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4 Mission Alignment Coordinating Council
5 Report to the General Board
6 April 17-21, 2010
7 D. Newell Williams, Chair
8

9 **Overview**

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11 As part of its 2008 off-assembly year Planning Process, the General Board undertook a
12 discussion of the next steps for living into the 2020 Vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of
13 Christ). General Minister and President Sharon Watkins stated to the board that this
14 represented the next phase in a long-term process. This “Mission Alignment” phase, to be led
15 by a specially appointed Mission Alignment Coordinating Council (MACC), would build on the
16 mission and vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the example offered by
17 Church Finance Council in its decision to merge into the General Assembly. After its adoption
18 at the same board meeting, the identity statement proposed by the 21st Century Vision Team
19 was included in the foundational documents of the MAAC.
20

21 MACC was charged with guiding principles that would build on the identity – vision –
22 mission – mission imperative – and four priorities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
23 These guiding principles were stated in two documents approved by the General Board in its
24 2008 meeting: the Principles for Mission Alignment and the Desired Outcomes of Mission
25 Alignment.

26 ***Principles for Mission Alignment***

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- 28 • Mission Driven and Priority Focused
 - 29 • Design Guided
 - 30 • Future leaning
 - 31 • Promote true community by embracing diversity
 - 32 • Practice good stewardship
 - 33 • Empower and enhance the networks of the church
 - 34 • Encourage partnerships.

35 ***Desired Outcomes of Mission Alignment***

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- 37 • Clarity about the General Board’s responsibility for the mission of the church
 - 38 • One church embracing our diversity
 - 39 • Congregations resourced for mission including
 - 40 ○ a focus on the mission priorities
 - 41 ○ Networking and Partnership
 - 42 ○ Streamlined General Church Administration
 - 43 ○ Attention to ongoing ministries.

44 Sharon Watkins and Moderator Newell Williams were authorized by the General Board
45 to appoint the Mission Alignment Coordinating Council (MACC). MACC was chaired by Newell
46 Williams and had ten members in addition to Watkins and Williams. The members represented
47 various places of ministry and demographics including clergy, lay, youth workers,
48 congregational, regional and general ministry representatives and representatives from the

49 National Convocation, North American Pacific/Asian Disciples, and Central Pastoral Office for
50 Hispanic Ministries.

51
52 An overall report on the MACC process including nine business items was presented to
53 the 2009 General Board for action. These items named areas of church life for expanded
54 dialogue by larger circles of stake-holders. One called for the extension of the life of MACC by
55 one year to oversee a process related to the role of general and regional ministries in resourcing
56 congregations for mission (outlined in GB-09-0650). The nine business items were approved.
57 Of those nine items, three have been completed as of March 2010 and a fourth will be
58 completed by action taken during the 2010 meeting of the General Board. The remaining five
59 are in various stages of organization, conversation and discernment.

61 **What We Learned**

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63 MACC began its work by offering for discussion three design models for a structural
64 realignment of the church. These models provided an opportunity to engage ministries of the
65 church and congregational representatives in dialogue.

66
67 The technical restructuring conversation quickly refocused onto the larger adaptive
68 challenge of how to engage in the church's mission in a rapidly changing context. When facing
69 an adaptive challenge the question becomes: "Is this a problem that an expert can fix, or is this
70 a problem that is going to require people in the community to change their values, their
71 behavior, or their attitudes? For this problem to be solved, are people going to need to learn
72 new ways of doing business?"¹ Although the language of adaptive challenge and adaptive
73 change were introduced into the conversation, we are aware that we still have much to learn
74 about the actual processes that can lead us through such change.

75
76 The conversations generated by this process produced many joys. There was joy in
77 knowing a desire exists within the church to move forward. Indeed, some (for example, Church
78 Finance Council) have been willing to take the bold actions necessary to allow us to take steps
79 toward our future. There was joy in knowing that we as a church have been challenged to be
80 catalysts for change.

81
82 As we listened, there was joy in learning about current ministries and partnerships that
83 exist within our structure. There was also joy in understanding more clearly the robust and rich
84 history of our church and its unique brand of ecumenism and unity which informs who we are
85 today.

86
87 We also encountered disappointments as we listened to the conversations of the church.
88 We were disappointed that although we see partnerships being developed across ministry
89 boundaries centered on our mission priorities, there is still a sense that not all ministry partners
90 with vital gifts to share are being invited to contribute to the same degree.

