

**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision Team – The 21<sup>st</sup> 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).

## **Christian Church Services, Inc.**

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Christian Church Services, Inc. (CCS) is a subsidiary corporation of the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and exists to provide building and special services to the General Ministries who are tenants in the Disciple Center in Indianapolis. A Board of Directors, composed of eight General Ministry presidents, manages Christian Church Services, Inc.

The staff provides common services including telephone and voice mail oversight, central mail services, common property insurance, workers' compensation processing and conference room scheduling. They also serve as the liaison between the 200 employees of the Disciple Center and the building owner, Perennial Washington, LLC, to coordinate such services as building maintenance and cleaning. The staff of CCS is composed of the Executive Director and a part-time bookkeeper to carry out financial and administrative tasks, two central mailroom personnel and a receptionist in the main lobby of Disciples Center.

It is the goal of the staff of Christian Church Services, Inc. to provide a work environment for the General Ministries conducive to affirming and sustaining the mission, imperative and vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

## Report of the College of Regional Ministers

By Ruth Fletcher, President

In 2000, the General Board of the Christian Church, (Disciples of Christ) adopted an Imperative that calls on the church to strengthen congregational life for our mission (Ephesians 4:11-13, 15-16) In January, 2009, the College of Regional Ministers devoted two days to a consultation in which we considered that imperative and its implication for our ministry. We invited several guests to make presentations that framed our dialogue:

Rick Spleth, Indiana Region

Rick Morse, Church Extension

Dennis Landon, Higher Education

Timothy James, National Convocation

Geunhee Yu, North American/Pacific Asian Ministries

Huberto Pimentel, Hispanic Ministries

April Johnson, Reconciliation Ministries

David Vargas, Overseas Ministries

These guests along with Jim Powell of Church Extension, Ron Degges of Homeland Ministries and Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President participated in the consultation process.

Where congregational pastors may have a depth of knowledge about the life and ministry of one particular congregation, Regional Ministers and others who work with congregations through the General Church have a breadth of knowledge about congregational vitality and mission.

Rick Spleth, Regional Minister in Indiana, started us off with a keynote entitled: "Is Our Imperative Really Imperative?" He noted that, although an "imperative" has to do with something absolutely necessary and obligatory that is not to be avoided, it has been rather easy for Regions to ignore our denomination's imperative to Strengthen Congregational Life for Mission: It has not been lifted up as a priority of the church; we have not been held accountable for implementing it; it is a General Board directive, not a directive of our individual Regional Boards. Yet, he went on to talk about why the Imperative is an appropriate focus for Regional Ministry:

*If all our congregations were to close and there were endowment funds left to sustain our ministries, I have no doubt we could figure out something to do to stay busy, but we would not then be doing what has historically been, formally and informally, our essential task.*

Next, Rick Morse, Vice President for New Church Ministry and Mission Initiatives with Church Extension offered a statistical analysis of Yearbook data in order to paint a picture of the current state of congregational life among the Disciples. It should be noted that these statistics only show certain aspects of congregational life and do not measure the ways in which congregations and pastors are empowering people to grow spiritually.

Here are the percentages of Disciples churches that fall within various sizes of congregations:

Family	1-60	47%
Pastoral	61-120	32%
Program	121-200	14%
Corporate	Over 200	7%

79% of Disciples churches are in the Family or Pastoral Size Categories.

About 50% of all Disciples congregations are located in small towns or rural areas; nearly 80% of the U.S. population lives in suburban areas or cities.

In the 1950s Disciples planted 180 new congregations. Today only 8 of those are sustainable.

Overall, our Disciples congregations are getting smaller.

63% of Disciples congregations are in numerical decline. 33% are growing. 4% are staying the same.

In 1930, an average worship attendance of 30 people could sustain a full time pastor, keep up a building and provide funds for church programming and mission outreach. Today, a congregation needs an average worship attendance of 100 to sustain that kind of ministry. That means 50-79% of Disciples congregations struggle with sustainability and the number is growing.

Vital congregations tend to budget about

50% for salaries

25% for facilities

15% for program

10% for mission

Congregations who are in the last quarter of their life cycle tend to budget

65-70% for salaries

30-40% for facilities

1% for program

3% for mission

In 1988, 52% of Disciples congregations exceeded a tithe to Disciples Mission causes. In 2007, only 12% exceed a tithe to Disciples Mission causes. This decrease cannot be attributed to people giving less

because individuals actually are giving more now than they were 20 years ago (adjusted for inflation). Disciples outreach is receiving less from congregations because churches are spending more on salaries and building upkeep.

In 1988, Disciples on average gave 13% for local causes and 10% for Disciples related mission. Now congregations give an average of 9% for local causes and 5% for Disciples related mission.

Over the last twenty years, overall mission giving to all sources has decreased by 4%, giving to local mission has decreased by 33% and giving to Disciples mission is down 52% (adjusted for inflation).

The decrease in mission giving has drastically reduced the number of ministers employed by General Units and the number of missionaries we are able to send out. Several regional staffs have also downsized.

Disciples do not lack for buildings or monetary assets, but many of our buildings are not in growing areas, and many congregations are maintaining facilities that are much too large for their needs.

50-75 DOC congregations are removed from the Yearbook each year by withdrawal, removal, merger or closure.

The planting of new churches has allowed us to increase our total number of Disciples congregations over the last six years.

### Leadership

In the afternoon, we focused our attention on leadership issues related to the imperative. Dennis Landon talked about the characteristics leaders need for today's church:

An evangelical sensibility that believes the gospel can change lives

Emotional health that allows them to be resilient in the face of conflict

Knowledge about how to lead an organization through change

A willingness to sacrifice in order to be a servant leader

David Vargas focused on the need for leaders to be mission driven, shaped by a global perspective.

### Racial/Ethnic Congregations

A panel moderated by April Johnson offered insight into congregations of African American Disciples, Hispanic Disciples and Asian Disciples. Timothy James noted that the Convocation churches have experience with hard times and might be able to offer some insight to the rest of the church about how to get through the current economic crisis. Huberto Pimentel noted that Hispanic churches noisily celebrate the gift of empowerment that was given at Pentecost in their worship and that "Pentecostal" identity is

important to them. He also observed that growth in the number of Hispanic congregations and the effect of immigration policies are presenting challenges to their leadership. Geunhee Yu lifted up the fact that there are now over 100 NAPAD congregations. He noted that sharing facilities with Anglo congregations can prove to be problematic sometimes for Asian congregations. All three panelists challenged Regional Ministers to keep developing relationships with racial/ethnic congregations in their Regions. Regional Ministers reiterated the urgent need for a new "Policies and Procedures for the Order of Ministry" that will allow for more flexibility about how ministers can be trained for service.

Break-out sessions followed the panel discussion. Those sessions focused on the areas of ministry with young adults, ministry with Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Christians and further discussion about particular leadership issues related to racial/ethnic congregations.

### Transforming Churches

In order to strengthen congregations for mission, it is important to envision what a strong congregation should look like. When asked, "What would characterize a congregation that was being and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ?" Regional Ministers offered these responses:

It would be passionate about following Christ.

Participants would regularly engage in the practice of prayer.

It would have in place a process for discipling newcomers in the faith.

It would reach out to serve instead of focusing on its own needs and interests.

It would offer radical hospitality.

It would allow itself to be shaped by the Alternative Reality of God set forth in scripture.

It would offer joyous, authentic worship with communion at the heart.

It would see itself as a people on a journey—moving like a river.

It would seek to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

It would provide systems of care for those in pain.

It would reach out in mission to "the least of these."

It would celebrate and give God glory.

It would provide opportunities for true community to develop.

When considering what blocks churches from living into this vision, those present for the consultation named these factors as the primary hindrances to growth and vitality:

A maintenance attitude (rather than a mission focus)

Lack of knowledge, resources and vision that could move them forward

Leadership that keeps a stronghold on the church, vetoing any change

Fear of the future and lack of faith in God

Buildings that suck money and time

Many regions have been involved in congregational transformation efforts over the last seven years. Here is a compilation of best practices that we agree lead to the creation of strong, vital congregations:

The conversation about transformation often must be initiated by an outside source.

The congregation must be able to develop a common understanding of its current reality (conditions). Tools are needed in order to assess the situation with some objectivity and to develop the motivation for change.

The transformation process must be driven by people who have a passion for the work, both the pastor and the laity of a congregation.

To transform, a congregation must become a learning community asking, "What is God calling us to become?" This conversation must take place over time.

Congregations in the transformation process can benefit from being clustered together for prayer, support and shared learning.

Pastors don't necessarily know how to lead congregations through transformation; they need assessment training and ongoing coaching.

Spiritual renewal that comes from the regular practice of prayer and immersion in scripture is essential to transformation.

Transforming congregations need to regularly celebrate the way God is working in their midst in order to stay connected to the Source of their courage.

Transformation requires risk; a congregation must often take bold steps (rather than engaging in incremental change) to move forward.

