

General Board Makes Major Changes During Its 2009 Meeting



General Minister and President Sharon Watkins speaks at General Board

The 2009 General Board gave its stamp of approval to a number of changes that signal new ways of handling many church-wide matters.

During a nearly four-day period in Indianapolis from April 18-21, the board discussed new means of ordering ministry, better partnering with congregations for mission, and restructuring the General Board to increase effectiveness. Fourteen resolutions also were forwarded by the board to this summer's General Assembly, including the ordering of ministry document and a resolution that provides new approaches for Disciples to express their concerns on moral, ethical or justice issues.

"I feel very good about the work that was accomplished," said General Minister and President Sharon Watkins. "While it was an intense few days, I believe we made decisions that will affect how the church functions for the next generation."

In her opening address, Watkins told those in attendance that Disciples live in a place that can best be described as "Already...not yet." It's "Already" because in Jesus Christ, God has already done all God needs to do to make our lives complete and whole, she said. "It's not yet... because we are not yet the people or the individuals or the church God created us to be. But God has already given us a vision and called us to be a movement for wholeness."

Watkins reminded General Board members of their responsibility to faithfully review reports and business items and to prepare Assembly resolutions that help us live into the church's vision of true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice. She challenged the board to consider proposals that "help us navigate these challenging times."

One issue that addresses changes in church-wide ministry was presented to the board in General Assembly Resolution 0922: Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The General Commission on Ministry (GCOM) forwarded the resolution and its accompanying report to the board, saying the material presented a more inclusive way to call clergy to church leadership.

The document is the first update of policies and procedures for ministerial credentialing in the United States and Canada since 2003. The document has been six years in the writing and has been informed by hundreds of comments and suggestions from across the Church. It "orders" ministry into commissioned and ordained, with commissioned ministry replacing what is now known as licensed ministry. There would be two categories of Commissioned Ministers – those seeking ordination, and those not seeking ordination.



(2009 General Board Overview Continued)

Commissioned ministry will continue to provide for ministry in a specific place or time, just as licensed ministry does now.

The proposal also delineates that there are two educational tracks for those seeking ordination: an apprentice track and a seminary track. Both tracks expect candidates to demonstrate competency in 16 areas of ministerial practice. Those in the apprentice track would work with regions who are urged to develop an educational program either alone or in collaboration with other regions. A special task force will be appointed by GCOM to assist this educational process enabling both apprentice track and seminary track candidates in achieving the 16 ministerial competencies.

If adopted by the General Assembly, the new ordering of ministry approach would not be fully implemented until August 2011, to allow time for implementation from regions and congregations.

"We recognize that certainly there is a lot to think through about these issues," said Carolyn Higginbotham, Vice President and Academic Dean at Christian Theological Seminary, who was part of a team of GCOM members presenting the report. "There are a number of questions that include how pastors of affiliating churches and pastors in the apprentice track receive recognition within the Disciples, about leadership and about not diminishing the value of a theological (seminary) education."

Mission Alignment Coordinating Council

The General Board spent several hours reviewing the report and nine recommendations submitted by the Mission Alignment Coordinating Council (MACC). The MACC was created at the request of the 2008 General Board and charged with looking at ways the Church might better align its life around the Church's mission priorities.

A 12-member council was named last May and held four meetings over the past year. The council built on information from three years of conversations that GMP Watkins had with congregations, regions, and general ministries, as well as upon the vision, mission and mission priorities articulated in the 2020 Vision. (www.newchurchministry.org/ministry/2020-vision.cfm)

As part of its work, MACC also held conversations with

regional ministers and moderators, general ministry presidents, staff and boards, and Racial/Ethnic ministry leaders.

On Sunday, April 19, several members of the MACC spoke to General Board about their work and recommendations. They reminded the board that the MACC's work was focused around three desired outcomes: clarity about the General Board's responsibility for the mission of the church; congregations resourced for mission, and one church embracing diversity.

"The initiative and hard work of so very many, many people in such varied settings across our church is amazing and humbling to contemplate," said Cherilyn Williams, a member of MACC from University Place, Washington. "And trying to fit all this into our current context of numerical and cultural realities makes a case for transformative change."

