

1 **MACC Report and Recommendations to the General Board**
 2 **Mission Alignment Coordinating Council**
 3 **January 2009**

4
 5 *“ . . . speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into*
 6 *Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it*
 7 *is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself*
 8 *up in love.” Eph. 4:15-16*

9
 10 *“Within the whole family of God on earth, the church appears wherever believers in Jesus the*
 11 *Christ are gathered in His name. Transcending all barriers within the human family, the one*
 12 *church manifests itself in ordered communities bound together for worship, fellowship, and*
 13 *service; in varied structures for mission, witness, and mutual accountability; and for the*
 14 *nurture and renewal of its members. The nature of the church, given by Christ, remains*
 15 *constant through the generations, yet in faithfulness to its nature, it continues to discern*
 16 *God’s vision and to adapt its mission and structures to the needs of a changing world. All*
 17 *dominion in the church belongs to Jesus, its Lord and head, and any exercise of authority in*
 18 *the church on earth stands under His judgment.”*

19 The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), paragraph 1.
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 21

22 **Background and Process**

23 In April 2008, the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) authorized the
 24 General Minister and President (GMP) and the Moderator to convene the Mission Alignment
 25 Coordinating Council (MACC). MACC was instructed by the General Board (GB) to make a report and
 26 present a plan for mission alignment to the GB in 2009 (item GB-08-0582) including any required action
 27 by the 2009 General Assembly. The goal of these conversations around mission alignment was, and is, to
 28 help the church organize its common life around our mission “to be and to share the Good News of
 29 Jesus Christ from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) The process of mission alignment
 30 came as a response to calls from congregations for greater transparency in how Disciples coordinate our
 31 mission.

32 The GB action was the result of three years of conversation with the 21st Century Vision Team;
 33 the College of Regional Ministers; the Council of General Ministries; current and previous moderator
 34 teams; a leadership group from Disciples Home Missions, Disciples Benevolent Services, Higher
 35 Education and Leadership Ministries; leaders of the National Convocation, Central Pastoral Office for
 36 Hispanic Ministries, North American Pacific/Asian Disciples; Office of General Minister and President
 37 senior staff, the General Board, and several groups of congregations.

38 The General Board named seven Principles for Mission Alignment to guide and measure MACC’s
 39 work. Their work should be mission-driven and priority-focused¹, Design-guided and whole-church
 40 oriented, future leaning, modeling unity and celebrating diversity, practicing good stewardship,

¹ The current mission priorities of the church are: 1000 new congregations by the year 2020; 1000 congregations transformed for mission by 2020; development of leaders to serve the new and renewed congregations; becoming a pro-reconciling/anti-racism church.

41 empowering and enhancing networks, encouraging partnerships. The General Board instructed the
42 MACC to work toward three specific outcomes:

43

- 44 1. **Clarity about the General Board’s responsibility for the mission of the church.** Defining the
45 appropriate role of the General Board in relation to other ministry boards in identifying and
46 implementing the common mission of the church and in funding that mission.
- 47 2. **One church embracing diversity.** Helping the church to live with integrity in a context of
48 growing racial/ethnic diversity by exploring enhanced partnerships, funding, and mutuality in all
49 areas of church life.
- 50 3. **Congregations resourced for ministry through a focus on mission priorities, networking and
51 partnership, streamlined general church administration, attention to ongoing ministries.**
52 Identifying ways to streamline general ministry infrastructure and increase partnerships,
53 collaboration and networking within and among general ministries in order to focus resources
54 on equipping congregations for mission.

55

56 **Process:** The Mission Alignment Coordinating Council built its work on the foundational vision,
57 mission and mission priorities articulated in 2020 Vision². It further assumed the theological identity
58 work of the 21st Century Vision Team.³ The MACC understood that its assignment was to look at
59 organizational issues hampering the forward movement in our ability to be and to share the Good News
60 as a movement for wholeness. It found inspiration for its work in the words and spirit of Ephesians 4:1-
61 16.

62 To address the first outcome related to enhanced GB capacity to fulfill its responsibilities
63 described in the Design, a sub-committee worked on issues related to the respective roles of the
64 General Board and General Ministry boards. The Council of General Ministries gave important input on
65 this subject as did the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform.

