippines, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Guatemala.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

**GA-1511**

**HIGHER EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES  
REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD  
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

**Submitted by  
Bernard “Chris” Dorsey, President  
January 30, 2015**

**INTRODUCTION**

With the whole church, Higher Education and Leadership Ministries works to help proclaim and embody the reign of God and to be part of the human transformation that is the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ by developing and nurturing leaders who will renew and transform the church in the coming generations.

Following the retirement of Dennis Landon in June of 2014, after 17 years of faithful service, the HELM board of directors called Bernard “Chris” Dorsey to the presidency for a transitional period of three years. Six months into this transitional period, there is a sense of optimism for the future of HELM. There is also a greater sense of where the key opportunities for furthering HELM’s mission are and what the potential for growth is. One of the most significant changes in the past six months has been a commitment on the part of the HELM and the council of Colleges and Universities to resume working more closely together to advance the mission of HELM and the missions of the colleges and universities in service to the wider church and society as a whole.

While it is true that this is a time of transition for HELM, it is also a time of significant transition for the church as a whole. At the national level, the general board has tasked the General Minister and President with exploring a mission focused structure that could result in significant changes in the way the church functions. Many regions are going through changes in leadership and some have been challenged by financial and administrative difficulties. While some general ministries of the church have experienced greater stability in clearer focus in recent years, other general ministries have begun to discover new challenges and problems that might make some of their futures uncertain.

As a general ministry of the church, HELM is in a unique and very promising position. In recent years, HELM has been under some financial strain to carry out its mission for the benefit of the largest possible number of constituents and the relationship with key institutional constituents has been fraught. The strain on HELM staffing resources has also been a significant challenge for the organization. However, with the board having committed to this transitional period of strategic discernment, The prospects for continuing the important work of HELM and even increasing HELM’s positive impact on the church and the world are actually very good.

With a healthy dose of measured optimism, the report is submitted to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).



## HELM PRIORITIES AND KEY STRATEGIES FOR THE NEXT TWO TO FIVE YEARS

### Financial Equilibrium

1. **Redesigned Budgeting and Financial Reporting** – In the past six months, HELM has redesigned its budgeting and financial reporting process. This provides the board of directors with a better picture of HELM's financials. It is also a format that brings HELM's financial reporting in better alignment with other general ministries and best practice financial reporting for non-profits.
2. **2014 Development Strategy** – In order to continue current programming and look at ways to improve funding for HELM programs, HELM must find ways to increase funding from non-DMF sources. In recent years, the annual fund has relied heavily on a single donor. The development strategy currently being pursued by HELM will strengthen the annual fund by increasing the number of key donors, reaching out to more potential major donors, and laying a foundation for major giving and planned giving to support the future growth of HELM's programs. In the first year, the annual fund will be the primary focus of increased giving. In the second and third year of this strategy, the focus will be increased giving to support three main components of HELM's mission: 1. Scholarships for undergraduate education, with an emphasis on Disciples students at Disciples related institutions; 2. Scholarships for graduate theological education, with an emphasis on Disciples related institutions; and 3. Funding support for leadership development programs such as the leadership fellows program and disciples leadership institute.
3. **Reorganization of HELM Staffing** – HELM's staffing has been under significant strain since the departure of Brad Lyons. Much of Brad's responsibilities were shifted to two of HELM's remaining staff and a contractor was hired to assume much of the responsibility for the Leadership Fellows program. With Dennis's retirement, this configuration has led to even greater strains on HELM's limited resources. VP & Treasurer Linda Plengemeier has announced her plans to retire on June 30<sup>th</sup> and this represents both a significant challenge to HELM as well as the possible opportunity to reconfigure all of HELM's staffing to better fulfill HELM's mission. The new staffing configuration will not only allow for existing programs to be coordinated more effectively, but it will allow the organization to allocate resources toward financial growth and better support of three key areas: 1. Program coordination of HELM's programs such as the leadership fellows program, the seminarians conference, and Disciples Leadership Institute, 2. Coordination of HELM's overall development and communications efforts; and 3. A return to fulfilling HELM's previous role of doing the interpretive & advocacy

work of supporting Disciples related colleges & universities, theological institutions, and campus ministries.

## Program & Staff Assessment

1. **Leadership Fellows Program** – The HELM Leadership Fellows program is undergoing some changes to help increase its effectiveness and address some recent challenges.
  - a. We are returning to the previous approach of having students apply in their last year of high school and they would then receive support and participate in the leadership fellows' retreat during their four years of undergraduate education.
  - b. We will also be working to have the Leadership Fellows retreat take place on the campuses of Disciples related educational institutions and in locations that are strongly connected to Disciples history and culture. This will both save money and expose students to the rich Disciples heritage and the ongoing mission of various expressions of the wider church
  - c. We are also restructuring the program around four specific themes that will provide focus for each of the four cohorts as they matriculate through the program.
    - i. First Year: Community – In the first year, students will focus their time in the program on learning about community. This will be the focus of the retreat in their first year and they will also spend time during the year learning about community in a specific context of their choice. Following the retreat, students will gather for two Google-hangouts during the rest of they year and will provide a summary report of their learning at the end of the year.
    - ii. Second Year: Transformation - In the second year, students will focus their time in the program on learning about transformation in community and society as a whole. This will be the focus of the retreat in their first year and they will also spend time during the year learning about transformation either in specific communities or an area of transformation in the wider society. Following the retreat, students will gather for two Google-hangouts during the rest of they year and will provide a summary report of their learning at the end of the year.
    - iii. Third Year: Global Awareness – In the third year, we are looking to partner with another ministry to provide student with an opportunity to travel outside the use as they learn about global citizenship and the role of the church in today's world. Students will not attend the retreat in their third year, but will instead have two Google Hangouts in the early part of the year and the internationals trip in late May or early June.
    - iv. Fourth Year: Mentoring/Vocational Discernment – In the fourth and final year, students will choose a mentor from their campus to work with on thinking about their own vocational discernment and their role



as an emerging leader. This will be the focus of the retreat in their fourth year and students will have two additional Google-hangouts through the rest of the year.

2. **Disciples Leadership Institute** – This program will be strengthened through seeking outside grant funding to support its growth and ongoing activities. Similar to the strategy of strengthening the Leadership Fellows program, there is the opportunity to have the Institutes take place on the campuses of Disciples related educational institutions and have access to key Disciples scholars. Another area of strategic focus will be increasing the visibility of DLI throughout the wider church and having participants who have gone through DLI offer workshops at General Assembly and various Regional Assemblies to help impart their learning's to a wider audience.
3. **Disciples Seminarians Conference** – The Seminarians Conference is undergoing a shift in its structure and focus. While past conferences have been structured to give general ministries the opportunity to present information to seminary students, the conference is being redesigned with the following primary commitments:
  - a. Students have a chance to develop and deepen connections with other Disciples Seminarians.
  - b. Seminarians will hear from the General Ministries individually and collaboratively.
  - c. Seminarians have the chance to speak to the leadership about their hopes and dreams for the church.
  - d. Seminarians will have the opportunity to engage in spiritual renewal.

While the general ministries have contributed to this redesign of the seminarians conference, the theological institutions have not been significantly engaged in the process of working to improve the conference. The next step in this strategic process will be to work with the Disciples theological institutions to improve this important program.

4. **HELM Staffing** – In recent years, due to transitions and declining revenue, HELM staff has been reduced and restructured in ways that have made the staffing “administration heavy” and has not provided the optimal configuration for HELM’s mission. HELM’s staffing is being strategically re-aligned with a greater emphasis on supporting HELM’s programs and the work of the three councils. The following is the proposed staffing structure:
  - a. President
  - b. Office Coordinator
  - c. Part-time Director of Programs and Technology
  - d. Part-time Director of Development and Communications
  - e. Finance Consultant/Contractor

## Relationship With Higher Education Institutions

1. **Council of Colleges & Universities:** HELM is moving forward with increasing its support for the colleges and universities in ways that help maintain and strengthen the historic relationship between the Disciples related colleges and universities and the wider church. This relationship is crucial to the covenantal nature of the relationship and it is crucial to the ongoing mission of HELM. The wider constituency of both the church and HELM's prospective supporters understand the rich legacy of education that is central to Disciples history. Working more closely with the Council of Colleges and Universities will strengthen HELM's ability to carry out its mission. One of the key responsibilities of the part-time director of development and communications is supporting the work of the Council of Colleges and Universities.
2. **Council on Theological Institution:** Leadership development takes place in a wide variety of places throughout the church. HELM can play a crucial role in identifying opportunities for coordinating leadership development across various ministries of the church. One way this can be done is to work more closely with the theological institutions on a coordinated effort to create a cohesive leadership development strategy for the denomination. As of December, HELM has assumed responsibility for the leadership development initiative that was commissioned by TLC and will be working with the Council on Theological Education and others to develop this strategy. Also, one of the key responsibilities of the part-time program coordinator will be supporting the work of the Council on Theological Education.
3. **Council of Campus Higher Education Ministries:** This council needs to be evaluated, redesigned and reconvened. It is currently not staffed. HELM will be working with a group of campus chaplains and church relations directors to re-establish this council.

## Board Development & Participation

1. HELM is fortunate to have a strong and diversely constituted board. In order to ensure this continues, considerable attention must be given to continued board development and participation.
2. Board Training – The Office of the General Minister and President has been working with the Cabinet to identify opportunities for training board members. There is currently the availability of someone who is certified to offer training in the area of governance and we are working to have someone provide a training module on governance at our next board meeting
3. Board Recruitment – We have had some positive success in recent years with recruiting talented individuals to serve as directors. At the recent board meeting, the HELM board of directors elected four people to serve as directors: Lonora Grave, Billie Lynch, Pamela Sparks, and Santiago Pinion.
4. Board Participation – Financial participation in advancing HELM's mission has increased among board directors, but is not yet at 100%. We will work closely





with the development committee to accomplish this and to present directors with additional opportunities to help HELM attract financial support in the coming years.

## **Summary**

These four priorities remain key areas of focus for this transitional period. They will form the basis for a more substantive strategic presentation and board conversation during the April meeting of the board.

## **HELM PROGRAM UPDATE**

### **Leadership Fellows**

The Leadership Fellows program remains the signature program for HELM and continues to attract talented students. The recent leadership fellows' retreat went well and we had 22 students attend. The plans to redesign the program have been mentioned previously in this report. In the coming months, we will be taking a closer look at how the Leadership Fellows program is funded and what we can do to increase the number of fellows each year.

### **Disciples Leadership Institute (DLI)**

DLI was held in Salt Lake City this past year and was facilitated by Lonora Graves and Eli Rolon. The gathering of a diverse group of young Disciples leaders (clergy and laypersons) was a tremendous success. This program has significant potential to have a much greater impact on leadership development within the church. The primary limitation at this point is funding. In the coming months we will be looking more closely at ways to attract more funding to support this important initiative.

### **Seminarians Conference**

The seminarians conference is being redesigned as mentioned previously in this report. The committee made up of key representatives from various general units and ministries, helped re-imagine the conference and structure it in a way that would be of greater benefit to the students and to the general ministry representative. The upcoming conference will be held in March at Scarritt-Bennett.

### **Association of Disciples for Theological Discussion (ADTD)**

The most recent meeting of ADTD was held in Indianapolis at the Hospitality House at CTS. The president of HELM was able to present to the scholars, the priorities for HELM during this transitional period and discussed the possibility of doing a better job of communicating to the wider church what our Disciples scholars are doing in terms of scholarship and teaching.

### **Bethany Fellows**

The relationship with Bethany Fellows is entering a new phase. With the end of the funding from Lilly, HELM no longer has responsibility for managing the finances for BF. There are ongoing conversations with the director of the program about the possibility of future partnership between HELM and BF.

#### **Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team (ECMT) –**

This gathering has not yet met during my time as president. There is a new chair and the gathering anticipates meeting in January or February. It is possible that participation in this group would make more sense if the Council on Ministries in Higher Education were functioning.

#### **Hyde Park Christian Church**

HELM continues to work with Hyde Park Christian Church in Austin, Texas under the terms of the trust that established the East Scholarship Fund, which provides that HELM and the congregation have joint responsibility for the scholarship program. HELM is trustee of the fund, passes applications on to the congregation and writes the checks; the congregation reviews the applications and selects the recipients from members of the five Disciples congregations in Austin.

#### **T.A. Abbott Award**

The 2014 awardee will be presented the award during inauguration celebration of the new president at Culver Stockton in April of 2015. HELM needs to develop an awards process that makes presenting the award in the same year it is made, a more viable possibility. As it currently stands, making the Award after the spring HELM board meeting makes it very difficult to find a meaningful time to present the award during the academic calendar of the school where the awardee is located.

#### **Disciples Scholars Breakfast AAR/SBL**

This year's Disciples Scholar's breakfast took place in San Diego and was well attended. Over 57 people signed up for the breakfast and we had 3 additional walk-ins that we were able to accommodate. As in previous year, Chalice Press co-sponsored the breakfast and subsidized the cost of the meal to keep it reasonably priced for participants. Brad Lyons gave opening remarks about recent publications and the success of some of the changes at CBP. The HELM president presented the gathering with an overview of the current work of HELM and the priorities during this current transitional period. The feedback received suggests that there is significant excitement about the possibilities that lie ahead for HELM. Next year's gathering will be at the AAR/SBL meeting in Atlanta, GA.



## **The Councils**

### **Council on Theological Education**

- a) The president of HELM was invited by the President of Lexington Theological Seminary, Clarisse Gillette, to attend the fall board meeting of LTS and present to them an overview of what's happening at HELM and what the current priorities are during this transitional period. The board was very much interested in the work of HELM and we received a number of encouraging comments regarding the work we are doing and the prospect for closer collaboration with the theological school. Lexington received a \$250,000 grant from Lilly to study student debt. This is a really exciting opportunity, since Lilly has become more selective about making large grants and this particular grant is an affirmation of the work LTS is doing under President Gillette's leadership.
- b) The president of HELM has also visited Disciples Seminary Foundation in California at the Claremont campus and spoke to students there in December. Another visit is planned for April of 2015.
- c) The next meeting of the Council on Theological Education will take place in April.

### **Council on Ministries in Higher Education**

This council is currently not functioning but will be re-engaged in 2015. There are currently plans in place to convene a group of chaplains and directors of church relations to begin the process of restoring this council

### **Council of Colleges and Universities –**

We continue to move toward a closer working relationship with the Council of Colleges and Universities. As of this report, the HELM president has visited a number of Disciples Colleges and Universities: Transylvania University, Midway College, Lynchburg College, and Chapman University. The president of HELM also gave the 160<sup>th</sup> founder's day convocation address at Eureka College.

In January, the president attended the gathering of the council that is scheduled to take place in San Diego in January of 2015 and made a presentation of ways we can resume a closer working relationship with the council. At this meeting, the Council Colleges & Universities voted to continue its operations as previously planned through June 30, 2015 with funding support continuing as currently planned through that date. But, beginning July 1, 2015 all funds previously provided to the council by Higher Education and Leadership Ministries will once again be retained by HELM for its budgeted activities and HELM will absorb the work currently being done by the current director. Guy Waldrop will begin phasing out of his role over the next six months and the president of HELM along

with the director of development and communications will work with him on an appropriate transition.

This is an extremely positive step forward and it would not have been possible without the collaborate work of the HELM president, the Council of Colleges and University chair, Ken Garren and the director, Guy Waldrop, who all worked to ensure a successful meeting and a positive reception by the presidents.

While the funding change is a positive step, the collaborative relationship that this shift represents is even more significant. The shared communication and representation activities will be of great benefit to the colleges and universities as well as to Higher Education and Leadership Ministries. Additionally, it will greatly enhance my ability to represent HELM and seek funding for HELM's mission. Ultimately, this will be of great benefit to the church and our shared mission.

## **HELM ADMINISTRATION**

### **HELM Staffing**

The staffing of HELM has undergone significant changes over the last few years and particularly in the last few months. The retirement of Dennis Landon has lead to the need to re-prioritize various responsibilities and the upcoming retirement of Linda Plengemeier brings the need for even more extensive changes in the staffing configuration. My initial assessment of the staffing configuration has led me to the conclusion that HELM's current staffing configuration is "administratively heavy" and needs to be reconfigured to provide better support for HELM programs as well as our development and communications efforts. HELM is moving forward with transitional staffing structure that will give us the flexibility and the growth potential that HELM needs during the next two years.

### **Previous HELM Staffing**

- President
- Vice President & Treasurer
- Administrative Assistant
- Contract Assistance for Accounting
- Contract Assistance for Leadership Fellows Program

### **NEW Staffing Configuration**

- President
- Director of Development and Communications
- Director of Programs and Technology
- Office Coordinator
- Contract Assistance for Accounting



## **Facilities**

The current facilities are sufficient for HELM's current work. HELM has been in the current office space for a year and there are two remaining years on the lease. It is possible that we could consider other arrangements for office space. This needs to be assessed in relation to HELM's long-term plans for location and staffing. This will be revisited at the April Board Meeting.

## **DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Development Overview**

In recent years, HELM has had some success in raising money through an annual fund and very limited success in raising funds for designated funds to support the Leadership Fellows program and other scholarships. Unfortunately, the annual fund has relied heavily on a single donor for a major part of the contributions and this donor is no longer making contributions to the annual fund. As DMF continues to decline, it is clear that HELM must look to other sources to adequately fund existing programs and grow those programs. Previous efforts to increase annual fund giving have been challenged by limited time and resource to seek out more contributions.

### **Communications**

**Newsletter** – In the past, HELM has published and distributed both printed and electronic newsletters. HELM has not done so consistently in recent years and this is due in part to staffing constraints. The previous newsletters were produced as PDF's and sent out to the database of HELM's constituents. A different newsletter format with hyperlinks that connect readers to content on the websites of various Disciples related institutions would be more robust and more interactive. Partnering with the three councils to provide content for an integrated newsletter would be an important way to represent HELM and its related constituent institutions to the wider church.

**Website** – The current website was redesigned a year ago, but remains in need of substantial redesign to match current best practices for non-profit and church related institutional websites. There is also the opportunity to save money through a coordinated website effort to support not just HELM, but the three associated councils. There are a number of key resources among the HELM leadership fellows and at Disciples related institutions to provide state-of-the-art web design as well as provide quality content for the website.

**Social Media** – The social media presence of HELM is in need of considerable attention to develop a solid social media strategy that makes sense for HELM and its institutional partners. This will be the focus of the Director of Programs and Technology

**Summary**

The transitions taking place at HELM are helping the organization move forward through a process of strategic discernment and intentional focus. HELM looks forward to the years ahead and it will continue to work closely with the wider church to help proclaim and embody the right of God and be part of the human transformation that is the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ by developing and nurturing leaders who will renew and transform the church in the coming generation.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from Higher Education and Leadership Ministries and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.



GA-1512

**National Benevolent Association (NBA)  
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
[www.nbacares.org](http://www.nbacares.org)**

**Mark D. Anderson, President and CEO  
January 2015**

### **Our Mission**

*Following God's call, the National Benevolent Association exists to inspire and connect the people and ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), to accompany one another in the creation of communities of compassion and care, and to advocate for the well-being of humanity.*

### **Our Core Values**

The core values of the NBA, a general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), serve as the foundation of how we go about our work, organize ourselves and the communities with whom we partner with, and how we measure our programs and initiatives. We live out these values in our daily interactions with one another and with the community members we accompany and advocate alongside. These values endure from season to season, situation to situation, and person to person. They guide our organizational culture as we live out faithful commitments to all of God's creation.

#### *Rooted in Compassionate Care*

We celebrate those who have served before us in creating a just world. Since 1886, the NBA's mission and work emerged from the faithful witness of a small group of Disciples women seeking to address the needs of children and families in need. We value this legacy of serving the "least of these" and endeavor to root all of our initiatives in the value and dignity of human life and in serving a world that God so loves.

#### *Accountability*

We claim our duty to be effective stewards of the resources entrusted to us. We are fiscally responsible and acknowledge our accountability to our partners and the communities we serve. We treat others with respect and strive to conduct our work in the spirit of transparency and openness. Where there is brokenness, we strive for reconciliation.

#### *Collaborative Partnerships*

We believe that meaningful results to build compassionate and caring communities happen only when we can work in partnership with God and a wide diversity of others – individuals, communities, churches and organizations. We affirm that by working with partners, as well as those we serve, and by practicing humble leadership, we have what we need to make a difference.





### *Accompaniment*

We value the creative voice and mind of all people as we seek to heed God's call, especially in the important work of developing solutions through creative and innovative efforts designed to address personal challenges and systemic oppression. As we assume a posture of openness, we find in each other's company the "bread" that will sustain us all. As we share life's joys and struggles, at times picking up one another's load and going the hard way together, we create communities of compassion and care.

### *Forward Leaning*

We commit to learning and adapting as we move into the future. We understand that during times of change and new directions, the path forward often involves uncertainty and challenges. Through our shared efforts of advocacy, education, pastoral response, and professional care and services, we move towards the health and well being of all.

### **Our Ministries and Partners**

Serving as the Church's health and social services general ministry, the NBA partners with local congregations, regional and general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers. **Our shared work is about advancing the care for and with others in our communities and raising the awareness of needs that are often overlooked and forgotten.** NBA equips and collaborates with partner ministries and organizations that provide direct care to those in need—via affordable housing, spiritual care for the incarcerated, children and family services, programs for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, care and advocacy for older adults, and initiatives responding to hunger in its many expressions, to name only a few.

The NBA centers our shared work in three ways – **Incubate, Initiate, and Connect.**

### ***INCUBATE***

The NBA incubates new and emerging Disciples-related health and social service ministries. We seek to partner with and empower these ministries so that they may grow and strengthen their effectiveness and impact of mission.

### **Impact of Incubate Ministries**



In fall 2014, the NBA collaborated with Hope Partnership's Leadership Academy to host a leadership track and workshops focused on "social entrepreneurs of faith," which brought together eight ministry projects and their leaders to learn, brainstorm, plan, and engage in dialogue about sustainable health and social service ministries.

Within 2014, six organizations and ministries have entered into a collaborative partnership with the NBA



as part of the NBA Incubate Initiative. The NBA works with each of these entities to strategically strengthen areas such as board development, capacity building, administrative mentoring, book keeping services, and affinity networks.

Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins joined the NBA as the Director of the NBA Incubate Initiative. She leads NBA's efforts of incubating new and emerging health and social service ministries that are addressing issues such as youth development, dementia care, community organizing around health and social service justice issues, and congregationally-based older adult programs to name only a few.

### ***INITIATE***

The NBA initiates ministry programs designed to establish and grow partnerships around health and social service ministries. Through listening with partners and fellow Disciples, NBA from time to time will initiate projects that engage a variety of partners in the caring for others.

### **Impact of NBA XPLORE**



In 2014, in partnership with Disciples churches, pastors, lay leaders, regions and regional staff, the NBA initiated the NBA XPLORE program. Our aim is to partner young adults with Disciples' congregations and the communities in which they serve — impacting neighborhoods, congregations, and young adults. The NBA XPLORE is a congregationally hosted, 10-month residency program where young adults live in simple community, explore community engagement, and develop their hearts for care.

The NBA XPLORE program, launched with three inaugural sites in 2014: Hiram-Mantua, Ohio (a partnership with three local Disciples churches and Hiram College), North Hollywood, California (a partnership with Hollywood Beverly Christian Church, First Christian Church in North Hollywood, and the Pacific Southwest Region), and St. Louis, Missouri (a partnership with Union Avenue Christian Church). At the conclusion of the first year of NBA XPLORE – 2 Residents are attending Disciples-related colleges, 1 is enrolled in seminary, 2 were offered full-time staff positions at their community engagement site, 3 will continue to reside in community with their Disciples congregation. In 2015, NBA XPLORE will welcome at least 21 new XPLORE Residents with four expanded host sites and cities. Indeed, this is a movement of wholeness and transformation!

### ***CONNECT***

The NBA **connects** direct care providers, emerging social service ministries, local congregations and mission partners so that all may learn, collaborate and grow stronger together. The NBA seeks to amplify and strengthen connectional networks so that leaders in Disciples-related health and social service ministries can share best practices, expertise, and resources with one another.



### Impact of Connect Ministries



In 2014, the NBA collaborated with Rev. Dean Bucalos with Mission Behind Bars and Beyond based in Kentucky to support Disciples congregations and leaders as they engage in prison and jail related ministries. With the NBA's commitment to connect affinity group ministries connected to health and social service justice issues, Rev. Bucalos serves as the mission specialist for prison and jail ministries. Through online, learning webinars, resources such as study guides, workshops, and involvement with other Disciples advocating on

the issue, the NBA seeks to truly connect and create communities of compassion and care for returning citizens and formerly incarcerated individuals and their families.

Through the Disciples Care Exchange, the NBA, *Disciples Home Missions*, and *regional and general ministries* of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are collaborating to support a network of care providers. Participation in the Disciples Care Exchange is by choice. No board approval on the part of any entity is necessary to engage this network, though a Disciples of Christ or United Church of Christ relationship should be evident.

Partners in the Disciples Care Exchange are connected through peer and web-based networks and have access to available resources including: grant opportunities, informational updates, peer learning opportunities, web-based and face-to-face conversations, social advocacy alliances, best-practice guidelines, and other connectional resources as the network deems appropriate. Leaders from 8 of the Disciples Care Exchange partners serve along with Rev. Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick, Director of the Disciples Care Exchange and Affinity Group Ministries, as the Advisory Council for the Exchange.

For more information about all NBA ministries and for stories, upcoming events, and worship and study resources, please visit [www.nbacares.org](http://www.nbacares.org)



## **PARTNERS IN THE DISCIPLES CARE EXCHANGE INCLUDE:**

### **A Small Hand**

Ann McBroom, Executive Director

Edinburg Christian Church

210 Center Street, PO Box 117, Edinburg, Virginia 22824-0117

(540) 933-6313

[www.helpingshenandoahcountyinfantsinneed.blogspot.com](http://www.helpingshenandoahcountyinfantsinneed.blogspot.com)

A Small Hand provides age-appropriate food, diapers, and hygiene essentials to infants in need from newborns to 36 months in the Shenandoah County of Virginia. The focus of our ministry is to serve as a specialist pantry providing care to the youngest and most vulnerable members of our community. All of our clients are enrolled in government supplemental feeding programs (SNAP/Food Stamps or WIC).

As these programs were never designed to provide a full month of nutrition, families and infants often do not have enough for non-food essentials such as diapers, feeding bottles, pacifiers, and hygiene essentials. These are the gaps that A Small Hand fills. As an all-volunteer agency, and A Small Hand takes pride in cost-effectiveness, professionalism and transparency. The vision and goals of A Small Hand are that children can reach their full developmental potential.

### **Christian Care Communities**

Rev. Bill Schiphorst, Director of Church Relations

12710 Townepark Way, Suite 1000, Louisville, Kentucky 40243

(502) 254-4200

[www.christiancarecommunities.org](http://www.christiancarecommunities.org)

Christian Care Communities is the oldest provider of Older Adult Care related to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We are Kentucky's largest faith-based provider of housing, long-term care, adult day centers, and community based services for Older Adults. We serve approximately 3,000 individuals and their families throughout Kentucky. We actively work with churches helping them with Older Adult ministries.

### **Christian Church Homes**

Don Stump, President/CEO

303 Hegenberger Road, Suite 201, Oakland, California 94621

(510) 632-6712

[www.cchnc.org](http://www.cchnc.org)

At Christian Church Homes (CCH) we build and manage affordable housing communities where seniors can live and thrive in the comfort of their own homes, because we believe doing so is better for communities as a whole and the seniors we serve. We are operating 58 senior communities across the country and providing high quality affordable housing for 5,500 seniors. As an organization we employ over 400 people and have a corporate balance sheet of \$78 million. As the country is looking at a doubling of the senior population, CCH also hopes to "Double in a Decade" and plans to provide 10,000 units of housing by 2014.

**Christian Services for Children in Alabama**

Cynthia M Stinson (PIP, LCSW), CEO  
1792 Highway 14 East, Selma, Alabama 36702  
(334) 875-0608  
[www.cscalabama.org](http://www.cscalabama.org)

CSCA's Family Outcome Centered Unification Services (FOCUS) program serves a five-county area surrounding Selma. FOCUS works with family members to instill and maintain family safety and unity. These individualized services are provided to families based on their own unique strengths and immediate needs. In partnership with the Alabama Department of Human Resources, CSCA provides therapeutic foster care services for youth diagnosed with emotional and behavior needs.

**Disciple Homes Management Group**

Karen Wardlaw, Administrator/CEO  
420 W Upshur Avenue, Gladewater, Texas 75647  
(903) 845-7638  
[www.disciplehomes.org](http://www.disciplehomes.org)

Disciple Homes has been providing quality affordable housing for senior adults (age 62 years or older) and their household since 1972 in Northeast Texas. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, rental assistance is available to all of our residents that qualify. Qualified residents pay 30% of their adjusted income for rent and utilities. Disciple Homes Management Group provides social services and housing to meet the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of person, in the loving and caring spirit of Christ.

**Disciples Retirement Community of Oklahoma, Inc. (DRCO)**

Rev. Devon McAnally, Executive Director  
301 NW 36th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118  
(580) 747-5986  
[www.drcok.org](http://www.drcok.org)

DRCO, through their ministry, *Hearts for Care*, provides a single trusted source for community resources and member-defined needs. Services are offered and provided by trusted and trained volunteers and service providers who have been prescreened by Hearts for Care. Members have access to help with such things as routine household chores, grocery shopping and errands, transportation, and yard work. Hearts for Care also offers social educational, and wellness opportunities through the organized efforts of the volunteers within the community. *Hearts for Care* is about community, connections, and caring. It is where relationships are authentic and mutual. It is about serving each other. It is about inclusion, no matter where we live.



**Florida Christian Center**

Rev Brent Reynolds, Executive Director

1115 Edgewood Avenue S., Jacksonville, Florida 32205

(904) 981-3095

[www.flchristiancenter.org](http://www.flchristiancenter.org)

Florida Christian Center provides ongoing programs and activities for the residents of neighboring Sundale Manor and Florida Christian Apartments, affordable living facilities for older adults. Chaplaincy services include ministry and pastoral care, worship services, classes on faith and aging, and other programs focused on spiritual health. Also offered are exercise classes, workout equipment, and comfortable areas for fellowship and entertaining.

**Gomer's House**

Rev. Milele Hobbs, Executive Director

6638 North Michigan Avenue, Portland Oregon 97217

(503) 935-6362

Gomer's House is a faith community of healing and transformation helping people reach their God-given potential. They are safe, learning, nurturing communities where broken, battered and bruised people get help and learn new skills to overcome compulsive behaviors to become productive, functioning members of society.

**Hiram Farm Living and Learning Center**

De Ann Brewer, Executive Director

PO Box 157, Hiram, Ohio 44234

(330) 569-3441

[www.hiramfarm.org](http://www.hiramfarm.org)

Hiram Farm Living and Learning Community is a nonprofit organization that provides opportunities for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to grow, learn, work, and live in a setting focused on respect and support for individuals and the environment. Hiram Farm is a community project born out of the desire to provide inspiration and meaningful work for the individual growth of people with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Our program began serving six adults with autism in June of 2009. In April of 2011, we welcomed the twentieth participant into the program.

