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The Oldtimers' Grapevine, Volume 23 (January - September 2014)

John Richard Foulkes Sr.

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The Oldtimers' GRAPEVINE

January—March, 2014

Volume 23, Issue 1

National Convocation Executive Committee & Reflection Meetings, Ghana, West Africa



Patricia Maples, President of the National Convocation and aggressive supporter of mission in Ghana, West Africa, led the Executive Committee of the National Convocation of the Christian Church in a life changing visit to Ghana March 14-24, 2014. The following is a snap shot of the Committee's itinerary, summary of their offerings and reflections by members of the committee on this life changing experience.

Itinerary snap shot:

- Sunday, March 16: Church at Christ Temple Service in Accra; 1st Executive Committee Meeting.
- Monday, March 17: Tour the Cape Coast Dungeon; Mission Reflection Meeting with Queen Mother, African Area Executive & Imakhus.
- Tuesday, March 18: Walk on Kakum Bridge; Fishing Village tour and interact with people smoking fish; 2nd Executive Committee Meeting.
- Wednesday, March 19: Visit Kumasi Wood Market; 3rd Executive Committee Meeting.
- Sat., March 22: Visit W.E.B. DuBois Memorial and acknowledge our Ancestors; Visit Art and Culture Market; Visit Professional Luggage Packers.
- Sun., March 23: Attend Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Trinity Parish in Madina -Accra; 4th Executive Committee Meeting

Services were:

- Three Water Wells Commissioned from donors
- Over 300 pieces of Clothing, Shoes & School Uniforms for Girls and Boys.
- School Supplies including Laptops for Scholarship Students
- Health procedures for adolescence's and adults
- Education Sessions for Men and Boys.
- Past Conference Bags from National Convocation & General Assembly.

Reflections:

- "Looking back, to look ahead" has not been a motivation to give handouts, but it has been a motivation to assist others to look up and to look forward to possibilities. The hope is to encourage independence and self-motivation and a desire to improve lives that have been seemingly stagnant for decades. It is our prayer that somewhere a life was touched and a vision for the future was given. For some of us, we left with opportunities to help educate a child or a commitment to search for such an opportunity. For others, we learned there is so much work to do, but we have the knowledge that we can do something.
- The worshipers at Evangelical Presbyterian Church were jubilant in their worship expressions. Additionally, among the regular worshipers, were two different groups attired in gray and white and others in black and white caps and gowns. They had done missionary outreach and were reporting the results in song. They sang very harmoniously....At the close of worship, we distributed pencils, dresses, t-shirts, soccer balls, tennis shoes and suckers to the children. As we gave gifts to the

children not expecting anything in return, the women of the church surprised us and gave each



of us Kente cloths....All of us were impacted in a positive way by the things we saw and what we learned about the history of Ghana. It's an impoverished country, with many needs.

Ghana has only been independent of Great Britain 57 years. When we were informed of a need that we could help alleviate at one of the schools we visited, we dug a little deeper to make a difference.

Seeing some of the needs of our brothers and sisters in the Motherland, we couldn't return to America, with the mindset of "What happens in Ghana stays in Ghana". We are our brothers' keeper.

- We did our mission work today at the Kwadaso Village and School. We commissioned water wells sponsored by Michigan Park Christian Church that will benefit the school and the community here at the Kwadaso Village. We handed out school supplies, dresses, shoes, and toothbrushes. The event was celebrated with a Durbar. There was dancing and gaiety all around. After the celebration, we were invited to the Chief's Palace to refresh ourselves.



- After an early breakfast, we went to the Village of Apatrapa, where we had an early morning visit with the family of two Queen Mothers of Apatrapa. We visited with the family and interacted with them, sharing their customs and traditions....From the family house, we went to the Apatrapa School.... We had morning devotions at the school with the children before we began our mission projects. The children were lined up waiting for us as we arrived. They welcomed us with a song. Their voices were so beautiful and melodic! We accepted the welcome with a song back to them..."Lift Every Voice and Sing". Then, it was AWESOME....we began singing an African song to them



that we learned this week, and they started to sing with us...Beautiful!



- We taught women and teen girls to do breast exams. We checked blood pressure, the men held a "Boys to Men" session with the boys. We met with the Village Chief who held a ceremony to thank the

National Convocation for the addition of two Water Wells so the Village and the school could have clean and safe drinking water. Then the Water Wells were commissioned.

The day started with a morning meditation at sunrise on the beautiful Atlantic coast. Notice the "footprints in the sand"!...We went from the depths of emotion after visiting the slave dungeons yesterday and thinking, "those were our ancestors who were victimized by the inhumane brutalities of slavery", to the "height" of faith and trust as we remember, "I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength" Phil. 4:13.... We exercised our faith this morning by walking the Kakum Canopy Bridges. There was a 15 minute walk up a rocky hill in the rainforest to get to the canopies in The Kakum Park. The Canopy Bridges are a 360 meter bridge suspended over a canopy of trees in Africa's rainforest. We walked over seven suspension bridges that were connected to six wooden platforms where we were able to stop and observe the panoramic views of the rainforest.

- Today ... we went to Cape Coast Castle, where slaves were placed in dungeons until they were passed through the door of no return. It was a very emotional tour, as we saw how inhumane our ancestors were treated....While slaves were left chained and handcuffed to wallow in their feces, urine, blood and vomit, the British had a church built over the slave dungeons praising God. Women were placed in the condemned cell for up to seven days if they refused the master's advances. It was a small room with no ventilation.
- We visited the Kente Village and Wood Carving Shops at Kumasi. We watched and received lessons on making Kente Cloth from the weavers. The vendors at the Ghanaian shops and the street vendors, though extremely resourceful, are very aggressive as they promote the selling of their wares.



New Leadership for the Oldtimers' Grapevine Newsletter

...that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God.

Colossians 1: 10 (NRSV)



The year 2013 was an awesome year of transition in leadership for the Grapevine. After 12 years of service, Oscar Haynes retired as Publisher and Executive Editor of the Grapevine in January 2013 at the young age of 97 years!! He was succeeded by John R. Foulkes who brought excellent credentials and a servant's heart to the leadership of the Grapevine. John's record over the past year indicates that the

board made a good decision in passing the mantle of leadership to him. John continues the Grapevine legacy of caring, excellence and adherence to our founder's vision and stated purposes for the newsletter. He has skillfully garnered the staff, new and old, to produce Grapevine issues that are informative, inspirational, and fun to read.

The year 2014 promises to be an awesome year in leadership transition, relative to our Board of Directors. The Oldtimers' Grapevine has a proud history of attracting committed Christians who are willing to share their time, talent, and treasure to support and enhance the ministry of the Newsletter. We are pleased to announce our successful recruitment of seven brothers and sisters in Christ who are willing to roll up their sleeves and help us take the Grapevine to the next level. An article in this issue introduces you to these new board members and I think you will agree that we are blessed to have such a dynamic group of Christian servants to carry on our proud tradition of service to this ministry. We express deep gratitude for their willingness to serve and we look forward to their contributions. We also express deep gratitude for our continuing board members who have been a "solid rock" amidst the many changes we have gone through over the past year.

Finally, we thank you, our readers, without whom we would have no reason for being. We solicit your

prayers as John and our new board provides leadership for our beloved Grapevine. All of us continue to honor the vision of our founder, William K. Fox. He had a way of asking you to do things and made it seem like it wouldn't happen unless you said yes. We hope he is pleased with our efforts and we are so glad we said "Yes". Let us know how we are doing – your input and support are invaluable!!
Your Sister in Christ,

Norma R. Ellington-Twitty, Ph.D., Board President

MEET THE BOARD

Dr. Norma Ellington-Twitty, President, St. Louis, MO:

Norma is a retired vice president of The National Benevolent Association. She has been a member of the Oldtimer's Grapevine Board since the newsletter's inception and has worked effortlessly to insure it's viability and excellence. Norma continues to bring to that ministry her strong Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) heritage as well as her academic and administrative gifts.

Sandra Bryant, Los Angeles, CA:

Sandra is the Director of the All Peoples Center in Los Angeles and has served the general church as a member of the National Convocation Board of Trustees and Vice moderator of the church. She brings a wealth of experience in caring for diverse populations in every age of development.

Patricia Clark, St. Louis, MO:

Patricia has served the National Convocation through it's Board and School of Faith and Life while serving her community as a seasoned social worker. Patricia also served as staff of the National Benevolent Association.

Rev. Dr. Paul A. Crowe, Jr. Indianapolis, IN:

Paul is a distinguished historian and renowned ecumenist having retired as the president of the Council of Christian Unity. Paul has slowed down a little but still is in demand as a teacher and lecturer.

Dr. D. Duane Cummins, Swanton, MD:

Duane is a distinguished historian and writer known throughout disciple membership for his book, [A Handbook for Today's Disciples](#). Duane has published many other historical books as well as being the former president of the Division of Higher Education, Bethany College and then Disciples Historical Society.

Katherine Fox-Cunningham, Indianapolis, IN:

Katherine is the daughter of the founder of the Oldtimer’s Grapevine and has grown up in the waves of the ministry of her father. She has been a member of the Oldtimers’ Grapevine Board since it’s inception. Katherine is a Federal Government executive who brings administrative, analytical and strategic thinking to this enterprise that she loves.

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, Decatur, GA:

Cynthia is the pastor developer and organizer of one of the largest and most influential congregations in the Christian Church (Disciple of Chris), Ray of Hope Christian Church of Decatur, Georgia. Cynthia has extended that congregation’s ministry to enable it to be a national magnet ministry for women’s as well as justice ministries. Recognized as an extremely competent leader she has been used by the Obama administration in many leadership roles.

Ruth Hobbs, Clinton, MS:

Ruth is a seasoned educator and elder of the Christian Church in Mississippi. Ruth has been a member of the Oldtimers’ Grapevine Board since it’s inception. At ninety-eight years of wisdom through Christian living, she brings to this enterprise the essence of it’s purpose.

Rev. Claude Maples, Dallas, TX:

Claude is a retired disciple pastor who is celebrated by his colleges as being an exceptional pastoral counselor. Prior to claiming his true calling, Claude was a reporter for the Associated Press.

Rev. Patricia Maples, Dallas, TX:

Patricia is presently serving as the President of the National Convocation and has recently retired from a supervising nursing career. One of the mile markers in that career was service to the National Benevolent Association as nursing supervisor.

Karen Vroman, DeMoines, IA:

Karen is a retired National Benevolent Association administrator with experience in geriatric care. Karen has served the General Assembly as a major contributor to the organizing of the interest group program.

