

## GA-1501

**General Assembly  
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Including the Office of the  
General Minister and President**  
*Sharon E. Watkins, General Minister and President*  
*Glen Miles, Moderator*

*Joan Bell-Haynes; First Vice Moderator; Antonio Rodriguez, Second Vice Moderator*  
*Paul Tche, Moderator-Elect*

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada  
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***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.*

**Our Vision** is to be a faithful and growing church that demonstrates  
true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice. *Micah 6:8*

**Our Mission** is to be and share the good news of Jesus Christ,  
witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth. *Acts 2:8*

**Our Imperative** is to strengthen congregations for this mission

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*Called by God's covenant of love, the **Office of the General Minister and President**  
(OGMP) convenes the church in mutual accountability for witness and service.*

The senior staff of the OGMP, led by Associate General Minister and Vice President, Dr. Todd A. Adams, consists of Sharon Coleman, Assistant Vice President for Operations; John Goebel Assistant Vice President for Finance; Cherilyn Williams, Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communication; Beth Sullivan, Executive Assistant to the General Minister and President. Dr. Timothy James, Associate General Minister and Administrative Secretary to the National Convocation completes the senior staff team. Chris Higgins serves as Director of Digital Media and General Assembly Production. Assisted by dedicated administrative professionals, this team supports the work of the General Assembly (GA), General Board (GB), and Administrative Committee (AC); interprets, promotes, receives and receipts Disciples Mission Fund (DMF); coordinates general church communication; and undergirds the ministry of the General Minister and President (GMP).

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### **Mission First!**

The General Board in April 2014, approved GB 14-0885, directing Moderator, Glen Miles, and General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins, to appoint a task force to facilitate a consultative process "about how we as one church, discern God's mission

for Disciples today and organize to accomplish that mission.” Tony Rodriguez, Second Vice- Moderator, served as chair.

Mission First! addresses the need to find a shared focus on God’s mission in the world. It seeks to help Disciples identify the next set of mission priorities. It creates a space for strengthening the connections among congregations, regions, general ministries, higher education and key partners in mission locally and globally.

Mission First! also seeks to improve the way we engage in, and hold our Church in all its expressions accountable to God’s mission together. The task force proposed Mission First! to the 2015 General Board as a call to and a model for shared focus in mission.

### **General Minister and President**

In a time of renewed energy related to Civil Rights and racial justice, sparked by 2014 events in Ferguson, Missouri, the General Minister and President traveled twice to Ferguson. The General Cabinet of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), met there to share in a day-long conversation and dialogue with local Disciples pastors. The focus was on exploring how the wider church can walk alongside our local churches to respond and offer a meaningful Christian witness in situations such as those experienced in the United States in light of the events in Ferguson and other parts of the country. In keeping with our church’s Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Priority, the Cabinet calls on all Disciples congregations to “seek out willing partners in conversation from communities and churches of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to explore more fully the implications of inequality and racial injustice for our lives as Christians. These sustained conversations must have as their focus the dignity of all persons, and we must commit ourselves to praying together for understanding and healing.”

The General Minister and President counseled with regions, general and other ministries in times of transition, serving on the search committee for Council on Christian Unity, Week of Compassion and National Hispanic Pastor. She worked with Canada, Capital Area, Central Rocky Mountain, Greater Kansas City, Great River Region, Nebraska, Northern California/Nevada, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee regions in their transitions toward interim and settled regional ministers. She officiated at regional covenanting services for new regional ministers in Georgia, Northern California/Nevada, and Oklahoma.

The GMP serves as the Church’s primary ecumenical representative (paragraph 51d, *The Design*). GMP Watkins has served as Vice Chair of the NCC Governing Board in 2014-2015. She also serves on the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), in her role as Program Guidelines Committee Chair of the WCC Central Committee.

The Justice Table (executives of ministries with major justice or advocacy components) continued to meet for coordination of efforts in four areas: hunger and poverty, women

and children, immigration reform, creation care. Related to the latter, the GMP became part of the leadership circle of Blessed Tomorrow, a coalition of diverse American faith leaders committed to “walking more gently on the earth and inspiring others to lead on climate solutions”. She worked with Disciples Home Missions, the Kentucky Region and the Green Chalice ministry to create a plan of action to involve more Disciples congregations in efforts to “connect Christian faith, spiritual practice and creation consciousness in order to demonstrate the fullness of God’s shalom” (Green Chalice mission statement).

As approved by the Administrative Committee, GMP Watkins spent her sabbatical leave in two parts: from July 29 – September 8, 2013, and February 24 - April 6, 2014. She used the time to complete the manuscript for her book *Whole: A Call to Unity in our Fragmented World* published in 2014 by Chalice Press.

### **Communication Ministries**

Since early 2014, Communication Ministries and the Council on Christian Unity have collaborated on the *Identity Initiative* to help members understand more fully the unique set of characteristics that make up the Disciples of Christ ethos. In addition to staff and board members travelling to at least eight regional gatherings, Quadrennial Assembly and two of the three racial/ethnic assemblies, Chalice Press joined the effort to promote an all-church read of Dr. Watkins book *Whole: A Call to Unity in a Fragmented World* published in June. Special four-week study guides were written to supplement the book. Stories and links in *Disciples News Service* (general interest weekly e-mail), *Disciples Together* (bimonthly pastor e-mail) and Facebook and Twitter spread the word about the studies and materials.

Video projects for 2014 included a four-part *Landscape for Mission* study, several greeting videos for the General Minister and in early 2015, a video introduction of Mission First!, a proposed process for identifying the Church’s next mission foci. In addition, an animated video and a live-action video were produced for General Assembly promotion. Other projects included an animated video explaining Disciples Mission Fund and one on how to become a Disciples pastor (in cooperation with General Commission on Ministry).

Also during the spring and summer of 2014 the disciples.org website migrated to a different content management system. The 2015 General Assembly site served as a test/practice case before taking the main site to the new platform.

General Assembly promotion began in summer of 2014 and has continued with special e-mails, a Facebook and Twitter presence and numerous mentions in *Disciples News Service* and *Disciples Together*. There have been save-the-date postcards, posters to select congregations and an ad-financed preview guide to individuals who have attended the last three assemblies. Revenue is anticipated from expanded advertising opportunities in e-mails before and during the General Assembly as well as the post-assembly news product.

The Communicator Forum of the general ministries, moderated by CM staff, has stepped up to assist ministries without a communications professional to help put together their 2015 General Assembly oral reports. Part of the effort includes production of uniform short intro videos that will also be used for the disciples.org website, the youth program at the General Assembly and the HELM seminarian's conference. Continuing activities include weekly production of *Disciples News Service* and a bimonthly collaboration with other general ministries and partners on the *Disciples Together* e-mail; social media posts and monitoring; supporting the communication efforts of ministries, particularly those with smaller staff numbers; maintaining the websites, disciples.org and ga.disciples.org; and assisting the General Minister and others with communication planning.

A new Facebook group was introduced for sharing ideas. Disciples Exchange now has more than 800 members. Topics range from practical "how-to" advice to theological discussions.

### **Finance and Treasury Services**

OGMP finished with an operating loss in 2014 for the first time in 7 years. There were several contributing factors:

- a. DMF decline in operating income;
- b. Expenses related to the move, depreciation etc;
- c. An employee returning to OGMP healthcare that was unbudgeted;
- d. New mortality rates for the post-retirement healthcare liability and electing to book the increased liability in one year, rather than pushing the expense down the line; and
- e. Incurring expenses related to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society (travel, staff, legal etc.)

To help offset the loss and ensure 2015 finishes in the black we are:

- a. Taking a full-time position where the person is retiring and converting it to part-time;
- b. Receiving cost-recovery dollars for the AGMVP's dual role with the Historical Society;
- c. Further cuts were made to employee benefits, saving over \$50,000 on healthcare costs; and;
- d. Recommending a change in auditors for 2015 saving between \$6,000 and \$9,000 per year for the engagement period.

OGMP Treasury Services continues to expand its accounting services. Currently, we have partnerships in providing integrated accounting with: (9) entities of OGMP, (5) ministries: Council on Christian Unity, Christian Church Services, National City Christian Church Foundation, College of Regional Ministers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society

and (11) regions: Illinois-Wisconsin, Indiana, Upper Midwest, Kentucky, Greater Kansas City, Capital Area, Florida, Georgia, Northwest, 6 of 7 entities of Mid-America, Pennsylvania, which started January 1<sup>st</sup>. OGMP TS continues to provide a needed service that is saving financial resources between \$10,000 and \$40,000 per year per entity.