**Manistee Manor Apartment Homes**

Debi Windahl, Administrator

7987 N 53rd Avenue, Glendale, Arizona 85301

(623) 915-5039

[www.manisteemanor.com](http://www.manisteemanor.com)

In the loving and caring spirit of Christ, Disciples House of Glendale Inc. and Manistee Manor are passionately committed to exceed the needs and expectations of our residents by providing quality senior housing and other services to enhance the lives of those we serve in a friendly family-style community environment. A place our residents are proud to call home. Manistee provides apartment home rentals for our low-income senior residents in a safe and caring environment where they can continue to age in place independently (with or without the help of out-side services) in an active senior community.

**Mission Behind Bars and Beyond**

Rev Dean Bucalos, Program Coordinator  
PO Box 22034, Louisville, Kentucky, 40205  
(502) 396-3543  
[www.missionbehindbarsandbeyond.org](http://www.missionbehindbarsandbeyond.org)

Mission Behind Bars and Beyond is a non-profit faith-based organization providing community based mentoring programs for those released from prison and returning to communities in Kentucky. In conjunction with a Disciples of Christ congregation, New Life in Christ Christian Church, which is located in a women's halfway house, we minister to those incarcerated, train outside volunteers to form Nurture, Support and Accountability Groups (NSAG) and connect returning citizens with a NSAG which will then walk alongside each person for six months to a year to equip them for a successful re-entry into the community to which they are returning.

**Oakland Peace Center**

Rev. Sandhya Jha, Executive Director  
111 Fairmount Avenue, Oakland, California 94611  
[www.oaklandpeacecenter.org](http://www.oaklandpeacecenter.org)

As an emerging social entrepreneurship nonprofit model of ministry, the Oakland Peace Center exists as a physical space (40,000 square feet gifted by First Christian Church of Oakland) and a network of people and organizations (over 40 Bay Area based nonprofits). It brings together direct service, advocacy, youth empowerment, art and culture shift organizations to cross-pollinate. Its purpose is to help small, local nonprofits on the front lines of the struggle for peace and justice connect with each other, and to support in expanding their capacity and their collaboration across sectors.

**Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center (OFEC)**

Rev. Sharyn Cosby Executive Director  
1020 South Garnett Road, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74128  
(918) 551-6017  
[www.ofec.co](http://www.ofec.co)

Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center (OFEC) was initially founded to manage a grant from the Office of Juvenile Affairs to address the disparity of minority contact with law enforcement (DMC). Because of those efforts Tulsa County has experienced a reduction in African American male contact with law enforcement in relationship to their White counterparts from 7-1 to 4- 1. However, through their work, they learned that there are gaps in services and/or service areas and now the center offer programming that addresses the needs of community including various support groups (substance abuse, parenting), classes (anger management, relationship education, active parenting, and Street Law) and workshops (financial literacy, job- finding, and grant writing skills) that will empower and individuals for purpose. Additionally, OFEC has offered free breakfast and lunch during the summer for kids on break and grocery assistance to its consumers in need through its pantry.



**Opportunity Village**

Rev. Dan Bryant, President, Board of Directors  
111 N. Garfield Street, Eugene, Oregon 97402  
(541) 606-4455  
[www.opportunityvillageeugene.org](http://www.opportunityvillageeugene.org)

Opportunity Village Eugene is a collaboration between the housed and the unhoused providing stable, safe, and sustainable places to be through alternative, cost-effective approaches for transitioning the unhoused to more permanent living situations.

**Reach Beyond Mission**

Rev. Mary Lu Johnston, Executive Director  
15907 Braesgate Drive, Austin, Texas 78717  
(512) 218-4335  
[www.reachbeyondmission.org](http://www.reachbeyondmission.org)

Reach Beyond Mission is a fully planned youth mission/poverty education experience. Youth join youth from other churches across the country to explore issues of culture, gender, and poverty in an urban setting. Participants volunteer at numerous metropolitan area non-profits working with the homeless, low-income families, children, people with disabilities and the elderly. We provide speakers, age-appropriate activities, and discussion starters to help young people explore the biblical, theological, economic, social and political issues related to poverty. Our goal is to help youth begin to explore how to spend a lifetime changing the systems that sustain poverty with their votes, through their career choices, and with how they spend their money. We partner with specific service organizations to provide a poverty education/mission week for youth onsite.

**Safe Haven Day Shelter at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Falls Church**

Rev. Kathleen Kline Moore, Senior Minister  
Rob Paxton, Safe Haven Coordinator  
6165 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Virginia 22044  
(703) 532-8220  
[www.fccfc.org](http://www.fccfc.org)

Safe Haven at First Christian Church seeks to be a welcoming sanctuary of warmth, sustenance, and respite for those experiencing homelessness and poverty. The primary focus is table ministry: abundant food, fellowship, services, and a kind and welcoming environment. What began as an outreach program to an average of 15-20 individuals a day has grown to a drop-in program serving over 150 people. Now an interfaith coalition of faith based communities contribute by providing hot meals and volunteers to the program, which brings increased awareness and support from the community.

**Serra Center**

Lisa Senadenos, CEO

2610 Central Avenue, Suite 120, Union City, California 94587

(510) 489-1700

[www.serracenter.org](http://www.serracenter.org)

Serra Center offers three types of support services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF-DDH) provides 24-hour care and supervision in six-bed homes in residential neighborhoods. Individuals in Supported Living Services live in the environment of their choice, with care and support based on their individual needs. Independent Living Services provide services focusing on specific identified living skills, working toward eliminating the need for services when the skills are mastered. All individuals served are active during the day either at jobs or in a day program.

**Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Inc.**

Judy Arnett, Interim Executive Director

860 East River Place, Suite 104, Jackson, Mississippi 39202

(601) 354-0983

[www.scscy.org](http://www.scscy.org)

SCSCY provides services through 11 different statewide locations including therapeutic group homes for children and youth, a transitional living facility for older teens who are homeless, an array of adoption, therapeutic foster care, and post adoption services, and education services that include independent living preparation for teens in the foster care system, and abstinence education for at-risk youth.

**StoneSoup Community Venture**

Rev. Christy Moore, Founder and CEO

7930 S 78th Ave., Tulsa, Oklahoma 74133

[www.stonesouptulsa.org](http://www.stonesouptulsa.org)

The mission of StoneSoup Community Venture is to establish food justice projects around diverse table and community settings. Our vision and mission is based on principles of empowerment through education and experience that are positive responses to a growing need for food security in local communities. Up to 25 % of any city's population may not know how they will secure their next meal. A new model of addressing hunger is needed, one that is based on a well documented approach of empowerment as an effective way to lift people out of poverty, thereby creating lasting and significant social change. We are creating public gathering spaces where an earth to table model of food security can be demonstrated and experienced by people of all ages.



National  
**Benevolent**  
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### **Tennyson Center for Children**

Rod Witte, CEO

2950 Tennyson Center, Denver, Colorado 80212

(303) 433-2541

[www.tennysoncenter.org](http://www.tennysoncenter.org)

Tennyson Center provides 24-hour intensive residential care, day treatment, special education and home/community based services for approximately 150 children and their families every day. Children with severe behavioral and mental health problems along with educational delays are the primary client population. The families of these children have experienced or are experiencing extreme trauma, physical and/or sexual abuse, mental illness, substance abuse, or extreme poverty and/or homelessness.

Tennyson is a leader in advocating for the needs of all children and families in need in Colorado through legislative and policy development.

### **The Family Tree**

Rev. Helms Jarrell and Rev. Greg Jarrell, Executive Directors

2910 Parkway Avenue, Charlotte, North Carolina 28208 (704)

654-7429

[www.qcfamilytree.org](http://www.qcfamilytree.org)

The Family Tree is a monastic service community located in the underprivileged neighborhood of West Charlotte called Enderly Park. Their mission is to be kinfolk rooted in discipleship in West Charlotte, NC. The ways in which they embody our mission is through creativity, prayer, and welcome. The Family Tree offers hospitality (housing and companionship) in their homes to neighbors who are in transition. Participants enjoy family-style meals each evening with neighbors and guests, gather for prayer every weekday morning and midday. Over the years, the ministry has grown to include: Freedom School summer literacy camp, Wednesday Evening dinner and devotionals for youth and children, twice monthly community meals, arts activities, young adult leadership development through internship programs, edible gardens, and community outreach activities. Currently, they are working towards creating a microbusiness in order to provide employment to neighbors as well as sustainable income to their nonprofit.

### **The Summit**

Ken Burger, Executive Director

1400 Enterprise Drive, Lynchburg, Virginia 24526

(434) 582-1500

[www.summitlynchburg.com](http://www.summitlynchburg.com)

The Summit is a senior living community providing an environment for each resident to be engaged in life. We provide services, amenities and facilities that support an active lifestyle in Independent Living for each individual. As residents' needs change, The Summit's campus has a continuum of care available through Assisted Living and The Summit Health and Rehab Center.



### **Woodhaven**

Mark Palmer, CEO  
 1405 Hathman Place, Columbia, Missouri 65201  
 (573) 876-7326  
[www.woodhaventeam.org](http://www.woodhaventeam.org)

Woodhaven serves men and women with intellectual and developmental disabilities in its community-based supported living program, and provides a Day Program for individuals who do not work during the day. The people served live in family-sized homes and apartments in established neighborhoods and are supported in being active members of the local community.

### **Worcester Fellowship**

Rev Elizabeth Magill (Liz), Pastor and Executive Director  
 PO Box 3510, Worcester, Massachusetts 01613  
[www.worcesterfellowship.org](http://www.worcesterfellowship.org)

Worcester Fellowship is outdoor church reaching homeless and at risk adults with Sunday lunch, worship, bible study, weekday ministries, and leadership development. We have one theology: God loves you now, before you get help, before you get sober, before you make changes, God loves you now. We provide a listening ear, sit beside you, and travel with you on life's sometimes difficult, sometimes joyous, journey.

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**Rev. Dr. Todd Adams (Proxy)**  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
Assoc General Minister & VP  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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**Mr. Gary Zimmerman**, VP for Administration and CFO



**National  
Benevolent  
Association**

**National Benevolent Association  
Consolidated Statement of Activities  
For the Twelve Months Ending December 31, 2014**

|                                          | Unrestricted<br>Funds | Temporarily<br>Restricted<br>Funds | Permanently<br>Restricted<br>Funds | All Funds<br>12/31/14 | All Funds<br>12/31/13 |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Revenues, Gains and Other Support        |                       |                                    |                                    |                       |                       |
| Fees for Service                         | \$534,316.93          |                                    |                                    | \$534,316.93          | \$2,968,078.47        |
| Interest, Dividends and Rents            | 31,081.45             | 4,595.04                           | 4.51                               | 35,681.00             | 80,626.82             |
| Net Unrealized and Realized Gains        | 1,527,714.54          | 815,298.98                         | 1,450.43                           | 2,344,463.95          | 8,403,960.25          |
| Contributions                            | 1,979,001.74          | 30,210.00                          |                                    | 2,009,211.74          | 2,310,260.69          |
| Actuarial Change on Deferred Gifts       | 51,580.36             | 4,633.54                           | 6,526.40                           | 62,740.30             | 116,358.29            |
| Other Income                             | 132,328.63            |                                    |                                    | 132,328.63            | 9,813.10              |
| Net Gain on Sales of Other Assets        |                       |                                    |                                    |                       |                       |
| Total Revenue, Gains and Support         | 4,256,023.65          | 854,737.56                         | 7,981.34                           | 5,118,742.55          | 13,889,097.62         |
| Net Assets Released from Restrictions    | 904,489.42            | (904,489.42)                       |                                    |                       | (11,074.84)           |
| Total After Assets Released              | 5,160,513.07          | (49,751.86)                        | 7,981.34                           | 5,118,742.55          | 13,878,022.78         |
| Expenses and Losses                      |                       |                                    |                                    |                       |                       |
| Salaries and Benefits                    | 1,609,335.16          |                                    |                                    | 1,609,335.16          | 3,235,102.55          |
| Professional Fees                        | 363,229.75            |                                    |                                    | 363,229.75            | 473,390.78            |
| Operating Expenses                       | 992,297.73            |                                    |                                    | 992,297.73            | 1,373,334.97          |
| Depreciation                             | 32,351.03             |                                    |                                    | 32,351.03             | 123,154.82            |
| Total Expenses                           | 2,997,213.67          |                                    |                                    | 2,997,213.67          | 5,204,983.12          |
| Net Loss on sales of other assets        | 1,770.00              |                                    |                                    | 1,770.00              | (68,064.94)           |
| Total Expenses and Losses                | 2,998,983.67          |                                    |                                    | 2,998,983.67          | 5,136,918.18          |
| Changes in Net Assets Before DO, EI & CE | 2,161,529.40          | (49,751.86)                        | 7,981.34                           | 2,119,758.88          | 8,741,104.60          |
| Discontinued Operations                  | (2,533,404.58)        | (119,686.30)                       | (157,780.31)                       | (2,810,871.19)        | (221,843.86)          |
| Change in Net Assets                     | (371,875.18)          | (169,438.16)                       | (149,798.97)                       | (691,112.31)          | 8,519,260.74          |
| Net Assets at Beginning of Year          | 37,103,343.21         | 10,970,571.41                      | 14,431,869.51                      | 62,505,784.13         | 53,986,523.39         |
| Net Assets at end of period              | 36,731,468.03         | 10,801,133.25                      | 14,282,070.54                      | 61,814,671.82         | 62,505,784.13         |



**National Benevolent Association**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**at December 31, 2014**

|                                         | <u>12/31/14</u>      | <u>12/31/13</u>      | <u>Difference</u>     |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Assets:</b>                          |                      |                      |                       |
| Current assets:                         |                      |                      |                       |
| Cash and cash equivalents               | \$383,559.99         | \$1,835,288.88       | (\$1,451,728.89)      |
| Accounts and interest receivable        | 1,374,156.47         | 1,025,012.80         | 349,143.67            |
| Contributions receivable - short term   | 283.81               | 8,249.00             | (7,965.19)            |
| Inventories and prepaid expenses        | 98,873.34            | 106,776.68           | (7,903.34)            |
| Marketable securities                   | 49,039,662.07        | 48,084,917.75        | 954,744.32            |
| Other Investments                       | 790,462.00           | 790,462.00           |                       |
| Total current assets                    | 51,686,997.68        | 51,850,707.11        | (163,709.43)          |
| Noncurrent assets:                      |                      |                      |                       |
| Land, buildings & equipment             | 508,188.69           | 1,397,525.90         | (889,337.21)          |
| Long-term investments                   | 19,846,231.14        | 20,154,365.02        | (308,133.88)          |
| Other noncurrent assets                 | 84,394.60            | 145,544.77           | (61,150.17)           |
| <b>Total assets</b>                     | <b>72,125,812.11</b> | <b>73,548,142.80</b> | <b>(1,422,330.69)</b> |
|                                         | =====                | =====                | =====                 |
| <b>Liabilities and net assets:</b>      |                      |                      |                       |
| Current liabilities:                    |                      |                      |                       |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses   | 140,783.10           | 365,624.78           | (224,841.68)          |
| Current portion of annuity obligation   | 630,545.91           | 750,949.34           | (120,403.43)          |
| Deposits of others                      | 245,612.56           | 266,495.12           | (20,882.56)           |
| Total current liabilities               | 1,016,941.57         | 1,383,069.24         | (366,127.67)          |
| Noncurrent liabilities:                 |                      |                      |                       |
| Other noncurrent liabilities            | 4,384,554.02         | 4,272,716.58         | 111,837.44            |
| Annuity obligation (less current)       | 2,184,009.94         | 2,576,834.36         | (392,824.42)          |
| Funds held in trust                     | 2,725,634.76         | 2,809,738.49         | (84,103.73)           |
| Total liabilities                       | 10,311,140.29        | 11,042,358.67        | (731,218.38)          |
| <b>Net assets:</b>                      |                      |                      |                       |
| Unrestricted                            | 36,731,468.03        | 37,103,343.21        | (371,875.18)          |
| Temporarily restricted                  | 10,801,133.25        | 10,970,571.41        | (169,438.16)          |
| Permanently restricted                  | 14,282,070.54        | 14,431,869.51        | (149,798.97)          |
| Total net assets                        | 61,814,671.82        | 62,505,784.13        | (691,112.31)          |
| <b>Total liabilities and net assets</b> | <b>72,125,812.11</b> | <b>73,548,142.80</b> | <b>(1,422,330.69)</b> |
|                                         | =====                | =====                | =====                 |



**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the National Benevolent Association and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.



**GA-1513**

**THE NATIONAL CONVOCATION OF THE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

Timothy M. James  
Associate General Minister and Administrative Secretary of the  
National Convocation  
P.O. Box 1986  
1099 North Meridian Street, Suite 700  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Under the theme, “One God, One Church, One Mission” the National Convocation is purposed to provide an instrumentality within the structure of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a forum for the discussion of pertinent issues related to the Black Church in the context of total church life. Meetings and programs are arranged for fellowship; program promotion; leadership development; and such other general purposes as shall support and strengthen the congregations in the total mission of the church.

Our vision is to be a leaven in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) recognizing and developing leaders for the empowerment of African American pastors and congregations for the benefit of the whole church.

We began the year in a whole church collaboration effort with the Office of the General Minister and President, Disciples Home Missions, The Pension Fund, The Department of Black Ministry, Christian Theological Seminary and The Christian Church in Indiana, to host the nationally acclaimed, 2014 Academy of Preachers. Young preachers, male and female, from across the nation including several Disciples of Christ preachers, were given opportunity to preach on a national stage in a forum for growth and review. Indiana was a great place for this event in which Disciples played a major role in its success.

The National Convocation is very excited about the information regarding the Merger Agreement of 1969 is being shared more and more, in circles of learning and cultural growth in the church. We are a church with a most interesting past and it helps to know where we have come from in order to plan where to go. We are intentional to emphasize and encourage the imperative and initiative to become a pro-reconciling/anti-racist church. We seek to become a church that serves, leads, and welcomes all to worship and feast at the Table as welcomed by God. We were blessed and challenged by our Minister of Reconciliation, Rev. April Johnson, who led us in an Anti-Racism Training Workshop during our December 2014 Board of Trustees meeting. We were made aware of three levels of racism that are peculiar to the African American community: institutional racism, socio economic - different access to goods and services; personal mediated racism, commission and omission, police brutality, and teacher

devaluation; and Internalized racism, acceptance of racism and the limitations imposed upon you as defined by others and/or yourself.

A major highlight of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Session of the National Convocation held at Columbus, Ohio was the successful Pre-Event sponsored by DHM and directed by Minister Sheila Spencer, Director of Christian Education and Faith Formation, the attendance was tremendous. We were really pleased to see the kickoff of the Preston Taylor Institute, sponsored by the African American Leadership and Development Program, directed by Dr. Bill Lee. It was a powerful experience. Ministers left looking forward to the next installment of the Institute. Many thanks go to Jackie Bunch and the Local Arrangements Committee in Columbus, for their hard work and commitment to the success of the Biennial Session. They made the Ohio Region and the city look good for the upcoming General Assembly. In our December Board Meeting, the Articles and By-Laws were amended to allow for the person nominated and elected to serve as vice president, would become president- elect at the end of their vice-presidency. The remaining officers would be nominated and then elected at the Biennial Session.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Session of the National Convocation took place in Columbus, Ohio. Our theme was "BE STILL AND KNOW", based on Psalm 46: 10. We were very happy to see attendance at more than six hundred registered adults and children. We were led in inspirational preaching, moving music and informative resource talks by persons who were willing and eager to serve. An added blessing to the Biennial Session was the cooperation the Local Arrangements Committee received from the entire region. Members of the Local Arrangements Committee came from as far as Cleveland, Xenia and Cincinnati. The inaugural class of the Preston Taylor Institute gave the clergy and lay leaders an opportunity to be for real, honest and transparent in discussing their passion and challenges in ministry. Mission First, was lifted up with the Board as an imperative program to strengthen our church from congregations outward. When Mission Gatherings take place in our regions, all Disciples are encouraged to participate.

It was the dream of our former president, Rev. Patricia Maples, to hold the 2014 Spring Executive Committee Meeting of the Board in Ghana, West Africa. The trip included the Executives, the Merger Staff, Board Members and friends. This was another example of collaboration between The Division of Overseas Ministries, Disciples Home Missions and the National Convocation. It was an unforgettable experience. We were able to dedicate three water wells, one at a school and two others in local communities. We also took clothing, school supplies and toys for the children at some of the schools and churches we visited. We were able to meet some of our overseas mission partners and were blessed to have the leadership of now retired Africa Area Executive, Rev. Sandra Gourdet, respectfully known as "Mama Sandra".

Disciples Home Missions practically serves hand in hand with the National Convocation in that our Merger Staff, Min. Sheila Spencer, Dr. R. Wayne Calhoun and Rev. Chesla Nickleson are housed in this ministry. We are all proud and pleased to welcome Rev. Chesla Nickleson as our newest Merger Staff member to serve as Program Director for the Office of Disciples Women. DHM president Dr. Ron Degges and Office of Disciples Women president Pat Donahoo



understand and are committed to the Merger Agreement and stress for diversity and inclusion throughout the life of church. It was my pleasure to attend my first Quadrennial Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia and witness the full scale and diverse participation of Disciples women from all over the country. I was impressed at the number of actively participating African American women.

I was honored to have a sabbatical last fall and used this as an opportunity to refresh my preaching craft that had shown signs of needed improvement recently. I studied with Dr. Frank Thomas, Professor of Preaching at Christian Theological Seminary who served as my preaching coach. This was time well spent.

Respectfully submitted,  
Timothy M. James, Administrative Secretary

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

GA-1514

## North American Pacific/Asian Disciples Ministries 2014

**Reported by Jinsuk Chun, Executive Pastor**  
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### NAPAD Board of Directors

John D. Roh (Moderator), Deanna Scobbie (Moderator-elect), Shirley Kinoshita (Secretary/Treasurer), Janet Casey-Allen (Immediate Past Moderator), Aaron Park (Member at large), Salesa Fatu Faalau (Member at large), John Woo (Member at large), Chungseong Kim (Member at large), Yeahwa Choi Lee (Member at large), Ron Degges (CGM Representative), Susan Gonzales Dewey (CRM Representative), David Lalthawm Lian (Representative to General Board), Sharon Watkins (General Minister & President), Jinsuk Chun (Executive Pastor)

### NAPAD Ministry Team

#### National Ministry

Jinsuk Chun, Executive Pastor

#### Ethnic Ministry

Lian Jiang (deployed) – Chinese Minister  
Saitumua Tafaoialii (deployed) – Samoan Minister  
Lianchinkhup Taithul (deployed) – Zo Minister

#### Women Ministry

Soo Yun (deployed) – Women Minister

#### Youth Ministry

Mayon Marcelino (deployed) – Youth Minister

#### Regional Ministry

Younglan Kim (deployed) – NAPAD Representative of Regional Ministry Team of Pacific Southwest Region  
Youngjun Yang (deployed) - NAPAD Representative of Regional Ministry Team of Pacific Southwest  
Daniel Lee (deployed) – Regional NAPAD Minister, Northern California-Nevada Region

### Mission of NAPAD



The North American Pacific/Asian Disciples of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) affirms the cultures and heritages of Pacific/Asian peoples within the historic and living Christian faith. As part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we join with other Disciples in the total mission of the church, to recognize and promote the gifts and presence of North American Pacific/Asian Disciples in the life and work of the Church.

### **Purpose of NAPAD**

1. To participate in God's mission through the various expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.
2. To contribute to the wholeness and unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.
3. To advocate for Pacific/Asian Disciples within and outside the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.
4. To share the gifts and traditions of Pacific/Asian Disciples with the wider church.

The NAPAD ministry in the year 2012 has continued to thrive in accordance with the Disciples identity, "...*a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world...*" The ministry of NAPAD is faithfully on the frontline of accomplishment of the four mission priorities of the Church: *Becoming a Pro-Reconciling and Anti-Racist Church; New Church Establishment; Congregational Transformation; Leadership Development.*

### **I. Becoming a Pro-Reconciling and Anti-Racist Church**

There were only eight NAPAD churches in 1992, but after 20 years of indefatigable work, there are about 100 churches in 2014 which consist mostly 18 different ethnic and linguistic groups: Burmese, Cambodian, Chin, Chinese, Chuuk, Filipino, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, Karen, Korean, Laotian, Mongolian, Montagnard, Samoan, Tongan, Vietnamese, Zo. Together we gather to form a community of faith working towards racial and ethnic inclusivity in all expressions of the church. NAPAD is committed to be "*a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.*" Our 2020 vision is to have 200 pro-reconciling and anti-racist NAPAD congregations. As a mission centered community, NAPAD holds evangelical passion, radical inclusiveness, and responsibility to the world.

#### **1. The 18<sup>th</sup> NAPAD Convocation**

The 18th Biennial NAPAD Convocation was at the University of Chicago. Its theme was "Sing the Lord's Song in the New Land" (Psalms 137:4). New Board of Directors was confirmed and elected the following: John D. Roh (Moderator), Deanna Scobbie (Moderator Elect), David Lalthawm Lian (Representative to General Board), Shirley Kinoshita (Secretary), Salesa Fatu Faalau, Chungseong Kim, John Wu, Yeahwa Choi Lee, Aaron Park (Members at Large). The

Convocation invited two special keynote speakers: Dr. Russell Moy and Dr. Russell Yee who have done extensive research in the field of Asian-American worship. Lonna Owens, Vice-President for Financial Development of the Division of Home Missions was appreciated for her integral leadership and support in assisting NAPAD accounting processes. At Convocation, NAPAD hosted several international guests who are mission partners with Global Ministries. Among the guests, Rev. Dr. Minhieu Cheon, Director of International Relationship of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), who spoke about the mission partnership between Disciples and PROK. While at Convocation, NAPAD seminarians who received NAPAD scholarships such as the David Kagiwada and Soongook Choi scholarships were recognized and honored. Convocation was a time of learning, fellowship and spiritual nourishment through worships, keynote, workshop sessions as well as cultural night.

## **2. Anti-racism and Pro-reconciliation Training for participants in NAPAD Convocation**

Sponsored by Reconciliation Ministry and National Benevolent Association, NAPAD provided a special program of Anti-racism and Pro-reconciliation for NAPADers who attended the 18<sup>th</sup> NAPAD Convocation on August 6 to 7. Rev. Sandhya Jha, of the Oakland Peace Center, along with Rev. Yvonne Gilmore, Associate Dean provided leadership as reconciliation facilitators for this training. Rev. April Lewton, vice-president of development and marketing at the National Benevolent Association, was pivotal in coordination and organizing the training program.

## **II. New Church Establishment**

1. The goal of NAPAD ministries is to have 200 healthy congregations by the year 2020. In partnership with Hope Partnership Ministry and Church Extension Ministry and Regional Committees of New Church Development, we have initiated and/or established new NAPAD congregations.
2. Under the excellent leadership of our ministry team, especially of Lian Jiang, Daniel Lee, Saitumua Tafoialli, Lian Taithul, Younglan Kim, and Youngjun Yang, 6 new congregations were established and 9 new ministers have been embraced by ordination or transferred from other faith communions.
3. NAPAD welcomed several five new Chuukese congregations located in diverse geographic areas of Iowa, Arkansas, and Missouri. In addition, the Northern California & Nevada Region received two new Samoan congregations. The NAPAD Reviewing and Nurturing Committee have interviewed and recommended several Korean congregations located in





Washington, Florida and Minnesota to their respective regional new church committees.

### **III Congregational Transformation and Pastoral Care**

1. For the purpose of pastoral care and nurture, the Executive Pastor with the Ministry Team made about 150 visits with ministers and 75 visits with congregations. Around 1000 contacts were created by means of email and telephone.
2. The Korean Disciples Convocation (KDC) held its 16<sup>th</sup> annual conference and retreat on August 4-5 at the Chicago Christian Church, Chicago. Sixty pastors and lay leaders participated in this special event. They had seminars and conferences that build upon personal faith, church spirituality as well as a strong focus on Disciples Identity.
3. NAPAD coordinated and sponsored regional gatherings of NAPAD ministers and lay leaders on congregational transformation and growth.
4. NAPAD sponsored a gathering for the Fellowship of Korean Disciples Ministers of Mid-America (Dongchoon Lee, Moderator) held in Chicago, IL. Participants were ministers and leaders from Korean Disciples churches in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Missouri. At the gathering, workshops on church growth and transformation were offered. Additionally, there was a ministerial trip to the Cane Ridge, KY in May.
5. Ghent Christian Church, Ohio continued to develop the united congregation of Anglo and Korean Disciples through multi-racial and cultural ministries.
6. There was an interfaith program which Saegil Christian Church (Burbank, CA) and Hyangrin Church (Glendale, CA) co-sponsored from October 2014 to April 2015. They invited spiritual leaders from neighboring regions to their congregations creating a space for all to share their faith and collaboration to find common ways to contribute to our society together.

### **IV Leadership Development**

1. **NAPAD Mission Center at Disciples Seminary Foundation**  
NAPAD opened its Mission Center at the Disciples Seminary Foundation, Claremont, CA. On its opening day, NAPAD honored the life of Rev. Harold Johnson, one of NAPAD's founders. Rev. Johnson passed away on Sept. 6 at the age of 93. He was known as dearly as the Grandfather of

NAPAD and was instrumental in establishing NAPAD as a community to include on Asians and Pacific Islanders within the Disciples. NAPAD's Mission Center will be used to host and facilitate leadership and church planning programs. With close cooperation with the Disciples Seminary Foundation as well as the Regions in the West Coast, NAPAD wants to strategically and intentionally develop effective ministries in planting and sustaining NAPAD churches as well as cultivating leaders for the NAPAD community.

## 2. **Fundraising Event**

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014, a fundraising event was held at First Christian Church of Pomona, CA to establish the Harold Johnson Legacy Fund. This fund is set up to support NAPAD's youth, young adult, and women ministries. The NAPAD Board unanimously agreed that this fund and its uses will serve to uphold the ministerial legacy of Rev. Harold Johnson. More than 50 individuals and churches made donations. The goal to raise \$10,000 was met.

## 3. **Ordination and Graduation**

Reverend Allison Enari graduated from Vanderbilt Divinity School and was ordained at Eastwood Christian Church, Nashville, TN.

Reverend Heechang Kang got ordained at Community Christian Church, Lincolnshire, IL.

Reverend Eli Rolon was ordained at South Broadway Christian Church, Denver, CO.

## 4. **Scholarship and Internship for theological students**

1) Scholarships awarded for leadership development: David Lalthawm Lian (Christian Theological Seminary), Heesook Park (Christian Theological Seminary), Teresa Kim Peccinovsky (Vanderbilt Divinity School) with Kagiwada & Choi Scholarships.

2) Internship grant for NAPAD women students: Jennie Hwang (Brite Divinity School) and Lynnette Li (Christian Theological Seminary)

## **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples and forwards the report to the General Assembly for consideration and discussion.