Transformation requires an investment of time and money.

Those leading the transformation efforts in the Disciples must themselves be engaged in personal and corporate transformation in the ministries they serve.

Transformation takes place in the gap congregations recognize between their call from God and their present reality.

Transformation is a path that must be consciously chosen.

Transformation must be contextually relevant.

Sometimes transformation processes focus on filling gaps; sometimes they focus on augmenting strengths. In each case, they must take into account the gifts and abilities of the congregation.

### Implications for Further Action

The information that was gathered during this consultation points to several areas for future work that Regional Ministers named as strategies or "next steps" to effectively strengthen congregations for mission:

1. Congregations need to be able to access their current reality as a first step toward change. We need more **diagnostic tools** for churches to use in this endeavor.
2. We need **assessment tools to help us identify pastors who have gifts and skills for congregational transformation.**
3. We need to train **both pastors and lay leaders in organizational development**, teaching what makes for a healthy congregational system.

4. In order to become culturally relevant, faithful, vital churches, congregations need **models of processes they can use to have conversation over time** about what God is calling them to do and to be.
5. Many congregations can no longer afford to call a full time ordained minister. Regions need **effective alternatives to full time pastoral leadership** to be able to offer these churches.
6. Congregations who are experiencing a lack of vitality often have become ingrown and myopic. Often they need new perspective that can only come from outside their context. Our church needs a **network of coaches** that can work with these congregations to help them see new possibilities. (Those coaches might actually be Regional staff.)
7. We need **strategies for providing competent congregational leadership** when it is lacking.
8. To help churches focus outwardly, rather than inwardly, congregational participants need **opportunities to engage in hands-on mission**.
9. Many of our churches have lost vitality because they are bound to the ways of the world instead of to the Alternative Reality (Kingdom) of God. We need a **renewed emphasis on adult faith formation and spiritual practices and the creation of effective resources for discipling new Christians**.
10. We need to provide **opportunities for clergy refreshment and support**.
11. We need **creative strategies that allow congregations to spend less time and money on church buildings**.
12. If we want to strengthen congregations for mission, then we need to **quit doing those things that only burn people out trying to maintain the status quo**.
13. We need **coordinated effort, effective structures and systems of accountability** within all expressions of our church in order to get the work of church transformation done.
14. If we are committed to living out our imperative, then we need **money dedicated to strengthening congregations for mission**.

## **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 become a pro-reconciling/anti-racism church, what is the role of your ministry in fulfilling any of these priorities?

Communication Ministries (CM) works to lift up the priorities of the church through a variety of communication tools, including news, print communications and video. As a division of the Office of General Minister and President, Communication Ministries continued its role of working closely with the General Minister and President to articulate the Church's vision and mission to all expressions of the church, as well as the four priorities.

Disciples News Service, the e-mail news alert that is distributed twice a month to all subscribers, grew in subscriptions in 2008 by about 3.1 percent. DNS is intentional in highlighting news and information that speaks to the four priorities of the Church. In 2008, DNS also included a monthly pastoral letter written by the General Minister and President as well as a monthly History "Moment" provided by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

One key accomplishment in 2008 was the implementation of the new Disciples.org website that utilizes new content delivery and management technology as well as an updated design and content structure. A new content management system was placed into production that provides means for OGMP/CM staff to maintain and create content on the site.

The new site acts as a portal to the general, regional and congregational expressions of the church by linking to all areas of the Disciples online presence. A new "whole church" search function utilizes Google technology to search information across all general ministry web sites with a single query, thus improving the quality of search results and simplifying the task of locating information for the web user.

While initial reaction to the new web site was very positive, Communication Ministries is continually working to discover ways to improve all areas of the site. CM has received positive and constructive feedback on ways to enhance the site and provide resources that are helpful to all expressions of ministry in the church.

CM also became more intentional about utilizing new and emergent media in 2008. Disciples communities were established on YouTube, MySpace, and Facebook to better connect Disciples and our partners around the globe. Using emergent media technology, Communication Ministries also established links to and between online social networking groups who are exchanging information and praying for the 2009 General Assembly. CM also is exploring other ways of effectively communicating to the wider church through the use of blogging, interactive web streaming, text-messaging and micro-blogging (such as Twitter.)

Another major accomplishment for CM in 2008 was the creation of a 10-minute video that explores the church's history, vision, mission and progress on the four priorities. Copies of the video were sent to every congregation for use in new member classes and basic church orientation. The video also was made available through video streaming on both YouTube and the Disciples.org website. Additional copies of the video are available to congregations for a nominal fee. Positive response to the video has led to discussions about making the resource also available in Spanish.

Early promotion efforts highlighting the 2009 General Assembly created opportunities for CM to network at several regional assemblies as well as the biennial meetings of the church's three racial/ethnic ministries. Our work in this area included booth and brochure designs and the creation of multi-lingual materials.

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

Key to the work of Communication Ministries is the goal of highlighting the mission and outreach of ministries throughout the church. Our news and information efforts through Disciples News Service strive to be as inclusive as possible about all ministries in covenant with the church. For example, DNS carries information about the General Minister and President's vision for the church, but also includes news and information from colleges and universities, financial and program ministries, and numerous other church-related organizations. In addition, the work of church-wide visioning groups such as the Mission Alignment Coordinating Council, was disseminated to the Church through DNS.

The CM staff continued to assist selected general ministries in redesigning and updating their web sites, and providing limited website consultation to congregations. The CM staff also continued to host an on-line web discussion forum for a community of over 300 people who utilize the forum to exchange ideas, create websites, or find more innovative ways to maintain their current one.

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

CM takes advantage of every opportunity to visit local congregations, to listen to their needs, attempt to address communication-related concerns, and evaluate communication strategies. As part of her work, CM's Executive Director visited Disciples congregations in several states in 2008.

Congregational input was important in the completion of the church-wide video, as well as in implementing social networking technologies such as Facebook and in updating and maintaining basic brochures, like "Discover the Disciples."

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

New technologies challenge our staff to stay current with the rapidly growing world of online communities. The two professional staff (the Executive Director and Director of Digital Media) work to stay informed through involvement in professional groups, conferences and input from congregational leaders in this area.

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**Samuel W. Huxford, Executive Director**  
**2009 General Board Report**

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. Like the World Convention, EES draws support and board members from all three streams and has been blessed by that inclusion.

At the present time, our educational ministry at The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins, led by Scott Caulley, continues to function along side of Eberhard Karls University, in Tübingen, Germany. In addition to his research which is focused on the study of Christian origins, Dr. Caulley works with the New Testament faculty of the University in a number of ways.

In October, 2008, the first members of a campus ministry team began arriving in Germany. They will use a portion of the facility owned by EES and located in the heart of the University's central campus. Currently four team members are present in Germany with another to arrive within the next six months. A group of exchange students are there as well, studying at the University and assisting in the outreach of the ministry team.

We continue to work on the idea of planting a functioning congregation in Tübingen that is focused on young adults and that can become a congregation for students involved in the campus ministry. We continue to search for a team leader who can develop a plan, build a team, and go to Germany to start a ministry of church planting.

The "American Agenda" of the European Evangelistic Society continues to focus on unity among Stone-Campbell churches. Our executive director has been serving with the Great Communion group, planning the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address." The sponsorship of the Walker Lectures, in memory of long-time EES board president, Dean E. Walker, is always focused on some aspect of early Christianity with a focus on bringing believers together as one body.

The current economic challenges, coupled with the exchange rate between the US dollar and the euro, are a significant issue for all ministries to face. This is especially true for missions where most of our resources are spent in Germany.

This mission was begun over 60 years ago by people who believed that the church is one body and that believers in every age have a responsibility to promote the unity of the church around the person of Jesus of Nazareth. We continue to be focused on that idea and will continue to seek ways to be a force not only for unity, but against the sins of racism and for any and all efforts to make reconciliation a reality because of the presence of Christ in our midst.