**MINUTES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

**February 7, 2014**

**Amended October 24, 2014**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**Sheraton Indianapolis City  
Centre-Downtown**

**Glen Miles, Moderator  
Paul Tche, Moderator-Elect**

**Joan Bell Haynes  
First Vice Moderator**

**Tony Rodriguez  
Second Vice Moderator**

**In Attendance: Bill Bailey, Sylvia Barr, Jinsuk Chun, Brenda Etheridge, Caroline Hamilton-Arnold, Timothy James, Glen Miles, Fernando Morales, Vy Nguyen, Norman Reed, Rick Reisinger, Edie Rice Sauer, Tony Rodriguez, Eli Rolon, Glen Stewart, Beth Sullivan, Kerry Swindle, Paul Tche, Sharon Watkins, Todd Adams – Staff, Cherilyn Williams – Staff.**

**Not in Attendance: Joan Bell Haynes, Mary Anne Glover**

**Overview**

The Spring Administrative Committee opened with worship and communion. Due to the health concerns of her husband, Rev. Joan Bell Haynes, First Vice Moderator, was unable to attend the meeting. She was greatly missed and prayers for her husband, Oscar Haynes, were lifted.

Moderator Glen Miles welcomed the Committee and gave time to its members to bring the committee up-to-date on themselves as well as express what they were looking forward to and what they were anxious about as they approached the Administrative Committee and General Board meetings.

**Business of the Administrative Committee**

**Agenda**

**VOTED**

to approve the agenda of the meeting as amended, to include discussion of the Mission Council Concept

**Consent Agenda**

The following items were removed from the Consent Agenda and calendared for immediately after the Consent Agenda vote.

**AC-14-2208 Designation of the General Board Offering**  
**AC-14-2213 Election of Administrative Committee**  
**Member to the Hispanic Pastoral**  
**Commission**

**VOTED** to approve the remaining item on the Consent Agenda

**2013 Fall Administrative Committee Minutes**

**AC-14-2208 Designation of the General Board Offering**

**VOTED** to designate the General Board Offering be taken in support of Disciples Mission Fund

**AC-14-2213 Election of Administrative Committee Member to the**  
**Hispanic Pastoral Commission**

**VOTED** to elect Dawn Robinette to the Hispanic Pastoral Commission for 2014 – 2015, pending her election to the Administrative Committee on Sunday, February 9, 2014.

**AC-14-2212 Change to the Administrative Committee Standing**  
**Rules, Section 9.3.2**

**VOTED** to approve changing Section 9.3.2 of the Standing Rules for the Administrative Committee to be consistent with the bylaws of the Hispanic and Bi-Lingual Fellowship in that two members of the Pastoral Commission are to come from the membership of the Administrative Committee, not the General Board.

**GB-14-1401 General Assembly of the Christian Church**  
**(Disciples of Christ) including the Office of**  
**General Minister and President**

**RECEIVED** the report of the General Minister and President. In her verbal report, Sharon highlighted: the transition taking place at Week of Compassion; the General Commission on Ministry report; the first report by Disciples Center for Public Witness and that they have assumed responsibility for the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative from the National Council of Churches; the five-year evaluation of the Center for Faith & Giving will take place in 2015 by the Administrative Committee; the second half of Sharon's sabbatical will include Brite Divinity School's 10-day study trip to Cuba.

## **Introduction of the Mission Council Concept**

Robert Welsh, president of the Council on Christian Unity joined the Committee for this discussion.

Discussion of the Mission Council Concept as introduced and described by Sharon Watkins and Robert Welsh. Key highlights of discussion:

- General Board would become the Mission Council whose responsibility would be to lead the church through discernment of our mission and the planning to carry it out.
- Administrative Committee would become Administrative Board to handle governance of the church.
- Idea came out of the General Cabinet Retreat – but this is a whole church matter.
- Looking at an aggressive timeline, otherwise we would have a four-year delay until 2017.
- Question of accountability of general church will be addressed as concept goes forward.
- Must make sure that how this would impact the merger agreement is taken into consideration. NCMC needs to become part of the conversation as early as possible in the process.
- Determined that we must reconsider our action from the 2013 Fall Administrative Committee meeting concerning the proposal presented to the Committee by the Council on Christian Unity.

**MOTION**                      **Reconsideration of AC-13-2204: A Proposal Regarding the Council on Christian Unity (CCU), the General Board (GB) and the Office of General Minister and President (OGMP)**

**VOTED**                      to reconsider **AC-13-2204**

**AC-13-2204**                      **A Proposal Regarding the Council on Christian Unity (CCU), the General Board (GB) and the Office of General Minister and President (OGMP)**

**VOTED**                      to postpone this item, pending the outcome of the Mission Council discussions at General Board and beyond

Glen Stewart asked it be noted in the minutes that the Administrative Committee thought the proposal regarding CCU, GB and OGMP was a great idea and still thinks it is a great idea.

**Administrative Committee plenary adjourned into Executive Session to discuss a real estate matter, then adjourned for lunch.**



**AC-14-2207            2013 Unaudited Financial Statement**

RECEIVED    the unaudited financial statement for 2013 was received.

Due to the early date of the 2014 Spring Administrative Committee, it was not practical to complete the audit in less than 30 days from the year-end close. The audit will be completed in the normal fashion and the Audit Committee will meet with our auditors to receive and review the audit. The Audit Committee will forward their review and recommendation to Administrative Committee, at which time a conference call will be scheduled to include a question and answer time and to receive the audit.

**Updates on the Resolution and Cultural Capacity Task Forces**

Both task forces are still in the process of being named. As soon as they have been filled, they will begin their work.

**Review of General Board Agenda**

Sharon Watkins walked through the General Board Agenda with the Administrative Committee.

**AC-14-2206            Accepting the Insurance Board as a Recognized Ministry Partner of the Church**

**VOTED**            to recommend to the General Board to accept the Insurance Board as a Recognized Ministry Partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Insurance Board will report to the General Board and General Assembly through Church Extension Financial and Missional Resources, Inc., beginning in 2015.

**2015 General Assembly Update**

Todd Adams reviewed the progress which has been made meeting on the 2015 General Assembly in Columbus Ohio, since the fall Administrative Committee meeting and answered questions from Committee members.

**AC-14-2209            General Assembly Items for Research and Reflection**

**VOTED**            to refer both **GA-1323, Incarceration, Justice and Restoration in the United States** and **GA-1324, Reflection on Christian Theology and Polity, the Christian Doctrine of Discovery and the Indigenous Voice**, to the committee which is developing the Justice educational opportunities for the 2015 General Assembly.

**Role of the Administrative Committee Members at General Board**

Committee members were given an overview of their role at General Board, including their small group leadership during the Identity Initiative discussions on Sunday morning and the discussion on Monday morning regarding the Current and Future Role General Board. Committee members were given time to plan for these leadership roles with their co-leaders.

With no further business before the Administrative Committee, the meeting was adjourned with a word of prayer.

**MINUTES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

**October 24-25, 2014**

**Disciples of Christ Historical Society  
Nashville, Tennessee**

**Glen Miles, Moderator  
Paul Tche, Moderator-Elect**

**Joan Bell Haynes  
First Vice Moderator**

**Tony Rodriguez  
Second Vice Moderator**

**In Attendance: Bill Bailey, Joan Bell Haynes, Jinsuk Chun, Chris Dorsey, Danny Gulden, Young Lan Kim, Glen Miles, Fernando Morales, Edie Rice Sauer, Dawn Robinette, Tony Rodriguez, Eli Rolon, Glen Stewart, Beth Sullivan, Kerry Swindle, Paul Tche, Sharon Watkins, Todd Adams – Staff, Sharon Coleman – Staff.**

**Not in Attendance: Delores Carpenter, Timothy James, Tanya Tyler**

**Overview**

**Friday, October 24, 2014 - Business of the Administrative Committee**

**Agenda**

**VOTED**

to approve the agenda as amended to include the Report of the Resolution Task Force as an Order of the Day at 2:30 PM CDT on Friday, October 24, 2014 and the Report of the Cultural Competency Committee as an Order of the Day at 10:15 AM CDT on October 25, 2014.