**GA-1515**

**PENSION FUND OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

**JAMES P. HAMLETT, PRESIDENT**

**1099 NORTH MERIDIAN STREET, SUITE 720**

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46204**

**PH: 317.634.4504 FAX: 317.634.4071 Toll Free: 866.495.7322**

**E-MAIL: [jhamlett@pensionfund.org](mailto:jhamlett@pensionfund.org)**

**REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD**

**2014 ANNUAL REPORT**

Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) continues to provide effective, compassionate service to members, congregations and wider ministries of the church on behalf of those dedicated saints who serve so faithfully. Our focus on supporting the ministry dates back to our founding in 1895 as the Board of Ministerial Relief. Pension Fund continues this commitment because we believe that Ministry Still Matters and its programs support those persons serving the church as ministers or lay employees. Pension Fund seeks, in all of its activities, to serve in a manner consistent with its core values – Trust, Security and Compassion. These values form the basis of our Ministerial Relief and Assistance programs, which provide support for ministers and others who retire with little or no pension, due to their service to congregations that offered low salaries or minimal pension dues contributions. Support for these deserving saints of the Church is sustained by direct gifts, Disciples Mission Fund dollars and earnings on Endowment Funds.

No participant in the Pension Plan, Tax Deferred, IRA, Roth IRA or Benefit Accumulation accounts has ever lost a penny of value, nor have benefits been reduced or payments delayed. The Pension Fund remains one of the most well funded retirement programs in existence today.

**1. CONTRACTUAL PROGRAMS**

- a. Investment returns have been favorable through the first eleven months of 2014. Assets under management grew from \$3.01 billion at November 30, 2013 to \$3.05 billion at the end of November, 2014. A Special Apportionment of 6.5% was awarded and funded effective July 1, 2014. Over the past ten years, pensions and pension credits have been increased an average of approximately 3% per year through Special Apportionments. This is well ahead of the rate of inflation and consistent with our objective of enhancing the financial well being for our retirees and active members.
- b. Pension Fund continued to provide Tax Deferred, Roth IRA and Benefit Accumulation accounts in 2013. Base returns for these programs were 3.5%, 3.5% and 2.5%, respectively. Good experience credits of 8.5% were awarded

for each of these programs in 2014. A reserve policy established by Pension Fund's board of directors provides essential protection for Account balances against loss of value. The primary focus of the Pension Fund remains on the protection of assets for the benefit of those we serve. Further growth of reserves, positive benefits for participants and asset preservation remain our primary goals.

During 2014, Pension Fund implemented on-line access for account holders providing them with up to date information about their pension and retirement savings accounts. On-line access for employers to manage program enrollment for their employees is anticipated in 2015.

- c. Pension Fund also serves as trustee of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Health Care Benefit Trust and as such administers Churchwide Health Care, Dental and Flexible Spending Account programs on behalf of the Church. Churchwide Health Care is a "self funded program" meaning that premiums must cover actual claims experience. At the end of November 2014, the trust had a positive operating reserve of \$1.5 million, exclusive of more than \$1.2 million in endowment funds received through the Heartbeats of Faith Campaign.

Pension Fund continues to monitor new laws and regulations as they unfold. Programs and operating procedures are changing rapidly as the Affordable Care Act is implemented. Pension Fund offers counsel to congregations and other church employers regarding the impact of the new health care system on the cost and availability of health care coverage. We encourage every congregation, region and wider ministry to consider using Churchwide Health Care for their clergy and lay employees. We believe it is an excellent health care program, one that is fairly priced to the benefits and markets in which we serve. For more information, check our website - [www.discipleshealth.org](http://www.discipleshealth.org).

- d. Pension Fund continues to offer Churchwide Accident Insurance and Long Term Care insurance to participants of the Pension Plan and related programs. Churchwide Accident Insurance is provided through Reliance Standard Life Insurance Company. Long Term Care insurance is provided by CNA Insurance Company. All billing and services related to the Long Term Care insurance is provided directly by CNA.

## **2. CONTRACTUAL PROGRAMS - INTERNATIONAL**

The Pension Fund provides access to membership in the Pension Plan by clergy and lay employees of congregations in Canada, Puerto Rico, and certain other service areas. The Pension Fund was able to declare a 4.0% special apportionment for Canada pensioners and active employees designed to partially offset the tax impact of the current account structure. We are delighted with the result and trust those served feel well supported. In 2014, we continued growth efforts in Canada among pastors and lay employees throughout the Stone



Campbell heritage ministries. We continue to serve pastors in Puerto Rico through a new plan that is being registered in Puerto Rico. Other changes may be made in the future with respect to participation, reporting and taxation as dictated by the applicable laws and regulations.

### **3. INVESTMENTS**

Through eleven months of 2014, total net assets of the Pension Fund grew from \$3.01 billion to \$3.05 billion. Pension Fund maintains a fully-invested policy with long-term asset allocation of 55% equities, 25% fixed income and 20% alternative investments. We continue to monitor liquidity objectives and stand ready to take actions to preserve our ability to make pension payments when due and respond to other financial events as they unfold. Pension Fund is well positioned to perform well against the investment benchmarks used to measure results. Long term investment strategies, although frequently reviewed, rarely shift as a result of market fluctuations.

### **4. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

The 2014 actuarial valuation and financial audit reflected the financial strength of the Pension Fund. All programs were and remain fully funded. We are grateful that the Pension Fund has continued to perform well against the benchmarks used to evaluate performance.

### **5. MINISTERIAL RELIEF AND ASSISTANCE**

During 2014, the Pension Fund distributed more than \$1.5 million in Ministerial Relief and Assistance on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Approximately 13% of the Ministerial Relief and Assistance funds comes from congregations through Disciples Mission Funding. Another 33% is contributed directly by concerned individuals as well as foundation and trust distributions. The remainder is derived from earnings on the Endowment Fund for Ministerial Relief and Assistance or funds previously placed in escrow for these purposes.

Supplemental Gift Pensions are gift distributions to those retirees who have extremely low pensions. It is a way for the Church to assist those who are most affected by economic turmoil. The Pension Fund was unable to increase supplemental gift pensions for qualifying pension retirees and surviving spouses this year. In the future, increases will be possible only when additional resources from gifts from individuals and additional income from Endowment Funds allow. Reductions in Disciples Mission Funding have a direct impact upon the benefits that can be provided for these worthy servants.

The “Thirteenth Check,” which is a gift to all persons on the Ministerial Relief roll and some of the neediest on the low pension roll, was sent between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Orlando General Assembly offering for this purpose, along with contributions from individuals and churches, provided the gift funds for 2013 and 2014. Favorable response to 13<sup>th</sup> check appeals and other Ministerial Relief resources enabled the distribution of a true 13<sup>th</sup> check benefit for the third time in the history of the program.

### **6. GOVERNANCE**

The Board of Directors and Staff of the Pension Fund are keenly aware of their fiduciary responsibilities to the Church and those served. The Pension Fund was created to provide a unique ministry to clergy and lay employees on behalf of congregations and their members. The Pension Fund seeks to fulfill these responsibilities, with compassion, wisdom and prudence.

The Board of Directors of the Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) established and adheres to governance policies intended to provide oversight and accountability. These are consistent with practices now required of public corporations. In this respect:

- a. The Board of Directors has assigned to its Financial Affairs Committee the function of “audit committee” through which independent auditors report directly to the board. This committee includes at least one person who is a financial expert (e.g., a CPA or CFP).
- b. The Board of Directors enforces their written “Conflict of Interest Policy, a written board member evaluation policy and a board member education policy.”
- c. The independent auditor is required to provide the directors with a management letter addressing any material internal control weaknesses or suggesting improvements to internal controls.
- d. The Pension Fund staff is required to provide a written response to each issue raised in the management letter as to the steps taken to address or resolve the issue or the rationale for disagreement with the conclusions presented.
- e. Each standing committee has a written committee charter that is approved and periodically reviewed by the Board of Directors.
- f. The President and Treasurer certify in writing to the Board of Directors the “appropriateness” of the financial statements and disclosures contained in periodic reports prepared in accordance with accounting conventions appropriate to the Pension Fund, and that such financial statements and disclosures fairly present, in all material respects, the operations and financial condition of the organization.
- g. Directors have established and enforced policies related to executive performance evaluation and compensation.
- h. Staff and Directors enforce their historic prohibition on the extension of credit to any director or executive officer except as “de minimus” reimbursable charges may arise in the normal course of business.

## **7. KEY FOCUS**

Pension Fund is a unique financial services ministry, focusing its efforts and resources toward the care and support of clergy and lay employees of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Directors and Staff believe the Pension Fund fulfills its historic mandate when it functions as an “innkeeper” (Luke 10:35),



assisting whomever the Church presents for care.

Because of the unique nature of Pension Fund's ministry, one can describe its activities within the context of the mission goals of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), although most impacts are tangential rather than direct initiatives. For example:

Pension Fund seeks to support the establishment of new congregations by assisting the pastors with subsidized health care.

Pension Fund believes that revitalization of congregations will require vibrant and healthy pastoral leaders. Addressing stress, depression, spiritual healing and the life choices these issues bring, which reduce effectiveness and cause illness, is the new ministerial relief issue of our day. Staff, directors, consultants, and other key participants are working to form strategies to address these issues. Success in this arena will benefit congregations, the clergy, Churchwide Health Care and the Church.

Leadership development is crucial to the growth and vitality of the Church. Pension Fund efforts in this area are related to our efforts to develop a financial net through Pension Plan membership and health care resources. Pension Fund will continue to work on this task in the years ahead. Of particular concern is the enrollment and support of seminarians and pastors of racial/ethnic heritage historically not served well.

To enhance our ability to serve the Church effectively, the staff and directors continue to address systemic racism within the organization, board membership, staffing, and culturally sensitive service capabilities. A multi-cultural staff team is working with outside guidance to assist in this process. Our goal is to serve all constituencies with equal vigor and effectiveness. This is essential to broadening our ability to serve throughout all of our church family.

Finally, Pension Fund believes that its efforts can best assist in the achievement of wholeness in a fragmented world by seeking to promote and support the work of healthy, vibrant ministry leaders. We celebrate and give thanks for the faithful efforts of clergy and lay employees.

## **8. TAX INFORMATION**

Pension Fund continues to keep its constituents informed of changes in tax laws and government regulations. Pension Fund continues to work with the Church Alliance, an interdenominational coalition of pension boards, to understand and respond to issues which could affect the services, reporting and taxation requirements which relate to the programs and services offered by the Pension Fund. The Church Alliance expects to be actively engaged on several issues in 2015 and beyond.

## **9. OTHER SERVICES**

In addition to those services already described, Pension Fund provides other services to those who serve the church and its organizations. These include the



conducting of workshops and seminars on Financial Planning and Preparation for Retirement and administering a Churchwide Accident Insurance program.

## **10. CLOSING WORD**

The Board of Directors and Staff of Pension Fund are grateful for the opportunity to serve the Church, its ministers and lay employees. Concern about the safety of pensions and retirement savings remain for some participants and are a continuing topic in various media outlets. This is quite understandable. We have sought to address such concerns by being transparent and available to respond to inquiries through periodic call in question and answer programs. We anticipate further sessions will be scheduled throughout 2015. We believe that these call in opportunities provide participants with a unique opportunity to raise questions directly with staff and hear those of other participants.

Pension Fund staff and directors continue their efforts to protect the pensions and retirement savings of all participants. We ask God's continuing guidance and your trust as we continue to focus on our ability to serve our constituents. This ministry is an expression of Thanksgiving from a grateful Church to those who accepted the call to the ministry, as clergy or lay employees, and who carry out that ministry faithfully.

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report of the Pension Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and forwards the report to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.

**GA-1516****The Council of Colleges and Universities of the  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

*A. Guy Waldrop, Director*

2040 Fort Harrods Drive, Lexington, Kentucky 30513

Telephone: (859) 227-9879

**Members of the Council:** The presidents of the fourteen colleges and universities in Covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are members of the Council that meets annually in conjunction with the Council of Independent Colleges.

**Mission Statement:** The Colleges and Universities of the Christian Church advocate for the 14 colleges and universities in covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to all our constituents by working together on common goals that provide students with an exceptional liberal arts education, that integrate both reason and faith, and that lead to a humane and fulfilling personal and public life.

The Council focused its work in 2015 on developing and implementing strategies to highlight the 14 Disciples colleges and universities in covenant with the Church in order to increase our schools' presence with Disciples and the enrollment of Disciples students. The Council continued to expand its focus on enrollment through direct contact with high school students who indicate a relationship with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Council's implementing strategies included involving college and university presidents, chaplains, admissions staff, and public relations staff. The following is a summary of the Council's accomplishments.

- a. In 2014-15, Executive Committee: The Chair of the Council and Treasurer, Kenneth Garren, President of Lynchburg College, is also a member of the HELM Board. David Arnold, President of Eureka College, is the Vice Chair of the Council. Norval Kneten, President of Barton College, is the Secretary of the Council. Scott Miller, President of Bethany College, immediate past Chair of the Council. President Kneten will retire from Barton in June 2015. John Marsden, President of Midway College, was elected Secretary at the Annual Meeting of the Council, January 4, 2015. Guy Waldrop is the Director for the Council. He reports to the Council officers and represents the officers as directed by the Executive Committee.

- b. The Director continues to be in contact with Disciples college chaplains regarding recruiting Disciples students, promotion of high school events at the General Assembly, contacting congregations about the Special Day Thanksgiving Offering, and sharing best practices for ministry serving college students.
- c. Admissions staffs of our colleges coordinated strategies to encourage Disciples high school students to consider applying to Disciples colleges. The Council has purchased lists with over 18,000 names of high school students (sophomores, juniors, and seniors) who are affiliated with the Disciples Church from the National Research Center for College and University Admissions. Students on this list were contacted the following ways in 2014: They were mailed two postcards calling attention to the all 14 colleges; the TCUCC website, [www.tcucc.org](http://www.tcucc.org); and the Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/TCUCC](http://www.facebook.com/TCUCC). This list of students was shared with all 14 schools so each institution could make direct contact with Disciples students.
- e. The TCUCC.ORG Website has been in operation since early July 2011 and provides a link to each of the 14 schools. It has a link to an email address that is monitored by the Director for the Council. Christopher Higgins, Director of Digital Media in the office of the General Minister, is under contract with the Council to be the Webmaster. A form was created on the website for youth to register name, address, phone, email, etc., so youth may request information about our schools as needed. Also, tracking options were installed on the website in December 2011.
- f. A Newsletter with articles from all colleges and a link to each school's website is emailed each quarter to over 18,000 high school students who are seeking information about colleges.
- g. The Council sponsored the "Disciples Got Talent" high school youth event at the General Assembly in July 2013 with over 300 youth participating.
- h. All colleges were represented at the General Assembly with a booth in the Display Area. A power point presentation promoting all of the colleges was presented during the Assembly business session along with a report from Scott Miller, President of Bethany College and Chair of the Council.
- i. In 2013 the Council was given the responsibility for interpreting and promoting the Special Day Thanksgiving Offering designated for colleges and theological schools. Resources were developed for congregations and college chaplains recruited students to send letters to the pastors of congregations to promote the



Offering. College presidents, chaplains and public relations staff as well as regional ministers were sent information about the link to the Disciples Mission Fund page listing resources for the Thanksgiving Offering (video and print).

<http://www.disciplesmissionfund.org/SpecialOfferings/ThanksgivingSpecialDayOffering/tabid/481/Default.aspx>

- j. The Council was invited in 2014 by Lexington Theological Seminary to participate in the Lilly Grant study on student debt, “Conversations on Stewardship and Finance”. David Arnold, Richard Valentine and Guy Waldrop represent the Council on this task group.

The goal of each of our Disciples liberal arts colleges and universities is to offer education and religious models that prepare students to live and lead as informed and productive citizens in a pluralistic world. Our colleges and universities continue to carry out the Disciples historic tradition that the life of the mind enriches the life of the spirit. The Council affirms that our schools are partners with the Disciples Church in implementing the Disciples common mission priorities of developing and renewing faith communities, educating leaders for today and tomorrow, and for respecting human diversity and celebrating pluralism. That partnership can become much stronger as Disciples encourage youth to attend our Disciples related colleges and universities.

The Council of Colleges and Universities appreciates the cooperative efforts provided by members of the staff in each of our schools. The Council values the opportunity to serve the youth in the Church by preparing them for leadership in the church and society. There are over 30,000 students in our schools, and only two to three percent are Disciples. The Church and our schools need to continue to work together to dramatically increase enrollment of Disciples so that the church and society has leaders who have the heart, mind and skills to renew our institutions and work for a more humane and peaceful world.

The financial resources for the Council come from the Disciples Mission Fund designated for undergraduate institutions. The Council presidents voted in 2010 to reallocate 5% of the DMF funds designated for undergraduate institutions for the purpose of employing a staff person to strengthen the relationship between the undergraduate institutions and the church. The annual budget for the work of the Council is \$30,000. The 2015-16 Budget will be developed later this year.

In light of the transitions with Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, the Council and the President for HELM, Chris Dorsey, have been in conversation about how our colleges and universities and HELM may function in corporative ways to strengthen the relationship between our institutions of higher education and the Disciples Church. Specific conversations are ongoing about HELM absorbing the work of the current Director of the Council into the operating



structure of HELM. It is the desire of the Council and HELM to have a new structure in place by July 2015.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Council of Colleges and Universities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

**GA-1517**

Report from the Council on Theological Education to  
The General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
February 2015

The CTE is comprised of the presidents and deans of the four seminaries, and the heads of the two divinity houses and the Disciples Seminary Foundation along with staff from the Atlantic United Divinity Center. LaTaunya Bynum represents the College of Regional Ministers and Chris Dorsey serves as staff support from Higher Education and Leadership Ministries.

The schools of the CTE provide broad and deep resources to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) related to the priorities of starting new communities and congregations, renewing existing congregations, becoming a pro-reconciliation/anti-racism church, and developing leaders.

The Council received a grant from the Oreon E. Scott Foundation two years ago to explore the following questions:

- What is the actual arc of ministry for Disciples pastors?
- What should Disciples institutions, such as the Pension Fund, DHM, and the graduate theological institutions, be doing to support pastors in the arc of ministry?
- How can we use the gifts each institution brings to the table to contribute to the health of ministry as a whole?
- What do we mean by terms such as resilience, sustenance for ministry, creativity, pastoral imagination, and the like?
- What are we already doing that has the potential to sustain clergy in ministry?
- What can we do differently to encourage sustainability in ministry?

The Council used our February 2014 meeting to plan our exploration of the above questions, decided to host conversations with pastors at each of our institutions and then invite 14 pastor to meet with us at our next meeting. That meeting will be in Nashville April 15-17, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Peluso-Verdend  
President, Phillips Theological Seminary  
Chair, Council on Theological Education

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The General Board has reviewed GA-1517 from the Council on Theological Education. The report is submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and discussion. No action is required. (Discussion time: 12 minutes)



# REGIONAL MINISTRY REPORTS



**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0891**

Title: **Report of Christian Church in Arizona**

Origin: Dennis L. Williams, Regional Minister and President

The following is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Regional Staff: Dennis Williams – Matt Clark - M; Laurie Cleveland- F; Lea Nesmith – F; Lyn Saint-Erne – F, Linda Sexton - F

Number of Congregations: 21 + 7 in formation

Total Members: 3254

States included in Region: Arizona

**Our Mission**

To create an environment and relationships in which leaders and congregations are called and equipped for congregational ministries that are transforming, growing and faithful.” We have understood this as an echo of the Mission and Vision of the whole church.

**Guiding Principles and Values**

One Mission, One Vision, Many Ministries

We are working intentionally to be One Region with a common mission and vision throughout its many ministries and not a region made up of a number of semi-autonomous ministries proceeding with differing goals and visions. Our Mission Focus Team is responsible for calling all ministries to this principle.

**THE ARIZONA REGION SEEKS TO FULFILL THE PRIORITIES BY:**

- 1) **Formation of New Congregations**-The Arizona Region currently has seven new congregations in formation. The priority for Arizona New Church Ministry this past year has been to work with these congregations as they move towards chartering as vital, self-sustaining Disciple Congregations. During 2014 two new congregations were chartered and several are working to complete this work this year. This has called for a priority on helping these congregations with the resources and information needed to move towards chartering and the next steps of congregational life.
- 2) **Transforming Current Congregations**-The Arizona Region completed a two



year partnership with seven congregations and Hope Partnership in Congregational Vitality and Transformation project known as “The Journey”. The Region’s Congregational Vitality Ministry has provided undergirding, planning and financial support for these efforts. These congregations are now developing future stories and strategies for moving toward their calling and mission. Additionally, the Region, through its Congregational Vitality Grants has assisted in calling and training of transformational leaders and providing funding for vitality programs in congregations. Seed Grants are also provided to congregations for transformation ministry events or projects.

- 3) **Leadership Development**-The Region is involved in developing leaders in at least three ways. Following a commissioned ministry training process, the Region’s Commission on Ministry has been working intentionally with a number of pastors to complete their work towards commissioned ministry. The Region celebrated commissioning three of those this past year as well as ordaining two Arizonan Disciples into ministry. The Journey clergy continue to meet for peer group resourcing and support for transformational ministry. Finally, the Region has provided leadership training event grants for a number of lay and clergy leaders.
- 4) **Anti-racism**- The Region is working with its leadership teams, ministry teams and Hispanic Ministry team to provide directions for bridging the gaps in our culture, ministry and practices. Following several years of training and program development our efforts are centered now on next steps for training leaders and intentional partnering in addressing racism, issues of justice around racism and building lasting bridges among the diverse Disciples in Arizona.
- 5) **Movement for Wholeness**- Central to the work of the Arizona Region in the past year have been intentional efforts to bridge the separation of culture and ideology that occupy the environment in Arizona. Our Regional Assembly Theme: Dare to Love Boldly, called attenders to reach out beyond the walls of our congregations and comfort to embrace communities and bridge divides. Work with our Commission on Ministry, Congregational Vitality and New Church has provided initiative for these efforts. These have included grants from both Reconciliation and Congregational Vitality to provide program and leadership to enable ministries of reconciliation and wholeness. The Region has provided grants and consultation to help congregations call pastors that will be shared between two diverse congregations. The Region has helped provide resource and support for congregations as they seek to develop a more inclusive understanding of “welcoming all to the table”.

#### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona.

## General Board

## Business Item #GB-15-0892



A Report to the General Board of the Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ) from the Christian Church in Canada

Spring 2015

It is a great and joyous time to be a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada. After several years of reactionary responses to issues of conflict, decline, and frustration, the Christian Church in Canada has elected to move forward in a positive attitude toward a hopeful future.

**New Churches:** There are currently five congregations in various stages of the New Church Movement initiative since the vision was cast. There are three more in the conversation and visioning phase of coming to life.

**Revitalized Churches:** Two of our congregations have engaged in New Beginnings processes; three more are in intentional process of their own design to revitalize their ministries. In 2013 six congregations from greater Ontario began “The Journey” coaching processes for Revitalization with HOPE Partnership. To date, half of those congregations are living out a newly visioned identity, mission, and purpose which is guiding them toward a hopeful future. The other three are still discerning, but their processes are being shaped by “the Journey”.

**Leadership Development:** The Christian Church in Canada, in partnership with the College of Churches of Christ in Ontario, has launched and endorsed internship programs with our partner churches to encourage pastoral and leadership identity development.

**Pro Reconciling/Anti Racist Initiatives:** In 2014, April Johnson, Minister for Reconciliation, came to Canada to offer an Anti-Racism and Reconciling training for our Ontario churches. The program was well received and has generated an increased awareness of intentional racial balance on all boards and committees.

**Search Process for Regional Minister:** At the 2014 Assembly of the Christian Church in Canada, a call for search committee was approved. Since the CCiC has been operating on a goals based model instead of a time based model during this Interim Ministry period, this is cause for celebration. The committee has been formed and is beginning its work with the guidance of the most capable Rev. Dr. Bill Edwards as consultant.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Richard E. (Rick) Hamilton  
Interim Regional Minister

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church in Canada.



General Board

Business Item #GB-15-0893

## **CHRISTIAN CHURCH CAPITAL AREA (Disciples of Christ)**

### **Report of the Christian Church Capital Area March 1, 2015**

The Capital Area Region has continued to struggle with financial support and income sources. As with many other regions, we find that many of our churches are not able to provide for adequate funding through Disciples Mission Fund. Several of our congregations have come to the decision that they are not able to provide the resources for full-time ministers. We observe a significant decline in the stability of a number of our congregations.

At the beginning of 2014 we engaged Treasury Services of the Office of Minister and President to provide our bookkeeping and accounting services. We are pleased with the services provided for us and find Treasury Services to be efficient, competent, and most helpful. With them we are moving in the right direction.

The Transformation Committee continues to work to define the role and responsibilities of the Region and how we might respond effectively to the mission opportunities that challenge us.

One of the ministries of the Region is the Rev. Frank Bradley Mission Center housed at our Pilgrimage Christian Church. Through the Center families are fed, children are enriched, and lives are changed. The continuing struggle is that needs are many, but resources are few.

A continuing ministry of the Capital Area is our Camp and Conference Program. The region provides programs at two locations; one in the mountains of western Maryland (Mary Mac); and the other on the shores of Delaware, our new Bethany Beach Conference Center where programs range from preschool to senior adults. Over the past several years we have conducted a capital campaign to improve the facilities. At Bethany Beach a new, up-to-date dormitory and meeting space has been built. We look forward to the first full season of use. We have expanded the capacity for the center and are now able to provide a comfortable center for campers. The hope is to expand the use of the facility for more of the year. Information may be found on our website.

**The Regional Center  
8814 Kensington Pkwy.  
Suite 208  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815**

**Rev. Dr. Robert W. Perry  
Interim Regional Minister**

**Voice: 301-942-8266  
FAX: 301-942-8366  
Email: [mail@cccadisciples.org](mailto:mail@cccadisciples.org)**

At this point, we have a bit over ½ of the funds needed to complete the enhancement project at our camp ground in Maryland. We continue to challenge our constituents to meet their pledges or to provide above and beyond giving. With faith we will move forward to accomplish these goals.

A featured camp at Mary Mac is the Created To Be Me Camp which is open to (8<sup>th</sup>) eighth graders. The camps' focus is directed at treating each other with love and respect and helps the participants understand that we are truly very complex human beings and that God loves us all and expects for us to love each other. It is a unique opportunity for our participants.

In the past year we ordained (2) two new ministers Terri McLellan and Nancy ink. In the region there are (15) fifteen Commissioned Ministers and (8) eight candidates who are Under Care and moving towards Ordination.

Our Ministers' Association continues to find ways for our clergy to network and connect with one another. We have provided two events in the past year that has allowed for fellowship and education. The Ministers Association has for years shared 90% of collected dues with others; offering 50% to the 13<sup>th</sup> check program of the Pension Fund, 20% for Crisis and Stress Ministry for Clergy in the Region, 10% for educational grants for ministerial students, and 10% to support continuing education for clergy.

A disappointing part of 2014 was the cease of ministry of two of our new Church starts. The Road in Virginia and United By Faith Christian Church in Maryland have both decided not to continue in their efforts. We are saddened by the loss of these two opportunities for ministry.

Several of our congregations have been engaged in a transformational experience with Hope Alive. The experience has shown a new dynamic conversation among the churches. We are grateful for the possibilities that may come through this experience.

Great hope is found in the search for the next Regional Minister. Within the (2) two months a new Regional Minister will be selected and a call will be made. We wait upon the one whom God has chosen to lead us. The Rev. Dr. Robert W. Perry has served as Interim Regional Minister for the past year.

The Capital Area yearns for your prayers as we face this time of transmission. With God's guidance we will find new hope and direction.

#### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church Capital Area (Disciples of Christ).

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0894****Central Rocky Mountain Region**

*Report to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada for the year ended December 31, 2014*

**Regional Staff**

- **Dean Phelps**, Interim Executive Regional Minister, Mountair Christian Church, Lakewood, Colo.
- **Shelly Garrison**, Associate Regional Minister for Youth, Village Christian Church, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- **Marty Hermanstorfer**, Associate Regional Minister for Search & Call, Cairn Christian Church, Lafayette, Colo.
- **Jessa Decker-Smith**, Executive Assistant, First Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Denver, Colo.
- **Rebecca Richardson**, Accountant, South Suburban Christian Church, Littleton, Colo.

The Region utilizes the services of 1.75 FTE ministry staff and 1.5 FTE office staff.

**Office**

The office of the Central Rocky Mountain Region is located in space leased from the Tennyson Center for Children at Colorado Christian Home. The Region proudly maintains historic ties with the Center. The office address is 2950 Tennyson St., Suite 300, Denver, CO 80212. Our phone number is (303) 561-1790, and we have a web site at [www.crmrdoc.org](http://www.crmrdoc.org).

**Regional Officers**

- Diane Ashton, Moderator, Laity, First Christian Church, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- Georgenne Tomlinson, Vice Moderator, Laity, Mountair Christian Church, Lakewood, Colo.
- Bob Vitt, Treasurer, Laity, South Broadway Christian Church, Denver, Colo.
- Jennifer Force, Secretary, Central Christian Church, Denver, Colo.

Sandie Dell currently serves as the Regional Representative to the General Board. Sandie is a member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Rocky Ford, Colo., and First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Manzanola, Colo., two rural congregations in the Arkansas Valley of Colorado. Her husband, John Dell, is a commissioned minister serving both congregations.

A complete list of board members is available on the Region's web site.



## Congregations

The 2014 *Year Book and Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* listed 46 established congregations and four congregations in formation related to the Central Rocky Mountain Region. We are saddened to report the closure of Community Christian Church in Salida, Colo., on May 24, 2014.

Two congregations in formation, Jesu Cristo el Buen Pastor, Loveland, Colo., and Iglesia Discipulos de Odres Nuevos, Fort Lupton, Colo., have discontinued followship with the Region. Although they have not sent a letter or documentation of congregational action, each congregation has made clear that they no longer consider themselves affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Central Rocky Mountain Region currently comprises 47 congregations, located in all or part of Colorado (37), Wyoming (4), Utah (4), Idaho (4) and New Mexico (1). The region is the third largest in land area, covering 311,610 square miles, 6,630 square miles per congregation. Of the 47 congregations, 13 are located in the metro Denver area counties of Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, and Jefferson. This creates a challenge for churches not to see the Central Rocky Mountain Region as Denver and for Denver congregations not to see themselves as the Region.

## State of the Region

The Central Rocky Mountain Region continues to be guided by the Future Story, which articulates a vision of the Region as a web of relationships. The Future Story describes three core ministries of the Region: congregational life, ministerial life, and regional life. Through ministry focused on congregational life, the Region fulfills its primary calling to strengthen and equip congregations for ministry and service in their unique context. Realizing that strong congregations require strong leaders, the Region focuses on ministerial life to develop the gifts and skills of pastors and other ministers and provide accountability in ministry. The ministry of regional life exists in the “in between” spaces, cultivating relationships among congregations and all those engaged in ministry.

All of these work together for the core purpose of the Region, ***to strengthen and equip local congregations for mission and ministry in their unique context.***

The Future Story raises questions and creates challenges for the Region. It was developed in 2009, during the Region’s previous interim period, and it envisions a ten-year horizon, the Central Rocky Mountain Region in 2019. The Region is now more than halfway through the timeline, and many in the Region agree that not much progress has been made.

The Central Rocky Mountain Region is now in another interim period following the departure of Jose Morales in August of this year. The Region called Dean Phelps to serve as the interim regional minister, and he began ministry to the Region on November 1. Debbie Gerkin served the Region as acting regional minister during the bridge period while Phelps was completing his interim regional ministry to the Oklahoma Region.