Debra Webb, Indianapolis, IN:

Debra Webb is secretary to the Black Disciples Endowment Fund and serves as legal council and administrator for the State of Indiana’s Insurance administration

Compassion Corner

Jimmy Mohler

The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes

Each of you OTG readers would have had this experience. “Hello, my name is James, and I’ll be your server this evening. Now that you have had opportunity to review our menu, what will you have? The trout? Good choice! Would you like your fish grilled, sautéed, baked or fried? On your salad, would you like French, Russian, blue cheese, ranch, balsamic vinegarette.....? What kind of potato would you like? We have baked, au gratin, scalloped, steak fries, shoe string...?”

Turn the calendar back about 2,000 years. “Hello, my name is Jesus. I’ll be your server this evening. We are offering bread and fish. Would you like both?” Which is the greater miracle, feeding the 5,000 or more that 5,000 combinations of what one person might order when we go out for a nice dinner? Oh, I’ve done the math. There ARE well over 5,000 com-

binations possible on a 21st century menu. How do we use what God provides?

Five loaves and two fishes! There were lots of witnesses to that miracle that day by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus not only stretched the food to feed 5,000, he was the one who served it. He asked only two things of his disciples. (1) Get them ready. (2) Don’t let anything go to waste. To bring this miracle to life today, Jesus is asking more of us – his Disciples. In 2014, we must not doubt. We know that God’s creation can still provide enough for all to eat. Now WE must serve it; Jesus is not here in bodily form to do that. And although I can’t say for sure, I think that Jesus still wants us to start by sitting down – perhaps kneeling down. Have a seat. Pray. Reflect. God might want us to reflect on where we are in this world, and what each of us can do to answer the question Jesus asked in John’s gospel: “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” The billions in this world who go to bed hungry must be lamenting that others of God’s children are choosing from 5,000 or more combinations for WHAT to eat, not IF there is food to eat. It would be lovely to have a gathering of OTG

readers to share what we have done and seen in our stewardship to feed God's children. There is more to be done.

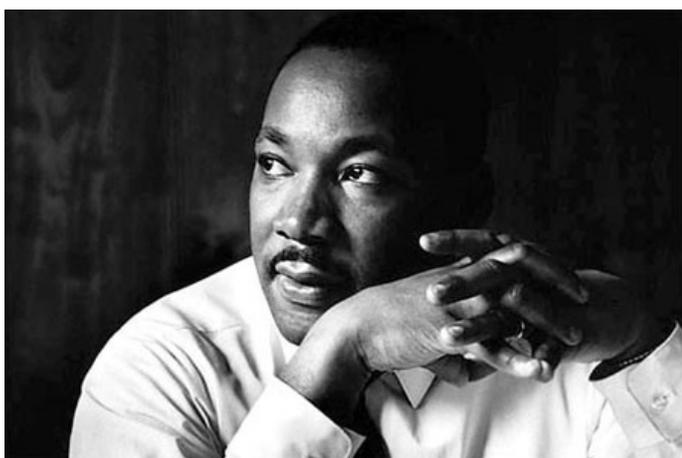
Are you hungry? Trust that miracle-worker God still provides. Let us respond in all the ways we can to God's call to distribute that provision in fairness and love. There is more than enough, for all of us. What a miracle.

The Durable Power of Love

Rev. April Johnson
Director, Reconciliation Ministry

What is the significance of honoring the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr?

Through the voice of history we have come to know



Dr. King as a man who possessed the courage of his Christian conviction. As a Christian, he took seriously Christ's affirmation of the inherent value of every human being. Dr. King understood God at base to be loving toward all of creation and having instilled that same capacity in each of us. In practice, however, we have learned that it is much easier to speak to the virtues of loving one another as Christ loved us than it is to live in principle. Yet, it is in the practice of allowing the love of Christ to shine through us that we demonstrate the courage of our Christian conviction.

One evening after receiving a barrage of threatening phone calls urging him to get out of town or else, Dr. King went to his kitchen and made a cup of coffee. Sitting at that kitchen table, he prayed to God confessing his discouragement and his inability to continue to lead the work of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In that moment at the table he felt the very real presence of God assuring him that he was not

alone and strengthening his courage to stay the course. Is there something in your spirit that drives you to have a little talk with God to strengthen the courage of your Christian conviction to address the indignities that harm God's beloved community?

This week we marked the 85th anniversary of the birth of a King. We celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King because of the impact of his courageous fight for liberation of all of God's children. Much like the children of Israel, in the days of the judges, we cry out for a king. At some point in most of our lives, we have begged for someone or something to help us conquer our enemies and our fears. Like the Israelites, in those moments we were looking for someone or something external to ourselves and our perceived abilities. The model of courage that Dr. King represents reminds us even today, that we can change the world for good, when we conquer the enemy of self-interest and greed with the light of love of Christ instilled in us through our Creator. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12 NRSV) As we remember Dr. King on this weekend dedicated to observance of his life and contributions to the world, let us keep his foundational faith tenet in mind that "the most durable, lasting power in this world is the power to love." Martin Luther King, Jr. November, 1956 Montgomery, AL.

Open letter from Global Ministries to South Africa

Rev. Sandra R. Gourdet

Dear Friends,

We join with others around the globe to express our grief and consternation as we remember the life and legacy of your former President, Nelson Mandela "Madiba". Although known as the Father of the South African nation, he was such an inspiration and role model that he belonged to more than just one nation. He belonged to the



continent and to the world. He will not be idolized as the only freedom fighter during the struggle for human dignity because there were many, many known and unknown fighters.

The world will remember this calm and stable man for his stand on reconciliation. His determination to resist the evil that divides us as human beings who share one nation or one world is a testimony to the impossible becoming a reality. He will also be remembered for his grace and willingness to step aside to make room for others.

He has made his long walk to freedom and completed the task set before him by God. We take this time to honor him and thank him for his faithfulness.

So, in the midst of our tears of sadness for the immediate family and the nation, we pray that this will also be a celebration of his life. We pray that there will be tears of joys knowing that he is at rest. As stated by

our own President Barack Obama, who was inspired by this son of Africa, "He no longer belongs to us but to the ages".

Your partner, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, stands with you during this time of remembrance and pain. May you find comfort as you reminisce over the history of your country during the past few decades and recall the role that this giant of a man played in making your country as great as it is.

God bless South Africa! God bless Africa! Blessings on you all!

Rev. Julia Brown Karimu, Co-Executive for Global Ministries/ President, Division of Overseas Ministries, Rev. Dr. Jim Moos, Co-Executive for Global Ministries/Office of Executive, Wider Church Ministries (UCC)

A Biblical Perspective on Cremation vs. Burial Services

By
Dr. Willie K. Crum, Jr.



Each day we live, as we try to find ways of dealing with the situations we face in this world, life brings struggles to us. Prices are sky high, and things are not getting better. When we look at the economy and jobs, times are tough, and many people live payday to payday. Everywhere we

look, we are faced with events that will bring more burdens on our families. Our greatest fears involve what will happen when we leave this world (die) to meet our Lord.

As I was working on my schedule to attend a classmate's funeral service, I heard a knock on my office door. It was the teacher next door. She asked if I had time to speak with her for a minute. I agreed. Then she asked me, "What do you think of cremation?" She

wanted to know if it is okay to cremate your loved ones.

I shared with her that personally, I feel it is okay to carry out the decision that your loved ones made in their wills. The Lord will come back for us, no matter how or in what condition and physical stage our bodies may appear. Every funeral service that I have done and participated in contains the last words from the Bible: "...for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Gen.3:19 NIV).

These words are read at the graveside, before the person is lowered into the grave by many faith groups. That reason is because when we die our bodies will decompose. When we die, it is not the body that is important, it is our soul. Our soul is what counts with the Lord. Are you (is your soul) right with the Lord? Again, the body is dust and ashes.

Biblical Perspective on Burial

1 Chronicles 10:11-12 (NIV) talk about burial: "...they buried their bones under the great tree in Jabesh, and they fasted seven days." 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 (NIV) tells us, "But someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?' ... If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth;

the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.”

As we understand these scriptures, the Lord is in control of our lives, what we are, and what we will return to Him. The life we live on earth, how we live with others and how we love the Lord our God, is the important part of living and dying.

Our Human Challenges to Cremation vs. Burial

Traditionally, we have been burying the dead as the people of the Early Church did. G.W. Bromiley, in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, writes that, “Among the ancient Greeks burial was the normal custom; but later cremation became widely practiced, particularly during a plague, or after a battle, in order to prevent enemies from disinterring the dead. Among the Romans likewise, especially the aristocracy, the practice of cremation largely was later than that of burial. Among the early Hebrews cremation was the exception. It was regarded as appropriate only for serious offenders, such as Achan. The burning of the bodies of King Saul and his sons by the men of Jabesh-gilead is disputed; it is an isolated incident and is omitted in the account given in 1 Ch. 10:11. Tacitus noted that the Jews bury their dead rather than burn them.”

As human beings, we often imitate what and how other people are living. According to the above scriptures, in some incidences, the Bible talks about the burning of the body as a punishment.

Furthermore, Bromiley states, “The early Christians, following the example of Jesus, spoke of the deceased as being asleep. Early memorials referred to the deceased as asleep in Jesus. A church in Jerusalem today bears the title the ‘Dormition of the Virgin Mary’ (dormition meaning sleep). They were confident, however, in the affirmation that the manner of death and disposition of the corpse would not affect the resurrection, because of God’s omnipotence. This was the position of the early church.”

Today’s Cost of Funeral Services

The cost of a funeral service is about four thousand dollars or more depending on where you’re located in these United States. There are people that cannot afford a proper burial. This situation can leave the family in a worse stage than it is already experiencing. Having other ways to give our loved ones a proper

burial can help a family. Typically, a full body burial service includes a casket, grave, burial vault, flowers, and transportation. Cremation is less expensive than a burial service.

Dr. Ed Markin stated in his survey that the cost of cremation ranges from \$710.00 to a high of \$3820.00, depending on which funeral home is used. What makes these numbers even more amazing is that all the funeral homes in his study used the same crematory and paid the same fee!

Also, Dr. Markin stated, “Any firm that offers cremation services will allow you to set up payment programs. If you want to use the services of one that for some reason does not, you can go to almost any bank and set up a ‘funeral account’ for funds that will only be used for your final expenses.”

The cost of the average funeral has risen more significantly than wage inflation. The ability for a family to place or scatter cremated remains in a location that is significant to them without the need for a grave, coffin, hearse, or other transportation costs greatly reduces the stress and embarrassment that not being able to afford to bury their loved ones would bring.

Conclusion

As Christians, the Bible is our Holy reference to life situations and a biblical teaching about our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Since the Bible doesn’t forbid cremation, then cremation is okay, based on the fact that your loved ones have requested cremation in their wills. If money is the issue, seeking support from other family members and people in your community would help with these expenses. Sometimes it is healthy to let people know what your needs are. The majority of the time, you will receive the assistance that you need.

