

No. 0901
General Assembly
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Including the Office of the
General Minister and President

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1. What is the state of the mission you are charged with in relation to the mission of the whole church?

The Office of General Minister and President “leads, serves, inspires, nurtures and facilitates the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as one church in many expressions.” (OGMP mission statement) Led by the General Minister and President, the OGMP exercises pastoral leadership by casting vision, nurturing that vision and holding the church accountable to that vision.” (Business Docket, General Assembly 2001, p. 134.) The OGMP provides leadership and staffing in areas related to church governance, funding common mission, communication, and covenantal responsibilities across the three expressions of Disciples.

Vision casting in the past biennium has been related primarily to interpreting the statement of Disciples identity, proposed by the 21st Century Vision Team (under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale) and adopted by the General Board in 2008: **“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.”** In this statement, “wholeness” is understood as God’s “shalom”. It draws upon Disciples’ historic passion for Christian Unity and our biblical commitment to live already as though the Reign of God is truly among us. It links our long-standing unity traditions with our current mission priority to become a pro-reconciliation/ anti-racism church. The theme of the **2009 General Assembly**, “For the Healing of the Nations,” grows out of our understanding of “wholeness” as our enduring commitment to embody unity for the sake of mission “from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.” The OGMP work to plan and implement the General Assembly has been led by Assistant Vice President for Operations, Sharon Coleman, and General Assembly program Coordinator, Patricia R. Case.

The OGMP has worked to further the mission of the whole church through the **Mission Alignment** process called for by the General Board in 2008. Mission Alignment grew out of calls from congregations for the larger church to be more transparent and effective in its organization for mission. The process, led by the Mission Alignment Coordinating Council (MACC), (chaired by Moderator Newell Williams) involved six months of listening to general and regional executives and board members as well as to congregational and Racial/Ethnic community voices. The process led to nine proposals for General Board action. Each proposal opens the door to broader dialogue in order to meet the desired outcomes of Mission Alignment: greater clarity about the General Board’s responsibility for mission (related to the various ministry boards), living with integrity as church in a context of growing Racial/Ethnic diversity, better organizing our General Church life in order to fulfill our imperative to strengthen congregational life for mission.

Governance – The General Board entered the 21st Century in terms of technology for meetings, thanks to a grant from Joe and Nancy Stalcup. With the purchase of laptop computers, digital projectors and screens, and with wireless internet availability throughout the meeting area, the 2008 General Board meeting was conducted with less than one ream of paper. The “social technology” of World Café style intentional conversation, enabled the GB to engage in the planning that led to the call for Mission Alignment. The General Assembly’s anticipated

experience of the “Wholeness Café” is designed to make it possible for thousands of Disciples to engage in meaningful dialogue about God’s direction for our church in the days ahead.

The “new” smaller General Board (a result of changes to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) voted by the Portland General Assembly in 2005) will continue to adapt in the coming biennium thanks to the hard work over the last sixteen months of the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform, chaired by the Rev. Barbara Jones, with staff leadership from the Rev. Dr. Todd Adams.

The Administrative Committee, now only twenty members, has already begun to function differently. Great thanks go not only to the fine moderator team of Dr. D. Newell Williams, the Rev. Ayanna Johnson, and Mr. Robert Alvarez, but also to committee chairpersons: Ms. Robyn Miller, Policy, Planning and Personnel; the Rev. Dr. Judy Allen, Finance; the Rev. Dr. Teresa Dulyea-Parker, Committee on Counsel and Mediation.

Treasury Services – Associate General Minister and Vice President Adams, led the 2009 completion of the merger and integration of the Treasury Services functions from Church Finance Council into the OGMP. The integration included evaluating and contracting for new accounting software, bridging the accounting software and the Contribution Tracking System, and building a new banking relationship with 5/3 Bank, including the integration of electronic processing of contributions. Treasury Services rewrote the Internal Controls documents to be in compliance with the new accounting standards. This project was completed in consultation with our auditors. John Goebel, Sr. Accountant was the primary staff person leading the integration of the new accounting software and the orientation of new team members to the system.

As a result of the merger, OGMP Treasury Services has been able to process Disciples Mission Fund (DMF) disbursements in record time, turning over funds to intended recipients earlier than ever before. New software, increased skill level of the staff, and the integrated deposit process with 5/3 Bank has decreased the payables and receivables staff from an average of 105 hours per week to an average of 68 hours per week. The reduction in staff costs has allowed Treasury Services to reduce or eliminate fees charged to other departments in conjunction with accounting and/or auditing services, made funds available for the promotion of DMF, and added resources for the Stewardship position that is being developed within the OGMP.

Promotion – Our promotion staff has been hard at work focusing on four key areas of promotion and interpretation: Top 250 giving congregations in actual dollars; Top percentage giving congregations as a percent of their reported operating budget; Racial/Ethnic Communities; and Disciples Women.

In reaching out to the Top 250 giving congregations, the contributions in most cases have stabilized (after years of decline) or increased. Many of these congregations have the capacity to increase the giving and all have been grateful for the intentional effort to recognize the level of their financial support for the whole church.

Arlene Pimentel, Director of Disciples Mission Fund, has been working faithfully with the leaders of Racial/Ethnic ministries to create information, share resources and provide culturally and linguistically relevant materials for congregations of color. This continues to be a growing area for interpretation due to cultural and language differences. Even though we are growing the number of racial/ethnic congregations, the total dollars given by Disciples communities of color continues to decline each year, making this all the more important.

In 2009, 129 Congregations were recognized for giving 10% or more of their operating budget to Disciples Mission Fund. There were three categories of recognition: the Centennial Society for congregations giving between 10-14%, the C.O. Hawley Society for congregations giving between 15-19%, and the Spencer Austin Society for congregations giving greater than 20%.