91
92 We were disappointed that, although effective ministry is being done in the name of
93 Jesus Christ and on behalf of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on the general and
94 regional levels, many of our congregations do not know about these ministries.

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¹ *The Healthcare Forum Journal*,
Vol. 38, #4, July-August 1995,
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96 We were disappointed at the resistance we met to even having conversations about the
97 idea of restructure. Our attempts to engage in conversation were often met with distrust,
98 suspicion or silence.
99

100 The resistance to conversation challenged MACC to take another look at what was
101 being said and what was not being said. This deeper discernment brought us to a renewed
102 realization of the importance of our primary covenant document (*The Design*) as well as the
103 historical covenants which have defined the merging of individual organizations into the wider
104 church. Given the organic character of our church life – without creed or confession – the
105 history of these covenants, for example, the 1969 merger agreement with the National Christian
106 Missionary Convention – is vital.
107

108 We recognized that in order for the church to fulfill its mission, we must have a more fully
109 realized understanding of what it means to be in covenant with Jesus Christ as well as to be in
110 covenant with one another. As a church, we have spent a great deal of time defining our
111 mission, identity, vision and priorities. We have spent far too little time exploring our covenantal
112 relationships, those very things which bind us together to do our mission, live out our identity,
113 accomplish our priorities and dare to envision our future.
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115 **Summary and Final Recommendations**

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117 As MACC reviews the original Desired Outcomes of the mission alignment process, we
118 find we have mixed results. There has been some accomplishment. Clarity about the General
119 Board's responsibility for the mission of the church has been enhanced as evidenced by the
120 restructuring of the General Board and the rewriting of its Standing Rules. Part of the General
121 Board's restructure is the creation of the General Ministry Covenantal Dialogue Committee. The
122 committee will be comprised of members of the General Board. It has been assigned two
123 tasks: reviewing the mission of each general ministry and initiating dialogue with each on how
124 its particular mission enhances the overall common mission of the church as articulated by the
125 General Board.
126

127 Conversations stimulated by MACC's work – the GMP's Pastoral Table and the justice
128 working group – bring new dimensions to the mission priority of pro-reconciliation / anti-racism.
129 It is hoped that these dimensions will bring us closer to the desired outcome of being one
130 church, embracing our diversity.
131

132 There has been progress, although not in the way MACC originally anticipated, in
133 regard to congregations resourced for mission. Rather than engaging in significant church
134 restructure, leaders have reached across ministry lines to explore new patterns of collaboration,
135 a move toward the "partnering, networking, whole-church" way of working envisioned in the
136 mission alignment principles. The renewed cross-ministry focus on leadership development
137 represented in the Leadership Summit in October 2009 is an example. The Summit was
138 planned by Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM), Disciples Home Missions
139 (DHM) and Church Extension (CE) and involved other ministries from across the three
140 expressions of the church.
141

142 The Mission Alignment Coordinating Council is very clear that although our time has
143 concluded, the conversations which have been started are not over. The General Board's
144 Desired Outcomes of Mission Alignment have not been completely fulfilled. There is much
145 work left to be done and it will be the General Board's responsibility to keep momentum going.
146

147 The MACC would like to leave their successor with the following recommendations.

148
149 1) All three expressions of the church need to enter into a period of education,
150 discernment and decision about what it means to be in covenant with one another. As
151 stated earlier, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is based on the covenantal
152 relationships defined in *The Design* and in our other historical covenants. We must have
153 the courage to explore these covenants with one another at all levels, understand their
154 history, acknowledge the distrust and suspicions that exist among covenantal partners
155 and look for ways to be more transparent and accountable in our ministries to help
156 engender the trust needed to work together towards the fulfillment of our mission in
157 Jesus Christ.

158
159 2) We envision that the renewed collaboration and partnerships we are seeing among the
160 general ministry partners as they explore new ways to do church will continue. We
161 recommend the General Ministry Covenantal Dialogue Committee's membership be
162 expanded so as to allow it to have a dual responsibility. The first would remain as stated
163 in the Standing Rules of the General Board: to engage in missional review and dialogue
164 with individual ministries. The second would be to review the partnerships among
165 ministries, encourage them to continue facing together the adaptive challenges and
166 develop the new structures needed to be joined in mission and to resource
167 congregations for mission in our changing context.