As the writer states in 1Corinthians 15:35-55, an earthly body has the physical human fresh but the heavenly body doesn’t have the human fresh; however, it is a spiritual body. In other words, our physical human body goes back to the earth (dust). So when we bury our loved ones, it is the human body, not the spiritual body that is being buried.

I pray to God that when it comes to making the decision on cremation or burial, you can freely choose what is right for you and in the presence of our Lord.

Principle Seminar at Light of the World

INDIANAPOLIS (WISH) – For the first time, there are five African American superintendents in Marion County.

Dr. Nathaniel Jones – Superintendent of Pike Township, Dr. Shawn Smith – Superintendent of Lawrence Township, Dr. Nikki Woodson – Superintendent of Washington Township, Dr. Lewis Ferebee – Superintendent of IPS and Dr. Dena Cushenberry – Superintendent of Warren Township.

They are putting their numbers together to try and empower parents as to how to best participate in their children’s education. They will take part in a meeting this weekend at Light of the World Christian Church. Pastor David Hampton says he believes improving the achievement of our children is urgent.

“I just firmly believe that if Dr. King were alive today, he would say that education is the number one civil rights issue of our time,” said Hampton.

It’s an issue that this group takes seriously. All of them have dedicated their lives to making sure students succeed, sometimes breaking down barriers in the process.

“One of my former students said to me, ‘you made history,’ and I said ‘history?’” recalls Cushenberry. “She said, ‘my mom said you’re the first black principal to open a school.’”

Dr. Nikki Woodson remembers the awe of one of her former students as well.

“The mother called me and said, ‘oh my daughter is so excited that her principal is a black girl.’ And her response was ‘mommy, I didn’t know that black girls could be principals.’”

Jones, who is a veteran of the group with 11 years as superintendent said, “When I saw the 3rd one (African American superintendent) come I got excited. When the 4th one came I really got excited, and then we got a 5th and I thought, it’s about time, and why did it take so long for this community to embrace leadership from African Americans.”

Not only has the community embraced these leaders, but it has also placed high expectations on the group,

to make sure all students succeed. And that includes addressing what’s called the “achievement gap” between white and minority students.

“There has always been an achievement gap,” said Jones. “I don’t understand why it became a focus like it’s something new. Go and look at any statistics as far back as you can go, when you start comparing the achievement of African Americans or any of our minority groups, we’ve always had a gap.”

The most recent numbers out by the National Center for Education Statistics shows that in grades four and eight, nationwide white students outperform black students on standardized tests by at least 26 points in reading and math.



“I think socioeconomics play a greater part in that gap than what people realize,” said Smith. “And for many African Americans we are still in poverty and so a lot of these

young kids are coming to school with nothing. We need to see this as an opportunity. How can we educate people? How can we take them from poverty to success?”

But the group is quick to point out that this issue isn’t as simple as black and white. And that African American students are not a homogeneous group.

“To say all children who are African American need this set of strategies or these are the toolboxes to working with African American children,” said Woodson. “That’s not going to work with my two African American children. I think children need differentiated learning experiences regardless of race, based on their needs—their needs.”

What they have found in their majority-minority districts is that often times student success hinges upon parental involvement.

“Think it’s high expectations,” said Cushenberry. “I think if you have expectations and you say students are going to meet those expectations, they will. If you have low expectations they’ll reach that too.”

“Education is not political it’s practical. It’s not a partisan issue. It shouldn’t be a debate between traditional or charter school education. It should be. We see ourselves as stakeholders and how can we best educate our children,” said Hampton. “We have to see that this is urgent, our educational process, our learning process, this is urgent.”

All Roads Lead to Raleigh! Forward Together!

Woe to those who make unjust laws, To those who issue oppressive decrees, To deprive the poor of their rights And withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, Making widows their prey And robbing the fatherless. -Isaiah 10: 1-2

Join Andover Newton as we go to North Carolina to participate in the Moral March on Raleigh on Feb. 8, 2014. This trip, inspired by the recent visit of The Rev. Dr. William Barber in November, will take members of the Andover Newton community to participate in the yearly march.



The situation that has developed over the past twelve months in North Carolina is dire. In the past year the current legislation has denied Medicaid to 500,000 people, cut unemployment benefits for 170,000 struggling North Carolinians, taken away the Earned Income Tax Credit from more than 900,000 poor families, passed the worst voter suppression bill in the nation since Jim Crow, attacked women's rights, and removed environmental protections under the rubric of making the state more business friendly.

This situation makes it critical for people of faith to gather in Raleigh and raise their voices in protest! The Moral March on Raleigh is a march to the state house to bring attention to the poor and the marginalized. As people of faith our call is to serve as a witness. Join us in this march as we stand and give voice to the voiceless.

The precursor of the upcoming march began in December 2006, under the leadership of The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, who also serves as the President

of the North Carolina state Conference of the NAACP. The Historic Thousands on Jones Street (HKonJ) organizational meeting drew a diverse group of some of the state's best organizers, political scientists, lawyers, religious leaders, and activists. HKonJ kicked off its first annual "HKonJ People's Assembly" in February 2007, when more than 3,500 supporters attended as they sanctioned and signed the coalition's "HKonJ 14-People's Agenda (with detailed 'Action Steps')." The HKonJ Coalition transformed the 14-Point People's Agenda into comprehensive reform bills that have been introduced in legislative sessions.

HKonJ achievements include, but are not limited to successful voting, mobilization, legal, and public awareness campaigns aimed toward preventing the unconstitutional resegregation of Wake County Schools (the largest school system in North Carolina); increasing the minimum wage; securing passage of The Racial Justice Act; obtaining Same Day Voting; winning Smithfield workers their right to unionize; obtaining Governor's veto of Voter I.D. Laws, veto of unfair budget, and veto of legislative efforts to repeal the Racial Justice Act; and helping initiate groundwork for the Governor's pending "Eugenics Compensation Program Bill." This is an impressive list, but given recent events, it is not enough!

Message from General Minister and President Sharon Watkins

Warm greetings in Christ on this first day of a new year!

I have mixed feelings about the practice of New Year's resolutions: they're so easy to make - so hard to



keep. This year my resolution is to do some sharing about who we are as Disciples of Christ. If in fact, let's make it a church-wide conversation! Here's what I have in mind:

Several years ago the 21st Century Vision Team summed up the essence of our Disciples identity with a brief statement. You may have heard it before -

*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.*

Four key words in the statement help us understand and own this identity as Disciples of Christ:

Movement - Individually and with others "extending the neighborhood" of God's love and care from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8, Matthew 28: 16-20 (Great Commission) "Who is my neighbor?"... "The one who shows mercy." Luke 10:29, 37

Wholeness - God's gift of shalom - unity with justice and peace - which we work and pray to receive more fully. "For the kingdom of God is....righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14: 17

Welcome - humbly offering to each other and to our neighbors the hospitality of Christ"Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves." Genesis 18: 1-8 "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." Matthew 14:16

Table - where we celebrate at least weekly the saving presence of the living Christ. "Do this in remembrance of me." I Corinthians 11: 23-26

Over the next several months, I invite you to engage with other Disciples and friends around the meaning of this identity statement. The Council on Christian Unity has created a series of videos capturing a rich diversity of Disciples laypeople and pastors sharing what these four words mean to them. The videos are accompanied by both **group** and **individual** study guides downloadable from the "teaching" tab on the identity page at www.disciples.org. Your study may take the form of gathering a group to watch the videos together. It may be preparing a series of articles or sermons based upon these ideas. (There are even a few examples on the "preaching" tab of the identity page.) I'll do my part by blogging about gathering at the table, offering welcome, participating in a movement, and embodying wholeness.

You'll also find links to new blog articles on the Christian Church Facebook page and in the Disciples News Service at different times in January and February, so you might want to **follow** or subscribe now to make sure you are notified.

I look forward to journeying together as we share our experiences and grow in our mutual understanding of what it is to be Disciples together.

Your companion on the journey -

Sharon

POET'S CORNER

LED TO MANHOOD

Mom taught me good manners,
She showed me so much love.
Dad said, learn to work with dignity,
Never push and never shove.
Mom said "a man, too, should know
How to care for himself, know how
to wash, cook, and clean."
She said, "you take care of yourself,
Son. Don't depend on others and
Never, never be mean – for God is
Always watching, He is with us all our
Days; the dreams we hold inside our
Hearts manifest thru words and ways.
Some dreams we dream
Simply fade away.
Still there will be others
to take their place – hooray.
Rise early, don't be lazy, lax, for
"the early bird gets the worm" 'tis true.
And you wouldn't want to miss that
Wonderful worm (dream) God has in
Store for you."
Hold your dreams in high esteem,
Fashion and shape them well.
Attach God's word to each of them;
Like a sunbeam you'll excel.
So listen to your Mom and Dad,
cherish their wisdom thought.
Every son needs to be trained, taught
And a Dad and Mom that ought.

May Reed
Written Feb. 8, 2014



FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

Roscoe A. Dickerson

April 6, 1923 – February 27, 2014



Roscoe Dickerson was a familiar face at the National Convocation and at General Assemblies for many years. He parted this life on February 27, 2014 to join the many members of the Dickerson dynasty who were all well known ministers in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Roscoe Alexander Dickerson was born April 6, 1923 in Bluefield, Tazewell County, Virginia. His parents were the late Elder George M. and

Mary (Finney) Dickerson. He was the twelfth of sixteen children.

He attended the Tazewell County School and at an early age enlisted in the Civilian Conservation Corps for three years. He served in the United States Army for three years and was honorably discharged in 1946.

He was employed by the George Moore Trucking Co. in Tazewell, Virginia and the Bluefield Sanitarium Hospital, Bluefield, West Virginia before moving to Cleveland, Ohio in 1949. Roscoe retired from Republic Steel (LTV) Corp. in April 1983, after 34 years of service.

At an early age, he was baptized into the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) under the pastorate of his father, the late Elder G. M. Dickerson.

Upon arriving in Cleveland, he joined Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), under the pastorate of Rev. George C. Campbell. In 1983 he joined Bethany Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), under the pastorate of Elder Robert W. Dickerson, Sr.

Roscoe loved Jesus Christ, his church, and he loved people. He served as District 3 Christian Men's Fellowship Chairman in the early 1950's and as District 2 Chairman for a brief period in the 1980's. He also served as Vice President of the Ohio Regional Disciples Men for a term, and the Ohio Regional Board of Directors of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Roscoe was married to Clara (Murphy) Dickerson July 28, 1955 and to this union was born, a daughter Bever-

ly and a son, Minister Roderick A. Dickerson, both deceased.

Roscoe enjoyed making friends, gardening, communicating with people, taking pictures and "telling Jokes." He also enjoyed being associated with and volunteering at the Cleveland Christian Home, serving abused children and the Eliza Bryant Center Men's Support Group..