66 To address the other two desired outcomes, in the summer of 2008, MACC presented draft
67 models of new structures to the church for feedback and discussion. As instructed by the General Board,
68 the models focused on those ministries primarily involved in the “domestic” or “homeland” ministry of
69 the church. They related specifically to empowering racial/ethnic ministries and equipping
70 congregations for mission. The church’s Web site featured information about the models and invited
71 feedback. Members of the MACC spoke in person when possible and by phone conference with the
72 ministries that would be impacted by the possible models. In each case, the MACC worked through the

² Vision: to be a faithful, growing church that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice (Micah 6:8); Mission: to be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving, from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8);

³ 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.

73 ministry executive leader to set up the meetings and conversations.⁴ In most cases, the ministries
 74 established response teams to dialogue with the MACC on behalf of the ministry. Regional ministers and
 75 moderators discussed the models at their August meeting in Nashville. The work of MACC was also
 76 discussed at the National Hispanic and Bilingual Assembly, the National Convocation Biennial Session,
 77 and the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples Convocation. GMP Sharon Watkins engaged in dialogue
 78 with pastors at the Pastors' Conference in September, as well as with a group of regional and general
 79 church executives who gathered at that time.

80 At its September meeting, the MACC reviewed and discussed feedback from the boards as well
 81 as other responses. Disciples Home Missions (DHM), Higher Education and Leadership Ministries
 82 (HELM), Church Extension (CE), the National Christian Missionary Convention (NCMC) and the National
 83 Convocation, requested additional time to respond to the proposed models and the council agreed to
 84 extend the comment period.

85 In November, MACC determined that it still needed feedback from key groups before making
 86 final recommendations. In December, MACC members met with the boards of the National Convocation,
 87 National Christian Missionary Convention, and the Pastoral Commission for Hispanic Ministries. In
 88 January they met with representatives from DHM, HELM, and CE and with the NAPAD Executive Council.
 89 Following these meetings, and with much written information in hand, MACC met on January 21-23, to
 90 develop proposals for the General Board.

91
 92

93 **What MACC Heard**

- 94 a. Support for the guiding principles of Mission Alignment (mission-driven and priority-focused,
 95 Design-guided and whole-church oriented, future leaning, modeling unity and celebrating
 96 diversity, practicing good stewardship, empowering and enhancing networks, encouraging
 97 partnerships);
- 98 b. Desire for a more effective General Board;
- 99 c. Support for the concept of a General Minister and President's Pastoral Table and principles of
 100 equity alignment among Racial/Ethnic Ministries;
- 101 d. Feedback that the Office of General Minister and President should not become a program
 102 ministry
- 103 e. Counsel that the historic 1960 and 1969 Merger Agreement between the National Christian
 104 Missionary Convention and the United Christian Missionary Society is complex, and deep
 105 conversations and thought are necessary to preserve its integrity in the midst of change;

⁴ During its listening and dialogue from June 2008 to January 2009, MACC or MACC members conducted 16 conference calls with 13 different groups (Regional Ministers, General Ministry boards, Racial/Ethnic Ministries, other organizations), held 40 face-to-face meetings with 17 different groups (Regional Ministers, Council of General Ministers, Administrative Committee, General Board, Racial/Ethnic Ministries, Other Organizations), made 9 formal presentations to 5 different groups (Racial/Ethnic Ministry conferences and boards, Pastors' Conference, TLC), received 40 individual written responses from 38 people/groups (Pastors, Congregants, Regions, Churches). In addition MACC received written responses to specific questions it posed from Church Extension, Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, Disciples Home Mission, Disciples Benevolent Services, Office of Disciples Women, North American/Pacific Asian Disciples, National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship, National Convocation, National Christian Missionary Convention and others.

- 106 f. Support to move North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD) into a more direct line of
107 accountability with the General Board;
- 108 g. Affirmation from the Hispanic Caucus that the MACC models are a positive step toward
109 embracing, empowering and affirming diversity in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
- 110 h. A call for a higher profile emphasis on domestic justice in the U.S. and Canada (while
111 acknowledging the justice and advocacy work already undertaken by the Division of Overseas
112 Ministries, Week of Compassion, certain DHM offices and volunteer Disciples organizations);
- 113 i. Desire for a focused dialogue with Office of Disciples Women (ODW) and International Disciples
114 Women's Ministries (IDWM) regarding the placement of ODW in the church's structure and the
115 appropriate relationship of ODW and IDWM to the General Board;
- 116 j. Renewed commitment on the part of Disciples Home Mission, Higher Education and Leadership
117 Ministries, and Church Extension to work collaboratively to address areas of related ministry;
- 118 k. Expressions of caution about moving too swiftly for a whole-church conversation and in
119 particular for conversation with the boards of ministries that may be affected by proposed
120 changes;
- 121 l. A call to be more bold.
- 122 m. A call for Regions to be part of the conversation related to equipping congregations for mission.
- 123 n. Questions as to why Council on Christian Unity and Division of Overseas Ministries were not
124 involved in the process.