**European Evangelistic Society  
Financial Report  
Year ending 31 December 2008**

Income (from churches, individuals, etc.)	\$169,523.66
Expenses (includes American, German)	\$180,389.70
Net Income	(\$10,865.70)

**Certificate of Deposit/Savings Account  
Church Extension – Indianapolis, Indiana**

Balance as of 31 December 2008	\$70,000
Johnstone Fund	\$32,970
Evans Fund	\$10,140
Walker Fund	\$11,537
Shaw Fund	\$7,923
Institute Fund	\$7,430

**Regions Bank Savings Account**

Total on Deposit	\$13,133.65
Restricted for Symposium in April, 2009	\$12,700.00
Unrestricted	\$433.65

**Property and Equipment**

Office equipment/furniture in US	\$15,000
Institute Building (Tübingen, Germany)	\$400,000
Apartment* (Tübingen, Germany)	\$198,000

\*Mortgage held by Church Extension, Indianapolis, Indiana

Current balance	\$161,712.91
Monthly payment	\$1612.00

# THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

*Ben Bohren, Chairperson*

*Howard E. Bowers, Administrative Staff*

Ben Bohren: Telephone: 925-556-9900; Fax: 925-556-9904; E-mail: [ben@ccncn.org](mailto:ben@ccncn.org);

Howard Bowers: Telephone: 317-635-3100; Fax: 317-635-370; E-mail: [hbowers@cm.disciples.org](mailto:hbowers@cm.disciples.org) ;

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

In 2008-09 the following persons served on the General Commission at both the August 2008 meeting and the February 2009 meeting: Susanne Blix, laywoman, Zionsville, Indiana; Ben Bohren, Regional Minister, Northern California-Nevada; Dani Loving Cartwright, Regional Minister, Southwest; Elsie Ferrer, laywoman, Fishers, Indiana; Lari Grubbs, Regional Minister, Capital Area; Richard Guentert, Regional Minister, Upper Midwest; Carolyn Higginbotham, seminary representative, Indianapolis, Indiana; Timothy James, Associate General Minister and Administrator of the National Convocation; Joyce Knauff, licensed minister, Loudon, Tennessee; Sotello Long, Regional Minister, South Carolina; Sandra Michael-Bowers, Pension Fund representative; Howard Ratcliff, retired regional minister, North Ridgeville, Ohio; Donggook Roh, Congregational Pastor/CE Consultant; and Richard Sparrow, United Church of Christ representative.

Don Shelton, DHM representative, attended the August 2008 meeting and we welcomed Ron Degges, new DMH President to our February 2009 meeting. Richard Guentert also retired from the Upper Midwest Region and was appointed as an at-large member. In attending the February 2009 meeting, Lari Grubbs completed 6 years of service. Sharon Watkins will be appointing two new regional ministers before the August 2009 meeting. Our General Minister and President, serves as an ex-officio member. During 2008-09, Howard Bowers has been the Commission's administrative staff person.

The General Commission met in Indianapolis in both August, 2008 and February 2009. The Commission addressed a variety of issues surrounding ordained and licensed ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Working in three committee settings, 1) Search and Call, 2) Standards, 3) Support, members dealt with particular areas of ministry that impact the daily life of the church.

A major focus of GCOM over the last year has been continued work on a draft document, *Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the The Ordering of Ministry*. In both the August 2008 and the February 2009 meeting, the Standards Committee spent about 25 hours (times 5) reviewing close to 300 comments and suggestions concerning this document. The full GCOM also provided review for each draft and in plenary session on February 25, 2009, gave unanimous approval to Draft 10.1! This has been a six year effort and deep appreciation goes to all those who have worked so diligently and faithfully to bring this document to General Board with hopes of approval for presentation to the Indianapolis General Assembly.

Other major work of GCOM in the last year has focused on: reviewing mandatory boundary training for clergy in general ministries; clarifying issues relating to the search and call system including special attention to the challenges in some states of "name matching;" completing the process in response to a formal "Appeal" for loss of Standing; making adjustments to the general ministry standing form; reviewing the GCOM Policies and Procedures for Responding to Clergy Sexual Misconduct of Persons Engaged in Non-Regional Ministries; ongoing consultation with racial-ethnic constituencies; continuing work on a Clergy Self-Care document; re-negotiating our contract with Oxford Management Company for background checks; plus at least two dozen other issues; this is a very hard working commission!

One of the ongoing responsibilities of the General Commission is the annual certification of Disciple ministers serving in the general expression of the church. For 2009, the Commission certified the ministerial standing of 138 Disciples clergy. For clarification GCOM certifies standing for: full-time military chaplains, full-time VA hospital chaplains, full-time federal correction institution chaplains; general ministry clergy; ecumenical ministries whose responsibilities extend beyond one region; and all ministries outside the US and Canada including missionaries and ecumenical ministries. This process of certification includes individual reading of all standing forms, followed by prayer, and specific contact with those persons who indicated special concerns or celebrations of ministry.

There is huge celebration for the strong skills and commitment of GCOM; for the cohesive work of this team and the spiritual foundation which provides such great joy and appreciation for the opportunity to serve.

Respectfully submitted to General Board, April 2009  
Rev. Ben Bohren, Chair

**Minutes of the General Board  
Of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
April 12 – 15, 2008**

**Hilton Indianapolis North Hotel**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**D. Newell Williams, Moderator**

**Overview of Meeting**

First Vice Moderator, Ayanna Johnson, led worship to open and close all plenary sessions. General Board Anti-Racism training and World Café Host training were held on Saturday afternoon. This was followed by an opening dinner and worship at Allisonville Christian Church. Celebrations of the current General Board members and of new and departing Regional and General leaders were part of worship. General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins, presented the State of the Church Address - Our Common Mission/State of the Church – Movement for Wholeness during worship as well.

Moderator Newell Williams preached the sermon at the Sunday morning worship. Sharon Watkins presented the context for The Principles of Mission Alignment, the topic for a new group discussion model at General Board, World Café. This model was also used to discuss the Elements of the Plan. Reports were heard from each of the General Ministries, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision Team, the Ministry and Money Task Force, the Mission Funding Task Force and the General Assembly Program Coordinator, Patti Case, among others. On Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, Second Vice Moderator presided over the plenary sessions. Don Shelton filled in for Bill Bailey as parliamentarian.

**Business of the General Board**

**VOTED** To adopt the agenda, with changes

**VOTED** To approve the minutes from the April 28 – May 1, 2007 General Board Meeting.

**VOTED** Approval of the Consent Agenda

**GB-08-0581** Ratification of Mail Ballots

**GB-07-0532 VOTED:** Elected the 2011 class of the General Assembly Credentials Committee.

**GB-07-0533 VOTED:** Election of the 2011 Class of the Time and Place Committee.

**GB-07-0543 VOTED:** Amend and update the Articles of Incorporation.

**GB-07-0544 VOTED:** Restore the corporate name.

**GB-07-0535 VOTED:** Continuation of the 2007 DMF allocation percentages for 2008.

## Receipt of Regional Reports

**GB-08-0548** Alabama-Northwest Florida  
**GB-08-0549** Arizona  
**GB-08-0550** Northern California-Nevada  
**GB-08-0554** Florida  
**GB-08-0555** Georgia  
**GB-08-0557** South Idaho  
**GB-08-0558** Illinois-Wisconsin  
**GB-08-0559** Indiana  
**GB-08-0560** Kansas  
**GB-08-0561** Greater Kansas City  
**GB-08-0562** Kentucky  
**GB-08-0563** Michigan  
**GB-08-0564** Mid-America  
**GB-08-0565** Montana  
**GB-08-0566** Nebraska  
**GB-08-0567** North Carolina  
**GB-08-0568** Northeastern  
**GB-08-0569** Northwest  
**GB-08-0570** Ohio  
**GB-08-0571** Oklahoma  
**GB-08-0572** Oregon  
**GB-08-0573** Pacific Southwest  
**GB-08-0574** Pennsylvania  
**GB-08-0575** South Carolina  
**GB-08-0576** Southwest  
**GB-08-0577** Tennessee  
**GB-08-0578** Upper Midwest  
**GB-08-0579** Virginia  
**GB-08-0580** West Virginia

The following General Ministry Reports were received.

**0801** General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including the Office of General Minister and President, Committees, Commissions and Minutes.

**0802** Christian Board of Publication

**0803** Christian Church Foundation

**0804** Church Extension  
New Church Ministry

**0805** Church Finance Council

**0806** Council on Christian Unity

**0807** Disciples Benevolent Services

**0808** Disciples of Christ Historical Society  
DisciplesWorld, Inc.

**0709** Disciples Home Missions  
Christmount Christian Assembly  
Inman Christian Center  
National Evangelistic Association

	Urban Spirit/KB Ministries, Inc.
<b>0810</b>	Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries
	United Christian Missionary Society
<b>0811</b>	Higher Education and Leadership Ministries
<b>0812</b>	Pension Fund
<b>0813</b>	Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries
<b>0814</b>	National Convocation of the Christian Church
<b>0815</b>	North American Pacific/Asian Disciples
<b>0816</b>	College of Regional Ministers

**GB-08-0582 Principles for Mission Alignment and the Mission Alignment Coordinating Council**

**VOTED** The 2008 General Board accepts the Principles for Mission Alignment as foundational work for a Mission Alignment Coordinating Council. The Mission Alignment Coordinating Council (MACC) will be named by the General Minister and President and the Moderator of the Assembly. The Council will present a full report of their work including a plan for mission alignment and next steps in pursuing the 2020 Vision to the 2009 General Board, including required action by the 2009 Indianapolis General Assembly. OGMP will assume responsibility for funding the expenses of the council.