Our fourth area of focus has been working with Disciples Women to tell the Disciples Mission Fund story. Disciple Women's groups from around the denomination are approximately 10% of

total gifts to Disciples Mission Fund. We are currently working with the Office of Disciples' Women Staff and International Disciples Women's Executive Council to develop a training and educational component related to Disciples Mission Fund and Quadrennial 2010.

In 2009, we added a video message to the special offering materials, shifted to a new printing and distribution vendor, and reclaimed responsibility for managing the database of materials. We are currently reaching 46% more congregations with Special Offering materials, using brighter colors, full color production and the DVD, as added features.

Ministry of Presence – GMP Sharon Watkins has nearly reached the goal of being in every region for a major gathering. The summer of 2008 was rich in assemblies: Hispanic Assembly, Sessions, International Christian Youth Fellowship, National Convocation, World Convention, North American Pacific/Asian Disciples, all of which she attended.

A GMP priority is to be present with our global partners in witness to our mission to share the good news to the ends of the earth – as well as to fulfill our calling to be critical presence in the places of greatest need. In May 2008, Dr. Watkins participated in the Indiana Region's visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was a joy to rediscover the continued strength of our partner church, the Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo.

The ministry of presence has also been fulfilled through the good work of AGMVP Todd Adams, and DMF Director, Arlene Pimentel, as they interpret our mission through Disciples Mission Fund by being present in or arranging for General Ministry presence in congregations with strong patterns of mission stewardship.

Dr. Watkins continues regular meetings with the Council of General Ministries and College of Regional Ministers and the General Commission on Ministry. She and Dr. Adams and the Rev. Dr. Timothy James attend a number of General Ministry boards in an effort to build communication and accountability among the various ministries of the church.

2. As appropriate, please comment on your work in regard to the four mission priorities of New Church, Transformation, Leadership Development and Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism and the mission imperative of strengthening congregational life for our mission.

One of the most important ways the OGMP supports the four priorities (1000 new congregations established by the year 2020, 1000 congregations transformed for mission by 2020, the development of leaders to serve the new and renewed congregations, and becoming a pro-reconciliation/anti-racism church) is by convening tables for dialogue and encouraging collaboration among ministries. Interpretation of the “movement for wholeness” identity statement frames the four priorities as a fulfillment of our core passion for unity and mission. Our new church movement has been blessed with a harvest of more than six hundred new congregations. Together they represent the diversity of the US and Canadian 21st century reality. These new Disciples give our church the opportunity to learn how to function as truly one, though very diverse. OGMP work on Mission Alignment is also intended to bolster progress toward accomplishing the priorities by identifying factors that are most helpful in moving us forward toward their accomplishment.

The OGMP staff, in support of the pro-reconciliation/anti-racism priority of the Church and in recognition of our new staff configuration has called together a new Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Team with Sharon Coleman as team leader. The entire staff attended the Two and a Half Day Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Training, Phase Two, on April 21-23, 2008.

Ecumenical Involvements – According to The Design, part of the role of the GMP is to “serve as the primary ecumenical representative for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).” It is in that role that Dr. Watkins serves on the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches and the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Active involvement by the heads of communion in the NCC is particularly important as the new General Secretary, Dr. Michael Kinnamon, shapes the next chapter in NCC life. With respect to the WCC, Dr. Watkins also

serves on the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration, which gives particular attention to the relationship with the Orthodox communions in the WCC.

3. Committees, Councils, Task Forces

Council of Compassion, Unity, Reconciliation and Justice (formerly CURAJ) – Comprised of representatives from the Council on Christian Unity, Reconciliation Ministry, Week of Compassion and the Office of General Minister and President, CURAJ is an on-going conversation exploring new relationships and insights for unity and wholeness that might emerge from sharing our particular ministries’ witness to compassion, reconciliation and justice in the world.

21st Century Vision Team – The 21st Century Vision Team celebrated a successful first GMP Pastors’ Conference with over 300 in attendance. Evaluations indicated that the networking among pastors from across the US and Canada, the speakers, the chance to hear directly from the General minister and President, all made it a worthwhile event that should be repeated. As the team winds up its work, a last project will be outline an identity campaign with particular emphasis on the phrase “a movement for wholeness” as a tag line for Disciples.

Task Force on Undergraduate Education – At the request of the college presidents and the board of Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, the GMP called a task force into being to review the 30 year covenant among Disciples undergraduate institutions and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

4. Other Reports

Included herewith are reports of the following offices related to the Office of General Minister and President: Communications Ministries, Treasury Services. Various committees, commissions and organizations which report to the General Assembly through the Office of General Minister and President are also included: Christian Church Services, Inc.; General Commission on Ministry; Reconciliation Mission; Week of Compassion; World Convention of Churches of Christ.

Four organizations with recognized relationships with the general manifestation of the church submit their reports to the General Board through the Office of the General Minister and President. These are: European Evangelistic Society; National City Christian Church Corporation; The United Christian Missionary Society and College of Regional Ministers.

Although *The Design* does not require a report from the College of Regional Ministers, the General Minister and President is a member of the College and requested an overview of some of the activities of our regions.

Minutes of the General Board and the Administrative Committee of the General Board appear with this report.

Auditors' Certificates

All financial reports have been audited by Certified Public Accountants. Auditors' certificates and notations are printed for the fiduciary corporations. Audits for the other units and organizations are on file with the Office of the General Minister and President and are available for inspection by members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The General Board reviewed report No. 0901 of the General Assembly
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Including the Office of the General Minister and President.
The report is submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and discussion.
No action is required. (Discussion time is 12 minutes)
