



Council on Christian Unity to Celebrate its 100th Anniversary

Indianapolis, IN (*January 1, 2010*) -- *A Century of Witness, A Journey of Wholeness* will be the theme as the Council on Christian Unity celebrates the 100th anniversary of its founding.

Robert Welsh, president of the CCU, hopes all expressions of the church (congregations, regions, institutions of higher education, and other general ministries) will participate in the variety of opportunities that will celebrate past achievements and will focus on where God is calling the Disciples of Christ in our ecumenical life and witness in coming years.

In 1910, Dr. Peter Ainslie III, a pastor in Baltimore, MD, was moderator of the International Convention in Topeka, Kansas. He called for Disciples to reclaim our commitment and passion for unity in his stirring address, "*Our Fellowship and the Task.*" In many ways, this same challenge stands before us today as we look to the 21st century and the urgent and desperate pleas for signs of healing, reconciliation, wholeness and peace, both in our society and world.

The goals identified by the CCU Board of Directors for this 2010 anniversary year are three-fold:

- To celebrate the best of our tradition as Disciples of Christ as a people of unity in claiming God's gift of oneness in Jesus Christ for all persons and for all times;
- To look seriously and critically at where the ecumenical movement is today, and to where God is calling us and the ecumenical movement in the years ahead; and,
- To focus upon the education and formation of a new generation of Disciples for service to and leadership in the ecumenical movement in all of its expressions: local, regional, national and global.

This year-long celebration will focus on **seven initiatives or events** to help our church continue the rich legacy we have inherited from the past – from Barton Stone; Thomas and Alexander Campbell; Peter Ainslie III; George G. Beazley, Jr. and Paul A. Crow, Jr.; and, from hundreds of pastors and laypersons who have been inspired by the sacred cause of Christian unity:

1. We will offer prayers, worship and study resources to our church (via the CCU website -- www.disciples.org/ccu) lifting up God's gift of oneness in Christ as the heart and soul of our life and witness as a church – with special emphasis on the themes of the Lord's Table, covenant, community, and seeking peace and justice in our world.
2. We will produce a publication to be distributed throughout our church telling the story of the Council of Christian Unity in words, photographs, and illustrations – highlighting our history, identifying key leaders over these 100 years, and lifting up the major role the CCU has played in offering leadership to the ecumenical movement in all of its expressions.
3. We will host a major dinner celebration of the CCU's past on April 27 where we will recognize and honor Paul A. Crow, Jr., as “President Emeritus” of the CCU in recognition of his 25 years of service to the CCU.
4. We will hold a churchwide event (*the Joe A. and Nancy Vaughn Stalcup 2nd Century Visioning Conference on Christian Unity*) in the summer of 2010 that will examine our past and explore our present in hopes of developing a fresh statement of our church's ecumenical vision for the future.
5. We will publish the major papers and report from this “Visioning Conference” in the 2010 issue of *Call to Unity*, and will make this widely available throughout the life of our church.
6. We will participate in a worship service in Topeka, Kansas in October, 2010 celebrating the founding of the CCU and its meaning for the life of the church – then and now.
7. We will hold a Young Adult Consultation on “Becoming a Multi-cultural, Multi-racial and Multi-ethnic and Inclusive Church” that will invite the input, insights, and experience of young adult Disciples in articulating a new and vital understanding of unity for the 21st century.

All Disciples are encouraged to join in these initiatives, and where possible, to participate in these events. Resources and materials will be available from the Council on Christian Unity throughout the year at www.disciples.org/ccu.