**Consent Agenda**

**VOTED**

to approve the Consent Agenda, which included the following business items:

**2014 Spring Administrative Committee Minutes  
(amended to include names of those present and  
absent)  
AC-14-2219 Establishing the Price for the 2015 Year  
Book & Directory of the Christian Church (Disciples of  
Christ)  
AC-14-2221 Audit Engagement  
AC-14-2222 Report on Maintaining 501(c)3 Status with  
the IRS  
AC-14-2210 Cultural Capacity Task Force Members**

**AC-14-2211 Administrative Committee Resolutions Task Force Members**

**AC-14-2225 Racist Language Audit Task Force Members  
Ratification of AC-14-2214 Membership in NVOAD  
(Approved by Administrative Committee via conference call on June 9, 2014)**

**AC-14-2224**

**Report of the General Assembly Including the Office of General Minister and President**

**RECEIVED**

the report of General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins. Highlights of the report brought to our attention include: additional streams of income above what is received from DMF; report on Treasury Services now partnering with 18 ministries in addition to OGMP; Communication Ministries work with the Identity Initiative in conjunction with Council on Christian Unity; management of our shared spaces of ministry through Christian Church Services; the reports of the three ministries (Center for Faith and Giving, Reconciliation Ministry and Week of Compassion) who report through OGMP but are not of OGMP.

**MOTION**

**It was moved and seconded that the Administrative Committee adjourn into Executive Session to receive a legal update.**

**VOTED**

to approve the motion to adjourn into Executive Session to receive a legal update.

**The Administrative Committee adjourned into Executive Session at 11:20 AM CDT.**

**The Administrative Committee adjourned from Executive Session at 12:30 PM CDT for lunch.**

**The Administrative Committee reconvened into Executive Session at 1:37 PM CDT to continue their legal update.**

**The Administrative Committee adjourned from Executive Session at 2:09 PM CDT, reconvening into Plenary Session.**

**MOTION**

**It was moved and seconded that the Administrative Committee adjourn into Executive Session to receive AC-14-2220 Housing Allowance Report**

**VOTED**

to approve the motion to adjourn into Executive Session to receive **AC-14-2220 Housing Allowance Report**.

**The Administrative Committee adjourned into Executive Session at 2:11 PM CDT.**

**The Administrative Committee adjourned from Executive Session at 2:15 PM CDT, reconvening into Plenary Session.**

**Order of the Day**

**AC-14-2234**

**General Assembly Process for Engagement in Theological Reflection on Ethical, Moral and Justice Issues**

**RECEIVED**

the report of the Administrative Committee Resolution Task Force as presented by task force chair, Caroline Hamilton-Arnold. Highlights from the Administrative Committee's discussion of the report include:

- Emphasis that we are trying to create a space for conversation which may lead to statements from the church that evolve from a place of respect for all viewpoints.
- Question – do these topics ever go to the General Assembly plenary?
- Question - how does the General Assembly address justice issues that emerge after the deadline?
- Question – if we shift the discussion of justice issues to educational forums at General Assembly, then people have to pick which to attend. How does a person have input on all of the issues in this type of setting?
- If we are trying to control the message, we aren't going to get there. Part of the process is to live in the uncomfortable spaces at times. That's part of living in community.
- Question – who gets to determine what the prophetic edge of the church is?
- Question – will it devalue the point of the General Assembly – to just be part of the conversation? A person can wait for the conversation to come to them.
- Question - does the possibility of multiple Public Witness statements dilute the voice of the church?

The committee was asked to address further questions and comments in writing to Caroline Hamilton-Arnold for the task force's consideration.

**AC-14-2226**

**OGMP Administrative 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 OGMP Administrative budget.

**AC-14-2227**

**Communication Ministries 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Communication Ministries.

**AC-14-2229**

**Promotions 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Promotions.

**AC-14-2228**

**Treasury Services 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Treasury Services.

**AC-14-2230**

**Year Book and Directory 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for the Year Book and Directory.

**AC-14-2231**

**Center for Faith & Giving 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for the Center for Faith & Giving.

**AC-14-2232**

**Week of Compassion 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Week of Compassion.

**AC-14-2233**

**Reconciliation Ministry 2015 Budget**

**VOTED**

to approve the 2015 budget for Reconciliation Ministry.

**AC-14-2216**

**Funds Transfer to Special Project Reserves**

**VOTED**

to transfer \$17,500 from the Temporarily Restricted Fund to the Special Project Reserves to cover expenses rising from the Mission Council Task Force and the pro-reconciliation/anti-racism training of three members from the Racist Language Audit Task Force.

**AC-14-2217**

**Investment Policy Change**

**VOTED**

to approve the changes to the Investment Policy of the Office of General Minister and President (as grammatically amended) to include provisions for receipt or inheritance of properties which contain active mineral right leases or management.

**AC-14-2215**

**Changes to the OGMP Employee Handbook**

**VOTED**

to approve the changes to the OGMP document retention policy and the clarification and expansion of healthcare options for OGMP employees.

The Plenary session concluded with the chair of the Mission Council Task Force, Second Vice Moderator, Tony Rodriguez, asking Committee members to re-read **AC-14-2235 Report of the Mission Council Task Force** in preparation for Saturday's discussion.

**Saturday, October 25, 2014 – Business of the Administrative Committee**

**AC-14-2237**

**Naming Three Members of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society Board**

**VOTED**

to approve a motion made by Sharon Watkins and seconded, to name three members to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society (DCHS) Board who will represent the broader church during this time of transition. The three people proposed are Mary Lou Kegler, Peter Morgan and Edie Rice-Sauer.

This action is in response to a DCHS Board of Directors motion approved during their most recent meeting (October 22-23, 2014) asking the Administrative Committee to name three members to their Board.

**AC-14-2235**

**Mission First: Mission Council Task Force Report**

**RECEIVED**

the report of the Mission Council Task Force, presented by Second Vice Moderator, Tony Rodriguez and General Minister and President, Sharon Watkins.

The discussion and questions which ensued from the report focused on:

- The size of the Mission Council (MC) and Administrative Board (AB) – some felt the MC would be too big to function while others were concerned the

smaller size of both the MC and AB would not permit a valid representation of the whole church. For example – in proposed make up of both bodies, youth and young adults are missing

- Would the increased work of the AB increase the number of times it would have to meet in a given year and would the whole process create more work for the Moderator Team, thus making it difficult to attract the people we need in leadership.
- Would need to examine the efficiency of our structure to see if we are able to function within smaller governing bodies.
- How would we hold the congregations accountable to the process and how would they hold the regions and general ministries accountable.

Additional comments, questions and suggestions may be forwarded to Tony Rodriguez

**AC-14-2223**

**Cultural Competency Task Force Status Report**

**RECEIVED**

The report was received by the Administrative Committee.

**AC-14-2218**

**2013 General Assembly Items for Reflection and Research**

**VOTED**

to approve the workshops listed in the report for the 2015 General Assembly as part of the implementation of the two items for reflection and research approved at the 2013 General Assembly in Orlando.

**AC-14-2236**

**2015 General Assembly Report**

**RECEIVED**

This verbal report was received by the Administrative Committee.

**MOTION**

**It was moved and seconded that the Administrative Committee adjourn into Executive Session to continue discussion surrounding a legal update.**

**VOTED**

to approve the motion to adjourn into Executive Session to continue the discussion surrounding a legal update.

**The Administrative Committee adjourned into Executive Session at 10:48 AM CDT.**



**The Administrative Committee adjourned from Executive Session at 11:44 AM CDT, reconvening into Plenary Session.**

**AC-14-2238                      Affirmation of General Minister and President's Actions**

**VOTED**

to approve a motion made and seconded which affirms the actions of the General Minister and President regarding the Disciples of Christ Historical Society as reported to the Administrative Committee in Executive Session.

**AC-14-2239                      Communications Plan for Disciples of Christ Historical Society Transition**

**VOTED**

to approve a motion made and seconded which instructs the General Minister and President to convene the church's leadership for input in the development of a communications strategy to keep the entire church informed of the transition process taking place at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

**AC-14-2240                      Affirmation of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society Board of Director Decisions**

**VOTED**

to approve a motion made and seconded which states that the Administrative Committee of the General Board recognizes, affirms and supports the Board of Directors of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society as they work on behalf of the Historical Society and the wider church to ensure that the important mission of the Historical Society continues.