The interim period presents an opportunity for the Region to take a fresh look at the Future Story and ask some probing questions:



- What have been the obstacles to progress on the Future Story?
- In what ways can the Future Story continue to guide the Region's ministry and self-understanding? In what ways is it no longer adequate?
- Does the Future Story continue to represent the life and ministry of the whole Region? Did it ever?

Because the a Central Rocky Mountain Region is in the first few months of a new interim ministry, now is the time for the Region to focus on the Present Story. A critical examination of the Region's processes, systems, and context can help the Region identify adaptive challenges and create experiments that will lead to stronger connections.

The Region has acknowledged that its current systems of governance are inadequate for discerning vision and making accountable progress. In response, the Region has convened a Governance Review Task Force that will make recommendations for change to the Regional Board.

Geography continues to challenge the Region. The Central Rocky Mountain Region is split by the Continental Divide, which is a very real physical barrier but which also provides a metaphor for the challenge. The greatest distance between two churches in the Region is from Sheridan, Wyo., to Farmington, N.M., 750 miles.

The Region attempts to make faithful use of available communication technology. The regional office produces three monthly email blasts: a newsletter for clergy, a newsletter of general interest, and a pastoral word from the regional minister. These communications are useful and necessary; however, they are all one-way, which reinforces a hub and spoke model of regional ministry and does little to strengthen the Region as a web of relationships.

Video conferencing is a valuable tool for bringing groups together to work without the expense of travel. The Region continues to look for ways to use this resource more effectively. However, in a time when the Region needs to draw on all of its creativity, it struggles with how to develop creative spaces using aardvark video conferencing and other web-based technologies.

Although it was highly active for a season, the Region's Anti-Racism Team has fallen dormant. Re-energizing the Anti-Racism Team will allow the Region to focus on some initiatives that were already being considered, such as a "Race Summit," bringing leaders from around the CRMR to discuss the dynamics of race and racism in the Mountain West. The hope is to develop, in collaboration with the Reconciliation Office of the CC(DOC), a contextually relevant anti-racism curriculum. The Race Summit was originally scheduled for November 2013, was postponed until 2014, but has not been rescheduled.

The Central Rocky Mountain Region continues to provide financial support to St. Francis of Assisi Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a prison congregation in formation in Draper, Utah, and a recognized congregation of Prison Congregations of America. The Region is blessed with resources for new church establishment and receives endowment funds that are restricted for this purpose. However, the Region currently does not have an active group giving leadership and planning to the ministry of new church establishment.

Search and Call continues to be a principal avenue for congregational transformation. The transition period, utilizing skilled and trained interim ministers, can be a

congregation's best opportunity to examine its internal and external environment and to discern anew how they follow Jesus into the mission field at their doorsteps. The work of search and call is receiving much more hands on attention from the regional minister, as this is of primary importance in our ministry of congregational life.

The Region's Congregational Transformation Team continues to look for new ways to re-engage the transformation process with congregations throughout the CRMR.

The youth ministry of the Central Rocky Mountain Region continues to equip and prepare leaders of the Church through camp and conference programs, which draw youth primarily from Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming congregations. We are still seeking to expand our ministry with and for young adults; Shelly Garrison, Associate Regional Minister for Youth, continues to give excellent leadership to this ministry.

The regional Committee on the Order of Ministry (COTOM) is still living into the new Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Order of Ministry, especially around the apprentice track. The COTOM is partnering with Phillips Theological Seminary (Tulsa, OK) to provide the education requirement for commissioned ministers.

The Interim Regional Minister engages general expressions:

- Attended the 2013 General Assembly in Orlando, FL;
- Serves on the General Board (*ex officio*);
- Actively involved in the College of Regional Ministers, serving as the webmaster for [rm-private.org](http://rm-private.org) and on the technology committee.

The Interim Regional Minister maintains a relationship with the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ and its Interim Conference Minister, Rev. Sue Artt.

## **Regional Stewardship**

The Region uses accrual basis accounting.

The practice of the Region has been to conduct biennial audits that cover a period of two years. Transitions in the Region have delayed approving the audit for the years 2012 and 2013. This will have been accomplished when the regional board met in March. One finding of the audit recommends annual audits. This will become the practice of the Region commencing with the audit for 2014.



## Financial Summary for Year Ended December 31, 2014

### Statement of Activities

|                           | General        | Program        | Reconcil-<br>iation | New<br>Church | Transform-<br>ation |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Disciples Mission Fund    | 120,299        |                | 3,167               | 5,206         |                     |
| Endowment income          | 45,947         | 2,280          |                     | 25,811        | 4,810               |
| Direct contributions      | 32,584         | 20,669         |                     | 545           |                     |
| Interest received         | 61             | 4              |                     | 15,601        |                     |
| Sale of assets            | 13,796         |                |                     |               |                     |
| Program fees              |                | 95,856         |                     |               |                     |
| Grant income              | 6,500          |                |                     |               |                     |
| Reimbursements            | 4,337          |                |                     |               |                     |
| Offerings                 |                | 2,542          |                     |               |                     |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>       | <b>223,525</b> | <b>121,350</b> | <b>3,167</b>        | <b>47,162</b> | <b>4,810</b>        |
| Compensation and benefits | 149,251        | 22,353         |                     |               |                     |
| Travel                    | 13,848         | 3,835          |                     |               |                     |
| Administrative expense    | 43,362         | 287            |                     |               |                     |
| Fundraising expense       | 6,005          |                |                     | 403           |                     |
| Program expense           | 5,440          | 99,480         | 4,200               | 15,078        | 1,987               |
| Flood relief              | 6,500          |                |                     |               |                     |
| Loan interest paid        |                |                |                     | 15,568        |                     |
| Depreciation              |                |                |                     | 8,628         |                     |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>     | <b>224,407</b> | <b>125,955</b> | <b>4,200</b>        | <b>39,677</b> | <b>1,987</b>        |
|                           | (882)          | (4,605)        | (1,033)             | 7,486         | 2,823               |

### Statement of Financial Position

|                      | General        | Program         | Reconcil-<br>iation | New<br>Church  | Transform-<br>ation |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>        |                |                 |                     |                |                     |
| Cash                 | 99,153         | 11,816          | 11,851              | 111,479        | 46,690              |
| Accounts receivable  | 23,511         |                 |                     |                |                     |
| Due from other funds | 19,611         | 50              |                     |                |                     |
| Fixed assets         | -              |                 |                     | 585,908        |                     |
|                      | 142,275        | 11,866          | 11,851              | 697,387        | 46,690              |
| <b>LIABILITIES</b>   |                |                 |                     |                |                     |
| Accounts payable     | 1,885          | 2,494           |                     |                |                     |
| Due to other funds   | 50             | 19,611          |                     |                |                     |
| Notes payable        |                |                 |                     | 317,574        |                     |
|                      | 1,935          | 22,104          | -                   | 317,574        | -                   |
| <b>EQUITY</b>        | <b>140,340</b> | <b>(10,238)</b> | <b>11,851</b>       | <b>379,813</b> | <b>46,690</b>       |

**Recommended Action:** The General Board receives the report from the Central Rocky Mountain Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0895**

**REPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ) IN FLORIDA  
to the  
General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
in the United States and Canada  
January 2015**

GEOGRAPHY The state of Florida except for the northwest panhandle.

REGIONAL STAFF Juan A. Rodriguez, Regional Minister  
Lori Lynn Wachter, Associate Regional Minister  
Mary Beth Harper, Director, The Retreat at Silver Springs

| <u>NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS</u> |    | <u>Listed as "in formation"</u> |
|--------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| (approximations)               |    |                                 |
| African American               | 4  | 0                               |
| Brazilian                      | 1  | 1                               |
| Euro/Anglo                     | 51 | 2                               |
| Haitian                        | 5  | 5                               |
| Hispanic/Latino                | 14 | 7                               |
|                                | 75 | 15                              |

TOTAL MEMBERS > 15,500 (approximation)

OUR VISION

To become ONE Church in Christ, open to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, intentionally making new Disciples, respecting diversity and showing Christian love for all people.

OUR MISSION

TO BUILD THE RELATIONSHIPS NECESSARY TO EMPOWER & MOTIVATE CONGREGATIONS FOR MINISTRY AND MISSION

CURRENT FOCUS

*"DISCIPLES. HERE. NOW." In Continual Transformation*

The Florida Disciples Regional Church continues to intentionally focus on healing from the wounds of the recent past by affirming Disciple identity and embracing our context as an ever-transforming re-configuring expression of Church.



As a BARRIER BREAKING BRIDGE BUILDING movement of God committed to COURAGEOUS COVENANT CONVERSATION, we are seeking to define and affirm the relationship between congregations, which led to the creation of Regional Church Ministry, in order to mobilize for mission collaboration that will:

- + create the necessary conditions and programming for lay and clergy leadership development,
- + provide camp & fellowship opportunities for children and youth,
- + connect congregations & pastoral leaders with each other & the broader church.

We continue to affirm and connect the cultural, theological and ecclesiological “planets” which exist within our Florida Disciple Regional Church Universe. Our congregations, racial/ethnic and fellowship organizations are geographically connected *and* “worlds apart” in their ideas about church and mission. The intent of “Courageous Covenant Conversation” is to deepen and expand a regional perspective around identity and mission.

We now have an “Implementation Team” poised to move forward our Regional Church Transformation process. The Rev. Dr. Dick Hamm continues to serve as our Transformation Consultant/Coach. Our October 2014 Regional Church Assembly affirmed the vision of a Florida Disciples Regional Church connected by ‘Resource Teams’ and ‘Affinity Groups’ and the direction set by our ‘Strategic Implementation Plan’.

## FINANCES

|                                    | 2010         | 2011         | 2012         | 2013         | 2014         |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Total Support &amp; Revenue</b> | \$ 451,276   | \$ 343,484   | \$ 249,044   | \$ 275,913   | \$ 306,245   |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>              | \$ (555,704) | \$ (455,617) | \$ (418,299) | \$ (330,969) | \$ (393,154) |
| <b>Net Loss</b>                    | \$ (225,108) | \$ (183,229) | \$ (231,888) | \$ (102,830) | \$ (144,689) |

A five-year financial plan (2015-2019) intended to balance the budget has been affirmed by our Regional Church Board. This plan will:

- get clarity about where Regional Church funds are going and offer totally transparent reporting and accounting
- fund our work based on our share of DMF offerings, an annual fund, program fees, and invested funds
- conduct a capital campaign and attain a goal of \$5 million in invested funds

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Florida.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0896**

**Title:** Report of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia

**Origin:** Denise Bell Regional Minister

(Information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).)

**Regional Staff:**

|                                                        |                                              |   |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Denise Bell,                                           | Regional Minister                            | F | Time          |
| Betty Brewer-Calvert, Director of Women's Ministries   | (Position financed by above-giving by women) | F | PT Contracted |
| Terressa Ewing, Director of Camping Programs           | (Position financed by the camping program)   | F | PT Contracted |
| Katie Gibson, Co-Director of Youth Ministries          | (Position financed by annual Youth Assembly) | F | PT Contracted |
| Stephen Westbrook, Co-Director of Youth Ministries     | (Position financed by annual Youth Assembly) | M | PT Contracted |
| Tommy Freeman, Camp Manager                            | (Position financed by Camp usage)            | M | PT            |
| Pam Van Dusen, Administrative Assistant                |                                              | F | 2/3 Time      |
| Allen Roger, Director of New Church/Church Development |                                              |   | Stipend       |

**Number of Congregations:** 63

**Members:** Total 15,845, participating 10,806 and AWA 4,598

**States included in the Region:** Georgia

*"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wastelands." (Isa 43:19, NIV).*

We celebrated the completion of the interim ministry of Rev. Bob and Dr. Karen Frank-Plumlee. The Frank-Plumlee's faithfully served the Christian Church in Georgia for two ½ years. They worked tirelessly in establishing infrastructures, processes, and systems to strengthen the region's organizational capacity and financial solvency for a new future. In March 2014 that future began to take shape in the Rev. Denise Bell who was called to serve as the Regional Minister of the Christian Church in Georgia.





Rev. Bell came to the Georgia region after serving in several congregational ministries as an executive leader including interim senior pastor at Mississippi Blvd Christian Church in Memphis Tenn. She processes gifts in spiritual transformation, leadership development and organizational capacity building.



The Georgia region is moving toward a new future with rich ministry components in women's, men, youth, and its camping program. The Georgia Disciple women experienced two retreats designed to build serving communities, create and nurture shared connections throughout the entire state of Georgia, and to reclaim the joy of the sisterhood. Moreover, the highlight of the Georgia Disciple Women was having had the distinguished privilege and honor of hosting the 2014 Quadrennial Assembly. Vibrant and powerful worship came through song, dance, and the bold proclamation of God's Word. Sisters, mothers, aunts, grandmothers, cousins and friends came from Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia, Dominican Republic, China, Palestine, Hungary, Thailand, East Timor, Ghana, South Africa, Republic of Congo, and Zimbabwe. Additionally, the Georgia Disciple Women helped to raise consciousness and awareness to the victimization of human trafficking during a Walk Against Human Trafficking from the Marquis hotel to Centennial Olympic Park. It was amazing, over 150 Georgia women, men, and youth graciously helped to make the 2014 Quadrennial Assembly a success. They made us proud!



Disciples Women's Retreat



DW of Georgia - Quadrennial

Georgia was also the host site for the "Convencion del Sudeste" (South East Hispanic Convention) held at First Christian Church 1905 N Patterson St Valdosta GA 31602 on Nov 7 and 8, 2014. Rev. Juan Rodriguez, the Regional Minister of Florida was the keynoter. While the convention was held at one of our established churches it was hosted by Iglesia Cristiana Discipulos De Cristo Getsemani, one of our vibrant new Hispanic churches. The worship, music and proclamation of the Word was powerful and changed the dynamic in the room.



The Disciple Men gathered three times in retreats and rallies. Our men endeavor to lead through prayer and service. As a collective force with many congregations through workdays, they kept the rafters strong at Camp Christian our retreat and camp center.





Camp Christian was a sacred and holy site for fun, fellowship, and discipleship during 2014 summer camp for almost 300 children and youth and 65 counselors and directors. Our CYF camp wrestled with the opportunity and responsibility for the church to embody a loving and accepting God and created a video revealing a Christ filled identity model for the Christian Church (DOC) called Simply Christian.



Genesis Camp 2014



CYF Conference 2014



Camp Balaam

We launched eight cluster gatherings in the fall of 2014 with the intention to introduce our regional team, reacquaint congregations, and to create momentum for the regional assembly. More than 340 people participated. We asked three questions during each cluster: where is God working, what should our witness to be, and what should we be praying about? Many of our churches believed that God is working in their youth and children programs, outreach, and church fellowships. The overall sense of our collective witness was to be an authentic and transparent church, community focused, and open and accepting to others while living as Christ would have us to live.

Lastly, we are praying for a number of things—our youth, struggling churches, the conditions of the world, leaders to lead our churches, and each other. Our dialogue was rich and hopeful. Next quarter a vision creation team will take these discussions and create a new set of questions for clergy, lay leaders and congregations to wrestle with on the way to vibrant and sustaining congregational and corporate ministry.





Sandy Springs Christian Church



Ray of Hope Christian Church

Georgia is home to the Disciples College. The College has been reconstructed in order to serve Disciples of Jesus Christ more effectively in the twenty-first century through a virtual campus platform. Professional Development for Ordained and Commissioned Ministers is a primary dimension of the virtual campus. The college offers a curriculum of ten courses which serve as opportunities of personal enrichment, certificate with CEU's, and courses for commissioning and ordination requirements such as Disciple History and Polity.

The 165th Regional Assembly was held on November 14-15, 2014 at First Christian in Sandersville Ga. It was widely attended by Georgia disciples across the state representing almost every congregation in our fellowship. Our theologian in residence was Rev. Dr. Mary Donovan Turner, an ordained Disciples minister and the Carl Patton Professor of Preaching at Pacific School of Religion, Berkley. Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, Disciples General Minister and President, preached the call of Christ to live and proclaim the love of God. Dr. Watkins along with a great cloud of witnesses in heaven and on earth installed Rev. Denise Bell as the Regional Minister and CEO of the Christian Church in Georgia.



First Christian Church in Sandersville, GA



Rev. Dr. June Boutwell, Rev. Denise Bell,  
Rev. Dr. Mary Donovan Turner and  
Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins



Laying on of Hands



Regional Ministers Gifts



Kenneth and Cynthia Farmer





### Youth Lock In at Bethesda Christian Church in Tennille, GA

Commission on Ministry (COM) celebrated one commissioning and one ordination. We received six new senior pastors to lead congregations in Georgia. Unfortunately, we lost two congregations. COM is working on creating strong leadership development and nurture programming for all clergy and candidates.



Ordination Service of Bryan Carswell



Installation of Rev. Jane Hull (David) at Union Christian Church

There is a great deal of work ahead of us to deepen the witness of our faith and the expressions of our faith walk together stretched across the state of Georgia. There are many challenges in discerning God's vision, vision resource development, leadership development for new church establishment and congregational transformational and vibrancy. Furthermore, it is our hope to engage in corporate dialogue and action in creating a beloved community that celebrates differences in race, culture, and demographics, and identifies and strengthens our common resolve to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Recommended Action:

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0898**

Everything's Up to Date in Kansas City...Well...We Are Working on It!

**2014 Report**

2014 has been a year of intentional transition in the Kansas City Region! Many of our long term staff, Paul Diehl, Katheryn Graham, Lyle and Sharon Bracken have retired or have begun the process. Our Regional Search Team is looking forward to interviewing candidates as we seek to call our Regional Minister and President in 2015.



Celebrating a ministry well done, we gave thanks for the ministry of Katheryn Graham.

We have revitalized, reworked and clarified both our Ordination and Standing Ministry and our Commissioning Ministry. We have ordained our first person, James Vertreese, through the Alternative Track process and have worked to insure that the experience of claiming one's call in our Region is both a time for celebration and partnership. We have ordained 4 new ministers and commissioned 6 new ministers in 2014.





### Giving of gifts at the ordination of James Vertreese at New Vision Christian Church

We are engaging in education and conversations to help us become a Pro-Reconciling Anti-Racist Region. Our first PRAR training was held in September. The seminar included a training session for clergy, one for youth, and a specific training session for our Regional Search Team. Many of our congregations are seeking to engage other races and ethnic backgrounds as we seek to find ways to come together as a witness for God's love and value of all people.



Samoan children and their families are active members at Belton Christian Church. The children shared in worship their custom of White Sunday. This Sunday in October is a day to acknowledge and celebrate children. The children help to lead worship in areas of music, drama and more.

As a part of our Pro-Reconciliation Anti-Racism work and our visioning for the future of our Tall Oaks Conference Center, we have committed to bringing more of our ethnic congregations to camp, both as campers and counselors. A big thanks to Bill Spangler-Dunning from the Upper Midwest for traveling to KC to guide and encourage us with our Tall Oaks visioning event.



One table at work over lunch at the Tall Oaks Visioning Retreat



We are redeveloping our New Church Ministry group and working with Charlie Wallace to create a clear set of guidelines for support and relationships. We are currently seeking to recruit individuals who will visit at least monthly and walk more closely with the new pastors and participants.

New congregations in formation in 2014

- Missio KC
- Manifestation Worship Center
- El Santo de Israel



Pastor and musicians for La Gloria de Dios – pastors are Manuel and Maria Angulo

We connected for our Regional Assembly as we opened ourselves to INSPIRE, EMPOWER and CONNECT! 370+ people participated in the day long event. We enjoyed lively worship, workshops and a Ministry Fair! At the Ministry Fair, congregations were invited to set up a table with information about a mission they have been called to embrace. Over an extended lunch, congregations made new connections with each other at Ministry Fair booths and joining together around tables. New partnerships were formed, and ideas were shared.



Centering Prayer Workshop  
Led by Rob Carr was our largest workshop in both AM/PM session.



It was wonderful to be "close."  
We had barely enough room to worship together.



Dancing to the Spirit

We are looking forward to great ministries together in 2015.  
We give thanks for all God has done and is doing in us.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Greater Kansas City.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0899**

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin  
*Together Making Disciples of Christ*

**Regional Property Locations:**

Regional Office: 1011 N. Main St., Bloomington, IL 61701-1753  
 309.828.6293, 309.829.4612—fax, [www.cciwdisciples.org](http://www.cciwdisciples.org)

Camp Walter Scott; 15290 E. 300<sup>th</sup> Ave, Dietrich, IL 61414-9325  
 309.828.6293, 217.739.2332, [camp@cciwdisciples.org](mailto:camp@cciwdisciples.org)

**2015 Regional Ministry Team****Full-Time Clergy Staff**

|                                                                                                                           | Gender/Race | Tenure |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------|
| <b>Regional Minister and President (Ordained)</b><br>West/Central Area, Administration, PRAR, Committee on Ministry.      | F/C         | 08/10  |
| <b>Associate Regional Minister (Ordained)</b><br>Urban/Metro/ North Area, Youth and Young Adults, Disciple Women          | F/AA        | 06/99  |
| <b>Associate Regional Minister (Commissioned)</b><br>South/East Area, New Church, Annual Fund, Transformation, Technology | M/C         | 03/92  |

**Support Staff**

|                                                                                               |     |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| <b>Administrative Support (part time)</b><br>Data Entry, Treasury Services                    | F/C | 12/11 |
| <b>Administrative Support (pt)</b><br>IT, Website, eNews                                      | M/C | 3/13  |
| <b>Administrative Support (pt)</b><br>Women, Youth, Camp                                      | F/C | 5/13  |
| <b>Administrative Support Staff (contract)</b><br>Annual Fund, Communication, Data management |     |       |

**Contract Camp Staff**

|                            |        |      |
|----------------------------|--------|------|
| <b>Program Coordinator</b> | vacant |      |
| <b>Camp Facility Host</b>  | F/C    | 1/15 |

**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Partnerships:**

Global Ministries, Angel Luis Rivera-Agosto; Global Partners, Concejo Ecumenico Cristiano de Guatemala and Mission Personnel Gloria Vincente Canu; Christian Church Foundation, Darwin Collins

**Statistics from 2013 yearbook:**

Congregations 135; Closed in 2014: First Christian, Gurnee; Harristown Christian Church.  
 Clergy (Ordained and Commissioned): 283

**1. CCIW's role in fulfilling current priorities.**

**New Church Establishment:** We continue to look for opportunities to start or partner with new ministries. Root and Branch Church is one our newest in Chicago. We have received property from closing congregations with the promise of starting new ones. We have a goal of creating an incubator for new church ministries.

**Transforming Congregations:** 11 congregations participated in the Journey with HOPE Partnership over the last two years. We continue to support this learning community and initiative.





We are creating “New Day” to launch in 2016. 2015 is the year of spiritual development and readiness assessment for our congregations.

Leadership Development: Youth, Women, and Camps are ongoing ministries. We are also encouraging Coach training for leaders in the region. Kris Tenny Brittian worked with our Journey congregations, and Dick Hamm led an Elders training for us. Scott Woolridge on our staff developed an online Elders training with MidAmerica Center for Ministry. We also encourage clergy cluster group gatherings, and Regional Elder training.

Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism: We emphasized “One Region, One Book” in 2014, reading A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest Gaines. We held a “Re-Routing” workshop on breaking the school to prison pipeline. We will sponsor two more “Re-routing events” over the next year. Our clergy ethics training cycle includes PRAR training. We will hold a 2.5 day training in November. We continue to give grants to support ministries in our communities. We are giving a grant for XPLOR project the Quad Cities in partnership with local congregations, the NBA and the Upper Midwest.

### Financial Information, Concerns, and Reports of the Region

- A. Accounting Method: Cash
- B. Audit: Annual Professional Audit
- C. Operations Budget Only:

|                   | 2014<br>(Unaudited) | 2013      | <u>2012</u> | <u>2011</u> |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Income            | \$460,419           | \$521,686 | \$571,000   | \$551,221   |
| Expenses          | 439,085             | 441,217   | 673,500     | 597,543     |
| Surplus (Deficit) | 21,344              | 80,469    | (117,657)   | (46,322)    |

- D. Permanent Funds Income based on the recommendations of CCF.

### Recommended Action:

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Illinois and Wisconsin.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0900**

**Report of the Christian Church in Indiana**  
 to the General Board of the Christian Church  
 (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada  
**2015**

**Richard L. Spleth, Regional Minister**  
**Monique Crain Spells, Regional Moderator**

[www.indianadisciples.org](http://www.indianadisciples.org)

**Indiana Identity Statement**

The Christian Church in Indiana is a diverse community of congregations called by God to act together in love.

**We Value . . .**

Christ's Table: We extend Christ's welcome to all through worship and communion.  
 Connection and Care: We are called to accompany one another.  
 Shared Wisdom: We gain insight in community.  
 Mutual Ministry: We do our ministry and mission more effectively together.  
 Spiritual Leadership: We nurture each one's call as gifted by the Spirit.

**We Imagine . . .**

a region that engages in networks of diverse relationships which shape our shared mission and ministry. We envision collaborative efforts that assist individuals in expressing their spiritual gifts, equip congregations to serve in their context and give witness to God's hope for a new community. This compels us to allocate our energy and resources in fresh ways and to call forth leadership throughout the region to fulfill this vision.

**Regional Staff**

Richard L. Spleth, Regional Minister  
 Carolyn Reed, Associate Regional Minister  
 Cheryl Cloar, Associate Regional Minister  
 Lee Yates, Minister of Faith Formation  
 Cynthia Newman, Minister of Clergy Economic Empowerment  
 Kecelyn Santiago, Ministry Associate





Sarah Riester, Ministry Associate  
Larry Brey, Barbee Camp Caretaker

### **New Constitution and Bylaws approved**

At the 2014 Regional Assembly a new Constitution and Bylaws was adopted ushering in a new governance structure for the Region. A revision had been attempted in 2000 and had failed to gain approval of the Assembly. Long time members of the church cheered the accomplishment of this revision.

The revision resulted in a dramatic downsizing of the Regional Board from 55, if it had been fully populated, to 15. In reality it had been difficult in recent years to fully populate the Board because the Area structures that supplied representatives had diminished. In recent years there were typically 25-30 Board members. The smaller size of the Board means that all members are “leaned in.” The Board is designed to be geographically diverse, gender and age balanced, a majority lay persons, and at least one third persons drawn from our racial ethnic constituencies.

A number of no longer functioning committees and commissions were eliminated. Currently there are four main commissions who each have a number of sub-committees: Commission on Ministry, Commission on Faith Formation, Commission on Unity and Witness, and Commission on Resources and Structure. We expect 2015 to be a transition year as we are populating these new organizational groups.

### **Progress on revisioning the focus of the Region**

Consistent with the “Manna Process” which assisted the Region in refocusing its staffing and energy toward congregational life, we have continued to make progress in connecting our congregations hoping to create a spider web of relationship across the Region. Several new clergy peer groups have formed. Congregations are finding new ways to partner with one another in areas such as Elder’s Retreats, youth rallies, food pantries and creation care efforts. We use our communication tools to lift up the stories of these projects.

The three Regional staff ministers with congregational assignments have been encouraged to give congregational and pastor support and care a priority in their schedule. The Region is divided geographically into three parts with each of these staff ministers assuming primary responsibility in their area for Search and Call, conflict resolution, and conversations about growth, decline, and change.

We are greatly assisted in this effort by our corps of Regional Elders. The 13 Regional Elders meet quarterly for training and support. They are currently chaired by Bill Bass. Each is assigned approximately 12 congregations and their ministerial staff. The relationships they form are greatly valued. We have two specialized Regional Elders, one assigned to work with our Asian Disciples congregations and the other to work with our correctional chaplains.

The vitality of congregations is a concern. Increasingly we see congregations struggling to fund program and mission because compensation for staff and building expenses take too large a percentage of their budget. We are partnering with Hope Partnership to engage several congregations in the New Beginnings process and we are partnering with Church Extension to offer a one day workshop, along with the Episcopal Diocese in Indiana on imaginative uses of church buildings.

### **Congo Partnership**

In May of 2008, the Christian Church in Indiana began a formal partnership with the Mbandaka District of the Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo (CDCC) and Global Ministries. At the 2012 Regional Assembly, a new partnership agreement was signed for a second five year period to begin in May 2013. As the relationship matures, Indiana's Congo Partnership Task Force continues to seek ways to connect the congregations of Indiana to our partners in Mbandaka through trip exchanges, education, and worship. Since the 2013 General Assembly, the bi-monthly eNews of the Christian Church in Indiana has lifted in prayer congregations in Indiana and in the Mbandaka District of Congo. The Congo Task Force in Indiana and the Partnership Committee in Mbandaka also keep in touch and hold each other's ministries in prayer regularly.

In June of 2014, six individuals traveled from Indiana to Congo. The pilgrimage was led by Sarah Riester, Ministry Associate for the Christian Church in Indiana, and included a current seminary student, two recently ordained ministers, a teacher, and a general staff person. The group witnessed the work of the CDCC as they minister to the people in Mbandaka through the worship, school, nutritional center, microcredit projects, and health care ministries. The pilgrims and their hosts also spent many valuable hours in worship, prayer, and fellowship together.

In addition in the spring of 2014 we sent an Indiana Disciples laywoman, Susan McNeely from Southport Christian Church to Mbandaka for three months to teach English language classes. A variety of congregations and individuals along with Global Ministries collaborated to support Susan's work with our partners.

We were honored to help host Reverend Bonanga Elik, General Minister and President of the CDCC, and Reverend Clement Mputu, Vice-President of the CDCC, when they were in Indianapolis in September during the 2014 Regional Assembly of the Christian Church in Indiana. The 2014 camp offerings were presented to the Disciples in Congo in support of their hymnal and Bible project. An additional financial gift was presented to support their work to address an outbreak of Ebola separate from the Ebola outbreak in western Africa. We also gave thanks for the partnership of Reverend Sandra Gourdet as she retired from the Africa Office of Global Ministries. Without Sandra's leadership and guidance, the partnership would not be where it is today.

**Conversations with the United Church of Christ**

The Indiana Region is one of several middle judicatories who created the Indiana Interchurch Center in 1967 where our offices are located. We currently occupy a larger suite in the building than is needed for the size of our current staff. The same situation is true for the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ. We are currently in active conversation with the UCC conference about the remodeling of our current space to accommodate the presence of both staffs in our office. This will lead to a reduction in rent for both of us but more importantly it will foster the possibility of increased collaboration in our programming and mission. We expect to accomplish this remodeling and move by the late summer of 2015.

Currently we collaborate with the United Church of Christ in educational retreats for licensed and commissioned ministers. We recently held a joint clergy retreat, and we are holding one of our summer camps at the UCC conference center at Merom this summer. There is a regular exchange of Disciples pastors serving UCC congregations and UCC pastors serving in Disciples congregations in Indiana, most often as interim ministers. For a number of years we had a joint Ecumenical Commission. While that commission no longer meets we feel like the conversations they held laid the path for our imagining new ways in which to share our ministries.