Garland (Gary) Sewell Farmer



Garland (Gary) Sewell Farmer passed away October 27, 2013, at the age of 94, in Davis, CA. He was born January 12, 1919, in Green County Farm, Alabama, to Mary Sewell Farmer, a teacher, and Garland Henderson Farmer, a preacher. He was raised in Texas where his father served as pastor of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregations.

As a teenager, Garland was inspired by the work of missionaries who developed schools, hospitals, and churches for those less fortunate. He left Texas for Oklahoma to attend Phillips University, graduating in 1941. After being ordained, he traveled East to Yale Divinity School, 1941-45, where he received a BD degree and prepared to be an overseas missionary. It was there he met Barbara Boynton, a biochemist working for the Army. They married in her hometown of Russell, MA, September 10, 1944. In 1945 they traveled to Texas to meet Garland's family, and then to Vanderbilt University, for more studies of preparation. Garland and Barbara served as missionaries in Puerto Rico from 1946 to 1959. Together they directed the Disciples' conference grounds. Garland also served as Treasurer of the Disciples Mission helping with the development of many new congregations, and he served on a number of evangelical councils. He taught himself a variety of new trades, from property title searches to plumbing repairs. During those years, daughters Margaret and Louise were born in Puerto Rico and Christine was born in Massachusetts. Garland's final years in Puerto Rico were spent working with the Puerto Rican Disciples church to develop its constitution and by-laws, working himself and Barbara out of a job, as Garland would often say.

In 1959, Garland was asked to be the Disciples' Administrative Field Secretary in the Belgian Congo, now Democratic Republic of the Congo. After spending eight months studying in Brussels the family traveled to the Congo where Garland served, 1960-64. Shortly after arriving in the Congo, the country received its independence from Belgium. Although Barbara and daughters were soon required to leave for a number of months, Garland remained during that tumultuous time, visiting mission stations along the river by boat and witnessing the challenges the new country faced as it found its identity. During his time as Administrator, the Church of Christ of Congo (Disciples of Christ) was chartered. It succeeded the mission in the administration of church work and property, and again Garland had worked himself out of a job.

From 1964 to 1984 Garland worked in Indianapolis, IN, for the United Christian Missionary Society (later known as Division of Overseas Ministries, or DOM, now Global Ministries). There he served as Director of Budget and Special Funds Promotion,

and later as Vice President and Treasurer of the DOM. His work took him to Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and the Caribbean.

In retirement, Garland returned to the Congo for two brief terms as acting director of two separate medical facilities. He also served a short-term assignment at Yakima Indian Christian Mission in Washington. Additionally, he held various volunteer positions relating to finances.

Garland had an endless enthusiasm for life, people and places. It is what led him to eventually travel the world appreciating the people he encountered and their cultures, loving the many opportunities his work brought him. He delighted in recounting the unusual life experiences he shared with Barbara. He was a gentleman, caring and compassionate, intelligent and sensible. His children and grandchildren are left with a deep appreciation of all they learned as a result of the world he shared with them.

Kathy Anne Turner Jeffries



Kathy Anne Turner Jeffries was born in Nashville, TN May 7, 1953 and went to be with the Lord February 17, 2014.

She attended Metro Public Schools, Tennessee State University and Nashville State Technical Institute. She had been employed

for 30 years as a Broadcast Technician at Nashville Public Television.

Kathy was very active in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at all levels. She has served New Covenant Christian Church as Youth Director, Vice-Chair of the General Board, Chair of the Diaconate, Church School Teacher and Superintendent, the Elder Board and the Church Choir. Kathy served the Christian Church in Tennessee through it's Executive Committee, Personnel Commission, Outreach Commission

and Resources Commission. She served for twelve years on the Tennessee Christian Women's Fellowship Cabinet, four years as Director of Service and eight years as President. Kathy served a four-year term as Vice-President of the International Christian Women's Fellowship Cabinet. She represented ICWF on the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches and on the Common Council of Church Women United, U.S.A. Kathy was later elected as President of ICWF becoming the first African-American to serve in that position. In that role Kathy represented Church Women United in September of 2000 as a member of a delegation of churchwomen to North Korea sponsored by the Partnership with Korean Women task group of the National Council of Churches. She served the General Board and the Administrative Committee of the Christian Church in the U.S. and Canada. Kathy also was a member of the Tennessee region Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation teams. She was a Past President of Church Women United in Tennessee, Treasurer of CWU in Nashville and a former member of the board of trustees of the National Convocation of the Christian Church.

Kathy has resourced women's events in regions throughout the United States and was the closing day speaker for the 2002 Quadrennial Assembly. She has written meditations for the CYF Yearbook and articles for the CWF Guideposts, was a contributing writer to the Faith Crossings Bible Study Show No Partiality and to the 2002-2003 CWF study Feed My Sheep. Kathy was the 2004 recipient of the Faithful Servant award given by the Disciples of Christ Historical Soci-

ety celebrating her years of service to church. Also in 2004, she was one of the recipients of the "Stir Up The G' Leadership award given by the Disciples Women of the National Convocation. In 2007, she was named a "Valiant Woman" by Church Women United in Tennessee. Kathy served on the Board of Directors of National City Christian Church and represented Disciples Women on the planning committee of World Day of Prayer/U.S.A.

Dr. John Mangram



Dr. John Dee Mangram was the first of six children born to Ruther and Viola Reed Mangram. The family worshipped at the Springhill Baptist Church in the Faker Community located outside Pittsburg, TX. At the age of twelve, John Dee was the teacher of the adult Sunday school class. He attended Garfield Elementary School

and Fredrick Douglass High School in Pittsburg, TX, graduating valedictorian of the eighth grade and senior high school. He was awarded a football scholarship to Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, TX in 1941. Following graduation from Jarvis Christian College with a Bachelor of Arts degree, he received the Bachelor of Divinity degree from Howard University School of Divinity; the Master of Sacred Theology degree, Yale University and the Doctor of Theology degree at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. Around 1950 John Dee married Bobbye Durham. When they moved to Dallas in 1968, they united with the Munger Avenue Baptist Church. John faithfully served in the pulpit and taught the Joshua-Garth Church School class until his death. Dr. Mangram served as the Assistant Director of the Labor Education and Cooperative Extension Service, Pendle Hill School in Wallingford, PA; University Minister and Instructor of Religion, Lincoln University, Oxford, PA; Chaplain and Assistant Professor of Religion, Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, MS; Minister First Congressional Christian Church, Meridian, MS; Minister, The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples, San Francisco, CA. In 1967, he was appointed Chairman of the Division of Religion and Philosophy and Professor of Religion, Bishop College, Dallas, TX, as well as a five-year term as Dean of the Chapel and Director of the Lacy Kirk Williams Ministers' Institute. In 1988, Dr. Mangram began serving as Coordinator of the Area of Religion in the Division of Arts and Science, Jarvis Christian College. In 2007, he became Professor Emeritus and designated writer of the histo-

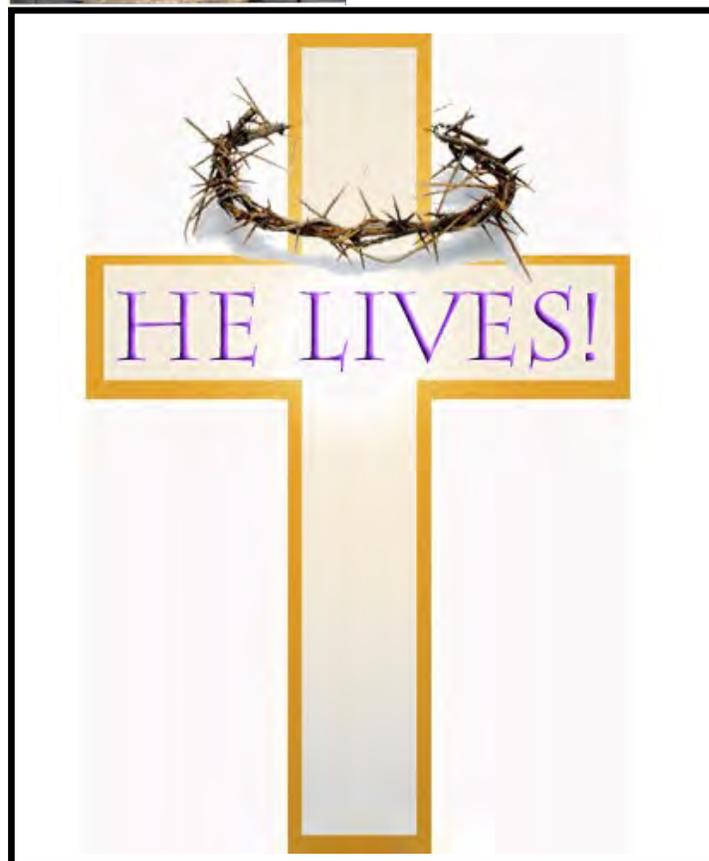
ry of Jarvis. He has contributed to publications in the areas of religion and education and participated in a Festschrift celebrating the seventy-fifth birthday of the late Howard Thurman. Dr. Mangram was granted the Distinguished Alumni Award from Jarvis Christian College and Howard University, "Man of the Year" Award from Tougaloo College, and the Minnie Stevens Piper Prize for Outstanding College Teaching in 1992. He was also a Fulbright Fellow, studying and traveling in Korea in 1994. In 1995, he was inducted into the Jarvis Christian College Pioneer Hall of Fame. He received an Honorary Doctorate from Georgetown College in Kentucky in 2009. .

Rev. Terry O. Peaks, Sr



With grief in my heart, I share with you the passing of Pastor Terry O. Peaks, Sr. on Saturday, March 8th, 2014.

Rev. Peaks was the Senior Pastor of Community Christian Church here in Nashville. Please join me in prayer for his wife Torenda, their family and his congregation.



Gilmore begins work as Associate Dean

Disciples Divinity House, University of Chicago



After a national search, alumna Yvonne T. Gilmore has become Associate Dean. She preached at the opening chapel service of the 2013 academic year on October 7, interpreting the quest for excellence for a new class of entering scholars and for this time and enunciating the importance of education that nurtures "thought leaders."

As Associate Dean, she collaborates with and assists Dean Kristine A. Culp in furthering the educational work of the Disciples Divinity House and interpreting that work to key constituencies in ways that will support DDH's mission over the long term. She will help to foster educational opportunities, vocational development, and transformative conversation among students, alumni/ae, and friends, as well as in wider venues.

She commented, "Profound scholarship, service, and creativity abounds at the House ... in concert with a great cloud of witnesses and an array of faithful and disciplined stewards of God's grace in its midst. I am so excited to join the grand constellation."

A 2005 MDiv graduate of DOH and the Divinity School, she was a member of the Alumni/ae Council when she accepted the invitation to serve. She is an ordained Disciples minister and founding pastor of New Song Community Church, a diverse urban Disciples/UCC congregation in Northeast Columbus, Ohio. Since 2010, she also served as staff chaplain and decedent care coordinator for Mount Carmel West Hospital in Columbus. She previously served in the Capital Area Region as an interim pastor, associate pastor, and chaplain.