There being no further business before the Administrative Committee, First Vice Moderator Joan Bell Haynes led the closing communion service and the meeting was adjourned.

**Christian Church Services, Inc.**

PO Box 1986  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-713-2414

Todd A. Adams, Executive Director  
Sharon E. Watkins, President  
Gary Kidwell, Board Chair

Christian Church Services is the umbrella corporation that coordinates the shared services of the Disciples Center. Since the last General Assembly, CCS has overseen the negotiations, build out and relocation of the Disciples Center. The new space provides a modern, efficient and collaborative work environment, while saving the church over \$3MM, when compared to the actual costs of remaining at 130 E. Washington St. The exterior, surrounded by glass, creates a light and open feel. The costs for each ministry will remain fixed over the life of the lease. The new offices include complimentary employee and visitor parking.

CCS is pleased to collaborate with Ambrose Properties and Compass Construction, both of which are minority-owned businesses (MBE). Additionally, Parallel Design group, who oversaw the layout, decoration and furnishings, is a certified women-owned business (WBE).

Christian Church Services currently contracts with the Office of the General Minister and President for Treasury Services and Building Management. The services provided by OGMP continue to save the General Ministries in excess of \$200,000 per year. Gary Kidwell served as board chair for 2013-2014. Rick Reisinger was elected board chair for 2015-2016. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President continues as President.

**Report to the Administrative Committee  
And General Board  
Center for Faith and Giving**

**Administrative Summary**

**Director:** Bruce A. Barkhauer, Minister for Faith and Giving

**Standing Committee:** Dennis Williams (chair), Robin Hedgeman, Erin Wathen, Eric Farris, (vacancy). Sharon Watkins, Gary Kidwell, Ron Degges serve Ex-officio.

**Our Vision:** *To create a culture of generosity across the life of the whole church*

**Our Mission:** *To provide resources that teaches stewardship as a spiritual discipline and whole life response to the generosity of God.*

**A Brief Word from our Director:**

This ministry has been the most exciting venture of my life, and it has without a doubt been the highest fulfillment of my 30 year calling in the service of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is a privilege to engage in this work on a daily basis and a delight to witness others discover the joy that is to be found in practicing generosity

**Our History:**

The Center for Faith and Giving was the final component in the merger of Church Finance Council with the General Assembly – the result of passing Operational Business Item 0734 *Concerning the Reorganization of Governance/Accountability, Church Treasury Service, Stewardship Education, and Promotion* at the Fort Worth General Assembly 2007. Under the provisions of the resolution, Treasury Services, Mission Fund Promotion and Stewardship became a part of the General Assembly and are supervised by the Office of General Minister and President.

At the recommendation of the Administrative Committee, stewardship education was to be housed in a newly created Center for Faith and Giving which would relate to the Church through the Office of General Minister and President. The Standing Committee appointed by the Administrative Committee discerns the mission and program of the Center and recommends the Center's budget to the Administrative Committee.

The Standing Rules have been amended to include two additional representatives, one from the Christian Church Foundation, and one from the Division of Homeland Ministries; each serving ex-officio. Gary Kidwell and Ron Degges currently are serving as the representatives from their respective ministries.

It was determined at the time the Center for Faith and Giving was created that it would be reviewed by the Administrative Committee after the first five years of operation, for the purpose of evaluating the mission, effectiveness, and the continuing need for this work. You are receiving this report as a part of that predetermined process and the criteria developed for this discussion.

## **Our Beginnings:**

This ministry truly was a “start-up” endeavor. From the need to acquire office furniture and stationary, to the staking out of a vision and mission, this work began with a white sheet of paper and world of possibilities. Logo creation, website development, resource gathering, relationship building, and need assessment started immediately when the Director reported for work on February 1, 2010. A five year plan<sup>1</sup> was quickly developed, embraced by the Standing Committee, and endorsed by the Administrative Committee within the first 45 days of the Director’s start date. A structured set of statements about the Center and its identity were included along with well-defined and measurable goals and a time line for assessing progress. This enabled us to move from “endless possibilities” to focus and clarity in the midst of many variables in a short amount of time.

In short, the majority of the goals established by this plan have been met or exceeded since the work of the Center began.

- Established relationships with Regions
- Provided Resources for theological education to seminaries
- Developed stewardship materials for congregational implementation
- Engagement with all of the racial/ethnic constituencies
- Built partnerships within the General Ministries
- Created additional funding sources beyond DMF
- Improved the ability of the whole church to talk about stewardship as a faith discipline and spiritual issue – moving it beyond the realm of simple fundraising
- Utilize existing and establish new ecumenical partnerships around the work of generosity
- Develop a method of critical evaluation of the ministry’s resources and effectiveness
- Grow new leaders for the ministry of stewardship as an additional resource for the whole church
- To be good stewards - faithfully managing the resources entrusted to us

## **--The Next Five Years:**

The Center in the next five years will “build out” from its strengths. A commitment has already been made to resource development during our next biennium. As we begin to look ahead, we envision a shift toward more targeted travel by the Director. By moving from a “shotgun to a laser” approach, we will allow for both time and financial resources to be more deeply invested in the creation of new, web accessible materials. It is important, as a matter of stewardship, to utilize an approach of lower cost/higher value selection of events to which we send the Director in the future.

### **◇ 2015**

- Freshen the appearance of the website and update static content
- Complete graded camp curriculum

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<sup>1</sup>

- Complete Academy curriculum – 10 Disciple affiliated members fully certified by year end
- Annual campaign materials tied to RNCL Year B with at least 350 sales. This will include a bonus resource section on electronic giving
- Sponsor GA Resolution/or create a study document to lift up the priority of stewardship and generosity conversation across the whole church
- Develop new video content for the website (30 units to be added by 2018)
- Continue to broaden our diversity. There is a strong personal commitment from the Director and a sense of priority from the Committee to strengthen our partnerships with our racial ethnic ministries.

#### ◇ **2016**

- Five Regions utilizing camp material (in some form)
- 20 additional Academy certified (expanding to include UCC)
- UCC resourcing 4 Regional Educational Events and 1 Combined Disciple/UCC National Event
- Annual campaign materials tied to RNCL Year C with at least 400 sales plus \$2,500 investment from UCC as joint publication. Bonus materials on narrative budgeting
- Increase by 2 the number of Disciple or UCC related seminaries engaged in some form of stewardship and personal financial education. Develop partnership with HELM
- Seek greater participation in biennial events of NAPAD and Obra Hispania.
- Start resource creation for stewardship priority (if passed at 2015 Assembly)
- Build the Stewardship network – hold first event.
- Host 5 regionally accessed webinars on narrative budgeting
- Establish a fund within the Christian Church Foundation for program development for stewardship related ministries. (Funds will be sought from individual donations)
- Continue to resource Regions via Assemblies (as invited and able to meet criteria)
- Continue video development

#### ◇ **2017**

- Annual Stewardship Campaign materials tied to RNCL Year A, done jointly with UCC with at least 450 sales. Bonus materials to include generational giving resource.
- Release first resource packet at 2017 Assembly tied to the 2015 resolution (if passed)
- Continue Academy certify 20 (Disciple/UCC)
- Address funding Issue to extend the viability of CFG through completion of 2019.
- Five additional Regions utilizing Camp Curriculum (in some form)
- Host Stewardship Network event (likely tied to GA)

- Continue video development and initiate translations where appropriate.
- Further develop electronic access to the Director as a congregational consultant
- ◇ **2018**
  - Partner with Academy for Young Preachers to offer category and some meaningful award for stewardship preaching excellence.
  - Develop high school level personal finance materials for distribution.
  - National Event for Stewardship Network partnering with UCC
- ◇ **2019**
  - Adapt to newly identified needs and resource delivery methods.
  - Prepare for review meeting with Administrative Committee in the spring of 2020.

Final report available after April 2014 AC.