**Lilly Grant for Clergy Economic Empowerment**

The Indiana Region has received a \$50,000 planning grant from the Lilly Endowment to determine if we wish to write a proposal for a \$1 million grant to address clergy economic challenges. It is the belief of the Lilly Endowment that pastors who are struggling and anxious about their personal finances cannot then give bold and courageous leadership to their congregations particularly in the area of stewardship. The \$1 million grant if approved for submission by our Regional Board in August 2015 and subsequently approved by the Lilly Endowment would provide funds to directly assist ministers in the Region in reducing their personal debt, particularly educational debt, and aid in increasing the financial literacy and competency of our ministers and congregational leaders. Cynthia Newman has been called to the staff to be the Minister of Clergy Economic Empowerment to oversee the planning grant process.

**Camp and Conference**

In 2014, the Christian Church in Indiana hosted 14 camps and conferences at three campgrounds, attended by over 500 participants. The most popular camping options remain our intergenerational Grandparent and Me camps and two specialty camps, MAD (Music, Art, and Drama) and CROSS (a sports and recreation themed camp). We also offer a camp on human sexuality, Created to Be Me, for eighth graders. We use Reconciliation Funds as scholarships to help campers from racial and ethnic minority congregations attend our camps so that our camps better reflect the diversity of our church.

A taskforce is actively considering whether the Barbee Christian Camp is economically viable and will continue to serve us well into the future. We have had conversations with the Presbytery of Wabash Valley located in northern Indiana about combining program

and facilities with them and will locate two of our camps at their campground in 2015 as an experiment. We are also in conversation with the United Church of Christ and will locate one of our camps at their campground in 2015 as well.

Many of the school districts in Indiana are shifting toward a "balanced" calendar, thus drastically shortening the summer break for students and making it more difficult to squeeze our camp offerings into a tighter time frame. The General Assembly falling this year in the middle of the camping season and again in 2017 adds another challenge.

We remain confident, however, that Outdoor Ministries are vitally important in the Christian Education and spiritual development of our youth and children, and will seek to find creative ways to offer comparable programming in the future assisting our congregations in faith formation. More than likely the solution will be found in ecumenical relationships with our UCC and Presbyterian partners.

### **Finances**

Finances continue to be a concern for our Region. Along with the denomination as a whole we have experienced a drop in Disciples Mission Fund giving each year over the last decade. Positively we have seen growth in direct giving by individuals to our Annual Fund and are seeking to expand that donor base to offset some of the loss of income we have experienced from our congregations. We have appreciated the financial guidance that has been provided by Treasury Services with whom we have contracted since March 2012 to provide our accounting services.

In 2014 we finished in the "black" for the year despite having a deficit in the operational budget that was approved by the Regional Board. We believe that 2015 will be even more challenging in that regard. The move to reduce rent is one proactive effort to minimize any budget deficits which would diminish reserve funds. The Region receives 40% of the Disciples Mission Fund dollars contributed by Indiana congregations. The remaining amount is divided between General Ministries including the Office of General Minister and President (50%) and our colleges and seminaries (10%).

The Indiana Region collectively contributed \$1,179,807.53 to all Disciples outreach causes in 2014.

### **Regional Assembly**

The Regional Assembly met on September 26-27, 2014 at Light of the World Christian Church, Indianapolis under the theme *175: Going Back to the Future*. There were 345 registered. The gathering celebrated the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Region in 1839. Dr. Frank Thomas, preaching professor at Christian Theological Seminary, was the featured speaker at the event. Singer and recording artist Andra Moran opened the gathering with a concert. Rev. Bonanga Eliko and Rev. Clement Mputu from the Disciples Community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo led our closing communion service.



The next Regional Assembly will occur in the fall of 2016.

Richard L. Spleth  
Regional Minister

Monique Crain Spells  
Regional Moderator

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0901**

Title: Report of the Christian Church in Kansas (Disciples of Christ), Inc.

Origin: Paxton Jones, Regional Minister

*The following is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.*

Regional Staff:

|                                                    |       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Paxton Jones, Regional Minister                    | M-Cau |
| Steve Martin, Deputy Regional Minister             | M-Cau |
| Ken Marston, Associate Regional Minister           | M-Cau |
| Renee Bridwell, Associate Regional Minister        | F-Cau |
| Barb Runge, Disciples Women Coordinator (Contract) | F-Cau |
| Susan White, Corporate Secretary                   | F-Cau |

Number of Congregations: 88 and 1 in formation

Total Members: 22,130<sup>1</sup>

States Included in Region: Kansas (except Johnson, Miami, and Wyandotte Counties and the congregation in Liberal)

Last year we noted in our report to the General Board that our midyear financial reversal in 2013 caught us by surprise. By far the hardest hit came to our largest Permanent Fund holding, the Young Trust, whose income heavily relies upon earnings from leased farmland and gas and oil wells in western Kansas as well as investments with the Christian Church Foundation. Prices for gas and oil dropped drastically in 2013<sup>2</sup> and the western half of the state remains in a severe drought. As a result, we borrowed significantly from past Permanent Fund earnings, froze all salaries for 2014, and a letter on behalf of the Regional Board was sent to all of our congregations in January 2014 requesting a one-time gift to the region.<sup>3</sup>

The Region experienced a remarkable turnaround financially last year. In addition to the 42 congregations and 3 individuals who responded to the Board's letter and to a *Kansas Messenger* column describing our plight, contributing \$14,820 in "above and beyond" gifts, many congregations increased their giving to the Disciples Mission Fund—so much so that for the first time in 20+ years we reached our projected DMF income!

We continue to be blessed by the existence of the Kansas Bible Chair, which provided grants<sup>4</sup> to help underwrite a variety of training events and retreat speakers—such as the Rev. Dr. Rick Lowery, who keynoted our Regional Assembly, and the Rev. Marilyn Fiddmont, who keynoted our KDW Retreats—as well as our summer interns, camper

<sup>1</sup> From the 2014 *Year Book & Directory*, which includes estimates for recognized congregations that did not report.

<sup>2</sup> As they have again in the latter months of 2014 and early 2015.

<sup>3</sup> It was only due to an extraordinary fourth quarter return from CCF that the Region ended 2013 in the black.

<sup>4</sup> Since first being awarded in 2007, KBC grants totaling \$96,624.40 have been distributed in support of regional educational events.



fees, International Affairs Seminar participants, and first-time attendees at Regional Assembly.

“Living the Vision” was the theme of the 2014 Regional Assembly as we sought to catch God’s vision for our future. As a result, two ‘new’ Regional Priorities were named: Mission and Spirituality. Spirituality, which is not a new priority, by its very nature necessitates ‘transformation’ within both individuals and communities; such spiritual transformation leads in turn to an outward focus or Mission—in all its myriad forms—with and to others.

As part of the ongoing Partnership Dialogue by the Kansas and Nebraska Regions, our separate assemblies approved a Joint Assembly for November 11-12, 2016, in Salina, Kansas. In conjunction with this gathering, a planning team of Kansas and Nebraska Disciple Women are sponsoring a 5-K Run/Walk to raise funds for a regional Human Trafficking cause. Meanwhile, the Partnership Team is hard at work exploring the shape and purpose of regional ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Currently a combined group of rural ministers from both regions are considering how the regions can be most helpful to them and to our rural congregations; our promise to them is that if they design it, we will find a way to fund it! In addition, the Partnership Team recently held its second retreat and a combined staff retreat will be held before May.

While all of this is going on, the ‘usual stuff’ that comprises regional ministry continues unabated: our camp and conference program hosted 530 campers and 121 counselors and directors last year, and broke ground for an indoor chapel (to be completed prior to the 2015 camping season); folks from 53 of our congregations attended our Regional Assembly, including 41 first-timers among the 214 adults and 58 youth/sponsors present; and 21 youth and sponsors attended the annual International Affairs Seminar in New York City and Washington, D.C. last spring. We continue to assist pastors and congregations with Search & Call, including how to use the new profiles; mentor 10 commissioned ministers and 7 candidates for ordination (and ordained our fourth apprentice-track candidate in 2014); mediate a variety of congregational problems; and are preparing to juggle staff responsibilities in the pending absence of our Regional Minister, who will be on sabbatical in May, June and July of this year.

#### Operating Budget Only

|                   | 2014                | 2013           | 2012           |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total Income      | \$1,267,411.23      | \$1,263,191.42 | \$1,287,905.95 |
| Total Expense     | \$1,267,410.64      | \$1,263,182.17 | \$1,287,809.30 |
| Surplus (Deficit) | \$0.59 <sup>5</sup> | \$9.25         | \$96.65        |

#### *The Christian Church in Kansas:*

*“Raising up Christian leaders for today and tomorrow.”*

<sup>5</sup> The actual yearend balance in 2014 was \$30,390.59, but the bulk of the remainder was transferred into reserve fund accounts before the books were closed. Similar transfers were made in 2013 when the yearend balance was \$25,409.25 and in 2012 when it was \$11,596.65.

#### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church in Kansas (Disciples of Christ).



**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0902**

Title: Report of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) In Kentucky  
Origin: J. Gregory Alexander, CCK General Minister

The following report is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

CCK Program Staff: J. Gregory Alexander (M), General Minister; Linda J. Jones (F), Associate Minister; West Area Minister (in transition as of this report)  
Bi-Vocational Staff: Lon Oliver (M), Kentucky Appalachian Ministries (in partnership with DHM); Mike McColl (M), Youth and Young Adult Ministries/Outdoor Ministries; Carol Devine, Minister for Green Chalice (in partnership with DHM); Dave Carr, Staff Consultant to the Committee on the Ministry  
CCK Support Staff: Barbara Gamboe (F); Terry Royster (F); and Glori Cope (F -West Area Office).

Number of Congregations: 215  
Participating Members: 21,963

Total Members: 35,825  
Average Worship Attendance: 12,073

States included in the Region: Kentucky

The State of the Region:

2013-2014 have been transitional years for CCK in many ways.

The CCK Board continues its transition into a true non-profit board by taking greater ownership and responsibility for the administrative oversight of the region. This transition is nearly completed.

In 2014, Lon Oliver, Kentucky Appalachian Ministry (KAM) Minister and part-time CCK Associate Minister, resigned from his work as a CCK Associate Minister and returned to parish ministry. He will continue to serve both DHM and CCK as the KAM Minister. That position is being redefined.

With a down-sized staff the CCK Board made some difficult decisions about ministry priorities. Today, the number one priority of Alexander is the training, nurture and care of pastors and their families. Jones shares in this priority. The CCK Board recognizes that our pastors are the most vital asset to the regional ministry. In recognition of this reality, along with the current staff size, the CCK Board has chosen to make the ministers of CCK its first priority. Jones and contract staff will continue to provide exceptional support to our constituency ministries, still occupying a high priority for CCK: Outdoor ministries, constituency ministries, congregational care and support, Kentucky Appalachian Ministries, the West Area, the Committee on the Ministry,



Reconciliation, Green Chalice, and our commitment to ecumenism are all important, ongoing ministries that are now being wonderfully led in many cases by committed, passionate volunteers.

### **Pastor Peer Learning Communities**

In the past biennium a pilot ministry was launched specifically for our pastors serving congregations. We call these cluster groups of pastors *Pastor Peer Learning Communities*. We continue to add new groups as opportunities present themselves.

In 2013 a different initiative for pastors was launched called *Learn.Love.Live.(or 3L)*. A select group of congregational pastors was invited to spend three days in a retreat format to learn the science of congregational systems and the vital nature of doing ministry from this vantage of point (*Learn*). In addition they were taught the significance of a personal spiritual discipline for empowering and undergirding their ministries (*Love*). Each person committed to spend a day a month together in a pastor peer learning community to reinforce their commitment to their spiritual disciplines and process together how congregational systems is informing their ministries (*Live*). A second *3L* took place in January 2015. A third will be launched in the Fall of 2015. At the end of 2015 CCK will over 50 ministers participating in one of these peer ministries.

### **Evangelism as Church Transformation**

In January, 2015 CCK launched a new approach to evangelism entitled, (*Not Your Parents Understanding of*) *The "E" Word*. Over the years we learned that as each of us truly listens to the stories of our neighbors and friends, God connects the dots for us between the person's needs and our ability to bring the love of God to bear on those needs. Opportunities for mission and ministry are born. Our church transforms. In these stories we learn of a person's passions. By bringing together those individuals who share a passion, new initiatives for mission and ministry are formed.

As a result we have developed a six week experience that introduces members of congregations to the power of story as the original (and probably only real) form of evangelism. Jesus preached to the masses but he met the needs of people one person at a time. This experience is designed to help us reclaim the form of evangelism Jesus modeled for us all. It has been field tested and revised based on the feedback from our trial groups and will soon be available to all.

### **Reconciliation**

CCK has made many attempts at becoming a Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Church. Institutionally we have made small strides but believe we are no where near where we feel called to be. There is a new spirit of oneness that has infused the region in many ways thanks to the intentionality of many key leaders throughout the region. There is palpable change in the air but it is only a beginning.

In 2013 the CCK General Minister extended an invitation throughout the Region to all who have a passion for reconciliation to come together for prayer and discernment about how God was calling us forward on this vital journey together. As a result a growing

number of people are committing to these conversations. The book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander was chosen as the foundational text, to give all involved a common language and understanding from which to move ahead. There is a lot of energy and commitment behind this initiative. We are praying for true reconciliation to capture the hearts and imaginations of all Kentucky Disciples (and beyond) as a result of this work

### **New Church Ministries**

The CCK Board established a new, New Church Ministry Team in its January 2015 meeting. Currently, there are three new church projects ready to receive Church in Formation status. This movement has new life, new vision and a new, committed core of people to see it through.

### **Green Chalice (a partnership ministry with DHM)**

Our Green Chalice ministry is addressing global and Kentucky-specific issues. In Kentucky some of those issues are mountain-top removal, and moving away from coal-fired energy to sustainable types of energy such as wind, solar and geo-thermal. Green Chalice promotes buy-local initiatives and backyard and community gardening initiatives. They also are working to enlighten our members on global threats to sustainability such as global warming, issues with clean water and its conservation and equitable distribution, and adopting sustainable lifestyles.

A concerted effort is being made in which the work of Green Chalice can partner more intentionally with the work of the Kentucky Council of Churches.

### **Missional Ministries**

The Board and Staff of CCK believe that empowering congregations for mission is the single best way to bring wholeness to a fragmented world. The CCK staff serves as a broker, of sorts, to connect congregations to such partners as DOM, WOC, Disciples Volunteering, Habitat for Humanity, Heifer Project, Bread for the World, and so on. CCK congregations participate in hands-on mission through these partner ministries to such a degree that CCK staff can no longer serve as a coordinator for these activities. The Region does strive to make the connection between justice issues and the mission to raise awareness and promote advocacy for those broken by the injustices in our world.

In 2013, CCK became a Global Ministries Regional Partner. Dalene Vasbinder, pastor of Woodland Christian Church, Lexington, coordinates this ministry. Our partner organization is Misio Cristiana in Nicaragua. Several setbacks (including the death of Misio Cristiana's President) have delayed the completion of the contract with our partner in Nicaragua. We pray that 2015 will see foundation for this partner ministry completed.

*Kentucky Appalachian Ministries (KAM)* serves to coordinate the desire for service of mission teams from Disciples congregations throughout North America with the needs of Kentucky Appalachia. In addition, KAM continues to serve both the Region and DHM through their support of rural communities and ministries. This growing ministry



awakens the world beyond Appalachia to the beauty and infectious spirit of the people of Appalachia. KAM is a partnership ministry with DHM.

### **Outdoor Ministries**

The 2012 Regional Assembly of the Christian Church In Kentucky voted to research the possibilities of moving CCK away from two camp sites to one, new, centrally located site. The vision set forth includes accommodations for all ages. The 2014 Regional Assembly granted the CCK Board permission to purchase property once the site was selected. This is an exciting time for our Outdoor Ministries.

### **Two New Initiatives**

*Care of Pastors and their Families* - In 2015, CCK is launching two new initiatives. With the current CCK staffing and over 420 ministers with standing in Kentucky, providing adequate care for our pastors and their families has become increasingly challenging. Everyone on the CCK board and staff are committed to giving our best effort to this ministry. A group of people passionate and skilled in recreating this ministry gathered with Alexander in February to begin to redesign how care will be given to our most vital assets.

*Ministry with Older Adults* - CCK has an historic partnership with Christian Care Communities (CCC) (formerly Christian Church Homes of Kentucky), a non-profit organization dedicated to elderly care. By way of a regional assembly resolution, in April of 2015, CCK and CCC will call together all interested Kentucky Disciples to design new strategies for working with older adults. This will include evangelism strategies, finding life-giving ways to incorporate these individuals in meaningful ministries and increasing awareness of the special needs of this part of our population.

### **Ecumenism**

CCK is a strong member of the Kentucky Council of Churches (KCC) and its efforts to re-imagine its role as an ecumenical agency. Many of the standing committees of the KCC are staffed in part by younger, activist Disciples seeking to make a difference.

It is exciting to see that the direction the KCC is heading will focus on how the partnered ministries of the KCC can bring the justice educational components back into our congregations; sound and trusted education like that which was once provided to Disciples by the former Department of Church and Society in DHM. In addition, the KCC will continue to bring the church's united voice to the legislative halls of Frankfort providing meaningful ways of expressing the concerns of a "new" and better-educated people on the real issues we face today. Their commitment is to restore a church forum for civil discourse to address the adaptive challenges our world is facing by bringing together the creativity, faithfulness, expertise and diversity of our peoples to debate, dialogue and discern together how God is calling us to act as people of faith. In October 2013, CCK General Minister, Greg Alexander, was elected as President of the KCC. He is the first head of a middle-judicatory to serve in this position in over 20 years.

In addition the CCK staff are actively engaged in ecumenical ministries. The

constituency ministries of Linda Jones, Lon Oliver, and Carol Devine, have significant ecumenical points of convergence with the UCC, PCUSA, KCC, and other denominations and councils.

### **CCK and Lexington Theological Seminary**

It is now widely known that Lexington Theological Seminary (LTS) has embraced a bold, new, cutting-edge curriculum that has moved it away from its historic resident model of educating seminarians to an online community based curriculum. It is working well.

While whole-heartedly embraced by the Board and Staff of CCK, this shift has created some interesting challenges for CCK. Historically, the resident students of LTS served as student ministers in those congregation throughout central and eastern Kentucky that could not afford full-time ministry.

In addition, each year witnesses several more congregations moving from full-time to part-time ministry as a result in membership decline and the cost of health care for pastors. Escalating health care costs are often the determining factor in the ability of a congregation to call a full-time pastor. These challenges have forced CCK to go “back to the drawing board” in how it provides pastoral leadership for these congregations. This is an ongoing challenge that has yet to yield a satisfactory solution.

In 2014 this issue will occupy a significant amount of the creative energies of CCK’s Board, Staff and COM. The good news with LTS’ new curriculum is that it affords those individuals seeking to be bi-vocational pastors the opportunity to attain excellent training for ministry without having to relocate or leave their current employment. LTS’ certificate for ministry program is geared particularly for those individuals seeking this kind of ministry.

### **Audited Financial Statements**

CCK’s audited financial statements are not available at the time of this report.

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0903**

Title: Report of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Michigan Region

Origin: Eugene James, Regional Minister

Information for the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Regional Staff: Eugene James, Regional Minister Male African American  
Beverly Peeler, Administrative Assistant Female African American  
Mike Lipsey, Bookkeeper Male Caucasian  
Brenda Murphy, Camp Director, Female Caucasian  
Sarah Beth Simonds, Women's Ministry Consultant Female Caucasian  
Anne McCauslin, Dean, Systematic Training for Effective Ministry, Female Caucasian

Number of Congregations: 43

State included in Region: Michigan

**Goals and Progress**

1. On August 24, 2014, Rev. Alexandra McCauslin was ordained at Central Woodward Christian Church.
2. CCMR has affirmed that the goals of the Region are:
  - Refresh, Renew, Revitalize, Transform our congregations: training for congregational Elders
  - Resource congregations and pastors for Conflict Management
  - Endeavor to build unity while understanding and respecting our diversity: held anti-racism workshop in cooperation with the Reconciliation Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
  - Resourcing congregations to be missional
3. CCMR maintains a long-term, established relationship with the United Church of Christ, Michigan Conference. There is reciprocal representation on each Board. We share in leadership training and the provision of resources for commissioned and ordained clergy. Planning continues for the "Festival of Faith", a joint event scheduled for April 18, 2015.
4. The partnership between the Kinshasa District of the Community of Disciples of Christ in the Congo and CCMR continues to evolve in very positive ways. We had

Mr. Jean-Pierre Djimbonge of Kinshasa as our guest this fall. Our first SKYPE meeting between the Partnership Committees went well after surmounting several technical challenges along the way. There will be more of these meeting in the near future; a similar meeting between Women's Ministries leaders is planned as well.

5. The ministry of the Regional Elders continues to be a blessing fulfilling their responsibilities and working with the Regional Minister to strengthen, encourage, assist, and support the congregations that are the Michigan Region. The work of the Regional Elders Review Task Group will continue in discerning ways for this vital ministry to be even more of a benefit to congregations.
6. The Gospel in Action is an ecumenical mission outreach ministry of the Michigan Region, under the auspices of the Ecumenism Commission. It is an outgrowth of collaborations developed among Disciples Peace Week, initiated by Central Woodward Christian Church, the outreach partnership between Northwestern Christian Church and the Northwest Community Block Club Association, Rippling Hope, and Motown Mission, a ministry of the United Methodist Church, that began in the summer of 2011. The state representative for the district that encompasses Northwestern joined the collaboration in 2012, which expanded the number of households that qualified for services. There were volunteers from thirteen states and one Canadian province. Faith traditions represented were Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), United Methodist, United Church of Christ, Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian, Non-Denominational, Baha'i and Mennonite. There were also volunteers from no particular faith tradition. For 2014, 535 volunteers, worked 14,487 hours on 386 homes, completing 780 projects. Rippling Hope was recognized by the City of Detroit for the work being done in the communities; Rev. Carl Zerweck received the Spirit of Detroit Award from Detroit City Council. Rippling Hope also established a relationship with Arise Detroit, a coalition of more than 400 organizations promoting volunteerism, community activism, and positive media images to create a better Detroit. They held the kick-off event for the annual "Neighborhood Day in Detroit" on the grounds of Northwestern Christian Church, which gave media exposure to Rippling Hope and the work being done in the community. Also, Rippling Hope received recognition





from the office of the Governor of the State of Michigan and an award from the ReFrame Association for best practices in Hospitality.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Michigan Region.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0904**

**General Board Report – Christian Church of Mid-America  
Submitted by Penny Ross-Corona, Mid-America Ministry Team Leader  
February 20, 2015**

Mid-America has been on a journey toward transformation for more than a decade and in more recent years has been in a discernment process with Dick Hamm as our coach. As a result, the following statements have evolved and been adopted:

**Values** In keeping with Ephesians 4:11-12, Mid-America Disciples affirm the core values of true community (mutual support and accountability), deep Christian spirituality, and passion for justice.

**Mission** The Mid-America Region's mission is to resource and support congregations, individually and collectively, as they seek to be more faithful, effective, and sustainable in the mission to which God calls us.

**Vision** The Mid-America Region is envisioned as a continuously developing network of relationships that includes broader and deeper participation by congregations, ministers, and laity in congregational clusters, learning communities, and shared mission and ministries.

During the Oct. 10 – 12, 2014 Regional Assembly in St. Louis, the following **Proposed Restructure** was rolled out: The five incorporated regional entities (the four Areas and the Region) are to be consolidated into one incorporated Region, with one board and one budget. Mid-America will no longer employ a Regional Minister, nor will we have a centralized office and a centralized staff. Instead, the Region will be staffed by a deployed, four member Mid-America Ministry Team (with a Team Leader) and administrative staff. Mid-America will continue to employ part time contract staff for women's ministries, African-America Convocation, youth and outdoor ministries, and communications. The existing 19 congregational clusters will continue to be supported and strengthened, and the networking of interest groups, learning communities, and shared mission and ministries across the Region will be encouraged.

Prior to the next Regional Assembly (which will be on Oct. 24, 2015 in Columbia) Area Boards and Area Assemblies will be voting on the Proposed Restructure. It is anticipated that the proposal will pass and that the new structure will begin in Jan. 2016.



Kris Tenny-Brittian (NE Area Minister) has resigned effective 12/2015, and the NEA has sold their building. The Region plans to employ an interim M-A Ministry Team member.

***The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.***  
***Ephesians 4:11-12 (NRSV)***

At our 2012 Regional Assembly, we embarked on a new and challenging journey of transformation, and we thank God for our partnership and the many ministry opportunities that we have in the Mid-America Region!

***The Mid-America Region's mission is to provide resources and support for congregations, individually & collectively, as they seek to be more faithful, effective, & sustainable in the mission to which God calls us.***

#### Our Ministry with Congregational Missions:

- facilitates regional communications and Disciples women's ministries
- supports the efforts of Week of Compassion, Volunteers in Mission, and Global Ministries
- supports disaster preparedness and response efforts
- provides 20/20 Vision support for New Church/Transformational Churches and Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism
- maintains our ecumenical/interfaith relationships

**Rev. Bill Rose-Heim** ([br\\_h@nwareacc.org](mailto:br_h@nwareacc.org)) and **Jan Shrewsbury** ([nwareacc@nwareacc.org](mailto:nwareacc@nwareacc.org)) are the Northwest staff who support this ministry. (816) 528-4400

**Donna Baderstadt** ([dbdwm2014@gmail.com](mailto:dbdwm2014@gmail.com)) is the Disciples Women's coordinator.

**Susan Moore** ([ccmacomm@yahoo.com](mailto:ccmacomm@yahoo.com)) is the CCMA Communications Coordinator.

**Regina Rhodes** ([rhodes4@grm.net](mailto:rhodes4@grm.net)) and **Sara White** ([sarawhite.maryvillefcc@yahoo.com](mailto:sarawhite.maryvillefcc@yahoo.com)) are coordinators of the NW Area Summer Church Camp program

#### Our Ministry of Administration and Wider Church Representation:

- serves as Mid-America Ministry Team leader
- supports
  - the Council of Areas
  - Executive Committee
  - Regional Assembly
  - the budget/finance committee
  - Mid-America Foundation trustees
  - Personnel committee
- facilitates financial recordkeeping
- represents Mid-America at General Board, College of Regional Ministers, and Heartland Cluster
- oversees regional properties, including Rickman Center

**Rev. Dr. Penny Ross-Corona**, President of the Mid-America Corporation ([prosscorona@eden.edu](mailto:prosscorona@eden.edu)) and

**Susan Moore** ([smoore@eden.edu](mailto:smoore@eden.edu)) are the Southeast Gateway staff who support this ministry. (314) 918-2515

**Jeff Silvey** is the caretaker of Rickman Center.

To schedule an event, please contact (314) 918-2515.



#### Our Ministry of Congregational Support

- facilitates our Christian Regional Youth (CRY) & African-American Convocation
- provides 20/20 Vision support for Leadership Development

**Rev. Dr. Kris Tenny-Brittian**

([kristb@nearea.org](mailto:kristb@nearea.org)), and

**Leslie Robb** ([office@nearea.org](mailto:office@nearea.org)) are the Northeast staff who support this ministry. (573) 442-5815

**Faye Vaughn** ([secondchristianchurch@missouricom.com](mailto:secondchristianchurch@missouricom.com)) is the African-American

Convocation Coordinator.

**Zane Whorton** ([zane@nearea.org](mailto:zane@nearea.org)) is the NEA Coordinator of Summer Ministries.

#### Our Ministry of Ministerial Support and Accountability:

- serves as a liaison with the Mid-America Center for Ministry
- facilitates our Disciples Care Ministry
- manages the Clergy Crisis Fund, the search & call process for Mid-America, Mid-America Regional Response Team, the Committee on Ethics and Discipline, and the Commission on the Order of Ministry which guides the processes of ordination and commissioning of ministers
- relates to General Church Commission on Ministry and the office of Christian Vocation
- maintains clergy records for all Mid-America clergy

**Rev. Dr. G. Mike Weinman** ([mike-olaccma@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mike-olaccma@sbcglobal.net)) and **Jeni Brown** ([olaccma@sbcglobal.net](mailto:olaccma@sbcglobal.net)) are the Ozark Lakes staff who support this ministry. (417) 865-0850

**Rev. Fran Schnarre** ([fran@m-acm.org](mailto:fran@m-acm.org)),

**Krystal Jacobs** ([krystal@m-acm.org](mailto:krystal@m-acm.org)), and

**Carol Abbott** ([carol@m-acm.org](mailto:carol@m-acm.org)) are the

Mid-America Center for Ministry staff. (573) 635-1187

*Each Area also facilitates the Search and Call process within its respective Area.*

For more information, visit us on the web at [www.mid-america-disciples.org](http://www.mid-america-disciples.org).



### **Common Mission Priorities Progress Report**

**New Church:** Mid-America currently has four congregations in formation. All four continue to grow in average worship attendance and outreach:

1. The Chuukese Christian Church (St. Joseph) – Pastor IS Phillik is going to the Feb. Leadership Academy in Indianapolis as a HOPE Partnership Coach. In addition, he makes frequent trips to help new Chuukese Disciples congregations in Council Bluffs IA; Denver, CO; Rogers, AR, and several others on and beyond the mainland U.S.
2. The Movement for Change Family Worship Center (Richmond) – Pastor Wendell Edwards is serving on the Mid-America Commission on Mission and Unity, as well as on the Regional Pro-reconciliation/Anti-racism team.
3. Table of Grace (Jefferson City) – Pastor Michelle Scott-Huffman reports that 2 members are currently discerning a call to ministry. The congregation operates an ecumenical, community supported food pantry which provides 3 – 4 days worth of complete, healthy meals (with recipes and cooking instructions) for 400 people per month. Their annual “Back to School Kids’ Club” has grown to over 90 pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Many of their members have been trained at the national level in faith based community organizing, and participate with 20 other local faith communities to mobilize people of faith around issues of economic dignity and racial equity.
4. Liberation Christian Church (St. Louis), Pastor Deitra Wise Baker reports a 20% growth in 2014, which means an average of 50 in worship. Liberation is working on a statewide juvenile justice campaign that will address the school to prison pipeline. Two of their members are serving as commissioned associate ministers. Currently an additional 3 lay people are discerning calls to ministry.

#### ***Transforming Congregations:***

Eleven congregations across Mid-America have participated in Hope Partnership’s two year Journey process that is concluding this year. We have witnessed positive transformation in those congregations that have participated. One additional congregation is in the process of signing on to a two year Journey process.

Bill Rose-Heim has made presentations on “the changes in culture that call for adaptive change and transformation in every congregation” in 29 congregations, at the Ozark Lakes Area Assembly, and at the M-A Disciples Women Annual Fall Retreat. His sense is that the level of interest in transformation is directly proportional to the amount of concern of congregations and their pastors about sustainability in the near term.

One of our Areas is providing consultations and coaching in individual and group settings. Monthly, they offer 6 coaching opportunities—5 onsite in the clusters and one by teleconference.

***Leader Development:***

The Mid-America Commission on Ministry (in partnership with congregations) works with/nurtures ordination candidates. Four ordinations have recently been approved: William Brown, Young Noh, Minnie Smith, and Sarah Klassen. Area teams work with commissioned ministers on behalf of the Commission.

