

## **GA-1309**

**Title: Report of Disciples of Christ Historical Society to the General Board and General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

**Origin: Glenn Thomas Carson, President, CEO, & Chief Historian**

### **Our Mission**

**Disciples History is dedicated to keeping our legacy safe and sharing our story with the world.**

Disciples of Christ Historical Society is a general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, and interconnects all Stone-Campbell churches around the world. We serve as the primary archive and collective memory for our faith family. Through the collection and preservation of historical documents and artifacts, by teaching and publishing, and per the world wide web, we insure that the ideal which was delivered to us – an open and welcoming Church – will remain available for the generations to come.

### **Our Promise**

Disciples History promises to maintain the highest standards in everything we undertake and to keep safe the precious historical materials entrusted to our care.

### **Our Vision**

Disciples History envisions the unity of all persons of faith through shared understanding of individual histories and creeds.



[www.discipleshistory.org](http://www.discipleshistory.org)

*The Future of History*

How does Disciples History contribute to the movement for wholeness in a fragmented world?

We now serve congregations and researchers in **over 100 countries**. To discover our ministry visit [www.discipleshistory.org](http://www.discipleshistory.org).

What does Disciples History mean by “serve”?

- We hold the world's primary collection of materials related to the Christian tradition known as Stone-Campbell (and, if asked, that's the names of the two main founders of our branch of the Church)
- We keep these materials safe and secure for the generations to come
- We share these materials with congregations and researchers today, so that wider audiences can learn more of their own story
- We provide a wide variety of information and helps through our main website (DisciplesHistory.org) and six other websites, each with a specific purpose
- We publish books, articles, and a scholarly journal to help tell various aspects of our faith story
- We mount exhibits to breathe life into our story
- We sponsor two lectureships to further scholarship and understanding in our corner of the Church
- We annually present three awards for excellence in the life of the Church (student historical essay; preaching; service)
- We provide teaching helps through curriculum like "Leaders & Legends" on the history and beliefs of Stone-Campbell Christians
- We teach in congregations, regions, and seminary classrooms through a number of half-day seminars (including the history of Communion; leadership lessons; and the history of American Protestantism)
- We teach via the web through a growing number of exclusive webinars
- We offer certification for congregational historians
- We offer a four-course certificate in the study of Christian history
- We offer congregational services for churches in transition, churches that need records management help, and churches that need advice on their historic buildings
- We partnered with 14 historians and Chalice Press to produce the first-ever Global History of our branch of Christianity
- We welcome guests from all over the world to our beautiful, historic building, which gives witness to our faith story in stone and glass
- We consult with academics and leaders of the Church on the interconnection between Christian history and the world we live in
- We partner with other general and regional ministries of the Church to foster and exemplify our call to Christian unity (including housing the records of these ministries)

--We serve on the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), bringing our unique perspective to the challenges at hand  
--We (sometimes) host tours of historic sites  
--We interpret our history in the context of world and whole-Church history, so that interested individuals are helped to make sense of the world they live in, by grounding that sensibility on the foundations built in the past that continue to give structure to the present, and to the future  
--At DCHS, we are *the future of history*<sup>®</sup> ...and more, always more...

### Disciples Mission Fund

Disciples History gratefully acknowledges the receipt of DMF monies in 2012, which represented 12% of our overall budget.

### Our Premium Members

Disciples History expresses gratitude to our Premium members, who accounted for 88% of our income in 2012.

### From the President

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
THE STATE OF THE SOCIETY  
The President's Report to the Board of Trustees  
October 27, 2012

We have been waiting for a couple of years to be able to say it. And now we can:  
*Disciples History now serves congregations and researchers in over 100 countries.*  
There is no other ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that serves on such a global scale.

This service takes a wide variety of forms, but when talking globally, the main delivery system, regardless of the particular service, is the web. We said in 2005 that the web would become the centerpiece of our ministry and we have steadily moved in that direction.

For almost a year we have been working on developing a brand new DisciplesHistory.org and we will enter 2013 with this much improved site. The site we have had for a number of years has served us very well, but this new site will take us to a new level of delivery and user-friendliness.

Our main website (along with our six others), joined with everything else we do in collection management, publishing, teaching, consulting, and giving-back point to a clear truth: taken as a whole, the state of the Society is good.

Like every other non-profit, our financial challenges remain very real. And daunting. However, to recall the words of the Apostle to the church at Corinth, *when there is first a willing mind, and a readiness to complete what is before you, it is done by what you have – so pay no mind to what you don't have*. At Disciples History, we are willing and ready, and we know that we have the Spirit of God calling us to complete the mission laid before us.

Looking forward, we are not certain what next year and the year after bring, but we are ready to adapt to the world we live in to insure the future of history. We are dedicated to our mission of keeping our legacy safe and sharing our story with the world. And we know that together we will continue to embrace our circumstances, whatever they may be, and address our challenges with vigor and creativity.

Tom Peters said, “it is what it is.” We do not run from, or deny, reality. We engage reality. And we are committed to doing everything it takes to fulfill our mission, keep our promise, and realize our vision. At Disciples History we not only preserve the past, we lead into the future. It is what we have always done – may it ever be so.

Highlights from the past year:

- I was honored to serve on the inaugural Board of the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD) and concluded my term in August
- We dedicated the D. Newell Williams Conference Room
- We successfully finished our commitment to the Stone-Campbell World History Project (with publication of the book by Chalice Press in early 2013)
- We continued making progress on ‘sifting’ our files and collections and the process of reorganizing the Stacks
- I spoke at the Eureka College Founder’s Day
- We completed the reset and cleaning of stones in Courtyard
- We translated *A Future History* into Portuguese for the World Convention meeting in Brazil (and we were a sponsor of the gathering)
- The Forrest Reed Lecture was held at Park Avenue Christian Church in NYC
- I presented our case to the General Youth Council in Indianapolis
- As always, I preached and taught (and presented our case) in congregations, regions, and classrooms
- We added a new website, bringing our current total to seven sites
- While we will always be ‘DCHS,’ we made the final step in refining our brand and now use ‘Disciples History’ as the moniker for our ministry

Perhaps the simple way to put this is that we practice Christian stewardship. In the fall issue of *Streamlines*, in answer to the question “what is it?” I said: *Christian stewardship is a life of caring for everything God has entrusted to us, and using that*

*everything according to: the principles of the New Testament, the witness of our gathered community, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Another way to say this is 'It's who we are and it's what we do.'*

With the continued dedication of our Board and Staff, by investing our time, talent, and treasure, we expect the ongoing growth of the Society.

Glenn Thomas Carson, M.Div., Ph.D.  
President, CEO, and Chief Historian

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Submitted by the President on behalf of DCHS and its Board of Trustees  
April 2013

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The General Board has reviewed Report No. 1309 from the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. The report is submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and discussion. No action is required. (Discussion time 12 minutes)