

**Title: CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION GENERAL BOARD REPORT APRIL 12-15 2008****Origin:****1. HOW HAS THE PSWR FULFILLED THE REGION'S PRIMARY PURPOSE AS STATED IN PARAGRAPH 20 OF *THE DESIGN*.**

**MISSION:** 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. Recently we have connected our Hispanic congregations to this important mission program as well as restructured their board for greater partnership and effective service. A newly added unit to our Region has been Project IMPACT. In order to meet the ever increasing needs of the community, Project IMPACT offers a comprehensive Juvenile Diversion program providing "at-risk" youth positive alternatives to drugs, gangs and other elements that destroy young lives. Project IMPACT is partnering with many of our congregations as a part of a comprehensive plan for transformation and mission-directed ministry. We have also recently established a Global Mission Committee to begin re-connecting our congregations with the wide mission work of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

**ANTI-RACISM:** Our Regions Leadership Apprentice Program is an intentional leadership training for the lay women within our ethnic constituency groups.

**NEW CHURCH:** Thirteen new congregations have been brought under care in the Pacific Southwest Region since 2007 (we now have 50 congregations under care). Our newest additions are: Primera Iglesia de Barstow in Barstow, Inspiration Christian Church in Chino, Iglesia Encuentro Con Dios in Fontana, Hollywood Bethany Christian Church in Hollywood, Hawaii Christian Glory Church (Korean) in Honolulu, Jesus Village Church (Korean) in Las Vegas, Iglesia Seguidores de Cristo in Los Angeles, Iglesia Cristiana Altar de Restauracion in Newhall, Centro Cristiano Libertad in Las Vegas, Silver Lakes Christian Church (Korean) in Helendale, Iglesia del Valle in Van Nuys, Primera Iglesia Cristiana in Ventura, Primera Iglesia Cristiana de North Hollywood in North Hollywood.

**TRANSFORMATION:** In 2006 our Region formed a Transformation Committee to begin addressing the needs of our established churches as they sought to be relevant for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We developed an assessment tool and plan to help congregations evaluate their current situation and then help them identify future directions. Seven congregations were a part of this pilot program: Downey Memorial CC, Covina CC, Delhaven CC, La Crecenta CC, Wilshire CC, Riverside Arlington CC, Foothill CC and Honolulu CC. Wilshire Christian Church is currently working with a consulting service and doing a feasibility study for possibly securing a developer who will build high rise apartments while creating underground parking and meeting spaces for church use. We also have developed 3 revitalization projects in PSWR: First Christian Church of Lompoc with interim minister Bob Cornwall (3 year transitional contract) with a written agreement with the region; First Christian Church in Oceanside with an intentional 3 year covenant partnering with Mission Gathering (age 18-35), attendance doubled in 2 month's; and Sunset Park in Santa Monica when they wanted to close doors and give title to the Region. Regional staff and members of our Transformation Committee attended the Conference of Congregational Transformation sponsored by *DHM* and held in Arlington, Texas in January 2006. In November 2007 Rick Morse from *Church Extensions* met with our Regions Transformation Committee to present an overview of the New Beginnings program and propose our participation in the program. In March 2008 we held two New Beginnings events with Rick Morse. We had 22 churches attend and at least 10 plan to participate in the program.

## **2. HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES OF MINISTRY IN THE PSWR**

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Loch Leven, our Regional camp and conference center, in September 2007 celebrated 50 years of ministry with a gathering of past participants, pastors, leaders, campers, counselors, and members of churches; they also for the first time in many years finished 2007 in the black! We have formed a new Regional Young Adults Ministry to address the needs of that age group. A Region wide farewell celebration was held in August 2007 for Don and Linda Shelton highlighting Don's 12 years as Regional Minister for the PSWR. We held a one day Regional Gathering in October 2007 where our new Co-Regional Ministers, Don Dewey and Susan Gonzales Dewey, were installed with General Minister and President Sharon Watkins presiding. *Christian Church Foundation* President Gary Kidwell (along with Vice Presidents Don Sarton and Jim Cullumber) led a two day event on "A Pastoral Approach to Understanding Wealth" in October 2007. *Week of Compassion* provided support for pastors and congregations devastated by the San Diego fires in October 2007.

**CHALLENGES:** We spent the last year and half recovering from the tragic death of our Camp Manager, Brad Carter (along with his daughter Lindsey) who were killed in a fatal car crash. It has taken us a while to secure the management position and restore to full function the operations of the camp. This year has also been a significant year of transition for our Region. In August 2007, Don Shelton concluded his two terms as our Regional Minister after twelve years of service, which meant that this past year our Region has been in the midst of the search process for new Regional Ministerial leadership. Along with the blessing of 13 new congregations coming under care is also the added responsibility for supporting, nurturing, and embracing these newly forming and affiliating congregations into the life of the Region and Disciples of Christ family. In addition to the challenges already noted there have been the usual time devoted to the search and call process, dealing with places of conflict, and ministerial misconduct all of which have had the added stress and challenge because of Regional Minister and staff changes.

## **3. GOALS OF THE PSWR WITH REGARD TO THE PRIORITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** In January 2008 we held our first Regional Board Retreat with three goals: To develop stronger relationships through fellowship, deepen our experiences through shared faith practices, and enliven our future through shared plans, dreams and visions. We are in the process of developing a new ministry with young adult women for leadership development and training. Also, to meet the growing needs of our Region we are in the process of restructuring our Committee on Ministry Committee into four key areas: We are also beginning a restructuring of our New Church Development Committee to better receive, guide, grow and establish our newly forming and affiliating congregations. We are also developing a Stewardship Development Committee which will include grant writers, fund raisers, and leaders in development and stewardship.

**ANTI-RACISM:** On March 30 through April 1 2008 we will be hosting a Pastor's retreat with an intentional focus on including our ethnic constituency pastors. Representing from each constituency group has been a part of the leadership and will present worship, fellowship, and faith experiences. In part through a Reconciliation grant we are developing a Stewards Program for high school girls with an intentional focus on those within our ethnic constituency groups.

**TRANSFORMATION:** We are initiating the New Beginnings program with as many of our established congregations as possible. To do this the Region is helping underwrite the cost for participating in this program. Our Region will also be the first of five cluster groups to host the second Conference on Congregational Transformation sponsored by *DHM* in September 2008.

**MISSION:** With the establishment of a Global Missions Committee we will be taking steps to become a Global Mission Region. We anticipate having a common Global Mission project for all our churches to participate in by our October 2008 Regional Assembly. In partnership with *DHM* and *Week of Compassion* our Disciples Women and Region are hosting a mission opportunity as a pre-event experience for the 2008 ICYF gathering at Chapman University in July. We are expecting 400 to 600 high school youth from around the country to participate in hands-on mission experiences at 15 different missions sites around the Region.