125

126 In addition to the myriad of comments received over the five months, the MACC added its own
127 observations:

- 128 o. The need for clarity with respect to the covenantal relationship between the General Board and
129 other ministry boards became apparent in the National Benevolent Association's bankruptcy.
130 MACC saw the need to design a process to help the General Board more faithfully perform its
131 duty to keep the mission of the church at the forefront of our life together through dialogue.
- 132 p. Racial/Ethnic Ministries inform, enhance and enrich Disciples' corporate life. Equity, not
133 uniformity, is the goal for the participation of Racial/Ethnic Ministries in the life of the whole
134 church.
- 135 q. General Ministries should be structured so that the greatest amount of financial resources
136 possible can be dedicated to mission and the least possible on executive oversight and
137 administration.
- 138 r. Many of the functions currently housed in HELM and DHM have enough relatedness that
139 consideration should be given to housing them together, particularly those having to do with
140 leadership development and scholarship programs.
- 141 s. MACC celebrates the energy and professionalism demonstrated by the New Church and New
142 Beginnings programs, but notes that "hybrid ministries" crossing the line between financial and
143 programmatic create particular challenges, as well. New church activities and congregational
144 transformation could find new synergies when more closely linked with leadership activities
145 across the life of the church.

- 146 t. MACC celebrates recent initiatives already undertaken that are consistent with mission
147 alignment principles and desired outcomes:
- 148 i) Dialogue between Disciples Benevolent Services (formerly NBA) and Disciples Care Network
149 (DCN) about how they can work together to expand the church's role in providing ministries
150 of mercy and advocacy by equipping congregations for mission,
 - 151 ii) A dialogue (now named Curaj – Compassion, Unity, Reconciliation and Justice) among the
152 Council on Christian Unity, Week of Compassion, Reconciliation and the Office of General
153 Minister and President, to explore how these ministry arms of the church can find new
154 synergies in the work of unity and wholeness,
 - 155 iii) The recent Regional Ministry New Church Summit called together to enter into conversation
156 about "Best Practices for Supporting New Church Plants" and to improve the interface
157 between New Church Ministries and regions,
 - 158 iv) Dialogue among CE, DHM and HELM about collaboration with respect to the mission
159 priorities of transforming congregations and developing leadership.
- 160

161 **Proposals to the 2009 General Board**

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163 In order to reach the desired outcomes, and as result of the dialogue described above, the
164 Mission Alignment Coordinating Council offers the following nine proposals for General Board
165 consideration. Each proposal adopted by the General Board will require further input from particular
166 ministries in order to reach implementation. Implementation may require cooperative action by other
167 ministry boards and or the General Assembly. Thus it is understood that to adopt these proposals is to
168 chart a direction for continued work in aligning our organizational life around our mission.

169 The proposals are grouped by the desired outcome to which they most directly relate.

170

171 **I. Desired Outcome: Clarify General Board responsibility for mission of the church**

172 (Principles for Mission Alignment associated with this proposal are: Design-guided and mission-focused)

173

174 **1. Adopt and implement new standing rules for the General Board regarding mission review and 175 dialogue process.**

- 176 a. While each ministry carries out its own distinct mission on behalf of the whole church,
177 the General Board has the responsibility to discern and articulate the common mission
178 of the church (with appropriate involvement of the wider church it represents.) The GB
179 has the responsibility to work in collaboration with the various ministries to coordinate
180 implementation of common mission goals and to allocate common funds for the work.
- 181 b. The Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform, in 2009, will propose a new
182 organizational structure for the General Board (including necessary changes to the
183 standing rules), allowing for the GB to focus on its work of mission review and
184 covenantal dialogue.
- 185 c. In 2010, MACC proposes that a trained team from the GB pilot a mission review and
186 dialogue process using the OGMP as the test case. In 2011, a team from the GB will