Associate Dean Gilmore is a member of the Board of Directors of Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) and of the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She leads anti-racism training with Reconciliation Ministry, most recently for the Michigan Region and the general church offices in Indianapolis.

She is also a poet and a spoken word artist who, as a member of the Cornel West Theory, has performed at colleges and universities and released recordings. She has preached or spoken at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, the Ohio Regional Assembly, and the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), among other places.

Alumni/ae Council President and Drury University Professor Peter Browning commented, "Choosing Rev. Gilmore as the Associate Dean is a future-oriented move. [She is] a poet who stands up for freedom and liberation and a pastor who has started a new church.... Not only does she have the background in development and the experience of knowing the House well as a former House Scholar, but she knows the church and she has a passionate voice."

Yvonne Gilmore grew up in the Michigan Park Christian Church, where in the 1950s her grandparents worked alongside Arthur Azlein, a DOH alumnus, to establish the integrated congregation in northeast Washington, DC. She attended The American University, where she earned a BA in International Relations. She has two daughters, Assata and Kharis, aged 14 and 9.

The position was newly envisioned during several months of study led by the dean and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees with the assistance of Jim Powell, former President of Church Extension, now with the Columbia Partnership. It is one of several steps being taken as DOH has recovered from the economic downturn. Dean Culp explained, "We have resumed a full complement of educational programs, we are thrilled that Associate Dean Gilmore is providing leadership for new opportunities."

Disciples Historical Society announces plans to Honor Cynthia Hale



Continuing its tradition of naming rooms to honor those who have served the Church with distinction, Disciples History will create the Cynthia L. Hale Hospitality Suite inside its headquarters in Nashville, Tenn. The Thomas W. Phillips Memorial Archives, home to Disciples of Christ Historical Society, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Design and construction of the Hale Hospitality Suite will begin later this year with opening and dedication scheduled for 2015. The suite will surround a Welcoming Table which will serve as a central gathering space for guests and staff.

A former President of the National Convocation and a member of the 21st Century Vision Team of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale is the founding pastor of Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Ga. She has served widely and has been recognized numerous times for her service. In addition to her appointment by President Barack Obama to the President's Commission on White House Fellowships, she is a member of boards overseeing both higher education and ministry.

Hale was honored in 2012 by Ebony Magazine and by the National Urban League in 2011. She is also a Life Member of Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

Arnold Nelson, chairman of the Board of Disciples History, said "Cynthia Hale is a model for a warm, Christian welcome, and we believe that placing her name within our beautiful building will enhance our already well-known spirit of hospitality."

Special Apportionments

At its Feb. 27-28 meeting, the Pension Fund Board of Directors approved a **6.5% Special Apportionment** for members receiving retirement and surviving spouse pensions, as well as active members accumulating pension credits.* Special Apportionments are based on December 2013 credits, and are applied July 1, 2014.

The Board also declared a **Good Experience Credit of 8.5%** for Tax-Deferred Retirement Accounts and Benefit Accumulation accounts. Good Experience Credits will be applied March 31, 2014.

What are Good Experience Credits and Special Apportionments?

Special Apportionments are similar to a cost of living adjustment (COLA) increase, but linked more directly to the Pension Plan's funding level. They are unique to Pension Fund and the Pension Plan, and are additional pension credits awarded based on review of reserves required for any potential market decline. When reserves exist above what is required by policy, the Pension Fund Board of Directors may declare a Special Apportionment for all participants. They are awarded as a percentage of the accumulated pension credits in a Pension Plan member's account.

Good Experience Credits apply to Pension Fund's Tax-Deferred Retirement Accounts, Benefit Accumulation and Roth IRA accounts. They provide the opportunity for extra interest earnings in those accounts. Each year, the Pension Fund Board of Directors reviews reserves required for current and future benefits. When reserves exist above the requirement, the Pension Fund Board may declare Good Experience Credits for all participants. Why are these features important to your retirement?

In short, Good Experience Credits and Special Apportionments increase your retirement income through Pension Fund.

Based on the annual percentage average of Special Apportionments over the past 10 years, a pensioner who began receiving a benefit of \$1,000 per month 10 years ago would receive a pension of \$1,338 per month (as of July 1, 2013). The Special Apportionment also applies to additional benefit annuities. Special Apportionments are fully funded on an actuarial basis, which means that all previous Special Apportionments are included in the base for any current increase.

After applying the Good Experience Credits, Tax-Deferred Retirement Accounts and Benefit Accumulation accounts will have earned an effective rate of approximately 11.75% and 10.5% (respectively) over the year (ending March 31, 2014).

Indianapolis General Ministries Moving, but not far



The Disciples general and racial / ethnic ministries located in Indianapolis are relocating their offices to the Landmark Center, 1099 N. Meridian St., in late August.

"We are excited about the opportunity to streamline our operations and increase collaboration among our general ministries located in Indianapolis," said Rev. Dr. Todd Adams, Associate General Minister and Vice President. Adams also stated, "We look forward to redesigned space that will better reflect how people work today."

Rev. Gary Kidwell, president of the Christian Church Foundation and chair for the Disciples building management group, said a space study conducted last year concluded the current building required more space than needed due to the building's configuration and efficiencies could be achieved with a different floor plan. The 22,000 sq. ft. reduction will save the church in excess of \$3.2 million over the life of the lease.

"We're right-sizing general ministry offices for the future, being faithful stewards of the dollars entrusted to us for ministry," Kidwell said. "The opportunity for stronger partnerships and collaboration will benefit all expressions of the church."

Gift ensures legacy lives on



The long legacy of the Pea Ridge Christian Church (also known as Pearidge) will continue thanks to a generous gift to the cemetery association. Rose Jones gave a generous gift in memory of her parents Anna Mae Thomas Bryant and Noble Bryant. Her lead gift of \$10,000 will begin the building of a new chapel on that site.

Pea Ridge Christian Church in Lonoke County, Ark., was the mother church for Disciples African American congregations all over Arkansas and beyond. Among those that can trace their roots to Pea Ridge are Cross Street Christian Church (Little Rock) and Mt. Sinai Christian Church (North Little Rock). The cemetery also has broader historical significance due to the many un-named graves of slaves.

Leaders such as Sara Lue Bostick are buried in the cemetery. Sarah Lue was the wife of Mancil Mathis Bostick who organized Black congregations while a practicing physician. His practice sustained not only Sarah Lue's missionary travels, but also several struggling congregations. Theirs was a match made in heaven as Mancil was ordained on their wedding day in 1892.

The churches of the Arkansas region were also the sending agents for the Disciples movement's first Black American missionary to Liberia (Africa) in

1905, Jacob Kenoly. Other Disciple luminaries who can trace their spiritual lineage to the church include K. David Cole, Raymond and Robert Brown, John Compton and the Mothershed family.

Jarvis Christian College off Probation

Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins has returned to good standing with its accrediting body.

The commission placed the college on probation last year, but continued its accreditation for "good cause."

Jarvis President Lester C. Newman said the commission's review is a tremendous accomplishment for the college. "Jarvis Christian College is now well positioned to advance its educational mission," he said, according to the news release. "We are now able to focus on expanding the programs we have to prepare



students for lifelong learning and rewarding careers."

Newman thanked the college's board of trustees for its support throughout this process. He said through the collaborative work of many people, the college documented and proved it has a sound financial model.

Board chairman James Atkinson commended the president and administration for its progress in addressing the commission's concerns in such a short time.

"The Board is excited about the possibilities that this creates for the future," he said



Why We Meet

Disciples Home Missions sponsored the 40th Annual Black Ministers Retreat March 3-6 at the Boones Creek Christian Church in Johnson City, Tennessee. Under the theme

“Equipping, Empowering,

and Transforming God’s People to Lead” 85 participants were challenged through inspirational preaching, content filled “clinics”, great fellowship and much needed rest.

The Black Ministers Retreat began an exploration into the viability of it’s ministry in 2012 and received at this retreat the findings from that exploration. Aside from resolving concerns about participation, time, place, program and length, the question that each participant must resolve for themselves and their relationship with other racial/ethnic members of a church committed to being anti racist and pro reconciling is, “Why do we meet as a separate racial ethnic people?” The question became clearer as the community discussed the OGMP Pastor’s Conference, the fact that some Black pastors don’t value the experience and that attendance has bordered on issues of cost effectiveness. Attendance and cost will need to be subjects for another article. The question of the value of Black preachers meeting to focus on the uniqueness of their experience and to be equipped to serve more faithfully out of that experience with those under their care in an Anglo/European environment/church prompts this editorial.

No one can argue that “descendants of former African slaves in the United States”, DOFASITUS, are not by definition “hybrids.” The focus of the 2000 Biennial Session was how we hybrids live powerful lives through the experience of being marginalized without devaluing the experience of our journey.

The reality is that all descendants of former African slaves in the United States are on a journey which involves: understanding self and culture; learning and becoming competent in the majority society; assisting others with our experience to gain that competence; struggling to not deny our heritage in the operation of broader society competence; struggling to couple our heritage with our competence to become an agent of

developing a “whole” church — not the assimilated church.

Stages in that journey, from the perspective of this pilgrim and sojourner are as follows.

I. Understanding self and culture

The National Convocation’s 2000 Biennial Session held in Charlotte, North Carolina focused on the issue of internal racism. Invitation to the Journey published by the National Convocation through a Reconciliation Ministries grant, is the digest of that struggle.

Frank A. Thomas concluded our exploration with a sermon framed in John 2:23 arguing that the most critical issue was one of our integrity. The closing prayer pleading for restoration from our brokenness solidified the truth that one can not fully actualize their value without that integrity. An integrity that:

- God has placed within through creation and the gifts of the Holy Spirit;
- The journeys of life both create and redefine culture;
- The uniqueness of experience expands;
- The relational skills with persons and systems of other identities exemplifies.

Integrity and celebration of self requires clarification, understanding and ability to communicate these creative offerings.

II. Learning and becoming competent in the majority society

Preston Taylor called the National Christian Missionary Convention into being and endowed it with everything he owned for the purpose of enabling the full appropriation of the gifts of “DOFASITUS” in the broader society. As the United States has struggled with her sin of racism the popular response to that struggle has been the greater sin of assimilation — some have called it integration.

Review of any of the records of the movement of NCMC from inception to merger with the International Convention of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) will not support an assimilation into that which exists but, ministry within what exists to create a new church. Advocacy for the creation of something new requires competence in what is. It was to that end that Preston

Taylor set out hope and vision in his will giving all his assets to NCMC.