After discussion in small groups and plenary conversations, MACC members voted on Tuesday, April 21 to adopt the MACC report and its nine recommendations, although in some cases with amendments. The proposals do not need General Assembly action. A few of the highlighted recommendations ask that the Church:

- Adopt and implement new standing rules for the General Board regarding mission review and dialogue. This recommendation ties in with a separate action from the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform that reorganizes the work of the General Board into seven committees that include: Governance, Mission Finance and General Assembly.

The final proposal says a General Ministry Covenantal Dialogue Committee, assigned from General Board membership, will create a process for conducting mission review and dialogue. That process will start in 2010. The committee will select a ministry for the initial review, and will look at other ministries on a rotating basis. The results of the initial review and suggested changes to the process will be reported to the 2011 General Board.

- Starting in 2009, the General Minister and President will convene a table with covenantal partners, beginning with Racial/Ethnic ministry executives, for an ongoing conversation about church-wide pastoral matters. The pastoral table will provide the church with a formal forum to witness,

share wisdom and address concerns. Details of the table's implementation will be determined by the partners, with the GMP making a report on the table's implementation at the 2010 General Board.

- North American Pacific/Asian Disciples will be moved from its place within Disciples Home Missions into a more equitable position alongside the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and National Convocation. Its ministry as a whole will have a covenantal relationship to the General Board. Anticipated implementation is January 1, 2010.

- The Council of General Ministries (CGM) is being called upon to bring a proposal to the October 2009 Administrative Committee to permanently reallocate the CGM escrow. The escrow funds were released from the National Benevolent Association by General Board action in 2005.

- Extend the term of the MACC for one year to allow it to broaden its conversations with key ministry partners around the adaptive changes required for domestic ministry also was approved.

To see the full list of approved MACC recommendations, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/o5vjzr>

A Call For Action

Disciples will have new ways of addressing moral, ethical or justice issues, as outlined in Resolution 0925 – A Call for Action. If adopted by the General Assembly, the resolution would serve as an invitation of the General Assembly to the whole church to address issues that require urgent presence and witness by the church in all its expressions. That action may include prayer, study, discernment, reflection and response. Up to four calls could be put forward in any Assembly year.

"We are forwarding the Call for Action to the General Assembly because the General Board acknowledges that true witness goes far beyond merely passing resolutions," said GMP Watkins, after the unanimous vote on the resolution. "I hope that this approach will help us as a church learn from each other and grow in our understanding of what it means to live as faithful followers of Christ."

The resolution was developed by the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform in response to a request



Moderator Newell Williams talks while the MACC committee listens in.

from the 2008 General Board to look at new ways for the Church to address issues of pressing social concern. The "call" will combine three categories of General Assembly business: Sense of the Assembly Resolutions, Study Documents and Items for Reflection and Research.

General Board review of the call proposal resulted in a final resolution that increases the number of calls per Assembly from three up to four. Provision also was added to the resolution to allow for emergency resolutions to be treated as a call.

All calls submitted will be listed in the General Assembly docket even if a particular call is not selected for widespread conversation and action within the Church. Changes in the Standing Rules for the General Assembly spell out that even non-selected calls may be referred to other expressions of the Church for prayer, study, reflection, discernment and response. The vote for calls that do go before the Assembly will be to affirm or not to affirm and the numeric and percentage results of a ballot vote will be posted and shared with the Church.

"I think we are moving in a good direction," said James Powell, President of Church Extension. "The new call proposal will give us the opportunity to deal with issues theologically and educationally and will allow for action, reflection and discernment."

Regional Ministers Focus on Helping Congregations Grow and Prepare for Mission Imperative

The College of Regional Ministers (CRM) reported their ongoing process to help sustain and grow Disciples congregations during a General Board presentation on April 20. A panel of regional ministers informed the Board that the CRM devoted two days to a retreat in January, where they considered the Church imperative calling on General and Regional ministries to strengthen congregational life for mission.

“Our major priority is about teamwork as we aspire to do the work that God has called us to do.” — William Edwards

Moderated by Ruth Fletcher, president of the College of Regional Ministers and the Regional Minister in Montana, the panel included William Edwards, Regional Pastor for Ohio; Rebecca Hale, Transitional Interim Regional Minister of the Northwest Region; Tom Jewell, Regional Pastor in Oklahoma; Paxton Jones, Regional Minister in Kansas; and John Richardson, Regional Minister in North Carolina.