187 conduct a mission review and dialogue process with the financial ministries of the
188 church (Church Extension, Christian Church Foundation, Pension Fund). Other general
189 ministries will follow on a rotating basis. A committee of the reorganized General Board
190 will be assigned responsibility for this process. The results of the pilot review and
191 suggested changes to the process will be reported to the 2011 General Board.
192

193 **II. Desired Outcome: One church living with integrity in a context of growing racial/ethnic**
194 **diversity**

195 (Principles for Mission Alignment associated with these proposals are: promote true community by
196 embracing diversity, empower and enhance networks of the church, encourage partnership)
197

198 **2. Implement the General Minister and President's Pastoral Table.**

- 199 a. Beginning in 2009, the General Minister and President will convene a table with
200 Racial/Ethnic Ministry executives (currently the executive pastors for the Central
201 Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries, National Convocation and North American/Pacific
202 Asian Disciples) that will be a conversation among pastoral equals to discuss pastoral
203 matters of the larger church. The pastoral table will provide the church with a formal
204 forum to witness as a whole, share wisdom and address concerns, particularly related to
205 topics such as trust and healing. The General Minister and President will report to the
206 2010 General Board with regard to the implementation and effectiveness of the Pastoral
207 Table.

208 **3. Align the ministry of North American Pacific/Asian Disciples and its accountability to the**
209 **whole church through the General Board (seeking equity with Hispanic Ministries and the**
210 **National Convocation).**

- 211 a. NAPAD has become more than just a program of a General Ministry. Moving NAPAD
212 from DHM will place it in a more equitable position with the Central Pastoral Office for
213 Hispanic Ministries and National Convocation. The NAPAD Executive Pastor will be
214 accountable to a NAPAD executive board, and the ministry as a whole will have
215 appropriate accountability to the General Board.
- 216 b. A committee composed of representatives from NAPAD, DHM, OGMP Treasury Services
217 and the OGMP be convened to facilitate the transition. A report of this committee is
218 due to the Administrative Committee by October 1, 2009. Anticipated implementation
219 date is January 1, 2010.

220

221 **III. Desired Outcome: Congregations resourced for ministry through a focus on mission priorities,**
222 **networking and partnership, streamlined general church administration, attention to ongoing**
223 **ministries.**

224 (Principles for Mission Alignment associated with these proposals are: Mission-driven and priority-
225 focused, practice good stewardship, empower and enhance networks of the church, encourage
226 partnership)
227

- 228 **4. Call upon the Council of General Ministries to bring a proposal to the October 2009**
229 **Administrative Committee regarding the allocation of the General Ministries portion of**
230 **Disciples Mission Fund to take effect January 1, 2010 that would include the following items**
231 **for consideration:**
- 232 a. Distribution of the funds currently marked "CGM Escrow". (Funds released from NBA by
233 General Board action in 2005)
 - 234 b. Disciples Benevolent Services DMF allocation be reduced in accordance with the
235 number of ministries currently operated by DBS. DBS allocation in part to support the
236 continued partnership conversation between Disciples Care Network (DCN) and DBS
237 regarding the church's role in providing ministries of mercy and advocacy.⁵
 - 238 c. That the funding from the reduced DBS allocation and the CGM escrow be used to
239 increase funding for
 - 240 i. each of the three current Racial/Ethnic Ministries,
 - 241 ii. the Council on Christian Unity and the Disciples of Christ Historical Society to
242 assist with our education of members on our historical identity for Christian
243 Unity and interpret theologically what it means to be a movement for wholeness
 - 244 iii. Higher Education and Leadership Ministries specifically for the leadership
245 priority.
 - 246 d. The proposal will be reported to the Administrative committee by October 1, 2009
247 followed by mail ballot of the General Board before the end of the year.
- 248
- 249 **5. Engage in a focused dialogue with Disciples Women**
- 250 a. This discussion will include the relationship and line of accountability of Disciples
251 Women to the General Board, as well as staffing, and finances. Women would also have
252 a voice in the larger DHM, HELM and CE discussion.
 - 253 b. A report of the resulting outcomes is due to the General Board by April 2010.
- 254
- 255 **6. Pursue an expanded justice and advocacy ministry through networks in the United States and**
256 **Canada.**
- 257 a. One of the comments MACC heard repeatedly was the desire to have a more focused
258 emphasis on justice and advocacy. MACC acknowledges existing advocacy positions in
259 DOM/Wider Church Ministries as well as in Week of Compassion and DHM. MACC
260 recommends that Disciples invest in connecting and expanding existing justice and
261 advocacy networks in order to support congregations who want to engage in these
262 efforts.
 - 263 b. The General Minister and President will convene partners to develop a proposal for
264 utilizing existing networks, organizations and agencies within and related to the

⁵ Blue Ribbon Panel Report on Benevolent Care, 2007, P3.