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170 The Mission Alignment Coordinating Council is humbled to have been asked to provide this
171 service to our church. May the peace and blessings of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with the
172 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as it continues its journey towards being a movement for
173 wholeness in a fragmented world.

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Appendix A

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Current Status of the Nine General Board Business Items

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The General Minister and President, through the Moderator Team and senior staff of OGMP undertook the necessary steps to engage each of the nine business items.

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GB-09-0642, Mission Review and Dialogue Process for the General Board

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This business item called for the creation of a covenantal dialogue process by which the General Board could increase its awareness and understanding of the covenantal accountability between the General Ministries and the General Board. The process includes a more in-depth review process by the General Board every five years of each General Ministry and Racial/Ethnic Ministry. As part of the 2009 Reorganization of the General Board, a Covenantal Dialogue Committee (CDC) of the General Board was created. The CDC will work to modify the process developed by MACC and test the process with the Office of the General Minister and President in 2010. The testing will allow for amendments to the process before its implementation with the General Ministries.

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GB-09-0643 General Minister and President's Pastoral Table

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The Pastoral Table consists of the General Minister and President and the chief executives of North American Pacific / Asian Disciples, the National Convocation, and the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries. The table is designed to serve as a place of partnership and dialogue regarding theological and ecclesiological matters of the church. The Pastoral Table's Panel Reflection on the Nature of the Church taking place during the 2010 General Board meeting will provide an example of such partnership dialogue. The Table will set its own agenda together and invite guests to join them as needed and appropriate.

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GB-09-0644 The Ministry of North American Pacific/Asian Disciples

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The General Board's action authorized the missional alignment of North American Pacific / Asian Disciples (NAPAD) in a like manner to the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries. Subsequent meetings were held with DHM leadership and OGMP Treasury Services to determine an appropriate separation of funds. NAPAD's executive council has been working to draft by-laws and establish other necessary documents. As of January 1, 2010, NAPAD has been moved into a new alignment with the General Assembly.

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GB-09-0645 Proposal for Distribution of Funds Currently Named "CGM Escrow"

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The business item called for the permanent allocation of the Council of General Ministries Escrow fund. At their December 2009 and February 2010 meetings, the Council voted to permanently distribute these funds based on the historic allocation of funds to the General Ministries. Business Item GB 10-0699 is presented to the 2010 General Board meeting for process review and approval.

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GB-09-0646 Office of Disciples Women

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The Office of Disciples Women (*and its predecessors*) has sought to nurture and empower women. The emphasis has not been put on "women" only, but the empowerment of women for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ as it gets lived out through congregations, Regions and the General ministries of the Christian Church

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226 (Disciples of Christ). The women have over years created a vast network that reaches
227 every corner of the church and into ecumenical relationships in order to live out this
228 mission.

229 Over the last few decades in the current structure, the ODW has found its efforts and
230 ministries being isolated at times and in some cases diminished. This affects the staff of
231 the Office of Disciples Women within Disciples Home Missions as well as lay and clergy
232 women in the wider church where they have not found a place at vision setting and
233 decision making tables. We acknowledge that this struggle is often multiplied for women
234 of color. This concern has brought Disciples women's ministries into this mission
235 alignment conversation.

236 The diverse and wise voices and perspectives of women are needed to live into the
237 identity "of being a movement for wholeness". What might be possible and how might
238 the whole church be uplifted if together we found a way and a place to live that would
239 release the energies and creativity and resourcefulness of Disciples women for the
240 future?

241 Based on thoughtful reflections given by women through both written and verbal
242 communications, including in-depth conversations with women representing the wide
243 spectrum of diversity found within the denomination, the Mission Alignment Coordinating
244 Council advises that:

- 245 1. The General Minister and President convene the IDWM Executive Committee,
246 Executive Director of Disciples Women, the President of the National Christian
247 Missionary Convention, President of Disciples Home Missions and Vice President of
248 Finance for Disciples Home Missions to engage in intentional conversation and
249 accounting of existing and potential funding sources for Disciples Women to
250 determine the feasibility of moving the ODW into a new configuration in the General
251 church. This task should be completed and recommendations made no later than
252 January 7, 2011.
- 253 2. The General Minister and President engage the Council on General Ministries in
254 conversation to determine ways of intentional inclusion of the Executive Director of
255 the Office of Disciples Women at tables of vision setting and decision making within
256 the life of the General Ministries by December 31, 2010.
- 257 3. The General Board, through its Governance Committee, be asked to consider a
258 direct reporting relationship with Disciples Women to assure the ministry is
259 represented and has a voice at General Board meetings and has a presence and
260 method of reporting on the ministry to the general church during General Assemblies
261 prior to the 2011 General Board and 2013 General Assembly.