## **College of Regional Ministers**

### **Report to the General Board**

**April 11-14, 2015**

President, Denny Williams

President-Elect, Cathy Myers Wirt

First Vice President, Teresa Dulyea-Parker

Second Vice President, Sotello Long

Secretary, Juan Rodriguez

*"The College of Regional Ministers was formed in response to the theological and ecclesiological imperatives attendant to the office of regional minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)."... the office of regional minister is "one of the clearest areas where the ministry of oversight (episcopate) finds expression within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)." – Preamble of the Constitution of the College of Regional Ministers*

*The College of Regional Ministers (CRM) meets annually for study and discernment to address items of fundamental importance for the church's mission, faith, order and practice. The College also meets for a working meeting on issues that are urgent and important in the life of the church and the world. In 2014 the College met in response to a consensus that journeying together into deeper spiritual and intentional collaborative partnerships provided the most important ways to be effective in our calling, and more supportive of one another as colleagues in strengthening congregations and the whole church.*

This has called us to intentional work in three areas.

First, to have the practice of deeper, more intentional spiritual connection as a part of our time. In December 2014, as a part of the Colleges meeting, we included a pilgrimage to Cane Ridge and worship there as a part of our time together. It provided both a spiritual and historical connection to our Disciple calling and ministry.

Second, the college has sought intentional collaboration with General, Higher Education and Constituent partners. This has included encouraging and participating in a Team Leadership Conference with these partners around issues of structure and mission in the whole church, collaborative conversations with Hope Partnership around transformation and meeting and conversations at Lexington Theological Seminary.

The College has also worked with the OGMP in providing consultation and support to regions in pastoral and structural transition. During the past year these have included Oklahoma, Southwest, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Northern California, Central Rocky Mountain and Kansas City Regions.

The College partners closely with the General Commission on Ministry (GCOM), to coordinate the implementation of the Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of the Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) approved by the General Assembly in 2009 and to provide needed updates to our system for Search and Call for pastoral leadership.

Finally, The College continues to work towards the mission priorities of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

These efforts have included regional and collaborative programs in developing new congregations, providing for vital transformative ministries in our congregations and the work of calling, training and supporting transformative Disciple leaders. Our meetings in 2014 have included developing best practices in these areas for Regional Ministers and Moderators, creating an updated Regional Minister Website and video meetings around important topics, and intentional collaboration around most effective ways to work with congregations and leaders. The College's Anti-Racism team continues to provide for training, awareness, resourcing and witness to anti-racism and reconciliation within the college and in our regions.

We celebrate the calling we have together to give witness to a God who calls us to a common ministry to create wholeness in a fragmented world.



## **DISCIPLES CENTER for PUBLIC WITNESS**

Ken Brooker Langston, Executive Director  
Five Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20005  
202-797-0113 - [disciplescenter@verizon.net](mailto:disciplescenter@verizon.net)  
[www.disciplescenter.org](http://www.disciplescenter.org)

**OVERVIEW:** The Disciples Center for Public Witness is doing very well. We continue to consolidate institutionally, support our work financially, and expand programmatically. Our denominational, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships are strong and getting stronger. And our unique partnership ministries are directed by incredible people doing incredible work. In addition, our volunteers continue working hard to increase the public presence and organizational capacity of the Center; and our internship program continues to increase in numbers and financial support.

**BACKGROUND:** The Disciples Center for Public Witness was founded in the Christian Church Capital Area as a ministry for the entire denomination. Our mission is to inform, connect, and empower Disciples and other people of faith for ecumenical and interfaith justice advocacy in the United States and Canada. Through workshops, conferences, internships, internet advocacy, grassroots activism, and meetings with policy makers, the Center promotes more thoughtful, more prayerful, and more effective public policy advocacy among all people of faith, especially the members, activists, and leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Center is now a recognized organization within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through our relationship with the Office of the General Minister and President. And we continue to gain strength in organization and mission from our relationships with various general ministries, regions, congregations, and individual supporters.

Although located primarily at National City Christian Church in the Christian Church Capital Area, the Center also has a presence in New York through its relationship with Park Avenue Christian Church, and in Canada through its relationship with its sister ministry, the Disciples Centre for Public Witness.

**CENTER MINISTRIES AND PROJECTS:** The Disciples Center for Public Witness is actively involved in a number of public policy issues and concerns, giving special attention to those issues and concerns that have been addressed by our church's General Assemblies, but also working alongside our ecumenical and interfaith partners on areas of shared concern.

In 2004, our **Health and Wholeness Ministry** focused mainly on the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid expansion in the states, and continuing access by all women to reproductive health care. Our **Economic Justice Ministry** had as its primary focus public policy that affects families--and especially children--living in poverty. And our **Gender Justice Ministry** focused on equal pay, domestic violence, and reproductive justice. Work also continues in the areas of worker justice, creation care, and religious freedom.

New projects currently being developed are (1) an ecumenical conference on environmental racism; and (2) an interfaith network of religious leaders and grassroots advocates who support public education.

**PARTNERSHIP MINISTRIES:** The Center has three partnership ministries as part of its overall ministry: Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Human Rights Ministries, and the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative. The first two partnership ministries are with Disciples Home Missions and the third partnership ministry is with our ecumenical partners in other mainline denominations, national faith-based organizations, and state and local ecumenical councils.

**Refugee and Immigration Ministries (RIM)** became a partnership ministry when Disciples Home Missions moved this ministry's office from Indianapolis to Washington, DC. Its primary focus in terms of public policy advocacy has been to promote the General Assembly's commitment to just and humane immigration reform. Working with ecumenical and interfaith partners, the Director of RIM has met with government officials, organized prayer vigils, and given leadership to a number of public rallies and peaceful protests. (She has even been arrested a couple of times for civil disobedience as a form of prophetic witness against immigration policies that divide families).

**Human Rights Ministries (HRM)** monitors and works on a number of important issues: torture, capital punishment, gun violence, human trafficking, and the rights of both Native Americans in the United States and the First Nations in Canada. But HRM's main focus has been criminal justice reform: juvenile justice, fairness in sentencing, solitary confinement, mass incarceration, and the rights of returning citizens. On many of these issues, HRM is now working closely with both Reconciliation Ministries and the new prison ministry program of the National Benevolent Association (NBA).

**The Ecumenical Poverty Initiative (EPI)** was originally a program of the National Council of Churches, but when that ecumenical body decided to move away from programmatic work, the Center was approached about our interest in this program, and, because of our desire to see it survive and

thrive, EPI became an ecumenical ministry of the Center. Since that time, EPI has continued its emphasis on ending poverty, especially among our children, and, to help achieve this goal, it continues to bring together partners from diverse Christian denominations, organizations, and ministries.

**INTERNSHIP PROGRAM:** This past summer, the Center had **five interns**. Two interns from Washington College in Chestertown, MD, were part of a program for academic credit in which they studied the role of religion in public life in relation to issues of their choice. (One intern chose public education, and the other one chose the war on terrorism). An intern from St. John's College in Annapolis, MD, worked on religion and environmental racism. And an intern from Connecticut University worked with EPI on faith-based responses to poverty issues. Our fifth intern was a Disciples Peace Intern co sponsored by the Center and Disciples Women. She went to various summer camps for young people to discuss both gender justice and interfaith cooperation. We look forward to continuing this undergraduate internship program next summer.

In addition, thanks to the generosity of the Oreon E. Scott Foundation, a Disciples seminarian will work with the Center as part of our newly founded **Oreon E. Scott Internship in Prophetic Ministry**. The purpose of the internship is to help empower seminarians to (1) relate Christian faith to justice-oriented public policy advocacy and (2) integrate faith-based justice advocacy into the overall vision, mission, and praxis of our church and our churches.

**CONFERENCES:** Our big conference every year is **Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice**, a conference in which nearly 1000 Christians from across the nation gather together to worship, attend workshops, network by issue, denomination and state, and visit their elected representatives. Held on March 21 -24, 2014, in Crystal City, VA, the theme for this conference was *Jesus Weeps: Resisting Violence, Building Peace*. As part of the conference, the Center joined with the United Church of Christ to sponsor a reception followed by a program on "Soul Repair" with Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock.

The planning for the 2015 Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference is already underway. The conference, which will be held on April 17-20, has as its theme, *Breaking the Chains: Mass Incarceration & Systems of Exploitation*. Ford Rowan, our Director of Human Rights Ministries, is part of the main planning group for this conference.