**GB-08-0583 Report of the Mission Fund Task Force**

**VOTED** To approve the appendixes

**GB-08-0584 Disciples Mission Fund Update**

**VOTED** To receive the report

**GB-08-0585 Ministry and Money Report (Implementation Update)**

**VOTED** To receive the report

**GB-08-0586 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision Team Report**

**VOTED** To receive the report

**GB-08-0587 2009 General Assembly Update**

**VOTED** To receive the report

**GB-08-0588 Mandatory Boundary Training for General Ministry Clergy**

**VOTED** All ordained and licensed ministers engaged in General Ministries (those whose standing is certified with GCOM) obtain sexual ethics boundary training either through the General Ministry where they serve or through the Region where they reside. It is understood that

military chaplains will obtain such training from the military and chaplains in federal prisons will obtain such training from federal prison authorities. The 2009 GCOM Standing Form will include a question to ascertain if such training has been received.

**GB 08-0589            Administrative Committee Report to the General Board**

**VOTED**            To receive the report

**GB-08-0590            2007 General Assembly Resolutions Update**

**VOTED**            To receive the report

**GB-08-0591            Report of the General Nominating Committee of the General Board**

**VOTED**            to approve the report of the General Nominating Committee, as stated in the General Board docket, pages 359 – 362. By approving the report, the General Board confirms the members the Boards of Directors for Christian Board of Publication, Church Extension, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (with correction) and Disciples Benevolent Services. The approval confirms members of the Boards of Trustees for National Convocation and the National Christian Missionary Convention Corporation. The approval elects members of the Week of Compassion Committee. The approval elects members of the Boards of Directors for the Christian Church Foundation, Pension Fund of the Christian Church, Disciples Home Missions and Division of Overseas Ministries.

**GB-08-0592            Approval of the Identity Statement**

**VOTED**            To approve the Identity Statement

**GB-08-0593            Common General Assembly General Synod 2013**

**VOTED**            To approve recommendations as stated

**GB-08-0594            Pentecost Offering Covenant Report**

**VOTED**            To receive the report

There being no further business to come before the General Board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM, April 15, 2008.

**MINUTES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 1, 2008**

Hilton Garden Inn

Indianapolis, IN

D. Newell Williams, Moderator

Newell Williams called the meeting to order. First Vice Moderator, Ayanna Johnson led worship.

Approval of the Agenda

**VOTED** to approve the agenda of the Administrative Committee.

Consent Agenda

**VOTED** to approve the Consent Agenda

Minutes from the April 2008 Administrative Committee Meeting

Receipt of the General Ministry Reports

<b>AC-08-1993</b>	New Church Ministry
<b>AC-08-1994</b>	Church Extension
<b>AC-08-1995</b>	Council on Christian Unity
<b>AC-08-1996</b>	Christian Board of Publication
<b>AC-08-1997</b>	NAPAD
<b>AC-08-1998</b>	Higher Education and Leadership Ministries
<b>AC-08-1999</b>	Pension Fund
<b>AC-08-2001</b>	Disciples Home Mission
<b>AC-08-2002</b>	CPOHM
<b>AC-08-2003</b>	National Convocation
<b>AC-08-2031</b>	Reconciliation Ministry
<b>AC-08-2032</b>	Week of Compassion
<b>AC-08-2038</b>	Christian Church Foundation
<b>AC-08-2039</b>	National Benevolent Association
<b>AC-08-2040</b>	Division of Overseas Ministries
<b>AC-08-2041</b>	Disciples of Christ Historical Society
<b>AC-08-2023</b>	Authorization of "Other Organizations" for the <i>2009 Year Book &amp; Directory</i>
<b>AC-08-2036</b>	Report on Maintaining 501(c) 3 Tax Status with the IRS
<b>AC-08-2018</b>	Election to fill a vacancy in the 2009 class of the Administrative Committee

**The Administrative Committee adjourned into Executive Session.**

Sharon Watkins' compensation package with changes is approved.

**The Administrative Committee reconvened into open Plenary Session.**

**The Administrative Committee Plenary adjourned into working committees.**

**The Administrative Committee Plenary reconvened.**

Reports on the Four Priorities are presented

New Church Ministries – Rick Morse  
Transformation – Doug Pfeiffer, R. Wayne Calhoun, Rick Morse  
Leadership Development – Dennis Landon  
Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism – April Johnson

Report from the Financial Ministries presented

James Hamlett – Pension Fund  
Gary Kidwell – Christian Church Foundation  
Ellen Mitchell – Church Extension

**AC-08-2037** Mission Alignment Summary

**VOTED** to receive the report

Discussion of Relationship between the General Board and the General Ministry Boards  
Led by Glenn Carson

**AC-08-2029** General Assembly Report

**VOTED** to receive the report presented by Patti Case, Wanda Bryant Wills  
and Sharon Coleman

**AC-08-2028** General Assembly Timing

**VOTED** to receive the report and have Todd Adams forward the  
Administrative Committee's comments to the Standing Committee  
on Renewal and Structural Reform.

**AC-08-2030** Circulation of Business Items

**VOTED** to receive the report. Also **VOTED** to authorize the General  
Assembly Committee to get a copy of the docket to each  
congregation and to report back to the Administrative Committee  
how that was accomplished

**AC-08-2034** Engagement of Legal Counsel

Business item is not ready for action.

Motion made to authorize Sharon Watkins and Todd Adams to  
make the final selection of legal counsel and bring that selection to  
the moderator team. **Motion Passed.**

- AC-08-2004** 2009 Administrative and Boards budget for the Office of the General Minister and President
- VOTED** to approve the budget with the changes specified during the Executive Session discussion of Sharon Watkins' compensation package
- AC-08-2005** 2009 Promotion Budget for the Office of the General Minister and President
- VOTED** to approve budget
- AC-08-2006** 2009 Office of the General Minister and President Treasury Services Budget
- VOTED** to approve budget
- AC-08-2007** 2009 Communications Ministries Budget
- VOTED** to approve budget
- AC-08-2008** 2009 Reconciliation Ministry Budget
- VOTED** to approve budget
- AC-08-2009** 2009 Stewardship Budget
- VOTED** to approve budget
- AC-08-2010** 2009 Year Book & Directory Budget
- VOTED** to approve budget
- AC-08-2013** Engagement of Auditor
- VOTED** to engage Capin Crouse for the 2008 OGMP audit

**The Administrative Committee was adjourned for the day.**

Newell Williams called the Administrative Committee back into plenary session on November 1, 2008. First Vice Moderator, Ayanna Johnson led worship.

Presentation of business item AC-08-2014 was made by James P. Johnson, President of Lexington Theological Seminary (LTS) and Gary Kidwell, Chair of the Board of Trustees at LTS.

**The Administrative Committee adjourned into Executive Session**

- AC-08-2014** **PROPOSAL TO THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MINISTER AND PRESIDENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) FOR A CENTER FOR CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP**

**VOTED** to refer the proposal to the Policy, Planning and Personnel committee for further consideration, discussion with Lexington Theological Seminary and comment from the College of Theological Educators. A revised proposal will be brought back to the spring Administrative Committee meeting. Overall feeling from the committee is that the proposal is a good idea, but needs refinement and clarification in areas such as long term funding of the position, who would the person answer to (LTS or OGMP), and physical location of the person.

**AC-08-2033** Minister of Faith and Giving Search Committee

**VOTED** to receive the report and absolve the search committee of further duties.

**AC-08-2024** Flex-time Implementation

**VOTED** to receive the report

**AC-08-2025** Sabbatical Request from Sharon E. Watkins

**VOTED** to approve the sabbatical request

**AC-08-2026** Sabbatical Request from Wanda Bryant Wills

**VOTED** to approve the sabbatical request

**AC-08-2027** Sabbatical Request from Timothy M. James

**VOTED** to approve the sabbatical request

**AC-08-2035** Northeast Region Report

**VOTED** to receive the verbal report

**The Administrative Committee reconvened into an open Plenary Session.**

**AC-08-2000** **Report to the Administrative Committee Office of General Minister and President**

**VOTED** to receive the report of the Office of General Minister and President, which included updates on CURAJ, Week of Compassion search, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision Team and the Task Force on Undergraduate Education, reporting on OGMPs pro-reconciliation/anti-racism training and highlighted the new staff in OGMP.

**AC-08-2020** Report from the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform

**VOTED** to receive the report and have Todd Adams forward the Administrative Committee's comments to the Standing Committee

on Renewal and Structural Reform on the structural changes proposed to the General Board as well as to the moderator team.

**AC-08-2021** Sense of the Assembly Resolutions

**VOTED** to receive the report and have Todd Adams forward the Administrative Committee's comments to the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform on the proposed changes to Sense of the Assembly resolutions.