At the retreat, Rick Morse, Vice President for New Church Ministry and Mission Initiatives with Church Extension, presented the regional ministers with a statistical analysis of the current state of congregational life among Disciples. It showed that 47 percent of all Disciples congregations have 60 or fewer members, and 79 percent of Disciples churches have 120 or fewer members. Morse also noted that about 50 percent of Disciples congregations are located in small towns or rural areas, while 80 percent of the population in the United States lives in cities or suburban areas.

Morse also reported that while congregations continue to struggle to grow in membership, giving by individual Disciples has actually increased, outpacing inflation. Congregations are challenged financially because churches are spending more on salaries and building upkeep and far less on mission giving.

“The priority for regional ministers is to have a conversation

with congregations, and encourage conversations among congregations so that they can structure their churches to become more relevant to the 21st century,” said Hale at the General Board meeting. “The challenge in the Northwest is to help congregations sustain budgets, membership and full-time ministers.”

Jones, the Regional Minister in Kansas, added, “The biggest challenge we face is there is not enough time, staff and resources. Our greatest joy is new church starts. When things go awry in churches, our first priority is the congregations and the pastors.”

“Our major priority is about teamwork as we aspire to do the work that God has called us to do,” added Edwards of the Christian Church in Ohio. “If we do the work He has called us to do, God will provide the resources.”

Several new regional ministers were recognized at the General Board meeting, including Mary Ann Glover, transitional regional minister for the Northeastern Region; in the Upper Midwest region, Bill Spangler-Dunning, lead transitional regional minister and Don Hiscox, regional minister for congregations and clergy care, and William B. Allen, interim regional minister in Pennsylvania.

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Lexington Theological Seminary Begins Process of Reinventing Itself



Jim Johnson, President of Lexington Theological Seminary, talks about ways the seminary is making changes to ensure its future success.

Facing one of the most difficult financial challenges in its 144-year history, Lexington Theological Seminary (LTS) is making profound changes in the way it delivers education. The seminary will switch to an apprenticeship model focused on vocational formation: spiritually, intellectually and practically, the seminary's president, James P. Johnson, told the General Board April 21.

"Let me state as clearly as I can, that this is not the traditional way of doing theological education." — Jim Johnson

The model will be competency-based so that students will be required to demonstrate their ability to use the information in the church. All students will have accountable positions in a congregation with an assigned mentor. Instead of 12 weeks of classes meeting three times each week, new modules will be available in a wide variety of learning possibilities, including online, with requirements fulfilled in a variety of ways, said Johnson.

"It will be possible, we believe, to complete a Master of Divinity degree without ever living in Lexington, Ky.," said Johnson.

Lexington Seminary had already begun restructuring to become more efficient when last year's economic downturn

forced the seminary to drastically accelerate that process. By November 2008, the value of its endowment had dropped from \$23 million to about \$18.5 million. In addition, the seminary's restricted endowment had fallen \$4.1 million below the minimum amount required by state statute. LTS is affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

In January the LTS Board of Trustees took swift action to protect and sustain the institution. The board reaffirmed the school's commitment to restoring LTS's restricted endowment to its corpus value, and declared that the school was in financial exigency. The staff was instructed to develop an operational budget that cut more than \$2 million from the previous year's \$4.1 million budget, and established a goal of raising \$400,000 in new, unanticipated gift money.

Faculty tenure also was terminated, and eight staff positions and five full-time faculty jobs eliminated.

"Let me state as clearly as I can, that this is not the traditional way of doing theological education," Johnson explained to the General Board. "We are not just trying to tweak the system. This is a different model. It is based on different assumptions, and it has, hopefully, different outcomes."

As part of the model, parish ministers, congregational lay leaders, regional ministers, general ministry leaders, institutional leaders and faculty will help to mentor students who are in the process of formation, Johnson said.

Following Johnson's presentation, General Minister and President Sharon Watkins told the General Board: "It's important for us to be aware of issues such as this so that we can understand how to walk in solidarity with ministries in times of difficulty. LTS is inventing a new way of delivering education that has new assumptions and new understandings. This is what we mean when we say adaptive change."



