



# Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

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Dear Disciples,

In July 2009, the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) made the difficult decision to relocate its 21st Biennial Session in 2010 from Charleston, South Carolina, as a witness against South Carolina's flying of the confederate flag on the grounds of the state capital. In taking that action, the National Convocation joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)'s boycott of tourism in South Carolina.

The decision of the National Convocation's leadership did not come easily. There were several factors to weigh, but in the end the decision was to be as clear as possible: a symbol so associated with division and human brokenness must not stand unnoticed by a church that seeks to be a movement for wholeness within the church and in society.

A recent statement by our church's Reconciliation Commission expressed support for the Convocation's decision, along with its deep appreciation of the Convocation churches (as well as all Disciples churches in South Carolina) that have worked to create a new reality in that state and in our church -- a reality where the dignity of all of God's children is held in highest value.

In addition, Robert Welsh, President of the Council on Christian Unity, Amy Gopp, Week of Compassion Minister, April Johnson, Reconciliation Minister, and I, meeting together as CURAJ (Compassion, Reconciliation and Justice) join together in expressing support of the decision by the Board of the National Convocation to relocate its 2010 meeting from South Carolina in witness to our solidarity with the racially marginalized communities in our society and our world.

In so-doing we lift up our whole church's commitment to racial justice and reconciliation, and call upon all Disciples to take advantage of this moment as an educational opportunity to understand this issue with greater clarity and to explore the Christian call to justice as a major component of our mission and ministry. Please pray for reconciliation, and engage in small group study or fellowship opportunities within your communities of faith that promote ministries of welcome and healing within our Church and indeed, the whole family of God.

As we move toward a summer that will include not only the National Convocation's Biennial Session, but also the National Hispanic Assembly and the North American Pacific Asian Disciples Convocation, it is our hope that these occasions will provide an opportunity for all Disciples to join together to bear witness to our commitment to create "a movement for wholeness" in the face of a very concrete example of the divisions that the sin of racism imposes on us all.

In Christ's name,

Sharon E. Watkins  
General Minister and President