Ben Bohren, chair of the General Commission on Ministry distributed the current draft (9.7) of the *Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* for future comment or question

**AC-08-2011** Disciples Mission Fund Report

**VOTED** to receive the report

**AC-08-2012** Regional Capital Campaign Language Update

**VOTED** to update the language as spelled out in the business item

**AC-08-2022** Establishing the Price for the *2009 Year Book & Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

**VOTED** to approve the price of the *2009 Year Book & Directory* as follows:

Paper Cover \$37.50

Loose Leaf \$37.50

CD \$32.50

Cloth Cover \$45.00

All purchases come with accessibility to the on line site

Paper Cover w/CD \$45.00

Loose Leaf w/CD \$45.00

Cloth Cover w/CD \$52.50

Internet only \$25.00

Shipping and Handling for books: \$5.00 for the first book and \$1.00 more for each additional book

The Finance Committee also reported that everything with the merger of Church Finance Council into General Assembly has been completed, including a combined audit which was sent to the appropriate people.

**AC-08-2015** Nomination of the 2013 Class of the Credentials Committee

**VOTED** that the following persons be approved for nomination to the 2013 class of the General Assembly Credentials Committee and presented for election by the General Board at its April 2009 meeting: Deirdre Jackson Jones and Frank Helm

**AC-08-2016** Nomination of the 2013 Class of the General Nominating Committee

**VOTED** that the following persons be approved for nomination to the 2013 class of the General Nominating Committee and presented to the General Assembly for election: Lorenzo York, Hilda Robles, Lian Jiang, Janie Wills, Hannah Arendt

**AC-08-2017** Nomination of the 2013 Class of the General Assembly Time and Place Committee

**VOTED** that the following persons be approved for nomination to the 2013 class of the Time and Place Committee and presented to the General Board for election at the April 2009 meeting: Larry Love, Rick Ikeda, Doug Garner, Janet Moore, Regina Morton, Judy Allen

**AC-08-2019** Election to fill a vacancy in the class of 2009 on the Week of Compassion Committee

**VOTED** That Eyamba Bokama be elected to fill the vacancy in the class of 2009

Discussion of the 2009 General Board agenda included the GCOM document and MACC. It was decided that feedback for both can be accomplished by telephone and e-mail.

There being no further business to come before the Administrative Committee, First Vice Moderator, Ayanna Johnson, led a communion service and the meeting was adjourned.

## **NATIONAL CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY CONVENTION, INC.**

Viann Bristow, President  
Timothy M. James, Corporate Secretary

And its subsidiary  
**GREENWOOD CEMETERY COMPANY OF NASHVILLE, TN., INC.**

Dwayne Bell, President  
Norman Reed, General Manager

To our Moderator, Dr. Newell Williams, our  
General Minister and President, Dr. Sharon E. Watkins and  
Members of the General Board

The National Convocation Board of Trustees is elected by the General Assembly, as the Trustees of the National Christian Missionary Convention (NCMC), Inc. The work of the Trustees is the oversight of the assets willed to the National Convention by Preston Taylor and contributions given to and through the Black Disciples Endowment Fund. The Trustees also give continued guidance to the work at the Greenwood Cemetery Company of Nashville, Tennessee, Inc.

### **NATIONAL CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY CONVENTION:**

The funds of the National Christian Missionary Convention are held in investment with the Christian Church Foundation and Church Extension. The National Convocation pays expenses related to NCMC operations, which makes NCMC an investment-holding corporation.

The Trustees of NCMC give oversight to the particular assets, which are: the Black Disciples Endowment Fund, the Greenwood Cemetery Company and the African American Leadership Development Program.

The Black Disciples Endowment Fund is facilitated by an Advisory Committee, chaired by John Foulkes. They receive and review applications for grants that will enhance and enable ministry in African American congregations. The Greenwood Cemetery Company has a Board which makes regular reports to the Board of Trustees of NCMC. The Office of African American Clergy Leadership Development Program receive designated funds from the Merchants Endowment Fund held by Christian Church Foundation, for the recruitment of ministerial leadership for our African American congregations. William Lee serves as Executive Director of OAACLDP. They partner with Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, for a weekend summer event, which brings together high school and college age persons who have expressed an interest or demonstrated potential for church leadership.

Trustees of the National Christian Missionary Convention are: Viann Bristow, Apostle John Harvey, LaVerne Bobo, Patricia Palmer, Nora Shumake, Eugene Reynolds, Karen Barrett, Eugene Randall, Jeanetta Cotman, Matt Harris, Raymond L. Brown, and Patricia Palmer.

### **GREENWOOD CEMETERY:**

The Greenwood Cemetery Company of Nashville, Tennessee is a nonprofit corporation organized to manage the Greenwood Cemetery, owned by the National Christian

Missionary Convention. At the December 2008 meeting, our manager, Norman Reed, shared his re-election as Moderator of the Christian Church in Tennessee. He is also an officer with the Cemetery Association of Tennessee. The Cemetery operates at three sites with plans for upgrades and improvements in the near future. There is concern that we get the word out about this unique Disciples of Christ operation.

The members of the Greenwood Cemetery Board of Trustees are: Dwayne Bell, President; Juanita Greene, Vice President; Freddie Lawton, Treasurer; Norman Reed, General Manager; John R. Foulkes,

## **NATIONAL CITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION**

*D. Duane Cummins, Chairperson (January-July, 2008)*  
*John D. Arterberry, Acting Chairperson (July-December, 2008)*  
Stephen W. Gentle, President  
5 Thomas Circle, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Telephone: (202) 232-0323; Fax: (202) 797-0111  
Web site: [www.nationalcitycc.org](http://www.nationalcitycc.org)

For 78 years National City Christian Church has sought to live out Alexander Campbell's vision to uphold a momentous church facility in the city known for its national and world leaders so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ might be proclaimed. National City Christian Church Foundation is honored to be one of the recognized organizations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. It holds in trust the ownership of the church property and its facilities on behalf of the wider church. It is led by a national board of trustees and reports to the General Assembly. The Foundation is yoked in partnership with the congregation of National City Christian Church to provide a national facility for worship, study, ministry, and mission in the U.S. capital. *The 2008 Promise* communicates this unique national witness in photos and words. Complementary copies are available by writing to [rcarey@nationalcitycc.org](mailto:rcarey@nationalcitycc.org).

### **MINISTRY AND MISSION IN CHALLENGING TIMES**

Two thousand and eight began with great expectations. National City Christian Church had concluded a discernment process that culminated in calling its settled senior pastor and Foundation president, Stephen W. Gentle. Dr. Gentle had been serving as transitional senior pastor for those two years. In addition an invitation was extended to Steven B. Moore to be associate pastor in stewardship and vice president for development for the Foundation. The capital campaign for the Foundation was in full swing and its goal was met. A new and impressive web site went online. The congregation and Board of Trustees met in a listening conference to focus on that which they hold in common, namely their love for Christ and National City Christian Church.

As a multiracial, multicultural, bilingual, open and affirming congregation, National City Christian Church is seeking to nurture leadership, partner with other expressions of the church, and be a pro-reconciliation / anti-racism church. The following is a snapshot of the fruit of our labor in Christ:

- National City Christian Church Foundation took its story to the National Hispanic and Bilingual Conference in Hasbrouck, New Jersey, the National Convocation in Memphis, and the World Convention in Nashville, Tennessee.
- Hundreds of young people "bunked down" in the facilities to participate in a life-changing mission trip or International Affairs experience.
- National City enjoyed welcoming the U.S. Conference of the World Council of Churches for an interfaith prayer service and dinner celebration that included denominational heads from many of the faith communions in the United States.
- Partnering with the Capital Area Christian Church, National City hosted a leadership development event for church leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ.
- Over 40 community children experienced a superb five-week summer enrichment program.

- Thousands entered the sanctuary on several Saturday mornings as families sought help for restructuring their mortgages through the services of the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA)
- The Hispanic congregation nested at National City continued to see growth in worship numbers and in small groups, thanks to the very capable leadership of its pastor, Noemi P. Mena.
- The young adult fellowship (Yada) grew in its weekly Bible study, community ministries, and its number of participants.
- The LGBT Fellowship continued to grow in its participation and ministry to the community.
- On the portico steps of National City, hundreds of people joined in a lively organ concert, popcorn, and warm welcome following the Capital Pride parade.
- On those same steps the congregation greeted neighborhood pet owners and their dogs for a second annual community blessing of the animals.
- Hilda's International Fair Trade Gift Shop received a complete face-lift and expanded its hours at the close of the year. This shop run by volunteers raises awareness and money to support artists in developing countries.
- Thousands of neighbors were fed through the weekly food pantry ministry.
- The ordination of Gethsemane mission year alum, Nathan Hill, was hosted by National City.
- National City celebrated the lay leadership of trustee emeritus, Oscar Haynes, when the Disciples of Christ Historical Society named the Oscar Haynes Exhibit Hall.
- The stained glass artist of the Hastings Memorial Window, Rowan LeCompte, spoke on Heritage Sunday as the congregation remembered with thanksgiving the ministry of J. Warren Hastings.
- With nearly 400 in attendance at Easter, and then again on Christmas Eve, National City Christian Church celebrated with two of its largest numbers of worship participants in many years.
- Numeric growth has been enjoyed in all three Sunday morning worship experiences – Gospel, Traditional, and Spanish-speaking services.