Among other conferences attended by members of the Center Advocacy Team and the Center's partner ministries were the National Convocation,

the Black Ministers Retreat, the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, the Quadrennial Gethering of Disciples Women, Equal Voices, and the Congress on Urban Ministry, this year co-sponsored by SCUPE and Interfaith Worker Justice.

**REMEMBERING THE SAINTS:** On July 31, 2014, Oscar Haynes, a founding member of the Center's Board of Governors, went home to be with his Lord and Savior. Ninety-eight years old at his passing from this world, Oscar was very well-known and very well-liked by persons of all backgrounds and generations throughout our denomination and beyond. We celebrate his incredible life of service to our church, and we rejoice at his presence among all the saints who now dwell more fully in the eternal life of our all-loving God.

## **EUROPEAN EVANGELISTIC SOCIETY**

**PO Box 24560**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**

**[www.eesinc.org](http://www.eesinc.org)**

**317-299-0333**

**Tony Twist, President**

### **2015 General Board Report**

The European Evangelistic Society (EES) established its Institute for the Study of Christian Origins in Tübingen, Germany in the early 1960s. Its purpose is to encourage and guide research in the earliest church and to focus the application of that research on the church today. Over the years the Institute has gained the respect of the faculty of theology at the University of Tübingen and as a result occupies a place of honor among scholars of the New Testament and early church history around the world.

The mission of EES in its 69 years of history has not changed. It remains: To develop leaders through higher learning to have a global impact by more effectively influencing their churches, cultures, and countries for Christ. This vision reflects the common mission priorities of the Disciples of Christ as a movement for wholeness that welcomes all to the Table and shares the Good News of Jesus Christ from “our doorsteps to the ends of the earth.”

The mission of EES is focused on this concern of leadership development necessary to realize the Four Priorities of the Church as outlined in the 2020 Vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). EES exists to develop international leaders for significant service. This includes leaders from Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.

Through the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins at the University of Tübingen, Germany, EES is actively involved in research supervision and publication. In conjunction with the Protestant faculty, a doctoral colloquium is offered in which international doctoral students have the opportunity for research supervision at a major European University. This mission expresses itself in three primary areas of ministry:

- To develop international leaders through advanced studies
- To assist emerging leaders in researching and publication of relevant national articles, books, and other materials
- To help encourage the establishment and development of churches, colleges, and agencies focused on evangelism and disciple making.

At the present time, the educational ministry at The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins, led by Director Dr. Beth Langstaff, continues to function alongside Eberhard Karls University, in Tübingen, Germany. The Institute has a long and productive relationship with the prestigious and influential University. The influence of this ministry has been felt all over the world, as international students have come to the University for academic purposes and have been a part of the Institute. It pursues basic New

Testament research, offers colloquia through the academic year, and engages in continuing dialogue with professors and students from around the world.

In order to serve more effectively as Bible college professors, presidents, mission directors, and in other high capacity positions, many from these networks will need the type of advanced preparation that EES can provide. The Institute for the Study of Christian Origins is being positioned to help develop dedicated leaders for significant service throughout Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.

On the basis of the respect earned by EES, the Institute has been able recently to sponsor, with the help of Tübingen's New Testament faculty and that of the University of Munich, two symposia with scholars from around the world. These meetings help to fulfill the mission of the EES to stimulate study of early Christianity among scholars so our movement to restore New Testament Christianity can be taken seriously at the highest level. The more recent of these was held September 30-October 1, 2014.

The 2014 symposium focused on the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. The English title is: "Make Disciples of all Nations": the Appeal and Authority of the Christian Faith in Graeco-Roman Times. Under the leadership of Dr. Beth Langstaff, Director of the Institute, Prof. Dr. Loren Stuckenbruck, of the Protestant theological faculty in Munich, and Prof. Dr. Michael Tilly, of the Protestant faculty in Tübingen, twelve outstanding scholars made helpful presentations on various aspects of early Christian evangelism. From the very beginning, the intent was to make the symposium an international gathering. In addition to Tübingen, these scholars came from such diverse places of learning as Dortmund, Wuppertal-Bethel, and Munich in Germany; Pretoria, South Africa; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Heiligenkreuz, Salzburg and Vienna in Austria; and Cluj, Romania.

The presentations (seven in German and five in English) spanned the time from the life and status of Jewish rabbis and their disciples to the missionaries from Syria who first took the gospel to China along the Silk Road starting in the third century. Dr. Peter Penner, from TCMI Institute, on the basis of his expertise as a missiologist, presented a lecture on Luke 24:44-49 to show a missiological hermeneutic used as a foundation for early Christian discipleship. Dr. Li Tang, a woman from China and an alumna of Emmanuel Christian Seminary, presented the results of her research on the earliest Christian mission to China. Dr. Loren Stuckenbruck, whose parents were the first missionaries sent by the EES to Tübingen, showed how some of the vocabulary of early Christian missions was also used in Jewish apocalyptic literature.

This international gathering, focusing on our work of making disciples, served to encourage us all to take seriously this commission of our Lord and to support with prayers and resources those who are engaged in the work around the world. Our hope is that God will use the symposium to stimulate and encourage His servants everywhere. All twelve of the symposium presentations will appear later this year in a book published in Tübingen by Mohr-Siebeck Publishers and thus will be available to all

interested scholars, especially teachers of the New Testament, early church history, and missiology.

Although EES does not work specifically in any one congregation, it seeks to promote the cause of reconciliation throughout the world by developing leaders who will demonstrate our commitment to the idea of a faithful, growing church that exhibits true community, deep Christian spirituality, and a passion for justice. The work of EES in Germany at the University of Tübingen is truly a multi-cultural community. Since 2000, doctoral colloquium presentations have been given by visiting professors and doctoral students from Australia, Canada, Germany, Finland, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Africa, The United Kingdom, and the United States. EES seeks to be an international witness for the Christian gospel in one of the most significant theological settings in the world. In keeping with the original vision of the European Evangelistic Society, the goal is to see churches thriving and flourishing throughout the world by equipping capable leaders to serve.

EES is characterized by a deep and abiding interest in the oneness of the Body of Christ. That interest has not changed with the passing of over sixty-five years of ministry. The European Evangelistic Society is one of the few ministries among Stone-Campbell churches that has historically sought to work among all three streams of the American expression of this ideal. For over half a century, the dream of a united Church, bound by its commitment to the New Testament as the revelation of God about the person of Jesus Christ, has been the unchanging focus of its mission.

## THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

*Paxton Jones, Chairperson*

The General Commission on Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is composed of up to sixteen members appointed by the General Minister & President in consultation with various constituencies across the life of the church. In odd-numbered years, the General Minister and President may present a slate of members to the General Board for confirmation.

In 2014, the following persons served on the General Commission on Ministry: **Howard Bowers**, Office of General Minister & President, administrative staff; **Jinsuk Chun**, Executive Pastor of the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples; **Jorge Cotto**, pastor, Central Christian Church, Coral Gables, FL; **Ron Degges**, DHM President; **Ann Dotson**, Pastor, First Christian Church, Rowlett, TX; **Bill Edwards**, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Ohio; **Jacque Foster**, pastor, Compton Heights Christian Church, St. Louis, MO; **Timothy James**, Associate General Minister & Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation; **Barbara Jones**, Executive Regional Minister, Great River Region; **Paxton Jones**, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Kansas; **Belva Brown Jordan**, Assistant Dean, Claremont School of Theology; **Sandy Messick**, Regional Minister, Northwest Regional Christian Church; **Saundra Michael-Bowers**, Pension Fund Representative; **Holly Miller-Shank**, UCC Representative; **Huberto Pimentel**, National Hispanic Pastor, Central Pastoral Office of Hispanic Ministries; **Rossy Ricart**, laywoman, Iglesia Hermandad Cristiana, Indianapolis; **Glen Stewart**, Regional Minister, Christian Church in Tennessee<sup>2</sup>; and **Sharon Watkins**, General Minister & President, ex-officio. In addition, **Warren Lynn**, Director, Office of Christian Vocation, served on the Search & Call Committee to share information directly related to his work.