III. Assisting others with our experience to gain that competence

The United States has grown from the myth of being a “classless” society to one in which there is a well defined “underclass” — those so discouraged by poverty that there isn’t a will to rise above it and a system that would rather serve the poor instead of elevating the poor. This social interpretation, regardless of how accurate it may be, heightens the focus of Cain’s question, “Am I my brother’s keeper.”

It is the response to that question and the operation of members in the body of Christ described in Eph. 4:11-16 that both recognizes that everyone isn’t at the same place and mandates a gift based effort to be “my brother’s keeper.” It is the stress of working to insure one’s own competency when at the same time assisting in our sister and brother’s competency. As Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, in his sermon on the good Samaritan preached the day before he was assassinated, “The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: “If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?” But... the good Samaritan reversed the question: “If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?”

IV. Struggling to not deny our heritage in the operation of broader society competence

One of the most addictive consequences of what some call “upward mobility” is that in the process of that struggle so much energy is exerted in maintaining the momentum that self is often lost in the enterprise. What we lament as the absence of “leadership development” may in fact be a by product of “success.”

V. Struggling to couple our heritage with our competence to become an agent of developing a “whole” church

Some social activists have criticized persons relying on their faith rather than their social intervention skills to solve problems as having been, “so heavenly bound that they are no earthly good”.

Application of “Realized Eschatology” — operating as if the realities of heaven were present with us in the present reality — in the midst of our struggle to be faithful, may cause us to forget that we are “pilgrims and sojourners” in this land. That which we struggle to enable will never be all that it can be. Yet it is that vision of heaven on earth that we work to enable in this reality.

Many “DOFASITUS” saw the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States as evidence of the arrival of this new reality. Any analysis of the responses to his leadership force the conclusion that we are not there yet.

For all of the reasons stated above there needs to continue to be meetings of “DOFASITUS” until the “whole” church emerges and all of us are part of her.

New phase for five Disciples health and social service agencies

A new phase of ministry has begun for five Disciples health and social service agencies. As of January 2014, the National Benevolent Association (NBA)-the health and social service general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)-will no longer serve as the sole corporate member for the following agencies: the Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, Inc. in Jackson, Miss.; the Florida Christian Center, Inc. in Jacksonville, Fla.; the Christian Services for Children in Alabama, Inc. in Montgomery, Ala.; Woodhaven in Columbia, Mo.; and the Serra Residential Center, Inc. in Fremont, Calif.

The NBA worked with the administration and board leadership of each organization in order for each of

their respective agencies to claim full autonomy and authority for their mission and ministries. By releasing corporate membership the NBA will not have a direct vote on their boards, and the agencies' financial statements are no longer included with the NBA's consolidated financial statements. The NBA continues to provide administrative support to the agencies who have requested support as a service for their ministries.



These services include accounting, board development resources, and connections to other Disciples health and social service providers.

NBA names Loving Cartwright to operations post

The National Benevolent Association (NBA) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Church Alliance Files Amicus Brief in Clergy Housing Exclusion Case

calls the Rev. Dani Loving Cartwright as the Associate Vice President for Operations. Cartwright will direct and manage a variety of administrative and missional activities to ensure efficiency and continuity throughout the NBA, the health and social service general ministry of the denomination.

Cartwright has served in regional and pastoral ministry for the past thirty-five years. She served most recently as the President and Regional Minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest. Prior to this, she served on the staff of the Upper Midwest Region for eight years as a Deputy and Associate Regional Minister. She has served on Regional Boards in three Regions and on the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Earlier this year, she completed her service on the board of Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

The Church Alliance—a coalition of the chief executive officers of 38 denominational benefit programs—has filed an *amicus curiae* brief in the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals (Chicago) in the case challenging the constitutionality of the clergy housing exclusion under Section 107(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (Code).

The clergy housing exclusion is important to millions of active and retired clergy from the 38 Church Alliance-represented denominations, including, among others, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., Church of the Nazarene, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Brothers Services, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Joint Retirement Board for Conservative Judaism, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reform Pension Board, Southern Baptist Convention, United Church of Christ, and The United Methodist Church.

OLDTIMERS' GRAPEVINE is a free print and electronic ministry published four times a year through tax exempt donations. The ministry, founded by Rev. Dr. William K. Fox, networks Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) seasoned pilgrims by: 1) enhancement of communication and sharing of mutual experiences; 2) conveying a holistic view of aging and health; 3) being an advocate for seniors to become a supportive, loving and caring community; 4) giving honor and dignity to the lives of those included in "For Whom The Bell Tolls"; and 5) highlighting opportunities for the maintenance of a high quality life style and service in retirement. We are enabled by servants ordered as Board of Directors, administration and editorial staff.

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He Loved Us Into Changing

By Ellen Crowder; photographs by John Scott Williams

On a bright spring Sunday morning at National City Christian Church, almost all of the people streaming in at the first floor entry were gravitating toward a table where a cordial gentleman greeted each one like they were his best friend. Thus began the day of celebration honoring our beloved Oscar Haynes with the Christian Church Foundation's Harry T. Ice Award for Distinguished Service.



This award, named for an Indianapolis attorney instrumental in establishing the Foundation, and presented only 10 times since it was established in 1984, recognizes church leaders for a lifetime of exceptional contributions benefiting the Disciples denomination. "Oscar's lifelong devotion to the church, and his service wherever called, demonstrates the personal generosity, leadership in philanthropy, and the love of, and commitment to, the whole church that this award symbolizes," said the Rev. Gary Kidwell, Foundation President.

During the 11 a.m. worship service, Rev. Kidwell and Rev. Randy Johnson, Foundation Vice President, presented the award plaque, and reviewed the numerous

roles in which Oscar has served over the course of seven decades:

- ◆ Second vice-moderator of the General Assembly
- ◆ Moderator of the Capital Area Region
- ◆ Office manager and director of communications, Capital Area
- ◆ Administrator of Operations for Sessions
- ◆ President, National Convocation
- ◆ Editor and publisher of the *Oldtimers' Grapevine* newsletter, growing the readership to over 1000 subscribers and donors
- ◆ Service on the boards of the Christian Church Foundation, Disciples Home Missions, Greenwood Cemeteries, Lexington Theological Seminary, National Council of Churches, National City Christian Church Foundation and Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

He is one of 12 to be named a Diplomat of the National City Christian Church Foundation. The Historical Society has named the Oscar Haynes Exhibit Hall in his honor.

Rev. Johnson remarked, "Some of you might not imagine how much the [Disciples] church has changed during the past several years. Sometimes people change because they are forced into it; sometimes because they're scared into it; in Oscar's case, he loved us into it."

Disciples General Minister and President Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, who had rearranged her schedule in order to be present, recalled her first meeting with Oscar when she was 25 and a little awed visiting Washington for the first time: "I'll say what I know everybody in this room would say: He made me feel like Somebody."



In the congregation that twice stood to applaud Oscar were several members of his family, many longtime friends and associates from Disciples churches, a number of loyal *Grapevine* readers, and a large group of members from United Christian Parish in Reston, Virginia, where Oscar's wife Rev. Joan Bell-Haynes is the Senior Pastor.

Tributes and photography continued at the reception after the service, where letters of congratulation were read, including those from Rev. Dr. Stephen Gentle, Senior Pastor of National City CC (away at his daughter's graduation), National Convocation Administrative Secretary Rev. Dr. Timothy James, and current *Oldtimers' Grapevine* Editor Rev. Dr. John Robert Foulkes. All the guests were glowing with good memories of their times with Oscar -- a familiar spirit of joy that typically prevails in any event where Oscar Haynes is the reason for the gathering.

As Rev. Johnson said, "Oscar Haynes is the ultimate Christian gentleman. He treats each and every person with profound respect and, as a result, all of us who know him feel like we must be one of his best friends! Through his generous spirit and deep faith he gives of himself and lives his faith every day of his life



Do this, don't do that

Advice for disaster preparedness by Brandon Gilvin, Week of Compassion

If a disaster struck your community, what would you do to help? Does your church have a plan for addressing the needs of its members, of its community? If your church or community were lost in a major disaster, what resources would you use? How would you even



begin?

Drawing upon their own work and the skills of a number of pastors and disaster response practitioners, Rev. Amy Gopp and Rev. Brandon Gilvin have edited *Help and Hope: Disaster Preparedness and Response Tools for Congregations*, a practical guide for preparing for and responding to disasters.

From Preparedness lists and advice on forming Long Term Recovery groups to guides on psychosocial care and preparing post-disaster worship materials, *Help and Hope* offers a number of tools for congregations, including the following Disaster DOs and DON'Ts list.

Collected from Faith-Based Disaster Response Organizations, Volunteer Agency Liaisons from FEMA, and the amazing volunteers who make up community-based Long-Term Recovery Committees, the DOs and DON'Ts are great to keep on hand in the event of a disaster affecting your community. They make a good resource to copy and hand out, post or project in your fellowship hall, or share on social media:

- **DO:** Check on your members, neighbors, and especially those who are elderly, disabled, or vulnerable in other ways.
- **DON'T:** Self-deploy as a volunteer, especially during the search and rescue phase. You will only get in the way or put yourself in danger.
- **DO:** If there are needs in your congregation and you belong to a national denomination, please contact your Regional Office, District Superintendent, or appropriate middle judicatory office, so they can coordinate ways to provide support through available disaster funds and organizations.

- **DO:** Check with your local VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster) about needs of survivors before collecting any material donations.
- **DON'T:** Collect material donations without arranging an appropriate destination (local social service agency, etc.).
- **DO:** Know that money is the most flexible donation you can make. Denominational and other disaster response funds often have really low overhead and are efficient, effective ways to turn your generosity into assistance.
- **DO:** If eligible, encourage all affected folks in your congregation and community to apply to FEMA for Federal Disaster Assistance. Please be aware that this is a long process, and be sure to read all documents carefully. An initial rejection does not mean one cannot appeal; an applicant may also be eligible for low-interest loans to replace damaged property.
- **DON'T:** Get discouraged by how long the process takes.
- **DO:** Become familiar with *FEMA's sequence of delivery*.
- **DON'T:** Organize material good distributions that might compromise an affected person's eligibility for aid. (Let the sequence of delivery be your guide.)
- **DO:** Encourage leaders in your congregations to become involved in the formation of a long-term recovery committee and to put their skills to work.
- **DO:** Stay hopeful. Recovery takes a long time, even among well supported, well-organized communities.

For more practical tools to help your church plan for the unexpected, check out *Help and Hope*, now available for pre-order from Chalice Press. **Royalties benefit the work of *Week of Compassion* and Church World Service**

Disciples Women Calls Program Director/Merger Staff

In gratitude and celebration Rev. Dr. Pat Donahoo, Executive Director, Disciples Women, announces the call of **Chesla T. Nickelson** as the Program Director/Merger Staff with Disciples Women. This position facilitates, administers, and oversees activities in support of Women's Resource Consultants, *Just Women* Magazine and leader guides, and Leader Apprentice Program.