The year was not without significant challenges. For the nations around the world and the United States of America, it became increasingly clear that we were entering into a global economic crisis. The financial and economic crash of 2008 was perhaps the worst in over 75 years and a tremendous setback for many institutions that relied heavily on invested endowments for their general budgets. National City Christian Church was not spared this dreadful downturn. In addition, a Foundation audit committee was put in place to negotiate the work between the auditor and the chief financial officer. As a result, the CFO is no longer employed at National City and an outside accounting firm, Raffa Financial Services, was secured to put the financial books in order for 2007 and 2008. Thanks to the work of this accounting firm and the industrious vitality of Rev. Moore, the financials are better organized than they have been in years. Yet with this knowledge came the bleak news that our institutional spending has been greatly outpacing its income. Irregularities were discovered in the summer of 2008, and much of the senior staff's time, energy, and emotions have been engaged in a forensic audit and setting into place best accounting practices. While this labor continues into 2009, National City Christian Church is greatly indebted to the many staff persons and church leaders who have given generously of their time, skill, and money, as well as the meticulous and difficult work of the audit committee of the Foundation.

An additional challenge came in the summer of 2008 when Foundation chairperson, D. Duane Cummins, retired early because of family health concerns. National City Christian Church is greatly appreciative of the brilliant leadership and untiring energies of Dr. Cummins. His leadership was sorely missed in the remaining months of the year. Thankfully vice chairperson, John D. Arterberry, has stepped into the role of acting chairperson. Mr. Arterberry has been invaluable in this time of considerable challenge. During these taxing times, National City Christian Church is greatly appreciative and truly humbled by the tremendous generosity and faithful support of the Foundation trustees, congregational leadership, and Disciples around the world.

### **THROUGH IT ALL**

In the words of the hymn often sung at the early morning Gospel worship service:

We thank God for the mountains, and we thank God for the valleys.  
We thank God for the storms that God has brought us through.  
For if we'd never had a problem, we wouldn't know God could solve them.

Through it all, through it all,  
We've learned to trust in Jesus, we've learned to trust in God.  
Through it all, through it all, we've learned to depend upon God's Word.

In the good times and those times that fall appreciably short of that, National City Christian Church is at its most excellent when it remains focused on ministry and mission. Through it all, National City has sought to do just that: stay focused on God and seek to embody God's presence in this world.

Through it all, National City Christian Church enjoys greeting and worshiping with Disciples from all around the world each and every Sunday. National City is your church. Tours of these facilities are available during the week upon request. All are invited to learn more about this unique Disciples witness by visiting [www.nationalcitycc.org](http://www.nationalcitycc.org). Come and share in your national witness in the U.S. capital.

**Reconciliation Ministry**  
**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
**130 E. Washington Street**  
**PO Box 1986**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1986**  
**(317) 713-2416**

*Rev. April Johnson, Minister of Reconciliation*

**Background:**

Reconciliation Ministry started 2008 in a search for a Minister of Reconciliation. In July of 2008 I began my call as Minister of Reconciliation filling a two year vacancy of leadership in the Office. The environment I encountered upon my arrival was one of expectancy and relief. I was pleased to find continued enthusiasm for the mission of Reconciliation and numerous partners throughout the Church willing to advance the conversation in their respective expressions. At the time of my arrival, materials for the annual Reconciliation Offering needed to be launched, the biennial sessions of each of our racial ethnic ministries were gathering as were Regional Assemblies, and dormant priorities and structure to those priorities needed much attention. Below please find tangibles with regard to the work of Reconciliation Ministry for 2008.

**1. What has been the role of Reconciliation Ministry in fulfilling the four priorities of the Church?**

Reconciliation Ministry is the priority of the Church which addresses historic and systemic fragmentation in our Church which stems from the sin of racism. It is the primary role of this ministry to empower each expression of the Church to build awareness and skills to confront and eliminate vestiges of this sin in their institutions. This is no easy task to accomplish in a few months! Therefore with the understanding that this work is transformational, Reconciliation has re-engaged the journey toward wholeness by establishing relationship with the leadership across our four priorities in order to plan and program together innovative approaches to address our mutual goals. As Minister of Reconciliation, I continue to work with Regions, Regional Transformation Teams and congregations to preach and teach transformation as our clarion call for advancing the gospel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. During this period, I have consulted and visited with the IL/WI Region and teams, Pacific Southwest, Northwest A/R Team and 1<sup>st</sup> CC Tacoma to name a few. Participating in the visioning and mission of A/R teams, Regional Transformation work, as well as preaching has been paramount in advancing these inter-related and mutual priorities.

Reconciliation joins Rick Morse, Church Extension, as a ministry partner in our committee work on the Mutual Accountability Team (a sub-committee of the Multicultural Consultation called in the Spring of 2008). Our work on this committee brings perspectives and actions relevant to how to prepare new and existing congregational leaders to address the changing face of our church and the communities they serve. As a Committee, we are thrilled to present to the General Board our recommendation for a congregational model to serve as an entry point into building both relationship and leaders across racial/ethnic differences.

**2. How is RM partnering with other expressions of the Church?**

It is the joy of the ministry for the Minister of Reconciliation to have both invitation and audience with our Pro-Reconciling/Anti-Racism teams in the Division of Homeland Ministries (DHM), Church Extension, Christian Theological Seminary and Office of General Minister and President (OGMP). These teams are actively pursuing justice while critically examining their institutions and applying the analysis of anti-racism to insure welcome and inclusiveness. DHM has shared with Reconciliation their anti-racism audit and challenges for implementing its recommendations. Their team, like all of our General Ministry teams, is undaunted with the task of becoming a

pro-reconciling and anti-racist institution. Reconciliation Ministry remains available as consultant and partner through our Office and resources (Core Trainers).

Church Extension has offered their model for implementing structural change to Reconciliation Ministry as a resource. Reconciliation Ministry and its Commission is working with Regional expressions of the Church to promote awareness training, namely Sandhya Jha and Ron Parker as Commission members working in the capacity of either trainer, consultant or team member where required. Mid-America Region has emerged as both a leader and partner in working with areas for innovative awareness trainings drawing increasingly more participants at each event. Might I add, through attention and intention with their own resources, they increased their offering by 24% for the ministry. In addition, Reconciliation and its Commission partners with the Council on Christian Unity, Week of Compassion, OGMF and National Convocation as members of the Pastoral Table on Compassion, Unity, Reconciliation and Justice (CURAJ).

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

Reconciliation has been actively involved in developing congregational resources and visiting congregations to listen to their visioning and mission objectives. In the congregations where I, as Minister of Reconciliation, have had the privilege to sit in Sunday School classes as well as preach, there has been a consistent refrain for the need to be relevant in their emerging communities. During these opportunities, I offer Reconciliation Ministry as a programmatic resource, instead of an invitation for awareness or skills building training. Here is the critical mission of Reconciliation around the need for developing relationship that leads to relevant interaction. Here also, we as a Church are compelled to understand the generational nature of the work of Reconciliation in that relationship requires time and commitment. It is the challenge of Reconciliation Ministry to empower our churches to remain “at the table” in the awkwardness of maintaining a posture of mutuality across difference.

In November, Reconciliation Ministry put out a call for sermons around the historic election of the first African American to the office of President of the United States and its relevance to the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birth. The sermons are in the review phase, a copy editor has been retained and publication of a small resource is expected by June of this year, in time for General Assembly. Also, the sermons will be available on the Reconciliation Ministry website.

### **4. What are Barriers/Challenges to Your Ministry?**

We live in a time of instant messaging, Twittering, webcasting and electronic social networking. These are really good communication tools and in some ways, provide for ‘real time’ ministry. The ministry of presence continues, however, to have real value in this Church’s current context. The art of duplicating ‘myself’ as Minister of Reconciliation was challenging but no longer presents itself as a barrier. Initially, promoting relationship, while promoting the Offering, while establishing an Office was complicated by the awkwardness that my predecessor was not in position to pass the baton. While the transition was awkward at best, time, that funny thing that has the character of schizophrenia in a period of instantaneous exchange, has become a friend of the ministry. In time, events that went without representation from the ministry have found new invitations extended and new ways to resource those events and invitations. The Reconciliation Commission is a working board and thanks be to God, its membership understands what that means with regard to advocacy and the ministry of presence. New ministry partners are emerging through relationship building, for example with Robert Welsh and the Council on Christian Unity, Edward Wheeler and the faculty at Christian Theological Seminary and Amy Gopp with Week of Compassion. The ministry had a void of paid leadership for two years. There was a real need for urgency to address dormant priorities simultaneous to the need to be still and listen. The urgency remains, yet the ministry is experiencing increase.

## THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Ronald J. Degges, 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, and the Division of Overseas Ministries by investing and managing its endowments and permanent funds for the benefit of the two Divisions.

