

**COMMUNICATION MINISTRIES**

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1. Knowing that the current priorities of the church are to start new congregations, transform existing congregations for mission, nurture leadership for these new and renewed congregations, and becoming an anti-racism/pro-reconciling church, what is the role of your ministry in fulfilling any of these priorities?

Communication Ministries (CM) continues to help the Church use communications as a means of disseminating news and information about church priorities. As a division of the Office of General Minister and President, Communication Ministries works closely with the General Minister and President to articulate the Church's vision and mission to all expressions of the Church. In addition, Communication Ministries identifies examples of renewal, transformation, leadership development and reconciliation that are being lived out by Disciples and uses various forms of media to highlight work that is taking place in these areas.

Communication Ministries focused much of its work in 2007 on General Assembly promotion. CM staff wrote numerous press releases and news briefs for the Assembly, produced brochures and worked with the local host area to highlight the event. As part of General Assembly promotions, CM strengthened the media capabilities of the Assembly website, allowing for more streaming media, news feeds and a discussion board.

At the end of 2007, Communication Ministries' three-person staff formally merged with the Office of General Minister and President. The change also included physically moving the CM office from the first to the 10<sup>th</sup> floor, a move that allows CM to work even closer with the Office of General and President to assist the larger church in meeting its current priorities.

2. In what ways are you partnering with other expressions of the Church and with other general ministries?

Communication Ministries accepts news and information from all expressions of the Church. Disciples News Service (DNS) is our primary means of disseminating news about the congregations, regions and general ministries. In 2007, DNS was distributed via e-mail to approximately 4500 people each week, and experienced an increase in overall subscribers to this e-mail service.

DNS will be offered as a blog-based distribution service later in 2008, which means it will contain a feature allowing readers to comment or discuss items they read in the news as well as RSS news feeds.

Communication Ministries also assisted several general ministries in redesigning and updating their web sites, and provided some website consultation to congregations. The CM staff also continued to host an on-line web discussion forum for a community of 250 Disciples, who utilize the forum to exchange ideas, create sites, or find more innovative ways to maintain their current one.

3. How have you been involved in congregations to fulfill their mission and ministry?

Communication Ministries welcomes information that congregations, regions, general ministries or colleges and universities send that showcases ways each group is addressing the four priorities of the Church. Communication Ministries uses this information in its e-mail news distribution service, Disciples News Service, and on the Disciples website.

CM also is examining ways to utilize social networking technologies, such as MySpace, Facebook and YouTube in Church communications, in an attempt to better connect Disciples and our partners around the globe.

In addition, CM continues to distribute a basic brochure, "Discover the Disciples," in both English and Spanish, to all congregations that request this information for use in their ministry.

4. What barriers do you experience in carrying out your ministry?

Communication Ministries consists of three people who are part of the Office of General Minister and President. Given staff resources, there has been an attempt to streamline the work of the staff to better focus its offerings. For 2008, the Executive Director's work is working more closely with the General Minister and President to assist in spreading her vision for the Church, as well as providing news and information to regions, congregations and general ministries that help connect everyone to the Church's vision and mission. The webmaster continues to design and manage various websites for the Church, most specifically the Disciples.org site. The Executive Assistant/project coordinator assists both CM and the Office of General Minister and President in providing resources and information.

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