Church's Financial Ministries Remain Sound Despite Economic Challenges

The church's financial ministries gave an update on their financial health during a presentation to the General Board on Saturday, April 18. Gary Kidwell, President of the Christian Church Foundation, commented on the status of the foundation and three other financial ministries: Christian Board of Publication, Church Extension, and the Pension Fund.

"Prudence, due diligence, integrity, proactively addressing the crisis, and a focus on serving the long-term interests of the church."



Christian Board of Publication reported that while it faces significant challenges in the current economic downturn, it remains financially sound. Its imprint, Chalice Press, saw double-digit growth in 2008 in book sales. The "Unbinding the Gospel" series has reached over 12,000 congregations in nearly 50 denominations, seven countries and all 50 states. Although there were steep declines in sales of products related to church programming and worship materials, CBP still had strong asset and liquidity ratios, positive cash flow for the year, and a net surplus of five percent on

sales. CBP ended 2008 in the black for the sixth consecutive year.



Church Extension realized \$240,000 in income from operations, an increase of \$565,000 over 2007, Kidwell said. Faithful giving led to gift income of more than \$1.38 million last year, one of the largest gift totals in Church Extension's history. While total net assets declined \$3.48 million last year due to the market downturn, Church Extension continued to service the capital needs of Disciples, advancing \$22.25 million to congregations. The New Church program of Church Extension helped to start 40 congregations last year, for a total of 582 new congregations started since 2001 by the end of 2008.



The church's 114-year old Pension Fund saw its assets decline from \$2.7 billion in 2007 to \$2 billion at the end of 2008. Nevertheless, the Pension Fund outperformed when compared against the major market performance

indices. In its written report to the General Board, the Pension Fund noted that there has been no decrease in pensions or pension credits as a result of the financial downturn. The fund provides retirement, disability and survivor benefits as well as related financial services to enable participants to live comfortably in their retirement years. It also administers health and wellness programs on behalf of the Church.



The Christian Church Foundation received over \$33 million in gifts and new investments last year, Kidwell noted. However, assets under management slipped from \$436 million in 2007 to \$314 million in 2008. But in spite of the economy, gifts made through the foundation in 2008 totaled \$11.7 million, one of the strongest years in its history.

"What do you hear consistently across all of these ministries?" asked Kidwell. "Prudence, due diligence, integrity, proactively addressing the crisis, and a focus on serving the long-term interests of the church."

Disciples Share Thoughts and Reflections on Becoming a Multicultural Church



Leaders from across the life of the Church spoke of healing, forgiveness and hope in recapping the work of a consultation on “Becoming a Multicultural and Inclusive Church,” which took place in Indianapolis last year. The consultation was held at the Fatima Retreat House March 27-29, 2008.

“We have been multicultural throughout our life. The big challenge is to be fully inclusive.”
— Robert Welsh

Participants at the consultation shared their reflections on the event with General Board members on April 21. They noted that the consultation led to discussions on what it means to be ‘whole church’ and on how to truly become a multicultural and inclusive communion. The gathering was attended by equal numbers of Hispanic, African-American, Asian-Pacific, and White Disciples. A committee of the consultation, the Mutual Accountability Team, sponsored the General Board presentation.

“We had a chance to hear from all of our respective constituents,” said Timothy James, Associate General Minister and Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation, which represents African-American Disciples. “To hear of their history is to learn that we’ve been here all the time. We’ve been here as African Americans since day one. We were at Cane Ridge.”

Disciples have a long history of ministry with Asian

One panel from the 2008 Consultation on Becoming a Multicultural and Inclusive Church addresses General Board.

Americans dating back to 1891, when the first Chinese Disciples church started in Portland, Ore., said Geunhee Yu, Executive Pastor for North American/Pacific Asian Disciples (NAPAD). The rapid growth of Disciples Asian American ministries was stopped due to anti-Asian hostility by such laws as the National Origin Act of 1923, and by the internment of Japanese Americans in 1942.

“Nevertheless, God did not let us, the Disciples, go easy into the captivity of racism,” said Yu. Today, NAPAD, ministry is growing by leaps and bounds, and “we, the NAPAD are happy and proud to be part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),” Yu said.