During 2008, there were two UCMS life income contracts released totaling \$6,000 and one UCMS gift annuity released in the amount of \$4,573. These funds were either distributed outright to Disciples Home Missions and the Division of Overseas Ministries or were added to the permanent endowments of UCMS. The UCMS did not receive any restricted bequests.

The UCMS continues to be involved, through its relationship with Christian Church Foundation, with ethical issues which relate to its investments and with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). This 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 UCMS, which has eight trustees and four officers, has no active employees. Beginning in 1993, The UCMS contracted with the Christian Church Foundation, Inc., to perform the treasury services for the Society. The current officers of The UCMS are as follows: Ronald J. Degges, President; David Vargas, Vice President; Jennie A. King, Secretary, and Lonna Owens, Treasurer.

Four trustees are nominated by each of the two Divisions served by The UCMS. 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 UCMS. 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 UCMS distributed the following from the investment pool in 2008: DHM - \$964,255; DOM - \$1,228,729; and other entities - \$58,229.

**WEEK OF COMPASSION COMMITTEE**  
**Rebecca Hale, Chair**  
**Amy Gopp, Executive Director**  
**Elaine Cleveland, Administrative Assistant**  
**P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206**  
**317-713-2442**  
**[www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org)**

**OVERVIEW:**

2008 was a year of increasing economic distress and the emergence of the global food crisis. It was also another record-breaking year for natural disasters. Human-created disasters such as the protracted, violent conflicts in Iraq, the Middle East, the Darfur region of Sudan and in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained among the most horrific humanitarian crises of the year. Disciples continued to support and trust the historic efficiency and effectiveness of Week of Compassion, the relief, refugee and development ministry fund. Responding to some form of human need every single day, Week of Compassion offers a reliable and faithful mechanism for Disciples to participate in helping to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression. Despite the financial struggles many faced, the 2008 Week of Compassion offering was up by slightly more than one percent, for which we are deeply appreciative.

Poverty, hunger, lack of clean water, disease, illiteracy, unemployment, displacement and other inequities remained as pervasive as ever, and Week of Compassion's support of long-term sustainable development projects remained an important part of WoC's witness and work in the world. Grants totaling over \$550,000 were made to projects in 45 countries and to ten states in the USA. These included 41 food production/security projects in 28 countries through our partnership with the Foods Resource Bank and Church World Service, with WoC/Disciples serving as lead funder for projects in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through Seed Programs, Inc. WoC/Disciples provided seeds to thousands of families and hundreds of communities throughout Africa, with a major investment in Zimbabwe and Liberia. In conjunction with Global Ministries' Area Offices, WoC funded sustainable development projects in Angola, Philippines, Turkey, Haiti, China, Micronesia, Ecuador and Syria, to name a few. WoC's sustainable development work encompasses food security, income generation, health care, water, sanitation, education, vocational training, women's empowerment, peacebuilding, trauma counseling and psycho-social care.

WoC continues to make long-term rehabilitation (post-disaster) work a priority, and the strong support WoC received in the aftermath of the 2005 hurricane season is still enabling us to continue such critical ministry along the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast through the second phase of the Disciples Hurricane Recovery Initiative.

In 2008, undesignated giving to Week of Compassion remained strong at \$2,461,362. Designated giving reached \$715,826, an increase of one percent over 2007 designated giving. Income from WoC's endowment program and other funds in the Christian Church Foundation equaled \$139,888, down from \$151,041 in 2007 because of the impact the economic crisis had on the Christian Church Foundation. Of special note in 2008 was the dramatic increase in on-line giving to Week of Compassion, totaling \$76,649, up from \$30,156 in 2007, a 154% increase.

2008 was also a season of great transition for WoC. After 16 years of dedicated service, Johnny Wray resigned as Director. An executive search process resulted in the calling of Amy Gopp as the new Executive Director. Her work commenced, officially, on December 1, 2008. WoC is profoundly grateful for the faithful and effective ministry of Johnny Wray and for the extraordinary leadership he provided WoC for so many years.

**1. Knowing that the current priorities are to start new congregations, transform existing congregations for mission, nurture leadership for these new and renewed congregations, and become a reconciling church, what is the role of your ministry in fulfilling these priorities?**

In April 2008, Week of Compassion organized the first “WeekEnd of Compassion” event in Nashville, Tennessee, with the objective to make the work of Week of Compassion more visible to Disciples congregations; recognize and strengthen lay leadership for mission/outreach in Disciples churches; introduce participants to WoC’s ecumenical partner organizations; provide a forum for exchanging ideas and empowering each other; and revitalize our commitment to God’s mission in the world. WeekEnd offered a full schedule for 150 people (capacity) from 24 different states and 70 Disciples congregations. The event began Friday evening with dinner and ended with lunch on Sunday afternoon (a pre-event WoC/Habitat for Humanity Build was also part of the event on Friday morning).

In addition, WeekEnd of Compassion was an opportunity for leaders representing already-established congregations to recommit themselves and their congregations to mission and outreach, establishing a new vitality as congregations get more deeply involved with Week of Compassion and invariably find new life. WeekEnd also hosted over 20 seminarians to provide support and encouragement in their discernment.

Another strong component of WeekEnd was the creative and vibrant worship experience each day, which focused on themes of compassion, justice and transformation. Workshops led by our ecumenical partner organizations served as the critical educational piece of WeekEnd, each one of them offering practical tools for application in the life of a congregation. Week of Compassion staff received written affirmations from most of the participants regarding their own personal transformations. Personal transformation leads to action and transformation among the communities of which the WeekEnd participants are a part. Along with the networking and relationship-building that happened at WeekEnd of Compassion, this transformation contributed to the work that will establish, reestablish, renew and transform local congregations.

Week of Compassion also entered into a new and vital partnership with Equal Exchange in 2008. In conjunction with Disciples Home Missions, WoC began promoting the use of fair trade coffee and other products (tea, chocolate, nuts and fruits) from Equal Exchange through the establishment of the “Disciples Coffee Project.” For every pound of coffee Disciples of Christ purchase from Equal Exchange, 15 cents comes back to the “Disciples Food Security and Hunger Relief Fund,” which is then divided at year-end between WoC and DHM. In 2008, WoC received \$991.20 for this fund, which in turn allows WoC to support even more sustainable development and agricultural assistance projects in coffee-producing countries. Disciples purchased 6,608 pounds of fairly traded products in 2008, up from 3,420 in 2007. Week of Compassion is proud to be able to support more small stakeholder farmers in the developing world as a result of this new partnership with Equal Exchange.

Because of the significant resources given to Week of Compassion in response to the 2005 hurricane season, WoC has been able to continue its support of revitalization efforts to two congregations in the Great River Region - First Christian Church, Slidell, LA, and Westside Christian Church, New Orleans, LA - congregations whose ministries and facilities were seriously impacted by Katrina but to whom new opportunities of service and growth have been given. In 2008 WoC continued to provide major support of the Disciples Hurricane Recovery Initiative. That support included assistance to Disciples Mission Stations at First CC, Gulfport, MS; Grace Disciples Church, Covington, LA; First CC, Slidell, LA; Westside CC, New Orleans, LA; First CC, Metairie, LA; First CC, Lake Charles, LA; First CC, Port Arthur, TX; Northwood CC, Beaumont, TX; and Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries, Los Fresnos, TX – support that is providing numerous opportunities for ministry and witness within those communities and also the congregations sending work teams to them. WoC also supported the establishment of a new mission station at First Christian Church in Texas City, Texas, as a result of the devastation of Hurricane Ike. More than 960 work groups (with more than 8500 volunteers) have participated, or are currently scheduled to participate, in the Hurricane Recovery Initiative, which translates to 340,080 hours donated! WoC and the Office of Disciples Volunteering continued a mission station with First CC, Pratt, KS and FCC, Kinsley, KS, to support long-term recovery efforts in tornado-ravaged Greensburg, KS. A brand new mission station was established at FCC in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to respond to the summer floods of 2008. Transformative

stories abound of new energy and new life for individuals and congregations participating and for those they served.

Just as work groups are a great tool for leadership building, Week of Compassion also supports other programs that nurture leadership for the church. In partnership with the Office of Disciples Volunteering/Disciples Home Missions, WoC supports the Summer Mission Intern program, and with Global Ministries/Division of Overseas Ministries, WoC funds the Global Mission Intern program – both programs that give Disciples young people individual opportunities for service. Again in 2008, WoC sponsored a mission/study trip for Disciples seminary students to the Balkans as it had the five previous years, with the purpose of giving emerging Disciples leaders the opportunity to see WoC dollars and partnership at work on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2008, three seminary students also served as special interns with Week of Compassion and thus, had unique leadership development opportunities along with hands-on training in the ministries of relief and development. WoC considers it a priority to build relationships with Disciples youth, young adults and seminary students, and as part of that priority, Amy Gopp participated in and/or led numerous young leader conferences, retreats and related events.