The Mid-America Center for Ministry offers a Certificate of Pastoral Ministry. They continue to grow their student body to include commissioned ministers from across the U.S. and several candidates approved by their Regions for the Apprentice Track toward ordination. Their courses (which are all online) are available on their website <http://center4ministry.org/resources/>. MCM also offers an Elders' Training video, as well as face to face boundary training, which is required every 5 years for ministers with standing in Mid-America.

Mid-America partners with the MO Mid-South Conference of the UCC in providing an annual "Persons in Ministry" Retreat at the Lake of the Ozarks. The topic for 2014 was "authenticity and vulnerability in ministry."

The Mid-America Christian Regional Youth Festival (CRY) was established in the 1970s to provide Disciples youth with an opportunity for leader development. A cabinet is elected annually, and they plan the week-long event at a Disciples related college, choose the theme and keynote speakers and provide oversight for the event. From among its elected officers, several CRY youth have accepted calls to ministry and many still serve in congregational leadership.

One of our Areas holds an annual leadership training for ministers and lay leaders. 3 Areas offer continuing education and leader development workshops during Area Assemblies. One Area is taking a new approach to leader development by offering partial reimbursements to those leaders who attend conferences, workshops, and other training that they choose.

***Pro-reconciling/Anti-racism initiatives:***

The M-A PR/AR Team is exploring training for a medical team in Kirksville and considering work with the MCM for a diversity course as continuing education for all our clergy. There will be a PR/AR Training July 9-11 in Columbia. In addition, two of our Areas have PR/AR Teams that continue to provide presentations in congregations and in community settings.

The Oct. 2014 Regional Assembly prayerfully commissioned several Disciples for the "Week-end of Resistance" march that was taking place at the same time in downtown St. Louis.

The St. Louis congregational pastors are partnering with the NBA, HELM, and Reconciliation to bring a trained person to St. Louis for about 6 weeks to help us with the Church's response to racism—advocacy, community organization, continuing ed., projects, etc.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church of Mid-America (Disciples of Christ).



**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0905**

**2015 Report to the General Board  
By Ruth Fletcher, Montana Regional Minister  
The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Montana**

**ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS**

At a Special Assembly, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Montana decided to remove itself from Partnership with the Montana Northern-Wyoming Conference of the United Church of Christ effective January 1, 2015. The Region currently is working with Denny Williams, Regional Minister in Arizona, to discern future directions.

This year, the Disciples Region has been instrumental in the re-formation of the Montana Association of Christians and we look forward to working with this new organization over the next few years.

**NEW CHURCH**

The Montana Region continues to reach out to those who refer to themselves as “Spiritual but Not Religious” through the Open Circles program. That program includes leader training, quarterly retreats, and session designs for Open Circles groups.

**MISSION AND LEADER DEVELOPMENT**

The Region continues its emphasis on mission. Last fall, we offered five workshops across the state called “Jesus Has Left the Building.” They focused on ways congregations can step outside their facility to engage in public witness in their neighborhood.

The Regional Church, Church Extension, and Volunteers in Mission came together over several months to repair water damage sustained by the Central Christian Church in Kalispell.

During our 2014 Regional Assembly, we focused on Jesus’ words in Luke 10:37: “Go and Do.” Participants spent four hours during that weekend helping out in 10 different social service agencies in the community of Missoula. We also heard from Julia Karimu and took a special offering for the Congo Initiative.

**ANTI-RACISM**

High School Youth in the Region participated in an immersion event at the Rocky Boys Reservation as their fall retreat in 2014.



## **CANE RIDGE WEST DEVELOPMENT**

We were pleased that a court ruled no public access will be granted through Cane Ridge West Conference and Retreat Center and that a public road may never be built through the property.

We upgraded some rooms at Cane Ridge West and hired a part-time Camp Administrator to help us better market the property as a place for family reunions, weddings, retreats, and conferences.

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Montanna.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0906****Report of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska**

Submitted by James W. Gordon, Interim Regional Minister

**Regional Staff:**

- Interim Regional Minister/Executive Director of Cotner College Educational Ministries: *James W. Gordon*, male
- Program Administrator for Education for Leadership Ministries (ELM): *Sharon Shields*, female, part-time
- Minister of Faith Development (with UCC): *Sandy Denton*, female, part-time
- Kamp Kaleo Administrator (with UCC): *David Ridings*, male
- Disciples Women's Ministries: *Teresa Olberding*, female, part-time
- Disciples Men Coordinator and Business Manager: *Paul Few*, male, volunteer
- Bookkeeper: *Pam Fairchild*, female, part-time
- Administrative Assistant for CCN and Cotner College: *Karen Widdowson*, female
- Covenantal Group Coordinator: *Russell Seger*, male, volunteer

**Number of Congregations:** 48 (including 4 congregations in formation)**Total Members:** 4429**States Included in Region:** Nebraska**Progress Report from the Nebraska Region in Response to the 2020 Vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)****The Formation of 1,000 new congregations**

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska has planted ten new churches since 2001. Three of those churches are ethnic congregations served by Hispanic pastors. One of our ethnic congregations decided to disaffiliate with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), while two of our congregations (both non-Hispanic) made a decision to disband. Of the seven congregations that remain, two are now among the largest churches in the Region and another is completely self-sustaining. The other four are quite small in numbers but very missional in their focus. The only new church to be started in Nebraska during the past 12 months is located in the city of Columbus. The part-time Regional staff position for New Church Development has been discontinued due to a lack of funds; however, our commitment to New Church Development remains strong.

**The Transformation of 1,000 current congregations**

We invited the Nebraska Conference of the UCC to be a partner in our Congregational Transformation Initiative. In 2014 the Transformation Team decided to consider other options for congregational transformation besides the Strategic Spiritual Journey which



had been our primary strategy during the previous three years. In June 2014 we met with Rick Morse (HOPE Partnership for Missional Transformation) to look at new ways of approaching the task of congregational transformation. Rick introduced us to *The Journey*, which focuses on developing transformational leaders. After several months of conversations with Rick, we decided to schedule a DARE to Lead event at two different locations in May of 2015. Clergy and lay leaders from both denominations will be invited to participate. We are hopeful that sufficient interest will be generated by this event to make this a viable strategy for congregational transformation in the Nebraska Region.

### **The Forming of new leaders and the continuing re-forming of current leaders**

Since 2001 over 130 persons have completed the Cotner College Educational Ministries three-year Education for Leadership Ministries (ELM) program. Many of these persons now serve in congregations as commissioned ministers. There are 24 persons enrolled at the present time (8 in the class of 2015 and 16 in the class of 2017). The Nebraska Region currently has 1 student enrolled in seminary.

Each year Cotner College sponsors Ethics in Ministry/Boundaries Training. Rev. Gwen Hurst and Rev. Gary George served as facilitators for both of the training events offered in 2014. 57 pastors, representing 7 denominations, received this training in 2014.

In addition to the ELM Program and the Ethics in Ministry/Boundaries Training, Cotner College offered the following educational opportunities in 2014: (1) *Different Drums and Different Drummers*, a workshop using the MBTI personality tool to help us understand “the other”; (2) *The History of Hell*, taught by Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh, associate professor of religion at Hastings College; (3) UCC History, Theology, Mission & Polity Course; and (4) American Baptist History, Theology, Mission & Polity Course. The Church Leaders Retreat (formerly known as the Elders Retreat) was cancelled due to a lack of interest. A Pastoral Care Course, taught by Dr. Russ Seger, will be offered to pastors and lay leaders in January and February 2015.

We had forty-nine pastors attend the 2014 Winter Convocation at St. Benedict Center in Schuyler, Nebraska. Dr. Rick Lowery served as the keynote speaker for this event. His topic was “What Does the Book of Genesis Have to Say about Social Justice Issues that We Are Facing Today?”

The Nebraska Conference UCC and the Regional Church co-sponsored a series of seminars on Church Finances called “More Money for Mission”. These one-day events were held at five different locations throughout the state of Nebraska, beginning in February and ending in May. Lukas Petersen, Director of Development for the Nebraska Conference UCC, did an excellent job of leading these events. 60 pastors and church leaders received this training.

Rev. Dr. Glenn Carson, President of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, was the guest leader for the Nebraska Men's Spiritual Retreat in April. His topic was *Leadership Lessons from the Lord's Table*. The Nebraska Men's Recharge Event, held in August, was led by Rev. Ken Marston, Associate Regional Minister in Kansas. The topic of discussion for this event was *Soulful Living*. Fourteen women from the Nebraska Region attended the Quadrennial Assembly in June. Nebraska Disciples Women also gathered for a spiritual retreat in August. The theme for this one-day retreat was "Go for God."

A spiritual formation ministry called Emmaus Road Discipleship School was initiated in 2014. Founded on the traditions & practices of early Christianity, ERDS offers monthly classes on spiritual disciplines as well as opportunities for group sharing and on-line dialogue. 12 students are currently enrolled in this three-year program.

We had another excellent camping season at Kamp Kaleo. 273 persons attended camp at Kamp Kaleo in 2014. Attendance at church camps has increased by 42% over the past four years. The camp facility has been incorporated as *Kaleo on the River, Inc.* (KOTR), making us eligible for grants that are not available to church organizations. Our camp facilities manager, David Ridings, is doing an excellent job of managing the camp.

#### **Becoming an anti-racist/pro-reconciling church**

Most of the funds received from the Reconciliation Offering are being used to assist members of the most oppressed minority in Nebraska (i.e., American Indians). The Regional Minister of the Christian Church in Nebraska is a member of the Grants to American Indians in Nebraska (GAIN) committee. This committee distributes funds contributed by churches (and by Mutual of Omaha) to assist Native Americans.

The Anti-racism/Pro-reconciliation Team works with Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska to oppose anti-immigration legislation. With the growing number of Hispanics and other ethnic minorities moving into Nebraska, the immigration issue is highly controversial.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

- A. What type of accounting method do you use?** Accrual
- B. Is a professional audit done annually on your books?** Yes
- C. For the last three years, with regard to your OPERATIONS BUDGET ONLY, please provide the following information:**

|                 | 2014            | 2013           | 2012           |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total Income:   | \$184,837*      | \$192,482      | \$191,624      |
| Total Expenses: | <u>179,993*</u> | <u>172,232</u> | <u>199,969</u> |



Surplus (Deficit): \$ 4,844\* \$ 20,250 \$ (8,345)

\*Estimated

**D. Currently, what is the total amount of Permanent Funds the Region has from which an “Annual Draw” of endowment earnings income is used to support your operations and programming? What is that percentage of draw and how is it calculated?**

The Permanent Funds are held by the Nebraska Christian Church and Cotner College Foundation, Inc., a separate legal entity that now grants about a 4.5% allocation to the Regional Church each year. In 2014 it made an \$11,318 distribution.

We have been told that we will receive \$11,972 in 2015. The Foundation held regional assets of \$266,061.57 at the end of the third quarter of 2014.

Additionally, the Region sold the office building in December 2013 and invested the \$112,880 proceeds at the Christian Church Foundation, Inc. as Funds Functioning as Endowments and drawing approximately 4.5% or 5.0% to support the 2015 budget.

**E. If your Region has had insufficient income or deficits in Part C above, how has your Regional Board and Finance Committee been trying to balance your budgets (e.g., staff reductions, program cuts, larger draws from permanent funds, initiative postponements, new streams of income, etc.)?**

We are projecting a surplus of \$1,028 for 2015. The 2015 budget anticipates a surplus only because we are (1) reducing the regional staff by one part-time position and (2) combining the Regional Minister position and the Cotner Executive Director position. By making these staff reductions and adjustments, we will be able to offer the Regional Minister a somewhat competitive salary of \$73,216. This figure includes \$21,216 formerly budgeted for the Cotner Executive Director's salary.

**F. What are the key financial issues and concerns currently affecting your Region's life and vitality?**

Declining membership and the high cost of maintaining buildings that are too large for the existing membership has had a negative impact on the giving of many of our congregations. Also, there seems to be a lot of apathy regarding Regional ministry. Questions are being raised concerning the importance and necessity of Regional ministry. A new vision of Regional ministry is needed. We

are currently in the process of working on that vision in collaboration with the Kansas Region.

### **KANSAS-NEBRASKA PARTNERSHIP**

In 2013 a task group of Nebraska Disciples and Kansas Disciples began to explore the possibility of a future partnership/affiliation—what it would look like, how it might work, etc. In 2014 this task group evolved into a Partnership Team that has continued to meet (both electronically and face-to-face) for the purpose of sharing ideas and dreams. With the help of consultants, Jim Powell and Lori Adams, we began to envision new ways that we can live into the future together.

In October 2014, the Nebraska Region and the Kansas Region approved a resolution stating that the 2016 Regional Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska will be held jointly with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kansas. This assembly will be held on November 11-12, 2016 in Salina, Kansas.

Priorities for 2015 include (1) the training of Regional Elders in Kansas and Nebraska and (2) the formation of a Kansas-Nebraska Rural Ministries Task Group. Rev. Rene Jensen, a former member of the Partnership Team, will serve in a consultative role in 2015. A Partnership Retreat has been scheduled for March 6-7, 2015 in Salina, Kansas.

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nebraska.



**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0907**

**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
General Board Meeting  
April 11-14, 2015**

**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in North Carolina  
General Board Report**

Current Staff: John M. Richardson, Regional Minister  
Valerie Melvin, Assoc. Regional Minister, DWM (Half-time)  
Casey Perry, Camp Caroline Manager  
Luke Miles, Coordinator of Youth Ministries  
Bob Kennel, Coordinator New Church Establishment (Volunteer)  
Lisa Tedder, Administrative Assistant & Bookkeeper

Congregations: 125 in North Carolina  
2 in South Carolina  
127 – Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
196 – Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ International  
323 – Total Congregations

The regional ministry of the Christian Church in North Carolina primarily relates to the 127 congregations noted above.

The 196 congregations of the Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ International, located in North Carolina and Virginia, relate to their primary middle judicatory (the eight Districts represented in North Carolina and Virginia and the bishops that lead each of the respective Districts). Only two of the pastors of the 196 congregations have ministerial standing with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in North Carolina, although all the congregations are listed under North Carolina in the Year Book & Directory. The ecclesiastical structure of the Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ International, and the offices of General Bishop and District Bishop are not recognized in the Year Book & Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), although the 196 are listed. I am grateful for the collegial relationship I share with General Bishop Alton A. Smith, and the Goldsboro-Raleigh District Bishop Chester Aycock.

The past year has been challenging for the region of North Carolina. Prior to, and more so following the Orlando General Assembly, several congregations in our region began to discuss withdrawing from the Disciples of Christ. A few ministers invited Disciples Heritage into their conversations. Subsequently a Disciples Heritage Fellowship of North Carolina was proposed to like-minded ministers and congregations. To date, eight congregations have left the Disciples of Christ over the past two-three years--all in the same general geographic area. Congregations, communities, families, and our region have all felt pain and grief over these divisive decisions, exacerbated by

misunderstandings and false information. In some congregations, life-long members, who want to remain Disciples of Christ, voted not to leave the Disciples, yet were in the minority. They now worship in a congregation that is no longer a Disciples of Christ church. Multiple individuals are reaching out and offering pastoral care.

The Rev. Dr. Rod Werline, professor of religion, launched the education for ministry component of the new Center for Religious Studies at Barton College in January of this year. The Center is offering classes in the 16 areas competency for ministers pursuing ordination via the apprentice track.

On a related note, Dr. Norval Kneten, who has served with distinction for the past 12 years as president of Barton College, will retire June 30, 2015. Dr. Douglas Searcy has been called to be the 12<sup>th</sup> president of Barton College. He will officially begin on July 1, 2015. Barton College and the Christian Church in North Carolina continue to have a strong relationship. The Disciples on Campus consistently offer excellent leadership to the students.

In the fall of 2014, two individuals were added to our regional staff--one full-time and one part-time. Casey Perry is the resident manager at Camp Caroline. Luke Miles is the part-time Coordinator of Youth Ministries. We are very excited about the addition of both of both of these gifted individuals to our staff.

Camp Caroline continues to be the primary location of ministries that offer spiritual nurture to our youth. By the beginning of summer we will dedicate the almost completed Jack and Gladys Lee Multiple Purpose Recreation Building at Camp Caroline. This \$1.4 million dollar building adds a gym, nine classrooms, and a new, clean, first aid room to our camp facility. Many people helped, but our region is grateful to Jack and Gladys Lee for making this dream a reality.

Our new congregation establishment slowed the last couple of years. However, we are in the initial planning stages for a potentially exciting new church in metro-Charlotte, where we need, at least, five more new Disciples congregations. Another new church start is unfolding in the Winston-Salem area. And still a third new congregation, composed primarily of Vietnamese Montangard individuals, is about to launch in Raleigh.

After thinking we could include several congregations in a transformation initiative, we have discovered congregations seem to prefer responding individually, although only about 10 have entered a transformation process to date. Another six - eight are considering entering a transformation process.

Our anti-racism/pro-reconciling ministry has a plus side and a negative side. The plus is certainly the incredible work the Rev. Dr. William Barber is doing in leading a grassroots movement to call attention to profound social justice issues in North Carolina. The negative is our Anti-racism/Pro-reconciling Commission has taken a long time to make



small steps forward. However, I believe they are finally making plans to offer anti-racism training for all our ministers.

We have some excellent and dedicated ministers in the region of North Carolina. Some serve in very challenging places. I am grateful to have them as colleagues.

We have some congregations that are doing wonderful ministry, and others that struggle. I am grateful for each of them and their witness and ministries.

We have some incredible young ministers, in seminary and recently graduated. I am confident the Church is in good hands.

And, I have a dedicated regional staff that works hard. I am thankful for each one.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Richardson  
Regional Minister

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in North Carolina.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0908**

Title: Report of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Northeastern Region

Origin: Mary Anne Glover, Regional Minister

The following is provided for information for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) General Board.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Northeastern Region continues to turn the corner. The Northeastern Region's ministry focus for the next five years continues to be "ESL": Evangelism, Stewardship and Leader Development:

- Evangelism will focus on the process of "making disciples of Christ" and congregational transformation;
- Stewardship will be organized on developing a steward's lifestyle;
- Leader Development will focus on intentionally making and mentoring the next generation of leaders who are forty and under in the Northeastern Region.

Area Coordinating Teams (Metro, New England, and Western) are being formed to directly address how to embrace ESL. The Metro Area Team's specific focus for the three areas is on "eradicating poverty". Continuing Hurricane Sandy follow-up confirmed that the foundational issue for human existence in the metro area is poverty. Two years after Hurricane Sandy, families (with elementary aged school children) continue to reside in shelters; many parents cannot read or write any language, particularly English; recovery, what recovery from poverty and Hurricane Sandy? According to the new census data, one in five New Yorkers remain below the federal poverty line; in Manhattan, the wealthiest 5% earn 88 times as much as the poorest 20% (09/21/2014).

The Metro Area Team has planned and organized: GED classes in the Bronx, quarterly feeding programs in Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx; back to school assistance; uniting congregations from Manhattan, Bronx, and Brooklyn representing the region's racial and cultural diversity are directly participating in these initial steps to address poverty. Of course, the "high and holy" days: Christmas and Thanksgiving outreach occurs, but the goal is to expand participation in the monthly united mission and ministry.



The Haitian Ministries Monthly Educational participants have completed their first year of ministry training to become recognized ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The last Saturday of every month, participants meet at the Evangelical Crusade Fishers of Men, Brooklyn, NY for instructions in one of required 18 areas of ministry competency. This ministry effort is result of an intentional partnership with Home Mission, Hope Partnership and the Northeastern Region. Many thanks go to our professors and instructors who have shared in making this ministry a possible: Charlie Wallace, Pablo Jimenez, Peter Heltzel, Mary Anne Glover, V. Algarin, Philius Nicolas, Franc La Blanc, Daisy Machado. The 2015 guests presenters are: Ron Deggs, Maria Lopez, Charlie Wallace, Sharon Codnor Walker, Luis Alfredo Cartagena, Daisy Machado, William Garcia.

2014 Regional Assembly was a grand marker moment in the life of the Northeastern Region; all areas, and ethnic groups were present and participated without any "fighting". The Regional Assembly worship and workshops were life giving!

The Regional Women's and Men's Ministries are having gatherings and continue to discuss having relationship with God, developing relationships with each other and their communities.

The Northeastern Regional Church has initiated first conversations on congregational participation and accountability. We are living in a radical time, so radical, Christian responses are essential to address this particulars congregations are facing. The Northeastern Regional Church Board will continue to discuss congregational participation and accountability.

States in the region: New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine.

Number of congregations: (Regional Church Board Discussion).

Number of members: 4,000 (estimate including congregations which do not report).

Regional Staff: Rev. Mary Anne Glover (African American Female)

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Northeastern Region.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0909**

Report to the General Board  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
In Northern California-Nevada  
April 11-14 2015

**Current Ministerial Staff:**

- LaTaunya M. Bynum, Regional Minister, full time.
- Kyung-Min Daniel Lee, Associate Regional Minister, part time.
- Yolanda Marquez-Lucar, Associate Regional Minister, part time.
- Carl Cordes, Minister of Youth, part time.
- Jesse Kearns, Minister of Search and Call, part-time.
- Katy Valentine, Women's Ministry part-time
- Laura Pierson, Minister for the Annual Gathering (the Regional Church's yearly assembly), part time.

**Current Administrative Staff:**

- Jim Thomas, Ministry Associate/Office Administrator, full time
- Diana Silva, Bookkeeper, part time

The months since the 2014 General Board have been filled with transition in Northern California-Nevada. Mary Jacobs completed her service as the Transitional Regional Minister a few months after LaTaunya M. Bynum was called to be the Regional Minister. Paula Bishop Pociecha retired officially at the end of 2014, but continued her ministry through March 2015 as the leader of a Women's Action Web event focused on the issue of modern day slavery -- human trafficking.

Kyung-Min Daniel Lee and Yolanda Marquez-Lucar were each given the title of Associate Regional Minister.

In terms of our common mission priorities, several new congregations have been brought into official relationship with the Regional Church and conversations are ongoing with several others. Our Reconciliation Commission along with our Justice Commission continues to provide avenues for the Regional Church to live out what it means to be open and inclusive. The work of congregational transformation and leader development goes on through the work of our youth, women's and men's ministries, camp and conference, and the work of regional NAPAD and Hispanic ministries in English – the Hispanic American Pastors and Leaders Alliance (in Spanish, ALPHA).

Our ministries are being done in relation to the theme: Creating Healthy, Vital Congregations and Communities and for the next year, we will be paying attention to the following:

- Recognizing and celebrating congregations and communities of faith engaged in mission.



- For congregations that need it, helping to develop a sense of mission beyond its doors and into the communities where they are located.
- Strengthening young adult ministry (ages 19-30), studying issues relevant to this age group in their various stages of life.
- Faith and Giving: Offering stewardship education, promoting systematic giving to Disciples Mission Fund and Special Day offerings.
- Interim Ministry Training

The theme for the 2015 Annual Gathering for the Christian Church in Northern California-Nevada is “Re:” we continue to celebrate with thanksgiving the ways God continues to reset, refresh, and reconnect the ministries of our Regional Church.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Northern California-Nevada.



## General Board

## Business Item #GB-15-0910

**Report of Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
To the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
February, 2014**

Submitted by: Sandra M. Messick, Regional Minister and President

## Regional Staff:

Sandra Messick, Regional Minister  
Amber Saladino, Office Manager  
Bill Robey, New Church Coordinator  
Chris Walters, Technology Coordinator  
Stephen Gumber, Youth and Family Ministries Coordinator



The Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) includes 50 congregations in Washington, Alaska and N. Idaho.

**“A Movement for Wholeness in a Fragmented World...”**

Called by God and sent by the Living Christ, we the Northwest Regional Christian Church intentionally engage with one another rejoicing in our diversity and shared gifts, deepening our spiritual life, building true community, acting courageously in ministry and mission, and sharing God’s good news with a fresh voice and a new song. We seek to “do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.” (Micah 6:8) - Northwest Region’s Mission Statement

The four priorities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and our Regional Mission statement are woven together to guide and shape our ministry. Below are some of the ways we have lived into those priorities in 2014 and looking ahead to 2015.

1. **Becoming a Pro-Reconciling/Anti-racist church:** During our 2014 Regional Assembly we intentionally engaged in conversations related to priorities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). These conversations were intended to help us think beyond our current practice and comfort zone and consider ways we as Region and as congregations could begin to address issues including those related to being a pro-reconciling/anti-racist church. Conversation topics included wrestling with the realities of the Doctrine of Discovery, human trafficking and becoming a Welcoming Church. In 2015 we are engaged in next step conversations around anti-racism and beginning development of a curriculum to use with Search





Committees and Congregations in Transition around anti-racism training and diversity readiness. Our regional camps and retreats continue to reflect our deepest diversity as our participants include not only English speaking persons of color but also members from non-English congregations nesting in our buildings. This lived-into diversity is helping create a new sense of openness and welcome among our young people that offers promise and hope for living into our vision of being a movement for wholeness in our world.

2. **Establish 1000 New Congregations:** Having a New Church Coordinator on staff has been a blessing as we have moved forward with planting new congregations. In Jan. 2015 Everett Christian Church began ministry with the arrival of new church planters Luke and Rebecca Sumner. This new congregation is funded by a gift from the Edmonds Christian Church, now closed. We continue to seek a new church planter for a new congregation in Walla Walla, WA, funded by Central Christian Church, also in Walla Walla. In partnership with HOPE Partnership and NAPAD we participated in a new church event for Korean churches in Western Washington with the hope of identifying either potential new church planters or new Korean congregations seeking affiliation. We are now in conversation with the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ to explore partnership opportunities for planting new congregations. Our challenge has been and continues to be identifying qualified new church planters who are willing and able to re-locate to the Northwest and are a good fit with our planting opportunities. We appreciate the resources offered by HOPE Partnership and others as they help us identify potential candidates. At our 2014 Regional Assembly Korean Crystal Christian Church was celebrated as a fully recognized, chartered congregation, moving out of Congregation in Formation Status. As of this writing, Open Gathering in Bellevue, WA, continues as a Congregation in Formation.

3. **Transformation of 1000 Existing Congregations:** Our Regional Focus Area for 2015-16 is "Building True Community." To encourage this focus and to support congregations as they try to do a new thing, we have begun offering Disciples



Together grants. These grants can be used for two or more congregations to try something new together. So far we have awarded three grants: two Eastern Washington congregations doing a mission trip together, Seattle area churches having a joint presence at the Gay Pride Festival, and Spokane area churches as they did a joint worship service together at the main downtown park. These events have helped build relationships between congregations and also served to encourage each of the participating congregations in their individual transformation ministries.

Transformation for many of our congregations means reaching beyond their doors and engaging in ministry with their neighbors. Sheltering and feeding programs are springing up across the region. On various nights through the

week, Disciples are sheltering people in Spokane, Yakima, Puyallup, Olympia, and Mount Vernon, Washington as well as other places. Hungry people are being fed in Seattle, Othello, and Clarkston, Washington as well as Anchorage, Alaska. As congregations engage their neighbors “beyond their doors,” they are being transformed by being the hands and heart of Jesus and by giving and receiving love with those whom God loves.

4. **Leadership Development:** In response to an assessment done in 2014 we have restructured our Leadership Team to encourage more participation from a wider range of people expanding our racial/ethnic, age and gender diversity. We are being intentional about developing leaders through pairing newer members with seasoned leaders and newer pastors to the region with those with a longer tenure. Our hope is that this will help develop strong leaders for the future while increasing the richness of our leadership pool today. In 2015 we are offering a number of region-wide events to help develop leaders within the congregation including a Stewardship Event offered jointly with the Oregon and SW Idaho Region. We will also be offering a gathering for Moderators and Treasurers to discuss Financial Best Practices, and a Region-Wide “Common Table” where ministry teams, leaders and others will gather to review our current ministry focus and imagine a focus area for the future. Our Commission on Ministry continues to work with wonderful candidates for ordination and commissioning.



5. **Other News:** The Northwest Regional Christian Church had a strong financial year in 2014 and continues to practice responsible financial management and thoughtful use of our resources. We have been gifted with funding for part-time staff from one of our congregations. In 2014 we welcomed two new part-time staff: A Technology Coordinator who is helping us re-design our online presence and abilities and a Youth and Family Ministries Coordinator who is overseeing our Regional Youth Commission and Camping Program. Along with our New Church Coordinator we are able to move forward in some exciting ways as we seek to be Regional Church in the Northwest and support our congregations as they seek to be faith-filled communities in their communities. Living into our vision statement we are “doing together that which by God’s design we cannot do apart.”

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Northwest Regional Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).



## General Board

## Business Item #GB-15-0911



**CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO**  
 DISCIPLES OF CHRIST  
 A COVENANT NETWORK OF CONGREGATIONS



Report to the April 11 - 14, 2015 Meeting of the General Board

Title: Report of Christian Church in Ohio

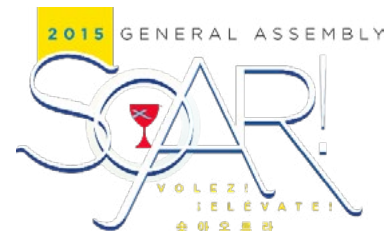
Origin: Dr. William H. Edwards, Regional Pastor and President

The following is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). As part of a movement for wholeness that welcomes all to the Table and shares the Good News of Jesus Christ from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth, this report lifts up the Christian Church in Ohio's accomplishments related to the four strategic mission priorities of the church:

- New Church,
- Transforming congregations,
- Leadership development
- Pro-reconciliation/anti-racism.

## Introduction

The Christian Church in Ohio is excited about being the host region for the 2015 General Assembly. There are hundreds of Ohio Disciples who will volunteer to offer graciously "Buckeye" hospitality.



The Christian Church in Ohio's vision as a regional church states that we are **"A covenant network of congregations in mission"**

*We are the Body of Christ gifted and called in covenant together as Disciples of Christ to be centers of transformation on the new mission frontier of our own communities.*

We are organizing our work around three regional priorities that grow out of the vision:

- Strengthening Relationships and Building Networks (True Community)
- Leadership Development (Deep Christian Spirituality)
- Congregational Transformation and Evangelism (Passion for Justice)

Regional Pastors facilitate and resource congregations through their relationships and networking with other congregations, providing resources for the development of local leadership, and partnering in the spiritual transformation and faith sharing ministries in local communities. The Regional Pastors are a central contact point for congregations relating to the Regional Church, in partnership with the Regional Elders. Regional



Elders are a volunteer cadre of retired experienced ministers who serve as an extension of Pastoral Staff in assigned Districts of the Region.



The Christian Church in Ohio is actively involved in the Northeast Inter-Regional Fellowship (NIRF), which includes the regions of the Capital Area, Canada, Michigan, Northeast, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The Christian Church in Ohio has been consulting with Christian Church Foundation in establishing a Development Committee. This ministry team has developed a fund raising and development strategic plan to financially under gird the present and future ministries of our regional church.

The Christian Church in Ohio is an active and vital member of Ohio Council of Churches. Our regional church supports the work of the Council financially and through participation of members of our congregations in its programming.

## New Church

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The New Church Committee of the Christian Church in Ohio is committed to the 2020 vision to start new congregations in the Ohio region. There are eleven new congregations that emerged and are in formation as a result of our initiative.