Huberto Pimentel, National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries, said the first Mexican Disciples church was started as early as 1889. Today there are Disciples who are primarily of Mexican heritage, but also many more with a Puerto-Rican background. The Disciples Hispanic conventions across the U.S. include fast growing churches that originated in Mexico, Puerto Rico, and other parts of the Americas.

“We are not becoming a multicultural church,” said Robert Welsh, President of the Council on Christian Unity, who called the consultation into being. “We have been multicultural throughout our life. The big challenge is to be fully inclusive.” Welsh wrote about the experience in an essay entitled, “Report on a Consultation: Becoming the Church

(Becoming A Multicultural Church Continued)

God Wants Us To Be." The report can be seen at:
<http://tinyurl.com/q78379>

*"When we said we wanted to be a pro-reconciling/anti-racism church we may have been skeptical but God believes us."
— Sharon Watkins*

Minister of Reconciliation April Johnson, who moderated the session, said the consultation had resulted in a "charge for something called mutual accountability for all members of this Church."

A second panel offered thoughts on hope for the Church. Moderator Newell Williams who was one of the presenters at the consultation, said the meeting helped him rediscover the power of Christian worship to "unite us to God and to one another." Eric Brown, Senior Minister of Woodland Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Columbus, Ohio, said the most hopeful aspect that he took from the consultation was the dialogue over what it would take to truly become a multicultural and an inclusive church.

"At this event, I saw a microscopic glimpse of what it will look like when all of us come before God, and truly I like what I saw," said Elizabeth Carrasquillo, who was a staff member at Christian Theological Seminary last year. She now works at the Division of Overseas Ministries.

Rick Morse, Vice President for New Church Ministry and Mission Initiatives, who also participated in the consultation, reported to the General Board that 80 percent of the people at new church planter trainings are people of color.

"When we said we wanted to be a pro-reconciling/anti-racism church we may have been skeptical but God believed us," said Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President, who also participated in the consultation. "We as Disciples are known around the world for work toward unity. The consultation reminded me that in order to be Christian unity people, it's more than church to church, it's people to people."



Joseph Cobb of South Carolina listens to discussion at General Board.

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***Pension Fund Makes Two Modifications To Its
Defined Benefit Plan***

The General Board approved amendments to the Pension Plan during its spring meeting. According to Pension Plan documents, the General Board is to review actions by the Pension Fund Board of Directors when those actions pertain to changes in the defined benefit program.

The General Board approved a request by the Pension Fund to adopt clarifying definitions in the Pension Plan with respect to retirement and spousal benefits. The former clarifies when retirement benefits may be started and the latter to assure uniformity of administration

throughout the country.

According to Jim Hamlett, Pension Fund President, “Neither part of the technical changes altered Pension Fund practices. The purpose of the changes is to write into the plan document the basis of administration as it has existed for some years.”



General Board's Work Will Be Reorganized Into Committees



Members of the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform present to the General Board.

A new organization plan for the General Board will replace the current system of sections and standing committees that has guided the board's work. At its April meeting, the board approved a plan that reorganizes it into seven committees which include board members and ex-officio representatives.

The plan was the work of the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform which looked at new ways to increase the effectiveness of General Board. The new committees include: Governance, Mission Finance, the Audit Committee, Committee on Counsel

and Mediation, General Ministry Covenantal Dialogue Committee, the General Assembly Committee, and the General Minister and President's Vision Advisory Committee.

Examples of the new committees' work includes the work of the Governance Committee which would be responsible for board member education, reviewing, processes, structures and rules, and receiving reports from the General Nominating Committee and the General Committee on Ministry. The Mission Finance Committee will provide oversight of the mission funding system and assist staff in interpreting and promoting Disciples Mission Fund.

The General Ministry Covenantal Dialogue Committee will engage in dialogue with the General Ministries of the Church and report the results of those conversations to the General Board and the respective General Ministry boards. The General Minister and President's Vision Advisory Committee will meet at the request of the General Minister and President for advice related to the interpretation and implementation of the Church's mission, vision and identity. To learn more, go to:

www.disciples.org/GeneralBoardoftheChristianChurch/tabid/334/Default.aspx

Wholeness Café Conversations

You will not want to miss the Wholeness Café during the 2009 General Assembly, which will take place on Thursday, July 30, at the Indiana Convention Center. It will be a chance for Disciples to sit face-to-face to address what it really means to live into our newly stated identity:

"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."