This position provides leadership and leadership training to churches and women's groups, leads Woman-to-Woman Worldwide experiences, and serves on IDWM Executive Committee just to name a few. As a merger position her responsibilities will also include providing consultation for the National Convocation, participation in the planning and implementing of Convocation and the Black Ministers' Retreat as they pertain to women's events and ministry, etc.



The Search and Call committee was blessed to have received gifted and talented candidates that will bless the church in many ways through their ministries. Chesla has served as an intern in various general ministries of the church and brings a wealth of information, experience and healthy relationships. Chesla will continue the healthy relationship between Disciples Women, Disciples Home Missions, and the National Convocation who work together to serve the Church and to provide opportunities for the whole church to be a movement for wholeness. Disciples Women celebrates Chesla's call to this ministry.

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Sandra Gourdet to Retire

Sandra Gourdet, Area Executive for Africa with Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ will retire after serving the church for 42 years on December 31, 2014. She is and has been a faithful servant/leader of the church and has given a lifetime to serving in God's mission. We give thanks for her ministry and celebrate this time in her life. I must share with you how hard she is working as she is overseeing the Congo Initiative. Many individuals would coast to retirement, however, she is giving even more as she brings to a closure her career with Global Ministries. We will celebrate Sandra's ministry in November and December.

Julia Brown Karimu, President
Division Of Overseas Ministries and
Co-Executive, Global Ministries

Area executive for Latin America and the Caribbean called



Rev. Angel Rivera-Agosto is the new area executive for Latin America and the Caribbean. Rivera comes with experience within Latin America and the Caribbean related to churches ecumenical and interfaith organizations, communities and other partners within the ecumenical movement.

Most recently he served as Executive Secretary for the Puerto Rico Council of Churches, having mission and ecumenism as a primary focus. He was also a professor at the Puerto Rico Evangelical Seminary and has run a private law practice focusing on civil and labor law. Currently, he is also a member of the Disciples-Catholic International Commission for Dialogue, serving as one of seven Disciples representatives.

Rivera graduated magna cum laude from the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, earned a law degree from the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico and a bachelors from the University of Puerto Rico. He is the author of articles and publications on theology, socio-economic justice and advocacy, and ecumenism. Rivera will live in Indianapolis and begin as Area Executive on Sept. 1, 2014.

Disciples of Christ Historical Society Board Receives Dr. Carson's Resignation

The Disciples of Christ Historical Society has accepted the resignation of Dr. Glenn Thomas Carson as President of the Society, effective July 31, 2014. Carson, a church-historian from Georgia, has served the society since 2005. During Carson's tenure the society advanced its digital presence, increasing services to over 100 countries. The tenure also saw many enhancements to the historic Thomas W. Phillips building in Nashville.

During the immediate interim, the Rev. Dr. Todd Adams, Associate General Minister and Vice President will serve as President. Adams' leadership will allow the board time to assess the fiscal health and future service of the organization, while conserving resources.

The Board of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society temporarily suspended operations on June 30, 2014 to address significant financial challenges facing the Society. .

The Society's public operating hours will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 am to 3 pm. The staff will respond to research requests Monday thru Friday. The current focus of the staff is the continued integration of the documents that had been located offsite and assisting with research requests. The building will reopen on Tuesday, July 22.

Arnold Nelson, Jr., board chair, commented, "The work before us is not easy, but with the prayers and support of the Church and her leadership, we will move forward to creatively and faithfully fulfill our mission as the caretaker of church archives and artifacts."

Higher Education and Leadership Ministries calls transitional president

by Linda Plengemeier, vice president and treasurer

Recognizing a transitional point in the life of its witness and ministry, the board of directors of Higher Education and Leadership Ministries (HELM) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has called the Rev. Bernard "Chris" Dorsey to serve as its next president effective Aug. 1. A dynamic and creative

leader, Dorsey is currently an Assistant Professor of Theology and Preaching at Western Theological Seminary.



An ordained Disciples minister, Dorsey received his BS from the University of Texas at Austin, earned a M.Div from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, and is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. He has taught at a variety of academic and theological institutions and previously served as local church pastor, university chaplain of Clark Atlanta University, and as the Vice President of Development and Marketing at Chicago Theological Seminary.

development and Marketing at Chicago Theological Seminary.

While recognizing the current challenges facing local congregations and faith-based institutions, the HELM board was impressed with Dorsey's vision for the future, gifts for communication, and excitement for continuing and transforming HELM's programs and ministry.

Dr. Ed Strong, chair of the HELM board, commented, "We were pleased with the success of the search process that led to the calling of Rev. Dorsey. The enthusiasm he engendered during this process is indicative of his desire and ability to guide HELM during its transitional period as it seeks to determine how best to serve the colleges, universities, theological institutions, and students in the task of developing and fostering leadership within the Church and society."

Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President added, "I am looking forward to Chris' leadership at HELM and also in the general Church. His breadth of experience, both sacred and secular, has already been a gift to the Church with his service on various task forces. I am glad to have him as a colleague."

"I am honored and humbled by this new opportunity to serve Christ's church," said Dorsey. "I look forward to building on HELM's success of leadership development and finding new ways to equip people with the skills and tools needed for successful ministry and service in a rapidly changing world."

Dorsey is the father of 10-year-old daughter, Alanis and they currently reside in Holland, MI. His appoint-

ment follows the retirement of Dennis Landon after nearly two decades of faithful service as the president of HELM.

Week of Compassion Calls a New Executive Director

Vy Nguyen has been called as the new Executive Director of Week of Compassion.



Vy holds a Master of Divinity from the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, and earned his B.A. in religious studies with a minor in environmental sciences from Texas Christian University. He joins Week of Compassion after serving for more than 5 years with Church World Service for the Southwest Regional Office where he worked with congregations and donors to increase their fundraising portfolio. Prior to his work with Church World Service, Vy worked with the Lutheran Volunteer Corps office in Berkeley, CA where he brought stability to the program and increased support for the organization among volunteers, congregations, and non-profit agencies. LVC doubled the number of volunteers and non-profit agencies during his tenure.

Vy brings with him a strong passion for working with diverse communities and building bridges between them. As a former refugee who came to the United States through the efforts of Refugee and Immigration Ministries and Church World Service, he has witnessed first-hand the vital role that Week of Compassion provides throughout the world. Through his work with Church World Service and local congregations, he has sought to foster among communities a deeper understanding and awareness of both the challenges that individuals and families face in the world as they struggle for refuge, as well as the importance of building local capacities and movements towards sustainable development in international relief and long-term development work. His commitment to enhancing diverse community engagement with the mission and vital work of outreach organizations has led him to work closely with senior staff at Church World Service on researching why communities choose to become involved in and engaged with new causes and non-profit organizations. Their efforts have led to new and creative ways of engaging with communities and donors to increase fundraising as well as strengthening relationships with individuals and communities.

Vy and his wife, Linh Bui, live in Oakland, CA.

Bynum Nominated to Northern California-Nevada as Regional Minister



It is with great joy that we proudly share with the Ohio Regional Church family that **Rev. Dr. LaTaunya Bynum** has been recommended as the final candidate for a 6 year term as Regional Minister of the Christian Churches of Northern California-Nevada. A special called Regional Assembly and an official vote will occur on

Saturday, August 2, 2014.

Dr. Bynum has served with excellence as Regional Associate Pastor of the Christian Church in Ohio since June 2007. She has offered great pastoral leadership to Disciple clergy and congregations in Ohio and in very important roles to the whole church. Please hold her in prayer as she embarks on this new ministry opportunity.

Rev. Dr. William H. Edwards
Regional Pastor and President
Christian Church in Ohio;

Ministries joining together for children in need



Disciples Home Missions (DHM), Week of Compassion, and the National Benevolent Association (NBA) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are collaborating with the

Church of the Brethren Children's Disaster Services (CDS) to create a new position and initiative that will meet the needs of children affected by disaster in the U.S.

A new memorandum of understanding outlines this partnership providing the framework for a three-year focus on expanding Children's Disaster Services in the Gulf Coast region. Funding provided by Disciples Home Missions, the National Benevolent Association, and Week of Compassion will develop a new role of a Gulf Coast coordinator. This new position will support the development and training of a larger network of volunteers in Mississippi, Florida,



Alabama, and Louisiana. By engaging the strength and networks of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregations and their significant children's ministries we envision great potential to better meet the needs of children in this disaster

prone area. Read more



Vanderbilt PhD student receives Dickerson scholarship



Yolanda M. Norton, a third-year PhD student in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel at Vanderbilt University, has been named by Higher Education and Leadership Ministries as a 2014 recipient of an Ann E. Dickerson Scholarship.

Ms. Norton is a graduate of Syracuse University and Wesley Theological Seminary, and has served as associate pastor of New Covenant Christian

Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nashville since 2011. Her academic work focuses on "...exegetical work...that addresses the complexities of scripture and the social, political, and cultural milieu of the biblical world from the African American female perspective."

The Dickerson Scholarship Program honors Ann E. Dickerson, who was elected Vice-Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in August 1975. A faculty member of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, TN, she died in October 1975, shortly after receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. The Dickerson scholarships are available to female members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who are engaged in graduate study in religion working toward the Ph.D. degree. Ann E. Dickerson Scholarships are awarded annually by HELM. Application packets for 2015 will be available from HELM in January. The next application deadline is April 15, 2015.

Revitalized National Council of Churches takes on mass incarceration

The numbers are deeply disturbing. The United States is home to only 5 percent of the world's population, but houses 25 percent of the world's prisoners. In addition, 50 percent of the men in prison are African American and 23 percent Hispanic. Advocates in the field say these numbers are largely due to the sentencing practices instituted during the "War on Drugs" when many nonviolent offenders were put in jail. See The Sentencing Project for breakdown

More children are being suspended or expelled from school than ever before and some at a very young age. While the way states are dealing with youthful offend-

ers seem to be improving, there is still a marked racial divide. School is very important as Bureau of Justice studies show that 68 percent of people in state prisons did not complete high school.

Many of these facts were laid out at the Orlando assembly in the Item for Reflection and Research GA-1323 - Incarceration, Justice and Restoration in the United States. The topic will be part of the learning communities for the 2015 General Assembly.

Meeting in the Washington D.C. area, the member communions of the National Council of Churches heard from advocates of change and people making a difference on the ground. Some of the general themes in the presentations included the need for smarter sentencing (click here to sign a petition hosted by the United Methodists), for both visitation in the prison and connection after release, the need for addiction and mental health services and the impacts on families and communities both economically and socially.

In addition, the privatization of prison operation is becoming more attractive to states and investors. It is unclear if these private prisons save states money, but there have been cases where inmates were moved far from their home states, making it nearly impossible for families to visit.

Over the coming months, members of the NCC are hoping to build more awareness of the issues surrounding mass incarceration by gathering existing resources and providing additional theological background.