In 2013, based on the demographic studies, Ohio launched 3 new congregations using a bi-vocational church planter model. Our New Church Committee is also doing a demographic study to launch a new congregation in Northwest Ohio near Toledo and in Southwest Ohio near Cincinnati.

As a regional church, we have launched a special evangelism campaign entitled "**New Wine Skins**". This special effort will extend the evangelism ministry of the congregations of the Christian Church in Ohio by launching new congregations in areas where there is a need to reach new people for Christ.



## Congregational Transformation

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The Congregational Transformation Ministry Team is exploring and initiating ways that the Christian Church in Ohio can educate and train leaders, identify and utilize resources, and network congregations and leaders to share their learnings and experiences. The role of the Regional Church is to be partner to resource congregations as they discern their own unique ***“spiritual strategic journey”*** of transformation.

Therefore, the Congregational Transformation Ministry Team has developed a Regional Church model of support that will educate and train leaders, identify and utilize resources, and network congregations and pastors to share their learnings and experiences. This model of support is comprised in networks:



### **Network of Leaders**

A key component of the model is the development of a "Leadership Network" for pastors who have covenanted to become "Transformational Leaders". The leadership network will be intentional in:

- Sharing the outcomes of congregational insights related to the use of transformation resources;
- Creating a "community of learning" through the use of "webinars", so that training and vision casting events for transformation can be held without requiring travel. (*Webinars are events held with the combination of conference call and internet-based presentation*);
- Writing articles on the topic Congregational Transformation for the Buckeye Disciple and sharing experiences at regional events.

### **Network of Congregations**

Another component of Regional Church support of congregational transformation is the development and facilitation of a "resource network" among congregations who make a formal decision and a covenant with the Regional Church to become a ***"Transforming Congregation."*** The Pastoral Staff and the Congregational Transformation Team are closely monitoring the activity of the congregational network and will offer recommendations by evaluating new transformation resources and sharing the results with the pastoral and congregational leadership networks.

### **Network of Coaches**

Coaching is an exciting way to draw out from within pastors and leaders the gifts and skills for transformation. The Congregational Transformation Team considers coaching perhaps the single most important resource for transformation and leadership development available for pastors and congregations. The Christian Church in Ohio has trained and developed a support network of coaches to work with pastors and congregational pastors committed to Transformation.

## Leadership Development

### **Children and Youth Ministries**

Throughout the long and successful legacy of Camp Christian, several areas of ministry have become evident... the emphases on servant-leadership and the development of mission-minded youth and young adults. In order to accommodate these components of ministry, campers from across the Ohio Region begin at an early age to study the lives and works of various biblical characters.



Younger campers witness teen servant leaders, Counselors-in-Training (CIT), assisting adult counselors with various tasks which benefit them directly. This image of selfless service leads campers to not only appreciate the CITs but also a desire to emulate them. The success of our Junior, or "Otter" Camp (3rd-5th graders) has led to the tremendous growth of this camp! This growth necessitated the addition of a second junior camp, "Ribbit" Camp, is one- half-week in duration and includes second graders.

Our middle school or Chi Rho Camp program emphasizes appropriate levels of leadership through worship participation, individual and groups leadership activities, attention to and care of the environment and opportunities to express and share gifts related to the creative and performing arts. Regionally, Chi Rho kids gather, biennially, to share in theme related activities, renew acquaintances and make new friends in what is called the Chi Rho Rally. This year's theme was "My God is So Great". For their mission project, Chi Rho kids brought new or gently used towels for those in need. This "Tower of Towels" (as it was called...), was donated to the Free Store (a ministry of the Christian Church in Ohio), which is housed on the grounds of Camp Christian. Those in need pick up needed items completely free of charge.

Our high school or Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) conferees experienced a new and improved leadership model during the 2014 conference year. The new model will forgo the traditional elective process to embrace a more inclusive one which invites all high school seniors to participate on some level of leadership at each CYF Conference. Senior leaders will attend a Leadership Retreat during the spring where the details of the new model will be share by camp Assistant Directors. Prior to the spring retreat, however, our CYF State Officers led a newly organized State Youth Convention at Camp Christian in March. In addition to various discussion groups on the proper, godly and respectful way to voice their opinions, our youth will be treated to the talents of several live Christian bands and have an opportunity to participate in a number of winter activities and games. Retreat leaders are in the process of weighing mission opportunities for the weekend, as well.





York City and Washington D.C. where our CYF youth have an opportunity to learn what it means to be people of faith, active in the American political process and global affairs. While in NYC, our young leaders served in a food station separating food into various categories to be distributed to those in need.

### **Advance Ministries**

Young adults (aged 19-29 years of age) will gather three times in 2015. They will hold spring and winter retreats in April and December, respectively. In August they will gather at Camp Christian for a week of Advance Conference. In each of these events retreat attendees and conferees continue to explore what it means to live faithfully as young adults in the Twenty-first Century. Leaders for the Christian Church in Ohio as well as for the Christian Church in the United States and Canada have been developed from Advance Ministries.

Advance Ministry is also active in communities other than Camp. Members of Advance are leading or participating in multiple new church starts through the New Wineskins campaign, attending and helping to facilitate/lead bible studies and religious based groups in their communities and universities, as well as attending marches and rallies, like those held in Ferguson, Missouri, striving for peace and justice in our world. These things may not be “official” Advance sponsored events, but individuals and groups from Advance Ministry attend and spread the love that is Advance Ministry. Through these events and activities members of Advance Ministry show the world that this generation cares about our world and wants to contribute to make it a better place for all.

### **Adult Conference**

This lay led event is into its 78<sup>th</sup> year in 2015 continuing to build leadership and relationships. The theme this year is “***Witnessing as a Community of Faith***” - Acts 8. Vesper Speaker will be Rev. Timothy Murtaugh and the Bible Lecturer will be Rev. Gayce Stewart.

Throughout the week there are mission opportunities in local area nursing homes as well as a special offering at the closing consecration service which is divided among several ministries including: Week of Compassion and Church World Service among others.

### **Disciples Fellowship Retreat**

This group of over 100 is completely led by lay people. They have two retreats a year a Labor Day and Memorial Day. This retreat is for everyone often has more than one family with 4 generations. They gather for fellowship, mission and worship. This year

their mission is collecting items to help with the Church World Service hygiene bag outreach program.

### **Commission on Ministry**

The Commission on Ministry of Christian Church in Ohio has reorganized to be more intentional in communicating and supporting all candidates and congregations the New Order of Ministry.



In 2014, the Commission on Ministry Ordained 6 ministers in the Ohio Region. The Commission on Ministry relates to 334 Ordained Ministers, 39 Commissioned Ministers, 10 Candidates on track to be Commissioned Ministers, 6 Candidates on the Apprentice Track, 12 in Seminary seeking to be Ordained Ministers, and 5 Candidates ordained in other traditions seeking standing with Disciples of Christ.

The Christian Church in Ohio, Commission on Ministry has reorganized to be more intentional in communicating and supporting all candidates and congregations with the New Order of Ministry. Blessed with strength and commitment to the ministry we have been called to we will continue to use the spiritual gifts that we have been blessed with to uphold, love, care, support, and nurture others who have said yes to God's call to ministry.

### **Ohio Disciples Men**

Mission continues to guide our Men's gathering as we work to redefine ourselves. Ohio Men are currently building work teams throughout the Ohio Region to help local church ministry and work with Disciples Volunteering. Ohio Disciples Men continue to lift up the 4 General Ministries supported by "Men Cooking for Mission." As a whole Ohio Men meet twice per-year. In the spring this is a work retreat for the mission of supporting our Camp Christian by preparing it for its summer program. This past fall men gathered for fellowship and learning. Rev. Stephen Bentley was the Keynoter for the fall retreat and spoke on revitalizing Men's Ministry.



### **Ohio Women's Ministries**

Ohio women were a part of helping with two major events in the life of the church in 2014. Ohio Women were a part of sharing in the planning and leadership of the 2014 Quadrennial Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia in June. Then in July Ohio Women's Ministries participated in the Biennial Session of the National Convocation in Columbus, Ohio. Ohio Women held another successful Women's Retreat in September, 2014. A delightful element to the Women's Retreat in recent years has been the addition of youth stewards, young women in high school who both insist and entertain the participants at the Retreat. They along with our keynoter and workshop leaders create



an atmosphere in which the women involved will be enriched spiritually and at the same time will build relationships with women from around the Region.

### **Spiritual Life Ministries**

This ministry team holds an annual winter retreat for Pastors and spouses who are able to come. The Spiritual Life Committee continues to work at building a network of Spiritual Directors that can be used for both clergy and lay leaders alike. Also in the fall, the team sponsors a time of Silent Retreat for both lay and clergy.

## **Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation**

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The Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission continues to offer anti-racism training to clergy and other regional leaders, along with congregations as we seek to become an



anti-racist/pro-reconciling church. After more than a decade in existence the Anti-Racism commission's commitment to helping the Christian Church in Ohio reach its goals of true diversity and inclusivity continues.

In 2014, the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission funded two grants for creative congregational initiatives. One grant will be used to assist a congregation in expanding its music ministry to expose current church members to a broader cultural range of music styles, while attracting persons of color. The

second grant will continue the historic work of one of our congregations in working to combat racism and promote positive relationships in their increasingly diverse community, offering three workshops – (1) A Black Church Music workshop targeting Black, White, and racially mixed congregations, (2) Invite a well-known speaker on Racism for a weekend of workshops and/or talks. (3) Target the participants from the two events for a 90-minute overview or 1 day Anti-Racism training in their congregations or organizations.

### **2015 Plans:**

- Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Commission is beginning to look at new training materials with a focus on reconciliation during our 90-minute and 1 Day Training presentations. This focus will hopefully increase interest and participation and promote individual and congregational change and growth as communities become more diverse.
- Continue to work toward increasing the Reconciliation offering.
- Make the development of an orientation process for new commission members a priority.
- A second priority is the development of a three year Strategic Plan for the commission

- Continue to concentrate on (1) capacity building using one on ones; (2) attract members with specific skills to move us toward media usage and (3) acquire and/or develop training materials to enhance the commissions various presentation types.

## Closing

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In all of these ministries we are working to carry out our Regional Priorities of:

- Building Relationship and Networking Congregations
- Leadership Development
- Congregational Transformation and Evangelism

We look forward with great anticipation of what God will do through us as ministers of the Gospel and leaders in Christ's church in the days ahead.

May God's Blessings be with you,

### **Regional Staff:**

Rev. Dr. William H. Edwards, Regional Pastor and President (African-American, Male)

Rev. Stephen Bentley Regional Associate Pastor (Anglo, Male)

Joanne Arnold, Executive Assistant (Anglo, Female)

Jennie Stoddart, Office Administrator (Anglo, Female)

Rich Haines, Treasurer (Anglo, Male)

Sally Wears, Financial Clerk (Anglo, Female)

Al Channell, Camp Christian Superintendent (Anglo, Male)

Doris Woodson, Camp Christian Food Services (Anglo, Female)

|                            |        |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Number of Congregations:   | 182    |
| Total Members:             | 39,163 |
| States included in Region: | Ohio   |

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ).

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0912**

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma  
Report to the General Board  
Pamela G. Holt, Regional Minister  
December 31, 2014

**TRANSITION TO NEW BEGINNING**

As 2014 draws to a close, the Christian Church in Oklahoma is celebrating the call of a new Regional Pastor. After many months of reviewing profiles and interviewing candidates, the Search Committee, under the excellent direction of Michael Oberlender, presented to the Regional Board their number one choice, the Rev. Pamela G. Holt, a pastor from Texas. The Regional Board voted unanimously, and called a Regional Assembly to submit and vote on the candidate. On October 18, 2014, the Regional Assembly gathered at First Christian Church, Oklahoma City, to meet Rev. Holt and her husband, Randy. The assembly shared in worship and a business meeting. After the recommendation of the committee to call Rev. Holt as the Regional Pastor, Regional Moderator Jeff Champeau called for a vote. There was an overwhelming majority voting aye to call their next Regional Minister, the Rev. Pamela G. Holt. The newly elected Regional Pastor then led the assembly in a spirit-filled communion service, which was followed by a reception. Many thanks were expressed to the Search Committee for their diligent work: Michael Oberlender, Chair; Rob Crawford; Nancy Pittman; Jesse Jackson; Ronnie Fields; Jeremy Skaggs; Kathy Standfield; Ronnie Hopkins; Cathy Clark; Aaron Krueger; Paxton Jones, Dwight Webber, Kelli Driscoll, Elaine Howsley, Jeff Champeau, Dana Shadid.

The Christian Church in Oklahoma also celebrated Dean Phelps transitional time as Interim Regional Minister for Oklahoma's Disciples. Dean's ministry was faithful and vibrant from January 2013 - November 2014. In closing, he expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve these twenty-two months and for the long and lasting friendships formed in Oklahoma. In November 2014, he was called to serve as Transitional Regional Minister for the Central Rocky Mountain Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

At the end of 2014, the staff of the Christian Church in Oklahoma is as follows:

- Pamela Holt, Newly Called Regional Pastor — attended the College of Regional Ministers in December and will be installed March 7, 2015
- Michael Davison, Associate Regional Pastor
- Leslie Dotson, Associate Regional Pastor
- Richard Keith, Building and Financial Administrator
- Ellen Beer, Executive Assistant (three-quarter time)
- Lori Heldman-Richcreek, Administrative Assistant (half-time)

The 2014 *Year Book and Directory* lists 151 congregations affiliated with the Oklahoma region.

These congregations either submitted a yearbook report or made a contribution to the wider church through Disciples Mission Fund.



During the course of the year, four congregations began the process of closing their ministry due to declining membership: First Christian Church in Burlington, First Christian Church in Covington, Oak Grove Christian Church in Dover, and First Christian Church in Weleetka.

Oklahoma has three new church projects in the developing stages: (1) Sacred Hoop Native American Ministry is starting in the North East Area and in November was granted "church in formation" status; (2) the Christian Church Commission has contracted with Michael Canada to plant a new congregation in midtown Oklahoma City; (3) Refuge Fellowship is congregation led by Noel Gray which ministers to the homeless in Oklahoma City and will be granted "church in formation" status in 2015.

Oklahoma's Disciples continue to be generous in their support of the ministry of the wider church. Oklahoma's Disciples are faithful and regular givers to Disciples Mission Fund. In addition to Disciples Mission Fund offerings, the Christian Church in Oklahoma receives financial support from its Annual Fund. The Region also receives distributions from endowment funds invested with the Oklahoma Disciples Foundation and the Christian Church Foundation.

Since 2007, the Oklahoma Region has requested a 50% allocation of Disciples Mission Fund dollars given by Oklahoma congregations. This difference from the General Board's allocation of 41.6% has provided an additional \$376,415 to Oklahoma; however, we recognize that the additional income has come at the expense of our general ministry partners.

In 2014, the Oklahoma Regional Board made the commitment to return to the General Board allocation, and took the first small step by requesting a 49% allocation. The 2015 budget calls for a 48% allocation.

Oklahoma continues its ministry of leader development. One hallmark of this ministry is the process of In-Care for students leading to ordination, for those on the apprentice track to ordination and to those seeking or maintaining standing as commissioned ministers. The Christian Church in Oklahoma, in partnership with the Commission on Clergy and several congregations, celebrated the ordination of four candidates into Christian ministry last year: Janet Edge, Cody Frech, Anna Hubbard, and Marty Stone-McCutchen.

There are two major program evolutions occurring in the Oklahoma Region. First, is an overhaul of the ethical training of our ministers specifically with regards to Healthy Boundaries. In the past, we have required clergy to take Healthy Boundaries one time. Now the Commission on Clergy has developed a new program where clergy will be required to attend a seminar for Healthy Boundaries every three (3) years. We are moving from 2 trainers to 4 teams of two who will train across our region. This transition will begin in 2015.

The second program going through an evolution is the Commissioned Minister Training Program (CMTP) offered by the region, using a curriculum built around the 16 core competencies to better educate ministers and church leaders. There are conversations with the dean of Phillips Theological Seminary to explore possibilities to team together to provide good foundations for the students through online classes in Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament classes. The program currently has thirteen candidates in process.



For more than 20 years the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma has offered Leadership Training School. In February 2014, the theme was "Growing in Grace," based on Ephesians 4:7. The keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Lisa Wolfe, Associate Professor in the endowed chair of Hebrew Bible at Oklahoma City University. More than 33 classes were offered. This year's classes emphasized practical ministry, offered "how-to" sessions such as "How to know when it's time for hospice," and "How to plan a funeral." Seventy-two congregations were represented, four hundred fifteen people from across the region attended, and seventeen exhibitors participated.

Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, and Outdoor Ministry in Oklahoma are relevant program ministries that teach the language of faith and the practice of Christianity for the Church today and tomorrow. Our ministries support the adults that volunteer, are paid staff, are part-time, full-time, are commissioned or ordained that journey in faith alongside this diverse age and socio-economic demographic.

International Affairs Seminar offers CYF age youth (grades 10-12) an opportunity to expand their perspective through study and travel. We rotate between these themes: 1) Faith & Economics; 2) What is a Christian Response in the Immigration Debate?; 3) Interfaith Dialogue; 4) Human Trafficking. The eight day trip includes the Holocaust Museum, the 9/11 Museum, a visit with a State Representative and tour of the Capitol, two Broadway Shows, Monuments & Memorials in Washington DC, a day to explore New York City, and 2.5 days of seminars.

Mission Enid, a week of mission work organized by a local congregation, welcomed over 250 Chi Rho, CYF, and their adult sponsors to Enid, OK, as well as all three Disciples Peace Fellowship Interns. Oklahoma is grateful to DPF for gifting the interns to us and all the camps each summer.

The Outdoor Ministry program offers children and youth a chance to experience the voice of God in their own language. Like many Regions, we struggle with recruiting enough adults to volunteer as counselors and the cost of our summer camps continues to rise. We are grateful for First Christian Church in Cherokee, OK, which gave the money to offset the cost of the adults at our Chi Rho Camp this year and to the Disciples Men's Ministry "Leave No Child Behind" which provided funds to lower the cost of camper registration fees. We are developing "Family Camp" weekends to introduce adults that did not grow up in a Disciples congregation to learn about the value of our outdoor ministry. We are researching non-traditional camps and options offered at the Heifer Ranch in Arkansas. Our Young Adult team is exploring the best way(s) to connect with 18-35 year olds and listen for missional direction.

Disciples Retirement Community of Oklahoma, under the leadership of Rev. Devon McAnally, has continued to create a network of volunteers and services with the purpose of helping seniors to maintain their independence and to live at home longer. DRCO is developing a partnership with the National Benevolent Association, and the two organizations have found a natural fit as NBA establishes its mission to cultivate and incubate new ministries.

This is a particularly exciting time for the Christian Church in Oklahoma and just a few of its many and varied ministries and missions. It is an honor and privilege to be called to serve with Oklahoma's Disciples in this time of learning, discernment, transition and conversation as we build God's dream together.





Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Holt, Regional Minister

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0913****CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OREGON-SOUTHWEST IDAHO  
2015 GENERAL BOARD REPORT**

General Assembly resolution 1325 authorized the affiliation of Disciples congregations in the South Idaho region with either the Oregon region or the Central Rocky Mountain region. Accordingly, nine congregations have affiliated with Oregon and four with Central Rocky Mountain effective January 1, 2014. The year 2014 represents the first year of operations for the Christian Church in Oregon-SW Idaho as a newly configured regional ministry. Regional Ministers Doug and Cathy Myers Wirt visited all nine affiliating congregations in 2014. These congregations have sent representatives to regional board and committees, Regional Assembly, clergy gatherings, and program events such as camps, women's ministries and youth council. From their experience in working together, the congregations of the Snake River District now have the most active and cohesive identity of the five districts within the Oregon-SW Idaho region. Our general ministry partners have played a crucial role in helping us move to new and effective forms of shared witness.

**Anti-Racism Pro Reconciliation Ministries**

The regional Commission on Ministry decided in 2014 to add Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation training to the list of required events for ordained and commissioned ministers in the Oregon-SW Idaho region. As in many states, the demography of Oregon and Idaho has changed in recent years and will continue to change, with immigration as a significant factor. In order to witness more effectively in this environment, Disciples ministers will benefit from a) the insights provided by Anti-Racism/Pro-reconciliation training and b) knowledge of historic policies of federal and local governments that have shaped the ethnic composition of the Pacific Northwest over several centuries. The Oregon-SW Idaho region has begun conversations with Reconciliation minister April Johnson to seek her guidance as to how and when to implement the training for clergy. Lay leaders will also have opportunities for Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation training.

A second regional church initiative continued to take shape in 2014. The region has recently highlighted the history of the first Asian American Disciples of Christ congregation, which ministered in Portland, Oregon from 1891-1924. This ministry began as a partnership between general, state, congregational and educational ministries of the Disciples of Christ and leadership in the Chinese Christian Mission by Jeu Hawk, Louie and Grace Hugh, and Lee Tong, among others. The ministry prospered for over three decades in spite of discriminatory laws against Chinese immigrants. However, as attested by Disciples leaders of the time, the effect of federal exclusion laws eventually did lead to the closure of the ministry in 1924. Regional Minister Cathy Myers Wirt has shared this story within regional women's ministries, noting that general, state and congregational women's mission organizations gave strong support to the founding and continuation of the Chinese Christian Mission. In 2014, Regional Minister Doug Wirt also shared this story with a local Chinese American professional society, the NAPAD Convocation, and at First Christian Church in Portland on Heritage Sunday.

Local Reconciliation giving supports Yakama Christian Mission in White Swan, WA and two ministries of new church plants in Oregon. These include Gomer's House recovery program of Trees of Righteousness Christian Church, and Misi3n Sonora of Peniel

Ministries, a borderland ministry that travels to Nogales, Sonora annually for ministry with families living in the garbage dumps.

### New Church Ministry

During 2014, the regional New Church Ministry Team engaged in discussions with five groups considering new church initiatives or affiliation with Disciples in the Oregon-SW Idaho region. Of these, three have already launched, one will begin in 2015 as a ministry of an existing congregation, and one has deferred launching for the present time. Two of these ministries subsequently requested and received approval for affiliation with Disciples in early 2015. Four people attended the Leadership Academy in Indianapolis in September 2014.

Led by Pastor Cornelio Garcia, Iglesia Cristiana Peniel de Hillsboro completed its second year of ministry in 2014. Peniel Ministries of east Portland, with Hector Curiel as Pastor, planted this ministry on the west side of the Portland metro area in 2013. The church met for its first two years at Aloha Christian Church. In early 2015, Iglesia Cristiana Peniel de Hillsboro moved to a new home at First Congregational Church of Hillsboro where Disciples minister Roger Lynn serves as Interim Pastor.

Lone Community Church, an affiliating congregation in eastern Oregon, decided to request a change of status to recognized congregation. Long established as a ministry of the United Church of Christ, Lone Community Church has decided upon an identity as a shared ministry of the UCC and Disciples of Christ. Stacy Shelton serves as Pastor.

At the end of 2014, Aloha Christian Church of Hillsboro, Oregon completed its visible ministry. As a church planted by Disciples forty years earlier, this congregation has generously provided space for another new Disciples church plant for the past two years. The congregation has decided to provide some of its assets for youth ministry and for new church ministry within the regional church. Also at the end of the year, donors working with Disciples Church Extension Fund established the Charlotte Esther Wirt Memorial Fund for New Church Ministry, in memory of Charlotte Wirt, a DCEF supporter who was a lifetime member of Portland FCC and mother of Regional Minister Doug Wirt.

### Congregational Transformation

In 2014, Parkview Christian Church began a new chapter of ministry in Meridian, Idaho. Previously known as University Christian Church in Boise, the congregation sold its property across from Boise State University and built out a church campus in Meridian. Regular worship attendance has increased dramatically at the new site. As a part of the transition, the congregation decided to strengthen their ties with the Disciples of Christ. A Sunday School class has taken special interest in a granddaughter of one of their long time families. Bethany Waggoner serves with Global Ministries in the FEDICE ministry in Ecuador, a regional church mission partner. Parkview called Gene Hill to serve as Senior Pastor in 2014, dedicating a new building and installing a new pastor on the same day.

Murray Hills Christian Church in Beaverton, Oregon, made plans in 2014 to launch a new ministry in 2015. The congregation will add a new worship service intended to reach specifically for people of the "millennial" generation. Three leaders attended Leadership Academy in 2014 in preparation for this outreach, which will be called 'Ground Level.'



First Christian Church in Silverton, Oregon celebrated the serving of their 100,000<sup>th</sup> meal in June 2014. The congregation began a small, weekly dinner program for a few families in the congregation when the recession began. This grew into a community meal which now feeds about 400 people each Wednesday night, with numerous local congregations involved. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon honored FCC Silverton with an Ecumenical Service Award. FCC in Albany, Oregon and FCC in Medford, Oregon now offer similar weekly dinners. FCC Eugene feeds about 200 homeless people every Sunday morning. FCC Salem, Oregon uses their kitchen to train homeless youth with culinary skills.

Red Rock Christian Church in Boise experienced a significant remodel of their facilities in 2014. One of several features is the development of a smaller worship space designed for the Sunday evening Trinity service. Northwood Christian Church in Springfield, Oregon made preparations in 2014 for remodeling in 2015. The church aims to have these improvements completed in time to host the Regional Assembly in 2016. Northwood, FCC Eugene and many others celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "Mission to Mexico" in 2014, a ministry that takes over 100 youth, college students and other adults to the same community in Mexico every year to build houses during Spring Break. First Christian Church in North Bend, Oregon celebrated 100 years of ministry in June.

#### Leadership Development:

The Oregon-SW Idaho region celebrated the commissioning of four young adults for service with Global Ministries in 2014. Kim and Erik Free began a four year appointment with Global Ministries in Mozambique. The Frees have been involved with congregations in the region at Silverton, Eugene, Lebanon, Albany and Portland. Kelsey Hertel of Eugene FCC volunteered during the summer for the FEDICE ministry in Ecuador and Bethany Waggoner began a two year appointment with FEDICE as a global mission intern. Eleven Oregon Disciples spent two weeks in Ecuador during July 2014, working and worshipping with communities in Cachaviro and Romerillos, where the regional church has raised funds for a microloan program. They were very much impressed with the work of Kelsey and Bethany in the communities and with the FEDICE staff. Together, we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of FEDICE at a ceremony in San Francisco, Ecuador. Blanca Puma leads the ministry as Executive Director and is well known, respected and beloved within the regional church as with the partner congregations in Ecuador.

In the Oregon-SW Idaho region, we praise God for the emergence of many young ordained ministers. Some come from this region and now serve local congregations here. Some from this region have gone to serve elsewhere. Others have come from different regions to serve in Oregon-SW Idaho. The Regional Ministers are spending significant time in working with congregations whose pastors are nearing retirement. A long period of preparation and transition is advised for congregations where the pastor has had a long tenure and where a retirement is announced.

Bruce Barkhauer, general minister for Faith and Giving, and Jerry Lang of Christian Church Foundation led two stewardship events in Portland and Nampa, Idaho in September 2014. Over 100 people, lay and clergy, attended, with many requesting follow up contacts. We are grateful in this and many ways for how our general church ministry colleagues share blessings with congregations and individuals in the regional church. Bernice Cintron of Murray Hills CC and April Oristano of Eugene FCC serve as General Board members. Jani DeMond of Treasure Valley CC in Caldwell, Idaho, recently completed many years of service on the General Board. Bernice served on the Mission First team in 2014.

At the 2014 Regional Assembly, Dick Hamm introduced the regional visioning process. Timed to begin with the new identity of the Oregon-SW Idaho region, this is a two year effort involving face to face and electronic communications, with prayer triads formed by people living in different parts of the region.

Summer youth camps continue to be a key component of leadership development efforts, for both youth and adults. Oregon Disciples are in a mutually beneficial partnership with United Methodists in which Disciples rent space for summer camps at the UMC owned Suttle Lake Camp in central Oregon. UMC young adults have an adjunct role in camp leadership. Southwest Idaho Disciples own and operate Camp Cascade, near Cascade, Idaho. After the Cascade Christian Camp board decided not to sponsor youth camps, Red Rock Christian Church took the lead in administering South Idaho youth camps in 2014. The regional board subsequently approved a request to sponsor the southwest Idaho youth camp programming in 2015. The regional church has designated Rev. Erin Donnell, Associate Minister at Red Rock CC, as the Regional Camping Administrator.

*Commission on Ministry:* First Christian Church in Eugene hosted the ordination service for Wally Burman, a graduate of Claremont School of Theology. Disciples Seminary Foundation has expanded the number of seminaries in the west with which DSF scholarships may be granted.

*Regional Community Garden:* In an effort to build more community between congregations and foster a connection with the communities surrounding the congregations of the regional church, the region sought and received grants from the Women's Endowment Fund of the Office of Disciples Women and a grant from Week of Compassion for a regional garden project. Approximately fifty barrels were distributed around the region in which individuals and congregations grew food and gave it to local programs that feed hungry neighbors. In addition a large in ground garden was planted and tended by a group from 8 congregations which harvested over 80 gallons of flambo and tigers eye beans and buckets of potatoes. Most of this harvest was given to feeding programs run by congregations and the rest was sold to raise money for the Gogoi Farm in Mozambique affiliated with Global Ministries and a project that regional partners Kim and Erik Free work to support. Several thousand dollars has been raised for the farm with the project ongoing. Two congregations have now become Green Chalice congregations with more getting ready to do so.

The College of Regional Ministers has elected Cathy Myers Wirt as President Elect, to begin service as CRM President in 2016. Regional Minister Doug Wirt has served as President of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon in 2014-15.

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church in Oregon-Southwest Idaho.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0914**

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION  
GENERAL BOARD REPORT  
April 11-14, 2015**

**Submitted by Don Dewey, Co-Regional Minister-President**

**The PSWR is blessed with an amazing staff that is passionate, dedicated, and Spirit-filled!**

**Regional Ministry Team**

- Don Dewey, Co- Regional Minister-President, ordained, M, C, FT
- Susan Gonzales Dewey, Co-Regional Minister-CEO, ordained, F, H, FT
- Dan Oliver, Staff for Stewardship & Giving, ordained, M, C, PT
- Xose Escamilla, Staff for Hispanic Ministries, ordained, M, H, PT
- Wilfredo del Pilar, Staff for Hispanic Ministries, ordained, M, H, PT
- Young Jun Yang & Young Lan Kim, Staff for Asian Ministries/NAPAD, ordained, M & F, A, PT
- JoAnne Bynum, Staff for African-American Ministries, ordained, F, AA, PT
- Matthew Haris-Gloyer, Young Adult Ministry, M, C, PT
- BJ Barlow, Youth Ministry, M, C, PT
- Sloan Hamilton, Camp Manager for Loch Leven Camp & Conference Center, F, C, FT

**Office Staff**

Bruce Indermill, Sr. Administrator, M, C, FT  
Branden Hendricks, Administrative Assistant, M, C, FT  
Janna Gould, Media and Communications, F, C, PT  
Michel Johnson, Support staff, F, C, PT  
Team CFO, Financial Advisors

We believe God calls the Pacific Southwest Region to be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. The Pacific Southwest Region is made up of 118 congregations, with 25 congregations affiliating. We have a wide diversity of participating members, which include Hispanic, Chinese, Korean, African American, Samoan and many multi-ethnic, multi-racial congregations.