GCOM meets twice per year in Indianapolis. During its 2014 meetings on January 13-15 and August 18-20, GCOM addressed the following issues:

- **BEST VENDOR FOR SEARCH & CALL:** Extensive time was spent in the Search & Call Committee discussing whether SURAN is the best vendor for our S&C needs; a detailed list of needed questions/data to collect before making an educated decision was developed and shared with CRM's Tech Committee, which is assisting in this exploration.
- **ABILITY TO POST DISCIPLE CONGREGATIONAL OPENINGS ON THE UCC WEBSITE:** Such postings may be done IF the Regional Minister signs the permission form. Information regarding the process and links have been shared with CRM.
- **COLLABORATION WITH CRM:** GCOM and the College of Regional Ministers addressed together several concerns related to the new clergy and congregational profiles, professional classification codes, a standard length for commissioning clergy, how to best care for general and regional ministers when

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<sup>2</sup> Glen Stewart retired as Tennessee's Regional Minister on December 31, 2014, but remains on GCOM.



concerns are raised about their health/well-being, and notification when a prominent Disciple dies.

- **STANDING FOR CLERGY WHOSE STANDING IS LODGED WITH THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON MINISTRY:** Standing was granted in January to 162 clergy serving in general, senior regional, chaplaincy and missionary situations and in August to 7 clergy newly called to such positions.
- **APPROVED NEW MEMBERS OF RESPONSE TEAM:** A 12-member team was named two years ago to respond to allegations of misconduct by clergy whose Standing resides with GCOM; half of the membership rotates off every two years. Therefore six new members were approved for four year terms, subject to their agreeing to serve.
- **REPOSITORY FOR GCOM DOCUMENTS:** GCOM documents will reside in the Office of the GMP.
- **Completed updates on:**
  - a. GCOM website—accessible thru the general church website at [www.disciples.org](http://www.disciples.org)
  - b. *Ordination Guidelines and Services*
  - c. *Closing a Pastoral Ministry*
  - d. Self-Disclosure Form
  - e. Congregational Profile
  - f. Appeal Process and Misconduct Policies (reviewed annually)

**Future projects:**

- a. review the *Letter of Calling and Agreement*
- b. create video webinar orientation materials regarding S&C for Regional Ministers [CRM has taken the lead on this project]
- c. review of the *Ethical Guidelines for Congregational Conduct* (adopted by General Assembly in 1989)
- d. update the *Guidelines for the Pastoral Relations Committee*
- e. revise the Pension Fund's *When A Minister Dies* brochure for broader use

As always, we welcome your input, comments, questions, ideas, and concerns.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paxton Jones, Chairperson

NATIONAL CITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION

*Richard L. Hamm, Chairperson*

Stephen W. Gentle, Senior Minister

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Washington, D.C. 20005

Telephone: (202) 232-0323; Fax: (202) 797-0111

Web site: [www.nationalcitycc.org](http://www.nationalcitycc.org)

## **Reconciliation Ministry**

Rev. April G. Johnson, Director

### ***Mission Statement –***

*Reconciliation Ministry advances the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)'s journey toward wholeness by empowering each expression of the Church to implement structural change to address historic fractures caused by racism and the systems that perpetuate it.*

### **Ministry Highlights:**

To the end of addressing our mission and the Church's journey toward wholeness, we share the following ministry highlights from 2014 to date.

#### **Education and Training:**

With almost a full year of the implementation of the revised Executive Search Model which stipulates search committees participate in anti-racism training, Reconciliation has facilitated a 40 % increase of events over the previous year. These opportunities and partnerships have unearthed a new awareness of the applied theology of our training model resulting also in an increase in identified training needs. The ministry has benefitted by increasing both the number and the capacity of trainers in anticipation of a larger demand. We facilitated events in Ontario, Canada; Central Rocky Mountain; and Virginia Regions as well as executive search events for Council on Christian Unity, Kansas City Region and Pension Fund. These are only a few of the opportunities for which Reconciliation and the requesting ministries benefitted. Our greatest benefit has been the introduction of additional adaptable modules to the analysis that allow our facilitators to provide content relevant to the ministry context and need. The evaluations from these events have pushed our model to adapt.

It is the objective of all our training modules to promote leader development and transformation through content that promotes individual and institutional self-examination.

#### **Mission Presence:**

Grants at work – Reconciliation Ministry partnered through our granting program with two programs intended to effect relationship-building and transformation. The grants provided seed money for a program to promote dialogue with SERF and SERF Convencion congregations as well to support service opportunities through Disciples Volunteering and HOPE partnership in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Participants in both programs will develop lifelong relationships that impact our ministry witness and practice.

Task Forces – Reconciliation has served as proctor and staff to the Task Forces on Removal of Racist Language and Cultural Competency to which the Board will receive reports in this meeting. Both task forces offer new guidelines for intentional inclusion of people of color in our ministries and our policies. To that end, we embrace the possibility that as the work and recommendations of these task forces progress we will be positioned to adopt new metrics for measuring the effectiveness of the Anti-Racism mission priority.

Leader Development/Ecumenical Partnerships – Reconciliation Ministry has committed in shared mission with our ecumenical partners to direct our efforts toward education and advocacy about race and criminalization – Mass Incarceration. We hosted and chaired a summit at the ELCA last Spring that was overwhelmingly successful bringing partners, formerly incarcerated and organizing networks to the same agenda. In collaboration with the National Council of Churches we were able to bring our shared influence to adapt the theme of this year's Ecumenical Advocacy Days to “Breaking the Chains: Mass Incarceration and Systems of Exploitation.”



Check Point: The Border between Tijuana, Mexico and San Diego, CA  
(Obra Hispana – Action on Advocacy for Just Immigration Reform and Children)



Regional Training Event – Central Rocky Mountain  
(Regional Leader and Team Development/Strategy training.)





Banner Memorial to Michael Brown placed in shrubbery at site of shooting. Ferguson, MO (February 2015 Cabinet Meeting Tour of Ferguson)

## **THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

Ronald J. Degges, President  
Julia Brown Karimu, Vice President  
1099 North Meridian Street,  
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Indianapolis, IN 46204-1036  
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The United Christian Missionary Society continued to furnish financial support for the Division of Homeland Ministries, dba Disciples Home Missions (DHM), and the Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM), by investing and managing its endowment and permanent funds for the benefit of the two Divisions.

During 2013, there were 2 gift annuities released for a total of \$5,905.00 of residual value distributed. There was no life income agreement income to report. When gift annuities or life income agreements are released, the funds are either distributed outright to DHM and DOM or added to the permanent endowments of the Society depending on the beneficiary designation. The Society did not receive any restricted bequests.

The Society continued to be involved with ethical issues which related to its investments and was active with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). ICCR is an ecumenical organization of 17 Protestant denominations and approximately 200 Roman Catholic orders which cooperate concerning ethical and social concerns as expressed by actions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Society, which has eight trustees and four officers, has no active employees. Beginning in 1993, the Society contracted with the Christian Church Foundation, Inc. to perform the treasury services for the Society. The current officers of the Society are as follows: Ronald J. Degges, President; Julia Brown Karimu, Vice President; Kathy Watts, Corporate Secretary, and Lonna Owens, Treasurer. Four trustees are nominated by each of the two Divisions served by the Society. They are elected by the General Board of the church and serve a term of four years. Their responsibilities are to oversee and determine policies concerning the investments of assets owned by the Society. The protection as well as the income realized from these assets is of paramount concern for the trustees. Their invaluable service is recognized and this report is submitted on their behalf.

The Society distributed the following from the investment pool in 2013: DHM - \$624,062; DOM - \$848,705; and other entities - \$49,326.

The Society distributed the following from the investment pool in 2014: DHM - \$643,408; DOM - \$874,554; other entities - \$51,232.

**WEEK OF COMPASSION COMMITTEE**  
**Melinda Wood, Chair**  
**Vy Nguyen, Executive Director**  
**Mary Jacobs, Interim Resource Development**  
**Dawn Barnes, Transitional Program Associate**  
**P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206**  
**317-713-2442**  
**[www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org)**

Week of Compassion—the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—continues to serve and respond faithfully to human need and suffering in North America and around the world.

By offering hope, compassion, and healing to individuals and communities in need on behalf of the entire church, Week of Compassion continues to be the expression of wholeness in a fragmented world.

