

**ANNUAL REPORT 2009
CANADA REGION**

FULFILLMENT OF PARAGRAPH 20 OF THE DESIGN

With the loss of our on-line Disciples' History and Polity course offered by Disciples Seminary Foundation, we discovered and offered to our pastors the History and Polity course designed by Mark Toulouse of Brite Divinity School. Dr. Toulouse worked with a local mentor in Toronto and students in need of the course.

The Regional Minister and Area Ministers have worked with new church planters to facilitate attendance at New Church Ministries training events. Visitation to new churches yielded a need to know more about church organization with regard to budget and finance and stewardship. Education in these areas is on-going and we have found that much of our new church practices are culturally rooted. We hope through education and support congregations will come to realize the importance of supporting the wider church and compensating their pastors.

The region has doubled its representation on service committees of the Canadian Council of Churches. This has been a concern for several years.

The Regional Minister was blessed to have the opportunity to share ministry with other Regional Ministers on a Global Missions experience to Congo. The experience was then shared with congregations throughout Canada.

St. Thomas Christian Church, St. Thomas, Ontario, has donated land for the building of a hospice and senior living complex.

During our regional assembly, over 3,000 pairs of socks were gathered by Disciples churches and donated to a local homeless shelter. During our assembly, dozens of youth participated in service projects in southern Nova Scotia – painting a church for a less fortunate congregation, clearing land and beaches.

FOUR MISSION PRIORITIES

NEW CHURCH STARTS

A new church start, All People's Church, in Georgetown, Prince Edward Island is off to a very promising start. The church is sharing space with a former Disciples' church, Crossroads Christian Church (considered to be the first Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) church in Canada). Two cell churches, one in Charlottetown, PEI and another in Georgetown are both promising.

CHURCH TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS

Some very innovative ministries like "A Walk Through Bethlehem", a multi-faith community service, a coffee-bar, a tea room, have helped breathe new life into some of our congregations.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

In the past year we have had two pastors complete the Interim Ministry Network training. Four pastors have completed the New Church Ministry Training. One pastor has returned to seminary to complete his M.Div. Through the ample financial aid of the College of Churches of Christ, Canadian pastors are able to achieve academic excellence and pastoral skills they may not have had the opportunity to do so otherwise.

PRORECONCILIATION EFFORTS

Our pro-reconciling efforts have focused in the areas of human trafficking (especially with regards to the 2010 Olympics to be held in Vancouver), aboriginal issues and concerns regarding our environment. One of our churches has declared themselves to be a “green church” embracing the tenets of the Alverna Covenant. This has also resulted in the development a General Assembly resolution to be presented at the 2009 General Assembly.

CHURCH TRANSFORMATION

Some of our churches have utilized Martha Reese’s “Unbinding” trilogy and found certain aspects helpful. We have two churches working diligently at how they present the gospel within the four walls of their buildings and especially outside the walls of their churches. Every effort is made to communicate the good work these churches are doing and to partner them with other churches desiring to undertake transformative work.

The vast majority of our churches are content practicing their faith as they have thst 50-60 years and thus transformation is of little interest. Some of our churches have moved away from the typical Disciples liturgy toward a more evangelical and Pentecostal style that seems to suit their worship styles better.

NEEDS

Our region is experiencing extreme financial difficulty that will not improve over the impending future. Our desire would be to have workshops for each area of our region (Maritime, Central and West) given by an expert in the field of church revitalization. It is possible to coordinate with other regions to make this cost effective but again, the desire for church leadership may still be limited. The focus of such workshops would need to be congregation-focused, rather than general.

Respectfully Submitted,

Reverend Dr. Catherine C. Hubbard
Regional Minister, Canada
Central Area Minister

Recommended Action:

The General Board receives the report from the Canada Region.