**OUR VISION**, to be a faithful, growing regional church that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice (Micah 6:8); and,

**OUR MISSION**, to be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps “to the ends of the earth”. (Acts 1:8)



**OUR GOALS,** 1) To be One Church; 2) To be a Missional Church; 3) To nurture and develop vital, healthy, growing congregations; 4) To be a well-organized and well administered Region.

***As we seek to fulfill the General Church priority of becoming a Pro-reconciling/Anti-racist church...***

**Goal #1 To Be One Church:** In 2014 & 2015 we held an Anti-Racism Education event for our youth and young adult as a part of our Annual MLK celebration. Regional Minister Don Dewey also serves on the Board of the Hispanic Commission and Rev. Susan Gonzales Dewey serves on the NAPAD Board.



We held another Anti-Racism training event for Pastors and Laity with over 100 attending, led by Rev. Sandhya Jha. Our Committee on Ministry has now made Anti-Racism a requirement for Ordination.

Our Regional Gathering was held October 2014 at First Christian Church of Garden Grove and had over 450 in attendance with the theme: "Walking in Light and Love Together" with our scripture focus of Ephesians 5:1,2. Our speakers were Rev. Julian

DeShazier, pastor of University Church in Chicago and adjunct professor at the Divinity School and McCormick Theological Seminary, and the Rev. Sandy Messick, Regional Minister for the Northwest. Also in October 2014 we held our Annual Pastors Summit with over 100 pastors attending.

**Goal #2 To Be a Missional Church:** Within our Region we have two significant mission sites, All Peoples Christian Center, located in South Central Los Angeles and Eastmont Community Center, located in East Los Angeles. The mission of All Peoples Christian Center is to provide a broad spectrum of social services to all, regardless of faith or race, and to empower the community to meet its needs by promoting equality, unity, respect and self-determination among all who participate in its programs. Hands-on mission experiences are conducted by groups within the Region and outside the Region at All Peoples. Eastmont Community Center in collaboration with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is designed to enhance the quality of life for children, youth, working adults and seniors in low-income families by providing needed education, social services, and health and wellness services that promote personal development and self-sufficiency.

Another unit of our Region is Project IMPACT. Project IMPACT is partnering with congregations as a part of a comprehensive plan for transformation and mission-directed ministry through free tutoring services for "at risk" youth in local schools. They have members of Disciples congregations providing tutoring, support and facilities for this ministry.





We continue to be a Global Mission Partner Region and co-host Global Mission Interpreters Training with our UCC partners and General Church. Plans are under way for our 8<sup>th</sup> annual mission trip to Nicaragua. We are also beginning partnership relationships with Mexico and Korea beginning in 2015.



In partnership with our General Churches Common Global Missions ministry the PSWR will be supporting Paul Turner, member of Abundant Life Christian Church in Los Angeles as a missionary to the Congo in Africa beginning in 2015.

***In our efforts to fulfill the General Church priority of forming 1000 new congregations by 2020***, our New Church Development Committee provides ongoing support, guidance and direction for all of our affiliating congregations and churches in formation. We currently have 25 congregations Under Care in the PSWR.

Since the beginning of 2014 we have launched 1 new congregation in the PSWR. This is a new church start within our Hispanic Ministry, Casa de Refugio in Covina, is off to a wonderful start. Co-Pastors Francisco Ramos and Soriliz Ramos are developing this exciting new ministry and in just nine months they have gone from zero to over 40 worshipping attendance! We are also starting an exciting new ministry that is being supported by both our New Church Development and our Leadership Committee called the Hatchery. We are developing an innovative, residential learning program for individuals who want to become social transformation entrepreneurs and invest in a local community for multiple years by launching a sustainable “common cause community.”

***In our efforts to fulfill the General Church priority of transforming 1000 current congregations by 2020*** we continue you to send pastors to the Hope Partnerships Leadership Academy for Trainings. We are now developing Coaching opportunities for pastors and congregations. Our Transformation Team is now conducting Appreciative Inquiry work with several congregations and we have also begun the Journey program with several congregations as well as a special version of the Journey geared toward our African American congregations.

**Goal #3 To Develop Vital, Healthy, Growing Congregations:** We held a very successful leadership training event in 2014 with over 100 pastors and laity attending. We had youth attending winter camps for both Jr. High and High School in partnership with the UCC. In addition, in April we hold our annual Spring Fling for High School students, which is a leadership-training event. We also had over 250 children and youth attending summer camp this year, with a new “Wee Camp” for our youngest campers. Our Disciples Women strengthen our congregations by holding successful Women’s Convocation and Spiritual



Growth retreats.

***In our efforts to fulfill the General Church 4<sup>th</sup> priority of Leadership Development,*** we continue to have great success with our Leadership Apprentice program, training women for leadership for local, regional, and general church. We’ve developed a Guides program for young women to develop leadership skills. Our Regional Youth Leadership Team receives training and experience while giving excellent leadership to all our Regional youth programming. We hold annual training opportunities for Camp Directors and Camp Counselors. We continue to hold annual Pastor’s Gathering Retreats and Pastor’s Summits with well over 100 participating for fellowship, educational development, networking, and spiritual renewal. We currently have 15 to 18 of our Hispanic Pastors participating in the CMS (Certificate of Ministry Studies) program. This is a two-year seminary level educational program with our partner DSF (Disciples Seminary Foundation) coordinated by our Regional Staff, Xose Escamilla, for Hispanic Ministries. We are also developing an MDiv program for Korean speaking Pastors, also with our partner DSF headed by Rev. Dr. Aaron Park, Pastor of Saegil Christian Church. In addition, this year we launched the first “Bethany West” program modeled and supported by Bethany Fellowship for pastors in the PSWR. This program is focused on young pastors from our ethnic communities and in their first call. Also under the direction of Regional Staff Xose Escamilla, 15 pastors from our Hispanic congregations participated in 10 month church growth program sponsored by the Region.

**Goal #4 To Be a Well Organized and Well Administered Region:** As our ministry grows, we continue to hire new staff to meet the expanding needs. We have hired a second full time Office Assistant and a part time Assistant to oversee all our media and communications. In addition we hired part time staff to oversee our Youth and Young Adult ministries. We have redesigned our web page to be more accessible, created a Facebook page, and better electronic communications. We also recently contracted with a financial group to help us manage resources. We





are also beginning the process to digitize all our documents in order to be cost effective and to be ecologically sound.



We will soon have the Region's entire operational budget supported through investment income. Our Regional Board has approved a Master Plan for future development our Camp and Conference Center as well as a plan for fully endowing our camping program.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Pacific Southwest Region.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0916**

**Title:** Report of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in South Carolina

**Origin:** Regional Minister: Sotello V. Long

The following is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Date: 20 February 2015

**Regional Staff:**

Regional Pastor: Sotello V. Long, male, African American/Black

Associate Regional Pastor: Deveta Smith Brown, female, African American/Black

Disciples Women Coordinator: Gloria Gilliard, female, African American/Black

Administrative Assistant: Alma Turner, female, Caucasian

Secretary: Barbara Williams, female, African American/Black

District Moderators/ Coordinators

District 1: Lucille Kinard, female, Caucasian

District Union 1: Freddie Lawton, Sr., male, African American/Black

District 2: Pete Cosgrove, m, Caucasian

District Union 2: Deveta Brown, female, African American/Black

District 3: TBD

**Regional Board: Term Oct 2010 – Oct 2014**

Chairperson: Eleanor Davis, First Christian Church, Columbia, SC

Vice-Chairperson: Harold Samuel, Path of Life Christian Church, Columbia, SC

Secretary: Tanya C. Williams, Zion Pilgrim Christian Church, Ridgeville, SC

Treasurer: Roy E. Tucker, New Galilee Christian Church, Holly Hill, SC

We extended the ministry of Christ through our 11<sup>th</sup> SC Regional Conference featuring 7 gifted preachers from around the Region extolling on the theme, "...in Christ! Give God the Glory!"

**Pastor Edward L. Cushingberry, Jr.**

New Hope Christian Church (DOC),  
Burton, SC

**Pastor Thomas Doctor**

United Love Christian Church (DOC),  
Fairfax, SC

**Pastor Mary Ann Goodman**

Andrews Christian Church (DOC),  
Andrews, SC

**Pastor John Hughes**

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),  
Charleston, SC

**Pastor Shaunette Lloyd**

Zion Pilgrim Christian Church (DOC),  
Ridgeville, SC

**Pastor Larry Mazyck, Sr.**

Ashton Branch Christian Church (DOC),  
Lodge, SC

**Pastor Kevin Roberts**

First Christian Church (DOC),



Columbia, SC

Our featured Conference Key Note Speaker, Minister Jose Morales, Jr. took us on a journey of insight and inspiration into the depths of imagining and understanding the glory of God!

Minister Jose Morales, Jr.



We extended the ministry of Christ through Disciples glorifying God through song, mime, liturgical dance, preaching, speaking and role play and interpretive visual arts!

We extend the ministry of Christ through collective giving and participation in several congregational clothing & food distribution ministries. The **New Beginnings Outreach** serves about 150 persons a month with food, clothing and other necessities in the name of Jesus in through with the Christian Church (DOC).

**Transformation:** We understand congregational transformation to be a community of people vitality connected with God and one another who are gifted by God fulfilling the vision and purpose God has called them to do. We hosted **story-tellers** for a week assisting them in their collection of stories of God's witness in our context.

We work with congregations to help them renew their bond and revive their witness as vitals members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the church of Jesus Christ in general. **First Christian Church, Aiken, SC, Briner Christian Church, Holly Hill, SC and Liberty Hill Christian Church, Ridgeville, SC** were recovered from the throes of discord and disassociation towards a trajectory of reconnection and renewed communal Disciples participation!!! Prayer for these congregations as well as others who have had similar experiences. God will make a way!

**Leadership Development:** Our leadership development is lodged with districts and the fellowship group ministries.

Districts: District 1 Convener is **Lucille Kinard**, Luray Christian Church, Luray, SC ; District Union 1 Moderator is **Freddie Lawton, Sr.**, Antioch Christian Church, Varnville, SC; District 2



– Pete Cosgrove; District Union 2 Moderator is **Deveta Brown**, Poplar Hill Christian Church, Cross, SC; and District 3 Convener position has not been filled at this time

Group Ministries: Disciples Men are served by a collaboration of District Men's Presidents/Conveners.; Disciples Women President is **Frankie Walters**, Luray Christian Church, Luray, SC; Disciples Women Staff Person is **Gloria Gilliard**, Poplar Hill Christian Church, Cross, SC; Disciples Youth Coordinator is **Lula Richardson**, Poplar Hill Christian Church, Cross, SC; Ministers Wives and Husbands Fellowship President is **Pamala Brown**, Canaan Christian Church, Moncks Corner, SC; and Commission on Ministry Chairperson is **Melvin Brown**, My Father's House Ministry, Moncks Corner, SC.

All of the aforementioned ministries convene asynchronous leadership development opportunities.

I will lift up the distinct approach the **Regional Commission on Ministry**. It hosts an annual Open House for pastors, ministerial candidates and laity. It coordinates and convenes a series of six – six hour sessions encompassing the areas of ministerial practice as outlined in the Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry (TFPCOM) in the Christian church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. It has proved to be an effective team in our efforts in developing ministerial leadership in commissioned ministry.

### Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism:



Our Region is in the cradle of experiencing reconciliation in the context of Black or African-American and white or European American race relations. The Region is predominantly African American and operates with a unique sensitivity to God's call to become one church functionally as well as spiritually.

### COME GROW WITH US!

We are an integral part of the SouthEast Regional Fellowship called "SERF!"

Regional partners are John Richardson:  
Sotello Long:  
Greg Alexander:  
Denise Bell:  
Glen Stewart:  
[Beth Dobbins Interim];  
John Mobley  
Florida;  
Juan Rodriguez:  
Lee Parker:



pictured from left to right  
North Carolina;  
South Carolina;  
Kentucky;  
Georgia;  
Tennessee (Retired)  
(not pictured) serves as  
Alabama Northwest  
Florida;  
Virginia!



We are reaching out to Convencion and the historically "Convention" congregations in our geographical locations with a spirit of equality!!!

#### GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

**The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in South Carolina**  
**Min. Sotello V. Long, Regional Minister**  
***"Treating You with Love Because Jesus Loves You!"***  
**Regional Minister's Email: [newsCRM@aol.com](mailto:newsCRM@aol.com)**  
**1293 Orange Grove Road Charleston, South Carolina 29407-3947**  
**Telephone: (843) 852-4537 or (800) 637-2718 Fax: (843) 852-4538**  
**Regional Church Office Email: [ROCCSC@AOL.COM](mailto:ROCCSC@AOL.COM) Website: [WWW.SCDisciples.org](http://WWW.SCDisciples.org)**

The Regional Council of South Carolina announces the celebration of the

**12th "South Carolina Regional Conference of the  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)!"**

*(This marks the unity of the 137<sup>th</sup> Annual Regional Assembly and the 145<sup>th</sup> South Carolina State Convention of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in SC!)*

**It will be held Thursday October 2 at 7pm through Sunday worship, October 5, 2014**

**The Theme: "Let God's Love Be Seen!"      The Scriptural Focus Text: 1 John 4:7-16**

**Host Church:              Poplar Hill Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
1621 Poplar Hill Dr.  
Cross, SC 29436-3525 (843) 753-2122  
[deveta.brown1@aol.com](mailto:deveta.brown1@aol.com)

Host Minister: Pastor Deveta Smith Brown

**Come & Enjoy the Celebration! Grow Spiritually! Be Inspired!**

See website for coming details about this & more: [www.scdisciples.org](http://www.scdisciples.org)

Feel free to call or email!" T: 843.852.4537 or TF: 800-637-2718; E: [roccsc@aol.com](mailto:roccsc@aol.com)

#### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in South Carolina.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0917**

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
IN THE SOUTHWEST  
Report to the General Board  
April 11-14, 2015

Contrary to reports concerning its demise, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest is alive and well, and exciting ministries are taking place across New Mexico, Texas, the panhandle of Oklahoma, and one congregation in Liberal, Kansas.

As most of you know, the CCSW has been in a time of transition since January 2014, when Rev. Dani Loving Cartwright concluded her ministry. During that first year, we were all getting our bearings, as we drastically downsized our Regional Staff, going from a high of six Regional staff members and eight Area Ministers in 2004, to five Area Ministers and 1 ¼ Regional staff members in 2014!

Yet, by making decisions that have been challenging, frustrating, and sometimes chaotic, we have made room for the Spirit to move in surprising and powerful new ways. For the first time in several years, we finished the year financially “in the black.” We’re certainly “not there” yet, but the past 15 months have been quite an inspiring ride; when reports from our Areas, committees, affiliated organizations, fellowship groups, and constituency groups are shared around the table at Regional Council meetings, I am always impressed and excited about the variety and uniqueness of ministries occurring in this particular part of the body of Christ known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest.

**New Church**

This past year we were blessed to be able to distribute \$108,000 in New Church grants to six new church starts in the Southwest; each congregation received \$18,000, and all were very grateful for this unexpected gift!

There seem to be new churches popping up all over the Region; some of our newer congregations are the following:

Tree of Life, Magnolia, TX; Galileo, Mansfield, TX; Grace Christian Church, McKinney; Expedition, Frisco, TX; Iglesia Filadelfia, Nacogdoches, TX; Micronesian Gospel Christian Church, Corsicana, TX; At the Cross Christian Church, Dallas, TX; Iglesia Christiana Eben-Ezer, Dallas, TX; Galileo Christian Church, Mansfield, TX; Kayros, Arlington, TX; Chalice Abbey, Amarillo; and in the Coastal Plains Area there are Zeteo, Just Love Christian Church, Disciples in the Wilderness, and Centro Cristiano (Discipulos de Cristo).



From Galileo Christian Church:

Last month we baptized Caroline, whose confession of faith was, "I never thought much about God because I figured God wasn't thinking much about me. But now I am just crazy about Jesus! And I want to follow him everywhere!"

We had 65 witnesses for her baptism on the back porch of the theater where we meet. We bought a used cattle trough from Craig's List and rigged a portable water heater to make the water warm. Thanks be to God!



Kayros Christian Church, Arlington, TX

### **Transforming Congregations**

Two congregations in the Piney Woods of East Texas have each taken a major, and possibly risky, step in seeking to transform their congregations. First Christian Church in Commerce, Texas, was rapidly dying, in every sense of the word; the average age among worshipers was approximately 75, and it was a good day if there were 15 in attendance. As they realized the community around them was increasingly Hispanic, they felt the needed to reach out into the community they had, not what once was. So, they extended a call to a Brite seminary student, Maria Garza, to serve as their pastor. Maria, along with her husband Jose, worked diligently in the community of Commerce as well as the church, and they now have a Hispanic/Anglo worshiping community, with the service done in Spanish and English. The congregation continues to grow with young families and children, and the Garza's have been embraced by the entire community.

Another example is that of Crestview Christian Church in Greenville, Texas, which was also on the verge of dying; this was an all-Caucasian church, in a community which has a high percentage of African-Americans and Hispanics. Years ago this town had a welcome sign which read: "Welcome to Greenville, Texas: The Whitest People with the Blackest Dirt." (thank goodness the sign is no longer standing!) Once again, this congregation took a risk and extended a call to an African-American minister, Rev. Phillip Dukes, in the hopes they would be able to better serve the community in which they find themselves. Again, this church is beginning to grow, and having honest conversations about race and reconciliation!

### **Leadership Development**

Our Regional Committee on Ministry stays very busy, meeting three times annually for a three-day session. Since our last General Board meeting, the RCOM has approved 21 individuals for ordination! They are: *John Frey, Maria*

*Garza, Myron Goins, Deanna Golsan, Christina Haworth, Tom Jones, Dorothy Koone, Karakay Kovaly, Colin McRaney, Jacqueline Morgan, Tiann Smith Morgner, John O'Neal, Evangelina Perez, Youree (Trey) Posey, Rosemary Redmond, Shari Reynolds, Stephen Robinson, Nathan Russell, Heather Santi-Brown, Shari Sims, and Casey Tanguay.*

Additionally, each of our Areas (Bluebonnet, Coastal Plains, North Texas, Northeast, and Mission West) have their own Area Committees on Ministry, which interview, educate, and support all of our commissioned ministers.

Many events for lay education are held around the Region, as well as continuing education events for clergy; the largest clergy event held is Brite Divinity School's Ministers Week, which took place this past February. Several of our Areas are beginning Area Elder/Shepherd programs, and we are grateful for our Indiana colleague, Rev. Rick Spleth, for coming to help train interested clergy.

Our camp and conference programs are strong, and seem to be growing! There are four campgrounds that are owned and/or used by the various Areas: Disciples Crossing, Brownwood, DCCI, Black River, and Ceta Glen. North Texas, Northeast, and Trinity-Brazos Areas do camp programming together, as do the three Areas which now comprise Mission West (Central, Hi-Plains, Tres Rios); currently Bluebonnet and Coastal Plains are in conversation about combining camping programs as well. Each summer, the Christian Youth Leadership Conference is held for one week, and it is rotated among the various campgrounds. We have great adults working with these camping experiences, and outstanding youth leaders; there is hope for the church!

Finally, we held our biennial Regional Assembly October 25-26, 2014, at Cypress Creek Christian Church in Spring, Texas. Guest preachers were Rev. Dr. Katie Hays and Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins; various workshops were offered, as well as youth activities. Live-streaming of the Sunday afternoon business session and worship service were available for those who were unable to attend. Our theme was "For Such A Time as This," since we are in a transitional time. The Assembly was well-attended, and we are looking forward to the next one in 2016, which will be hosted by the North Texas Area.



Ordination of Reverend Nathan Russell, Robert Carr Chapel, Brite Divinity School, May 2014

### **Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism**

This is the mission priority where our Region really needs to spend more time and attention, even though we are intentional when appointing committees, task forces, boards, etc., that there is representation from all of our ethnic constituency groups. The Regional Committee on Ministry hopes to have this training as a requirement for ordination in the very near future; in the meantime, we have representatives from the Southwest Hispanic Convencion and the Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship serving on the Committee. We also hope to have at least one youth camp offered this summer which will focus entirely on pro-reconciliation/anti-racism issues and concerns. We take this priority seriously, and it is one of our growing edges.

Currently, we have representation from the Southwest Hispanic Convencion and the Texas Christian Missionary Fellowship serving on our Regional Council, and our Regional Youth Ministry Committee. However, as we hopefully move into establishing new Asian-American faith communities, we will eventually have NAPAD representation as well.

These are interesting and exciting times in the Southwest Region, and we look forward to what God has in store in the year ahead!

Grace, joy, and peace,

*Coretha*

Rev. Coretha Loughridge

Acting Regional Minister & President, and  
Northeast Area Minister

### **Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest.



**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0918**

Title: Report of the Christian church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee

Origin: Beth Dobyns, Interim Regional Minister

The following report is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Regional Staff: Beth Dobyns (F/C) Interim Regional Minister and President  
Joan Hale (F/C) Bookkeeper, Office Manager  
Vivian Hayes (F/AA) Secretary  
David Johnson (M/C) Bethany Hills Campground Manager  
Thom Schuyler (M/C) Contract Staff for Camp and Conference

Number of Congregations: 66

Total Members: 34, 503 (16,219 participating)

States included in Region: Tennessee, DeSoto County, Mississippi,  
And Crittenden County, Arkansas

The Christian Church in Tennessee has been working through a time of readiness for transition in 2014. After a number of changes in the structure of the Regional church, our commissions are seeking to work effectively and hopefully, with clear focus on the tasks in their charge.

This year saw the retirement of Glen J. Stewart as Regional Minister and President. A well-loved servant of the church, Glen has helped to clarify structure and mission in the region over his twenty-year ministry. In gratitude, the Regional Assembly, held in Chattanooga in October, expressed its gratitude to Glen for his years of service and dedication to the Region.

A unique partnership with the Christian Church in Alabama-North Florida has enabled the continued work of Colleague Groups. Ministers who participate in these groups have been able to focus on a particular topic for the year. Their time together in small cohort settings has allowed in-depth study of several books, excellent sharing of joys and concerns with colleagues, and prayer time in a trusted setting.





New churches continue to develop in Tennessee. Iglesia Cristiana Nuevo Vida in Memphis has become an established congregation, moving from congregation in formation status. A new congregation in formation, The Church of Another Chance, is finding its life within the wall of the Davidson County Jail in Nashville. This church seeks to serve those who are incarcerated, as well as developing ways of helping returning citizens regain life outside the walls again.

The camping and conference program is a lively ministry in the Tennessee region. Camps begin in late May/early June and run through early August. Bethany Hills, the region's campground near Nashville, is the site for meaningful, life-changing experiences for young persons and for those who direct and counsel at each of the camps.

The Tennessee Disciples Women Ministries provide excellent opportunities for worship and fellowship all through the Region for women. In the spring of 2014, events are held in the three areas of our region, providing highlights and ideas for worship, outreach projects, and ways in which Disciples Women can join together to share in common projects and ministries.

The Ministry Commission of this Region continues to support and encourage candidates for ministry in the ordination and commissioned ministry pathways. Thoughtful, engaging interviews encourage the candidates to bring their best as they enter the work of the ministry to which they feel called. Commissions meet in Memphis and Nashville on a regular basis throughout the year. It is a joy for the Region to celebrate ordinations and installations of ministers during this last year.

The Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt University provides a lively setting for the support of ministerial students. About twenty students live at the house, and their shared space allows for thoughtful conversations, supportive environments, and challenges in the preparation for the variety of ministries. Each year, a uniquely-Nashville fund-raiser is held for the Divinity House. Called T4TH, Talent for the House, some of Nashville's star entertainers provide music and entertainment for this enjoyable evening. It is a true gathering of Disciples and alumnae from Western Kentucky and Tennessee.

In October, 2014, Rev. Dr. Beth Dobyns was called to be the interim Regional Minister and President. Beginning January 5, 2015, Beth will be working throughout the Region to help prepare for the calling of the next Regional Minister. A search committee has



been formed and is starting their work, planning to call the new Regional Minister by the end of 2015.

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Tennessee.

**General Board****Business Item #GB-15-0919**

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest  
Report to the General Board  
February 2015



We broke ground on a new Worship Center Building as part of our 2012, "Our Path Together" 5 phase plan. This building is on schedule to be completed by May 1, 2015. This building is part 2 of the 5 phases and will help greatly towards a plan to accomplish our ministry goal to not only help our Conference Center break-even but will lead to financial funds to contribute to other ministries throughout the region and whole church.

committed to \$210 for a full week of clear throughout our have emphasized to all buildings is to ensure our camping ministry. nearly 1000 campers summer. 104 of our campers and we continue to honor our commitment that every youth gets to go to camp.



For the last 12 years we have maintaining our camp price at camp. We also have made it "Our Path Together" journey that our reason for building the that we can always underwrite We are excited to report that attended camp this past 150 congregations sent

As we build new buildings at our Conference Center it has resulted in a 40% increase in bookings beyond our camping program. We anticipate and are tracking a trend to another large increase in bookings for this coming year which will allow us to move closer to our ministry/financial goals for the whole region.



The energy and passion around the "Our Path Together" grew beyond buildings as 35 churches partnered with the Region to adopt the mission of sending Rev. Anne Gregory as a missionary to Thailand. This was an above and beyond mission of the churches.

In the midst of money given to both build buildings and send a missionary to Thailand our churches maintained DMF at the same level as 2013. This is the first time in 2 decades or longer that our DMF did not decline by 4 to 5 percent. One year does not make a trend but we are humbled and overwhelmed by what seems to happen when Disciples are encouraged give toward ministries in which they a deep passion and purpose to support.

We continue to give encouragement grants to congregations to seek out new ways of being church in their communities. These grants have resulted in 30 new ministries throughout and together with other Disciple Churches. Between the grants and many other opportunities to

physically participate together in ministry our congregations seem to be growing in the understanding that we as Disciples are both local congregation and a “Movement for Wholeness” as Disciples of Christ.

Respectively submitted by

Bill Spangler-Dunning  
Regional Minister and President  
for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Upper Midwest.

**General Board****Business Item# GB-15-0920**
**Report of the Virginia Christian Missionary Society,  
dba/ The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Virginia**
**Regional Staff:**

|                 |                                                              |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alisha Bennett  | Craig Springs Camp and Conference Center Manager – part time |
| Ken Burger      | Executive Director, the Summit – adjunct staff               |
| Melinda Floyd   | Financial Assistant – part time                              |
| Sue Gordon      | Office Assistant – ¾ time                                    |
| Ray Gryder      | Director of Disciple Men's Ministry – contract staff         |
| Amy Moore       | Editor of the <i>Virginia Christian</i> – contract staff     |
|                 | Regional Assembly Coordinator - contract                     |
| Bill Moore      | Director of Commissioned Ministry - contract staff           |
| Lee Parker      | Regional Minister – full time                                |
| Rita Rodenbaugh | Administrative Assistant - full time                         |
| Donna Webster   | Director of Disciple Women's Ministries – contract staff     |

**NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS:** 155

**TOTAL MEMBERS:** 17,323

The financial picture shows little change except to prove that declining revenue and an inflation rate of over 27% the last ten years continue to create hardship inside congregations and communities. South Central Virginia has been hit particularly hard with almost all of the major textile and furniture mills moving overseas. The thriving economy there has been lost and not replaced. In spite of this there is a sense that the call to announce Good News is still the proclamation to the church and the churches are continuing to hear and respond.

A number of congregations have had to go from full-time to part-time ministry. Only one congregation has increased the number of staff. We are at times feeling off balance but the general feeling seems optimistic.

2014 will end in the red with over a deficit of over \$22,000..

Currently a new church start in the Fredericksburg area is being explored. A pastor is undergoing church planter training.

There are seven congregations undergoing intentional transformational efforts.

Submitted by George Lee Parker, Regional Minister and CEO

**Recommended Action:**

The General Board receives the report from the Virginia Christian Missionary Society dba the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Virginia.

## General Board

## Business Item #GB-15-0915 &amp; #GB-15-0921

Combined Report  
to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
in the United States and Canada



The Christian Church in West Virginia  
and  
The Christian Church in Pennsylvania  
Spring 2015

[www.wvdisciples.org](http://www.wvdisciples.org)



[www.padisciples.org](http://www.padisciples.org)

Prepared by: The Reverend Thaddaeus B. Allen, Regional Minister and President

The Church has a liturgical life that is set to the seasons of our Lord's birth, life, death and resurrection. The rhythm of the year also speaks consistently to us that the Holy Spirit is present and with us still. If we are observant, we might also catch glimpses of other seasons that God gives God's own. The regional church made known in West Virginia and Pennsylvania finds itself in an intense season of collaboration, or as Disciples have long promoted "Cooperation". These are exciting times for us to consider the ministry to which we have been called.

Many of the generative ideas and ethos that are "Disciple" came to us from the areas of Washington, Pennsylvania and then Bethany, Virginia. Much was being done together as the church grew and members built lives marked by faithfulness and courageous action for the Savior. In these regions, Disciples were planting roots and extending the mission of the church "from doorsteps to the ends of the earth." Idealism and pragmatism came together, and cooperation for the sake of the gospel was the practice of the early Disciples.

In this holy season of the church's life, idealism, pragmatism and holy cooperation are being employed in new and exciting ways within the bounds and bonds of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in West Virginia – with its 40 congregations and small college of national distinction - and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Pennsylvania – with 59 congregations counted. Collaboration and ministry together may be laying out some new ideas that will bless us. New and renewed partnerships are being celebrated for the sake of the gospel. A few of these, from the historic regions, are below for your edification.

- "Two Regions - One Staff" is a plan that has the regions sharing staffs across regional lines. Together we serve and are seeking excellence, transparency, and timely response to those whom we serve. Cooperation, idealism and pragmatism are being shared.



- Buffalo Seminary continues to grow as our continuing education arm for training church leaders. Through a grant from the Oreon E. Scott Foundation and through strategic partnerships across the church, good things are happening. We are excited that the General Assembly Learning tracks will be certified with CEU's by Buffalo Seminary at Bethany College this summer.
- Our Gift of Years Project ([www.giftofyears.org](http://www.giftofyears.org)) continues to bless our Seniors and world. Because of the National Benevolent Association and our partnership great ministry is happening. This WV project is slated to move into PA in the coming weeks.
- We rejoice in the coming of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society to these hills. We believe that we are uniquely poised to serve this ministry and to host the Society in the village of Bethany and around the bend from Washington. We trust that more generative ideas will spring forth from the rich history that is of us.
- The Christian Church in Pennsylvania is taking a bold step in adopting for the first time in years the General Board's recommended Disciples Mission Fund allocation. This is a sign of trust in God's abundance and a sign of devotion for the church as it extends the gospel around the world.

These are just a few of the things happening in this season. Caring for clergy and congregations is still bread and butter work for the regions. Being the body and facilitating gospel work is still part and parcel of what we do. Teaching the faith, gathering as a regional expression, and working through good and difficult times is important and holy work in regional church life. We do this work on behalf of the church, in cooperation with the General Church, and with our congregations, for we are one. We give thanks for devoted staffs that are functioning as one for this year, and rejoice in the new things that God is about in these two historic regions.







**“2015 General Board Business Docket”**

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