Week of Compassion has always been committed to working with and within communities even years after disasters occur, and that still holds true to this day. Week of Compassion continues to participate in long-term recovery efforts in Haiti to rebuild communities impacted by the 2010 earthquake. Our partner Church World Service is creating infrastructures for child protection and food security, and we are creating micro-credit and seed programs with our partner Agriculture Missions. To better support mothers and their children, we are also providing safe Motherhood kits that are used to reduce the risk of infection during childbirth through IMA World Health. With our partner Prosperity Catalyst, we are developing the space and resources for entrepreneurship training for women to rebuild their lives.

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria, Iraq, and surrounding countries continue to call Disciples to respond to the millions who are mired in violent conflict and who are now displaced within the region. At the end of 2014, there were more than 52 million refugees in the world—the highest since World War II—and almost half were children. For the first time in three decades, Afghanistan was no longer the country with the most refugees: Syria has now surpassed Afghanistan with nearly 3 million refugees. Week of Compassion has, through many partners, been actively responding to the needs of Syrian refugees throughout the region, as well as to the needs of the displaced religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq where internally displaced Iraqis increased from 1.8 million to 2.1 million by the end of 2014. Thanks to the work of many of our partners, Week of Compassion has been able to provide relief to these refugees not only by providing shelter, food, water, non-food items, and hygiene kits, but also by carrying out protection initiatives for women and children.

In Western Africa, the widespread outbreak of Ebola, one of the worst in recent history, destroyed many lives and significantly impacted many local economies within the region. Through our partnership with Global Ministries, Week of Compassion supported the work of many Disciples communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With



our partner IMA World Health, Week of Compassion was able to provide protective medical equipment for doctors to treat patients in Liberia and the DRC.

In Nigeria, many individuals, especially girls, have been kidnapped, communities have been destroyed, and towns and communities have been ravaged by Boko Haram. Through our ecumenical partner, the Church of the Brethren, Week of Compassion has been able to respond rapidly and provide relief, food, water, and shelter to many communities affected by this conflict.

Week of Compassion continues to work closely with our regional ministries to coordinate domestic emergency response by providing solidarity grants for congregations and communities who sustained damage and loss due to natural disasters. Week of Compassion is partnering with Disciple Home Mission's Disciples Volunteering, United Church of Christ's Disaster Ministries, Oklahoma Region of the Christian Church, and the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ to work towards the long-term recovery for the Oklahoma City area and to transform the area into a mission site for volunteers. Week of Compassion is also partnering with the Oklahoma Council of Churches to fund a long-term program designed to offer emotional and spiritual support to individuals and families after a disaster. In the fall of 2014, the Joplin, MO's mission sites, which came into existence following the 2011 tornado, closed. These sites hosted hundreds of volunteers who helped rebuild the Joplin community.

The conflicts in Central America led to many unaccompanied children crossing the U.S. borders in 2014, and these numbers will continue to increase. Many of these children cross thousands of miles to reach the southern borders of the U.S. in order to escape extreme violence and poverty in their homeland. WoC has been coordinating with our partners at Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Church World Service, and Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries to provide counseling, shelter, food, and legal services for these unaccompanied children.

Across North America and around the world, severe weather patterns are negatively affecting many communities. It is clear that our planet and climate are changing rapidly, leading to alarming new weather patterns and extreme shifts in our environment that will continue to affect communities around the world. The northeastern areas of the United States have been particularly hard-hit this winter by extreme cold weather and severe storms, while the southwestern parts of the United States are suffering from severe droughts that NASA is calling "megadroughts." Droughts are also impacting other regions of the world like Namibia and Central America, which are devastating crops and food supplies for many communities. In the Philippines and South Pacific, strong typhoons are becoming a regular occurrence, while many parts of Asia are now experiencing extreme flooding. Week of Compassion stands strong and will continue to respond to many of these communities.

In 2014, Week of Compassion and Disciples Volunteering developed a new partnership with Society of St. Andrew to help end hunger by mobilizing Disciples volunteers to glean nutritious produce from farmers' fields and orchards after the harvest to help feed

families. Many Disciples congregations are actively serving Equal Exchange coffee, tea, and chocolate in their worship communities to help farmers have fair and equal wages for their crop productions.

Week of Compassion is able to do this ministry because of the generous support from many of our congregations and individuals within the life of the church. Week of Compassion responds where we are needed when families and communities experience natural and human-made disasters. Through this life-saving ministry—when we put our Compassion in Action—our church serves as an important, visible sign of our witness to Christ in the world, so that we can say: “Week of Compassion around the world around the year.”

**WORLD CONVENTION**  
**(CHRISTIAN - CHURCHES OF CHRIST - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

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The board of the World Convention with members from nine countries met in Nashville, Tennessee, USA, April 1-3. God worked powerfully in that meeting, opening new pathways and possibilities for the ministries of World Convention.

The board approved a more succinct mission statement for World Convention:

**In Christ, all are reconciled to God and to each other, and in the Spirit, God calls us to proclaim this good news throughout the world. World Convention (Christian-Churches of Christ-Disciples of Christ) embodies and encourages fellowship, understanding, and common purpose within this global family of churches and relates them to the whole Church for the sake of unity in Christ Jesus.**

World Convention seeks to fulfill this mission by connecting our churches everywhere, every day. We connect through an email newsletter, through our website, in personal visits, and many other ways. One way we seek to connect our churches is through a Global Gathering. After much prayer and discernment, the multinational board of World Convention has decided with much disappointment and regret that its next Global Gathering, scheduled for 2016, will not be held in South Korea as planned. This decision was prompted by challenges within the leadership of the churches in South Korea. World Convention is thankful to God for the growth of the churches in South Korea. Our prayer is that we might hold a Global Gathering there sometime in God's future.

The board received a moving invitation from churches in India to hold a Global Gathering there. We are overjoyed to announce that the board accepted that invitation, and our next Global Gathering will be in New Delhi, India, January 12-15, 2017. The World Convention board also elected Ajai Lall as its new President. Ajai is the founder of Central India Christian Mission. Gerson Vicente de Souza of Brazil was elected as a Vice President.

The board also approved structural changes to streamline its work and broaden its composition to reflect the diversity of our churches globally. The board unanimously approved a proposal to begin creation of two bodies: a Board of Governance that will provide fiduciary accountability and decision-making functions, and a Board of Guidance that will advise the other body. The board appointed a Governance and Guidance task force to give proposals to the entire board regarding the composition

of those boards, including terms, the role of officers, and other matters. In addition, board members have been added from India, Poland, Swaziland, Ghana, and the United States.

The board appointed a Christian Unity committee to explore ways that the World Convention can more fully participate in the wider ecumenical movement with global, regional, and national entities, in close association with the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council.

**Year Book and Directory**  
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The Year Book and Directory provides the annual listing of ministries recognized as part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Year Book also maintains a listing of those congregations, regions, general ministries, and Disciples' related organizations and institutions and certifies to the Internal Revenue Service that they are capable of receiving tax deductible contributions.

Each year, the Disciples are augmented by new congregations recognized by their respective regions. In 2014, 20 (3 congregations are listed as "emerging" and not yet Year Book Listed) new congregations were officially recognized. The following are the number of new congregations per region:

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Alabama-NW Florida       | 2 |
| California-Nevada, North | 1 |
| Canada                   | 1 |
| Florida                  | 1 |
| Georgia                  | 3 |
| Great River              | 1 |
| Indiana                  | 2 |
| Kansas                   | 1 |
| Kansas City              | 4 |
| Mid America              | 1 |
| Oregon                   | 1 |
| Southwest                | 1 |
| Tennessee                | 1 |

The Year Book also works with regions to maintain an accurate listing of congregations by acknowledging congregational losses in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). During 2014, 104 congregations were removed from the official list of congregations. one was a duplication of a formation congregation, 45 congregations were, 42 congregations withdrew, 15 congregations had the region withdraw recognition of their status, 1 congregation was removed through the process outlined in GA 9516.

Of those congregational losses, 38 were formation congregations: 16 closed, 6 withdrew, 15 were removed from regional under care status, 1 was a duplicate.

The Year Book also lists ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This listing is provided by the Office of Search and Call in Disciples Home Missions. 6,850 ministers were listed with denominational standing. Of that number, 2,153 (31.4%) were listed as retired (1080 active retired) and 2,250 (32.8%) are listed as pastors of the more than 3,400 congregations.

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