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263 ***GB-09-0647 Justice and Advocacy Ministries***

264 A concern raised through the MACC process was the loss of a central office coordinating
265 and educating the church related to matters of social justice. The ministries of the
266 church responded that many ministries have justice and advocacy components in
267 addition to the grassroots networks such as Disciples Justice Action Network, Disciples
268 for Choice etc. Steve Gentle, Senior Minister of National City Christian Church is
269 chairing a group to conduct this conversation. The justice working group will meet in the
270 summer of 2010. It will include representatives of Overseas Ministries, Home Missions,
271 Week of Compassion, Reconciliation, Disciples Justice Action Network, Disciples Peace
272 Fellowship, Disciples Farm Worker Ministry, Disciples for Choice and the Center for
273 Public Witness and others.

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GB-09-0648 Dialogue Between the Office of General Minister and President and the Council on Christian Unity

The General Board action called for enhanced conversations between the Office of the General Minister and President and the Council on Christian Unity (CCU). Those conversations have involved the President of CCU, Robert Welsh, the CCU board, GMP, Sharon Watkins and AGMVP, Todd Adams. Furthering the already close working relationship between CCU and OGMP, in 2010 OGMP Treasury Services began a new relationship with the Council on Christian Unity managing all aspects of their treasury needs.

GB-09-0649 Enhanced Collaboration of New Church Ministry Partners

The General Minister and President was called to convene a table of conversation to work through the challenges and opportunities related to the new church priority. This meeting was delayed due to the number of sabbaticals scheduled for participants. The table will include racial / ethnic ministries, regional ministries and new church ministries housed in Church Extension. The meeting is scheduled for May 6-7, 2010.

GB-09-0650 Extending the Term of the Mission Alignment Coordinating Council

The General Board action extended the term for MACC by one year to allow a broader conversation with key ministry partners regarding greater collaboration on how congregations are resourced for mission. An expanded group met two times, seeking to address the adaptive challenge of resourcing congregations for mission. The adaptive process calls for each of the systems of the church, responsible for resourcing congregations for mission to participate in a dialogical process leading to new ways to engage in mission in a rapidly changing context. Out of this process new partnerships were formed and networks established. Indeed, many of the hopes of proposal 9 are being realized in a MACC inspired process related to leadership for transformation led by Church Extension, Disciples Home Missions and Higher Education and Leadership Ministries working in partnership.

307 **Appendix B**

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311 **Members of the Mission Alignment Coordinating Council**

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315	Xose Escamilla	San Diego, California	H, C, M
316			
317	Carolyn Ho	Quito, Ecuador	A, L, F, YA
318			
319	Mary Jacobs	Tempe, Arizona	W, C, F
320			
321	Kari Kempf	Orange, California	W, L, F
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323	Bill Lee	Roanoke Virginia	B, C, M
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325	Tim Lee	Fort Worth, Texas	A, C, M
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327	Sotello Long	Summerville, South Carolina	B, C, M
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329	Darryl Trimiew	North Plainfield, New Jersey	B, C, M
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331	David Vargas	Indianapolis, Indiana	H, C, M
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333	Sharon Watkins	Indianapolis, Indiana	W, C, F
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335	Cherilyn Williams	Tacoma, Washington	W, L, F
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337	D. Newell Williams	Fort Worth, Texas	W, C, M
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339	Staff from the Office of General Minister and President		
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341	Todd Adams	Carmel, Indiana	W, C, M
342	(Associate General Minister and Vice President)		
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344	Beth Sullivan	Indianapolis, Indiana	
345	(Executive Assistant to the General Minister and President)W, L, F		
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349 Key: A – Asian; B – Black; C – Clergy; F – Female; H – Hispanic; L – Lay; M – Male; W – White;

350 YA – Young Adult.

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