Week of Compassion continues to support several ecumenical efforts in the Gulf South working to address issues of race, class and poverty that have been further exposed in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, such as the Harry Tompson Center in downtown New Orleans. On occasion, WoC provides grants to partners, including congregations, as they seek to address similar issues in their community.

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

Partnerships are the core of Week of Compassion. Everything WoC does is done in and through a remarkable network of partnerships. Much of that work is done through our ecumenical partners, and WoC is repeatedly recognized as enabling Disciples to be important participants in partner organizations like Church World Service, Action by Churches Together, Foods Resource Bank, IMAWorld Health, Bread for the World, Habitat for Humanity, Souper Bowl of Caring, One Great Hour of Sharing and other church partners. Within the Disciples structures, WoC undergirds Refugee and Immigration Ministries and the Office of Disciples Volunteering in Disciples Home Missions and the Disciples Hurricane Recovery Initiative mentioned above. Also mentioned earlier, WoC supports the Global Mission Intern program and the Critical Presence Initiative in Global Ministries/Division of Overseas Ministries, as well as providing significant disaster and development grants through GM's Area Offices and overseas church partners. The Council on Christian Unity is a very valuable partner with whom we converse regularly around issues of ecumenicity, cooperative humanitarian ministries and the like, as well as working with CCU to support such programs as Bossey Scholarships for emerging church leaders from the developing world at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland. The Christian Church Foundation has been a great partner in managing, promoting and building the WoC endowment program, as has Church Extension in providing stewardship of WoC dollars between the time they are received and the time they go out into the world to bring help and hope to hurting people. Certainly our partnerships with regions are important as we work with numerous regional and area offices each year to respond to Disciples affected by disasters, support regional work trips and participate in regional and area events.

Of special note in 2008 was the commencement of "CURAJ" (Compassion, Unity, Reconciliation and Justice), a new table of partnership convening the ministries of Week of Compassion, Council on Christian Unity, Reconciliation Ministry and the Office of General Minister and President. CURAJ is an exploration of how we might re-energize our passion as Disciples to our common witness and mission of compassion, justice, reconciliation and unity.

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

There is no partnership more important for Week of Compassion than the partnership we share with the nearly 2500 congregations that make the work and witness of WoC possible. That partnership involves, of course, far more than a financial relationship. In 2008, WoC supported approximately 150 congregations in work/mission trips; relied upon 75 congregations to respond to relief and humanitarian needs within their

memberships and communities; and encouraged nearly 500 Disciples youth groups in their participation in the Souper Bowl of Caring. WoC also partnered with more than 22 congregations to combat hunger in the world with Foods Resource Bank local growing projects. For each congregation leading a growing project, WoC provided a \$1000 solidarity grant. For the \$22,000 WoC invested in these Disciples growing projects, harvest proceeds totaled more than \$240,000. There were also many Disciples churches engaged in the "Tents of Hope" campaign for Darfur, Sudan. Five of those churches were present in November in Washington, DC, for the culmination of the campaign – creating a "tent city" of the tents local churches had raised in solidarity with those in Darfur. In partnership with the Christian Church Foundation, WoC is also helping those congregations whose visible presence has closed but whose ministry continues through permanent funds that support WoC in perpetuity. Numerous existing congregations have also chosen to undergird their commitment to Disciples' humanitarian work in the world by establishing similar funds in the Foundation. These are just a few expressions of the ways in which WoC helps congregations fulfill the mission Christ has given to them to respond to those Christ called "the least of these, my brothers and sisters."

When Christ spoke of finding one's life through giving it away, he surely was speaking to communities of faith as well as people of faith. WoC becomes one of the ways, not the only way certainly, but a very crucial and important way, for Disciples congregations to engage in compassionate, self-emptying, life-giving, transforming ministry around the world, around the year. Week of Compassion continues to lift up joyous and humble thanks to God, Disciples congregations, members and friends for their steadfast trust and support, without which none of this ministry could be accomplished.

# WORLD CONVENTION

(CHRISTIAN - CHURCHES OF CHRIST - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Jeff Weston, General Secretary/Executive Director  
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World Convention provides both the opportunity and means of sharing between churches and individuals within the Stone-Campbell family of churches around the world.

It seeks to build up fellowship, understanding and common purpose within this global church family on an everyday basis, and through quadrennial conventions. Our ministry in the last year has consisted of:

- a) Publishing the global magazine "*World Christian*".
- b) Publishing the monthly email newsletter, "*ChristiaNet*".
- c) Maintaining the World Convention web site which includes a growing number of national descriptions of your church family's witness.
- d) Emphasizing your church family's unique story and witness through the writing of articles and by speaking in Churches and assemblies.
- e) Lifting up daily global prayer through our prayer network, "11: 11 - Get Connected".
- f) Strengthening networking through global correspondence, visiting and networking with leaders from various countries and 'streams' within the movement.
- g) Maintaining links with other Christian World Communions.
- h) Organizing the quadrennial World Convention global gathering.

The 17<sup>th</sup> World Convention was conducted in Nashville, Tennessee, July 30 - August 3. The theme was "*Together in Christ*," emphasizing the foundational principles of the World Convention. A steering committee comprising representatives from the three streams planned the convention under the leadership Dr C. Robert Wetzel. The opening night speaker was Cynthia Hale from Ray of Hope Christian Church. Many exciting options were on offer including 46 workshops which were each presented twice. There was a strong "missional" emphasis present in all aspects of the program. New initiatives included participation in both local and international mission projects, including the construction of two house frames to be used by Habitat for Humanity and the internal painting of a local High School gymnasium. Comprehensive and creative youth and children's programs were provided. The closing communion service included a celebration of the bicentennial of Thomas Campbell's writing of the "*Declaration and Address*" and the induction of new President Mr. B. J. Mpofu from Zimbabwe. Six major sponsors formed partnerships with us to facilitate the World Convention, however we still had a deficit of around \$17,000 due to the smaller than anticipated number of registrations. In total we believe that around 3,000 people attended at least one of the events at World Convention.

We praise God that 10 overseas leaders from two-third countries were able to be sponsored to the convention. Many of these people have never had an opportunity to travel outside their own country. They were encouraged to be able to share with likeminded brothers and sisters from around the world. Our preconvention event the Global Leaders' Forum featured many resources available to Church leaders today including, print, video and computer tools. Each two third leader was given a large parcel of these resources to take home with them.

The Global Women Connecting retreat attracted 75 participants and was viewed as a great success in drawing women from all three streams of the movement.

The 18<sup>th</sup> World Convention will be conducted in Goiania, Brazil, July 2012. The theme will be *Sharing the Love that Unites* based upon Romans 15: 5&6.

This past year we published a revised edition of "*The Traditions of Christmas*". This popular book written by our General Secretary/Executive Director Jeff Weston is an e-book, it is made available at no cost. Two books written by Clinton Holloway were released at the 17<sup>th</sup> World Convention. The first titled "*Together in Christ, A History of the World Convention of Churches of Christ 1930-2008*" is a synopsis of each of the seventeen global gatherings of the World Convention. It sells for \$5.00 plus shipping. The second book "*Lest We Forget, Meditations at the Meal of Remembrance*" is a collection of 75 meditations for use in the local church's observance of the Lord's Supper. The cost is \$11 plus postage. Both these books are available from our Nashville office. Clinton Holloway was also a joint editor of the book "*One Church, A Bicentennial Celebration of Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address*". This book is the spring board for discussion on the relevance of the *Declaration and Address* for today's church. Jeff Weston also wrote a Communion Meditation in the book.

We continue to develop profiles on the 180 countries where the Stone-Campbell movement has witness. Historian Clinton Holloway has researched and now written profiles on 125 countries. These have all been posted on our web site.

A new aspect of our ministry has been the development of mentoring relationships with a number of Church leaders and Pastors of two-third world Churches. Many of these folk are in isolated locations and lack pastoral support. Executive Director Jeff Weston has maintained a relationship via email, personal mail and visits. At present pastors from six countries are in the program. Jeff Weston has undertaken teaching ministry in Brazil and Australia this past year. We receive many invitations for Jeff to visit and teach overseas.

Of major disappointment for us has been the inability of Jeff and Rosemary Weston to obtain Permanent Residency status in the United States. As their current work permits conclude in 2009 they have decided to conclude their ministry with us and return to Australia. The Weston's returned to Australia on April 22, 2009. At present the Board is considering our future direction in light of this decision. We believe God is in control and we must trust seeking direction and guidance for the future.

Due to the high production costs we have revised our magazine "*World Christian*". It is now produced as an e-document and is available for download as a PDF file from our web site or via email. For those without electronic access we provide at minimal cost print copies.

The existence of World Convention is a constant reminder to all within our movement that the church is universal and that all those with roots in the 19th Century Restoration Movement are bound together through a common heritage and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Unity (in order that we might effectively represent the Gospel) is our polar star. Everything we do as individual Christians and as the Church, we must do with the understanding that we are a part of the one Body of Jesus Christ.