265 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The report is due to the General Board in April
266 2010.

267

268 **7. Request Council on Christian Unity board to continue conversations already begun with the**
269 **OGMP and other partners to explore a closer relationship with OGMP.**

270 a. Matters related to the Council on Christian Unity were not part of the original task for
271 the MACC; however, feedback from several parts of the church suggested that
272 continued discussions with CCU could be helpful in highlighting a core value of the
273 church's identity and mission. One of the working principles of the MACC is to be
274 Design-guided. Upon reviewing the Design's description of the ecumenical work of the
275 General Minister and President (51, d), MACC believes that there is a strong case to be
276 made for the CCU to be more closely related to the OGMP. Other factors that caught
277 MACC's attention are the funding concerns of the Council on Christian Unity, and the
278 sense that a closer relationship between the OGMP and CCU would parallel some of our
279 peer denominations.

280 b. The General Minister and President in consultation with the President of the Council on
281 Christian Unity will create a process for engaging in this dialogue. A report will come to
282 the General Board in April 2010.

283

284 **8. Instruct the General Minister and President to convene a table for enhanced collaboration**
285 **around issues growing out of a burgeoning New Church movement.**

- 286 a. to continue conversations that have already begun among New Church Ministries,
287 regions, Racial/Ethnic Ministries, and other related ministries including the Christian
288 Church Foundation,
- 289 b. review agreements and processes related to establishing endowments at the dosing of
290 a congregational ministry and disposition of property
- 291 c. The group reports to the General Board in April 2010.

292

293 **9. Extend the term of the MACC for one year to allow it to conduct a broader conversation with**
294 **key ministry partners, particularly about the adaptive changes that are required for domestic**
295 **ministry in the 21st century.**

296 a. During the research and listening in 2008, the MACC noted several areas of overlap in
297 the functions of Disciples Home Mission (DHM), Higher Education and Leadership
298 Ministries (HELM) and Church Extension (CE). However, in conversations with the
299 boards of these General Ministries as well as the National Christian Missionary
300 Convention, the National Convocation and Disciples Women, it became apparent there
301 are some areas that bear further discussion, including the most appropriate and
302 effective grouping of functions currently assigned to DHM and HELM and possibly some
303 of the functions of CE.

304 b. For this year of continued dialogue, MACC recommends that ALL the ministries and
305 offices of the church identify and act on points of commonality around tables

- 306 representing our priorities of new church, transformation, leadership development, pro-
307 reconciliation/anti-racism.
308 c. MACC will present a report of its work, including recommended actions to the General
309 Board in April 2010 according to the timeline below.
310

311 **Proposed Timeline for Extended Mission Alignment Process:**

312 MACC suggests the following timeline for discussion during the period from
313 April 2009 to April 2010, incorporating suggestions from DHM, HELM and
314 CE:
315

316 May 2009 – MACC convenes an expanded gathering including representatives of
317 regions, general ministries and their boards, racial/ethnic constituencies, staff
318 and others to name questions about the nature and need of Disciples
319 congregations. This group would identify the role and functions that the general
320 church needs to fulfill in order to equip congregations for mission. This
321 information would inform MACC'S work toward realigning our ministries to
322 better equip congregations.
323

324 June/July 2009 – Seek feedback from the May gathering and gather more
325 information from selected congregations and through one or more focus groups
326 or conversation models during General Assembly
327

328 September 2009 – MACC meets with the larger gathering from May 2009, to review
329 survey results; make action recommendations
330

331 Fall 2009 – meeting of MACC
332

333 November 2009 – Additional feedback period as necessary
334

335 January 2010 - compile report and action plan for General Board 2010.
336

337 April 2010-April2011 – continue work as appropriate: implementation, further
338 planning, etc.
339

340 **Recommended Action:**

341 The General Board receives the report from the Mission Alignment Coordinating Council.