

**Report of the Council on Christian Unity
Robert K. Welsh, President**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Council on Christian Unity submits this report on its program and activities for the period from April 2012 - April 2013.

OUR MISSION:

The Council on Christian Unity was created in 1910 as an instrument of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to reclaim our passion as Disciples for Christian unity and the oneness of the church, and to encourage our participation in the wider ecumenical movement. Our mission statement today continues that same vision as we “serve as a general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), working with congregations, regions, colleges, seminaries, and other general ministries to encourage their partnership in our church’s efforts in the quest for the unity of all Christians as a sign of God’s love for the world.”

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CCU’S WORK AND RELATIONSHIPS AS CARRIED OUT BY CCU PRESIDENT (via single phrases or summary statements, provided for busy people to capture the heart and soul of the CCU’s work, without offering a full-blown analysis or report on the details involved):

- I. “Internal” involvements, programming and leadership within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):
 - Preaching in congregations, especially for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, World Communion Sunday, and Week of Compassion
 - Preparing regular “Updates” on the life and work of the CCU that go to over 900 individuals on my email distribution list
 - Writing and lecturing on the meaning and vision of Christian unity for Disciples in the 21st century
 - Serving on the church’s “Justice Table” and heading the focus on eco-justice
 - Serving as co-opted staff for the Covenantal Dialogue Committee of General Board
 - Working with the Young Adult Commission of DHM, seeking to give leadership to a pilot program of “Babel Table experiences” within several regions of our church
 - Staffing the “Faithful Conversations” committee, in partnership with the Disciples Peace Fellowship, to address the critical issues of war, peacemaking and unity
 - In partnership with the Communication Ministries, giving leadership to development of a new “Identity Initiative” for Disciples that will be launched at the 2013 General Assembly

- Preparing and hosting the Stalcup Lectureship on Christian Unity, along with Brite Divinity School, in Dallas, Texas, on June 9, 2013, with Dr. Diana Eck as the lecturer
- Seeking to re-establish a network of Regional Commissions on Ecumenical Concerns as a way to strengthen the contacts with congregations and with local ecumenism
- Serving as the co-chair for developing a study guide for the General Commission on Ministry's document on *Historical and Theological Foundations for the Ordained Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*
- Representing the CCU on the General Cabinet of our church
- Developing contact with Disciples Chaplains and Church Relations staff at Disciples Colleges and Universities in their ecumenical and interfaith programs
- Participation in the development of programming for the 2013 General Assembly, which will include partnership with DOM in a dinner highlighting the global and ecumenical church; offering two "Sunday School" options; and working on the learning track of "Sacred Conversations"

II. "External" involvements, programming and leadership within the ecumenical movement:

- UCC-Disciples Ecumenical Partnership (Disciples staff to the committee)
- Churches Uniting in Christ (member of the Executive Committee and treasurer)
- Stone-Campbell dialogue (co-convener for the annual meetings)
- Church of Brethren "exploratory conversation" (provide staff leadership)
- Christian Churches Together in USA (one of our church's two official representatives)
- National Council of Churches of Christ (Member of Governing Board; Chair of Ecumenical Relations Committee; and, Co-chair of the Transitional Task Forces for future vision and purpose of NCC)
- World Council of Churches (Member of Bossey Advisory Group, and member of the 10th WCC Assembly Planning Committee)
- World Council of Churches Relations Committee of NCC (vice-chair, and moderator of the pre-Assembly event for US participants)
- Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (General Secretary)
- Joint Consultative Commission between WCC and Christian World Communions (moderator)
- Disciples-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue (co-secretary)
- National Workshop on Christian Unity (member on the planning committee)
- Interfaith engagement (serving as a member of the Christian-Jewish dialogue "table" to explore pastoral issues between Christians and Jews)
- National Ecumenical Officers retreat (convener)
- World Communion of reformed Churches (staff oversight on behalf of DECC)

BASIC THEMES RUNNING THROUGHOUT THESE INVOLVEMENTS:

- A. There are **three basic themes** that provide coherence to the work of the CCU and our ecumenical involvements:
1. addressing issues of racial justice as fundamental to our vision and work for Christian unity;
 2. identifying justice and peace-making as major topics to be addressed in our work for unity in today's society and world; and,
 3. discovering the growing edge of interfaith engagement as central to our witness to Christian unity.
- B. I continue to believe that at the heart of the ministry of unity and reconciliation (and therefore my own personal ministry) is the need to stay spiritually, biblically and theologically grounded. This requires a spiritual discipline that helps me to see and understand my work and ministry not as "meetings to attend, or speeches to prepare, or articles to write, or travel to plan," but as giving expression to God's gift and call to oneness in Christ in all those places I am privileged to be and to serve on behalf of our church.

The General Board has reviewed Report No. 1307 from the Council on Christian Unity. The report is submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and discussion. No action is required. (Discussion time 12 minutes)