General Board Gets Update On Disciples Mission Fund Giving

A Disciples Mission Fund (DMF) update for 2008 was given to General Board members by Todd Adams, Associate General Minister and Vice President, who stated that the fund held relatively steady despite significant downturns in the economy.

DMF, the church's common mission fund, declined 3.08 percent in 2008 for a drop of \$442,868 from amounts received in 2007. Slightly more than half of that decline

"We recognized 129 outstanding congregations last year who gave more than 10 percent of their operating budget."
— Todd Adams

- \$285,500 - came from a decrease in congregational giving. One bright spot in giving was Blessings Boxes contributions from women, which rose slightly by \$3,847. The overall fund stood at \$13.9 million at the end of 2008.

Adams pointed out that several new strategies are being employed to enhance and expand DMF giving. A partnership with the Office of Disciples Women is underway to train 70-100 "DMF Advocates" who will be trained to speak about the fund at the women's 2010 Quadrennial. Adams also emphasized the use of personal visits to congregations to establish better relational networks.

"We recognized 129 outstanding congregations last year who gave more than 10 percent of their operating budget," said Adams. "We also will recognize our top 100 givers at a luncheon at the 2009 General Assembly in July and through continuing visits." Adams added that about 485 churches gave 80 percent of monies contributed to DMF.

DMF dollars in 2008 were distributed with about 50.6 percent going to regions, about 39.6 percent to general ministries and approximately 9.8 percent to higher education.

A status report also was given on the church's four Special Day Offerings: Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving and Christmas, each of which supports special ministries of

the wider church. In 2008 there was a \$119,000 decline in Special Day offerings when compared to 2007. The use of more videos to supplement the offering, expanding distribution of materials to additional congregations, and outreach to congregations that lack Internet access will likely have a positive impact on these offerings, Adams said.

Statistics for the church's Special Mission Funds, Week of Compassion and Reconciliation, showed a positive increase. Week of Compassion increased \$49,792 and Reconciliation Ministry rose \$14,142.



Adonna Bowman of Disciples Women and K.K. Wiseman, representing Disciples Home Missions, listen at General Board.

General Board Sends A Variety Of Resolutions To The General Assembly For Action

The General Board forwarded 14 resolutions to the 2009 General Assembly that looked at climate change, global mission outreach and new ways for Disciples to address moral, ethical or justice issues.

Resolution 0916, "Be a Global Mission Church," identifies Global Mission as a value that connects all Disciples and calls on the church to live out this commitment in current and future mission priorities. Congregations and regions are asked to express their commitment through such activities as prayer, education and giving to the work of global mission through Disciples Mission Fund.

Resolution 0919, "Christian Unity and War" notes that Disciples of Christ have not always been explicit about their commitment to Christian unity and their witness to working for peace. The General Board's recommendation to the Assembly is that the resolution be referred to the Council on Christian Unity and Disciples Peace Fellowship for further work. It may develop into a call for Action at the 2011 General Assembly.

Two churches in the United States and two churches in Canada submitted Resolution 0921, "Statement on Global Climate Change" to the General Board. The resolution noted that people of faith need to heed the call to be faithful stewards and caretakers of God's creation and asked that all expressions of the church educate themselves, their communities and their elected officials on the consequences of climate change. It also asked Disciples to examine their own actions to determine if their actions contribute or mitigate factors to climate change and "faithfully and conscientiously" to act accordingly.

Resolution 0925, "A Call for Action" creates new ways for Disciples to address moral, ethical or justice issues. The new 'calls' would replace Sense of the Assembly resolutions. (Please see related information about the Call for Action resolution under the General Board overview on page 3).

To see a full list of all resolutions that will go before the 2009 General Assembly in Indianapolis, visit page 13.

Mark Your Calendars For The 2011 And 2013 Assemblies

Disciples could experience the sights and sounds of Orlando, Fla. at the **2013** General Assembly. The General Board voted to recommend holding the Assembly in Orlando from **July 13 to 17** following a presentation from William Morrison, Regional Minister in Florida. Both the region and the City of Orlando offered incentives to attract the upcoming event.

The 2013 Assembly will continue to offer outstanding worship, fellowship, and opportunities for Disciples to learn from an impressive list of preachers, teachers and from each other. If held in Orlando, those who attend the Assembly will be able to take advantage of attractions in the city,

which ranks as one of the country's most popular vacation spots. Orlando is home to Disney World, Universal Studios Florida and Sea World. It also boasts an array of natural, cultural and heritage attractions, as well as a growing number of Disciples churches. Voting representatives at the 2009 General Assembly will make the final decision this summer.

*Don't forget to include on your calendar the dates for the **2011** General Assembly in Nashville, Tenn. Famous for its southern hospitality and country music heritage, Nashville will host the Assembly from **July 9 to July 13.***



Resolutions To Be Considered At The 2009 General Assembly

No. 0915

Axis of Friendship (Sense-of-the-Assembly)

No. 0916

Be a Global Mission Church (Operational Business Item)

No. 0917

Celebrate and Reaffirm Our Commitment Towards the Vision of Church Planting
(Operational Business Item)

No. 0918

Changing the Meeting Time of General Assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
(Operational Business Item)

No. 0919

Christian Unity and War (Sense-of-the-Assembly)

No. 0920

Renewing Disciples Support for Farmworker Ministry (Operational Business Item)

No.0921

Statement on Climate Change (Sense-of-the-Assembly)

No. 0922

Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (Operational Business Item)

No. 0923

Call for an Open Meeting Policy for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (Operational Business Item)

No. 0924

Special Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly (Operational Business Item)

No. 0925

A Call for Action (Operational Business Item)

No. 0926

Report of the General Nominating Committee (Operational Business Item)

No. 0927

Report of the Time and Place Committee (Operational Business Item)

No. 0928

Change in Regional Boundaries (Operational Business Item)

For full details on the resolutions, visit the 2009 General Assembly website at: www.disciples.org/ga

Moderator Team Nominees Include Businessman, Pastor And Women's Leader



Larry Brown, a member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Chickasha, Okla., has been nominated to serve as the next Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). A businessman, Brown founded Midwest Towers, a manufacturing and construction company in 1987. As a Disciple, he has served the Oklahoma Region as moderator, chairperson for the 2002 Miracle Day, and chairperson of the 2004 Annual Fund.

He served on the Search and Call Committee for the General Minister and President in 2004, and has been a moderator, committee chair, and elder for his congregation. Brown received a bachelor's degree from the University of California Davis in 1968. "This is an awesome responsibility," said Brown of his nomination. "As our Mission Imperative says, I look forward to helping take our Church 'from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.'"



A longtime Indiana pastor and community leader, **Juan Rodriguez**, has been nominated as First Vice Moderator. Rodriguez has been pastor of Iglesia del Pueblo - Hope Center - in Hammond, Ind., for the past 28 years. He was born in Puerto Rico and reared in New York City. He was called by the Indiana Region as organizing pastor of Iglesia del Pueblo in 1981. He also served simultaneously as pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Hammond from 1986 to 1992.

Rodriguez earned a doctor of ministry degree at McCormick Theological Seminary in 2008 and his bachelor's degree from Bethany College. "I believe in our vision for unity," said Rodriguez. "I believe in the oneness of the church and in the commitment of our denomination to assist one another."



A Disciples lay minister from North Carolina, **Marilyn F. Williams**, has been nominated to serve as Second Vice Moderator. Williams is a member of Covenant Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Cary, N.C., where she is co-chair of Women's Ministries and a member of the choir. She currently serves on the International Disciples Women Ministry (IDWM) Executive Committee.

Williams has served in many positions in women's ministries at the local, regional and national level. She is Vice Moderator-elect for the North Carolina Region and is 2nd Vice President-elect for the National Convocation Women's Ministry. Williams is a graduate of Lay Academy Religious Studies at Barton College. She lives in Raleigh, N.C., where she works as a dental hygienist. "My greatest joy is spending time with my grandchildren," she said.

The General Board has forwarded the nominations of the Moderator Team nominees to the 2009 General Assembly for approval.