Society of St. Andrew

Week of Compassion and Disciples Home Missions Disciples Volunteering have established a formal partnership between the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA - www.endhunger.org) and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in order to share more healthy food with hungry people in the United States.

As a formal partner, SoSA will work more directly with Disciple congregations to promote and provide volunteer opportunities, seasonal spiritual life resources such as bible studies and vacation bible school materials, and also help congregations build capacity for food pantries, soup kitchens and other hunger alleviating efforts. In addition, SoSA will include Disciples Volunteering networks in information about Harvest of Hope mission retreats and other volunteer opportunities

I SEE YOU.....

The 2014 Quadrennial Assembly (QA) was recently held June 25-29 in Atlanta GA. It was presented by the international Disciples Women Ministries (IDWM) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. This event brought together sisters from across the globe for spiritual renewal, relaxation, and empowerment through the preaching, workshops, and opportunities for Mission. Special events consisted of the Walk Against Human Trafficking, the QA marking the 50th year anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965

There was also a pilgrimage to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, the place of his birth home, the Center for Non-Violent Social Change and to the Ebenezer Baptist Church.

A program entitled “I see you ... Free!” was held for all QA attendees on Saturday June 28th at the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

Another highlight of the QA was the Disciples Women Ministries’ introduction of the new Program Director Chesla T. Nickelson!

I attended my first Quadrennial in 1986, and have been to every QA since then – which counts as 7 so far. It’s an event at which once you attend you will keep coming back. “I did!” You meet and make friends at QA. They become as family and the friendship lasts a life-time.

I was elected to serve as a member of the IDWM Executive Committee for the term of 2010-2014 representing the National Convocation Women. My responsibility is to make sure that the women of the National Convocation have voice and representation at the table in planning and preparing for Women’s Ministries for the whole Church.

It is exciting as you begin to contact your friends to see who will be coming to the QA. It is just like a big family reunion everyone looking to see a familiar face; greeting them with hugs and laughter; sharing photos, accomplishments and disappointments that have happened since last we met 4 years ago. Yes, there were great opportunities for shopping with all of the various vendors and around the Atlanta area. I liked a lot of freebies from the exhibitors!

This year for the first time Disciples Men coordinated a special program planned just for men.

Each attendee of the Quadrennial Assembly received a charm in the design of the conference logo and a tote bag made of oil-cloth by Women from Puerto Palomas, a little town in Chihuahua, Mexico.

“Theme” for this QA gathering

was “I see you.....” and each day the preacher inspired us to SEE!

- ❖ Through the eyes of Grace Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins
- ❖ Through the voice of Compassion Rev. Dr. Nohemi pagan
- ❖ With hands of Justice Rev. April Lewton
- ❖ With a heart of joy Rev. Dr. Penny Ziemer
- ❖ I see you whole Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale

And by doing these things God will see us as Whole!

Hope to see you at the next QA in 2018!

God’s peace.... “Shalom,”

Barbara Williams



LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

April – June 2014

It's All About You: Sharing Your Good News

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have,
for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

Hebrews 13:16



Our expanded board of directors recently convened. A big portion of our discussion centered on our readers. The board is confident we have the solid leadership needed to sustain our Grapevine ministry. As we move forward we are putting our emphasis and focus on you, our readers.

Our goal in producing the Grapevine is to enlighten, inspire, and

encourage you. When you sit down with the Grapevine, we want you to be excited about the “Good News” you will read. In order to produce “Good News” stories, we need to know how we are doing and we need your input. In short – this is a plea to let your voice be heard as we shape a Grapevine that we all will love to read.

Initially, we encourage you to write a *Letter to the Editor*. Please include in the Letter those articles or columns you like. If there is something missing or ways we could better serve your needs; we would like to hear that as well. The more we know about what you are thinking, the better the Grapevine will be.

Secondly, we encourage you to become more involved in creating input for the Grapevine. If there is something of interest that you think Grapevine readers would like to know about; please e-mail this information to our Editor. Many of our readers enjoy catching up on what is happening with former colleagues and friends around the country. If we receive sufficient information, we would like to develop a column: “*I Heard It Through the Grapevine*”. This can only happen if YOU send us tidbits that we can share with others. Let us know if this is something you would enjoy reading and whether you would be willing to contribute items to be included in the newsletter.

Thirdly, we would love to develop a cadre of “Grapevine Field Reporters” who would periodically produce articles on topics of interest that fit within the Grapevine five purpose areas. (1) Enhancement of communication and sharing of mutual experiences; (2) Conveying a holistic view of aging and health; (3) Being an advocate for seniors to become a supportive, loving and caring community; (4) Giving honor and dignity to the lives of those included in “For Whom The Bell Tolls”; and (5) Highlighting opportunities for the maintenance of a high quality life style and service in retirement.

So you see, as we move forward - - “It’s all about you! – Share Your Good News!” Let us hear from you. Please let us know how we are doing and how you would like to be a part of making the Grapevine the very best it can possibly be.

Your Sister in Christ,

Norma R. Ellington-Twitty, Ph.D., Board President

Compassion Corner

by Jimmy Mohler

“The measure of a country's greatness is its ability to retain compassion in times of crisis.”

-Thurgood Marshall (1908-1993), Civil Rights Activist and US Supreme Court Justice

The compassion that Justice Marshall writes of is not confined within the borders of the United States of America. The creation story in Genesis has no mention of God creating borders on the land. I write during the week our nation is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act. We are appalled by the news images prior to its passage, where we see persons filled with hatred rejecting and harming others of God’s children. Where is the compassion in that crisis?

This is also the week that we celebrate the signing of our nation’s Declaration of Independence. Yet again, media images are of persons filled with hatred rejecting and harming others of God’s children. Angry mobs are blocking busses tasked with transporting refugees away from Texas to other states in order to avoid the overcrowded conditions at refugee camps along the Rio Grande River in Texas. Families, and even unaccompanied children are fleeing from violence and threats in their home countries in Central and South America and beyond. Where is the compassion in this crisis?

There are laws in this country to accommodate persons from other countries seeking asylum from persecution. They are laws of compassion and justice that

provide for the care of the basic needs of the refugees while they await a legal determination of their application for asylum. Many churches and other not-for-profits, including our Disciples unit Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries, also seek to accommodate those seeking asylum until legal rulings can be made. It is what Jesus would do.

We know from the birth narrative in the Matthew Gospel that Jesus was a refugee; his family fled to Egypt to escape Herod's brutality. We know from our Disciples history that Thomas and Alexander Campbell (two of the founders of our denomination) emigrated from Scotland to the United States in the early 19th century.

June 20 was World Refugee Day. The United Nations reported that there are now over 51 million refugees worldwide, more than at any time since World War II. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is continuing its "1 Campaign" – keeping with the theme that one family torn apart by violence is too many. Wouldn't you agree? So many OTG readers are putting their compassion into action in times of crisis, and we pray that all Christians will join in. Over 50 million of God's children have had to flee their homes. Some have landed on land claimed by the United States of America. Perhaps we can each have our own "1 Campaign." Each of us can help at least one.

Thank you, OTG readers!

Suicide and Forgiveness

"Ministering to families of a suicidal Christian or non-Christian individual"

By

Rev. Dr. Willie Kizer Crum, Jr



As I look behind the wall, what do I see?

The word "suicide" brings back memories, pain, hurt, frustration and sadness. Perhaps you know or learned about someone who committed suicide. Suicide means that someone destroys their own life. Maybe that person felt that he or

she was not able to cope with the pain or sadness brought about by the loss of their loved one through death or divorce.

How do we stop a person from committing suicide? The majority of times, we can't. Only if the person shares with us his or her thoughts, then by the grace of

God and with faith in God, we may be able to talk hope into that person's mind.

My personal feeling is that people who act out their feelings through suicide are mentally ill. No one can blame anyone for not doing enough, because sometimes enough is not enough to save persons with evil thoughts from killing themselves because of uncontrollable circumstances.

Why do people commit suicide?

Let us talk about suicide, which is not something new to this world. It has been around since the beginning of the Bible, and references to suicide may be found in several places in the Bible, perhaps most notably in Matthew 27:3-5 — Judas' suicide.

Judas could not face God to ask for forgiveness. Some people in today's world perhaps have felt the same way. Being unable to stand before God to ask Him to forgive them, they committed suicide instead.

Earlier in the Bible (I Kings 16:17-20), we read about Zimri's suicide. When people feel that they are bigger than God or they just do what they want to do, they end up in their own world of hell. When the demons are on my back, one powerful and spiritual song always lifts my spirit. I call out, "I need Thee every hour, most gracious Lord; no tender voice like Thine can peace afford. I need Thee, O I need Thee; every hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee."

There are also people, however, who have no respect for the Word of God. Matthew made it clear to us in (Matthew 7:21-23).

Our military soldiers have experienced difficulties on the battlefields, where they have to kill or be killed, and where many have witnessed their buddies being killed. They are aware that they are defending this country and others; nevertheless, it has changed who they are, and they have never returned to themselves.

As a retired Army chaplain/lieutenant colonel, I have opportunities to attend workshops and meetings at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. In one of the meetings that I attended weeks ago, it was reported that "twenty-two military soldiers committed suicide daily in this country. These soldiers returned home with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, grief and guilt, and other illnesses that can't be resolved over months and are unmanageable."

We expected these soldiers to return back home normal, to be men and boys again. But there is no way around their battlefield experiences. Some of the soldiers feel that if they ask for help, it will show a sign

of weakness. Therefore, they refrain from seeking help, because they feel that it will affect their military careers. Instead of asking for help, some soldiers self-medicate, and others commit suicide because they are not able to come to terms with overlooking their careers in order to conquer their illness.

We can help these soldiers to find forgiveness in God's Word and let them know that God is with them all the time. If they would only let Him control their minds and spirits, peace would enter into their hearts.

Many times suicidal individuals feel that there is no hope to their life. But there is help. The Lord cares about all of His people (John 14:13-17) — “another comforter.”

How do the Scriptures relate to suicide?

The Holy Word tells us that if we do harm or destroy what God has created, it is not His will that we do these things to His Temple, the body that He lent to us — 1 Corinthians 3:17 and 6:19-20.

The Rev. Tom Stewart writes, “Look at it from God's point of view. He has already made ample provision for every conceivable circumstance of your spiritual and physical life.” When we seek God's grace, it helps us to understand that our problems are not ours alone. God is with us through all these problems in life. God's Word helps us to come to an understanding of God's purpose for our life and how it applies to our living as Ephesians 2:8-10 tells us.

When we act against God's will, it removes us from inherent eternal life with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What do we understand about suicidal ideations?

Suicidal ideations occur when a person has thoughts or feelings of killing him- or herself. Someone is attempting to destroy his or her own life. “The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than hunger for bread,” said Mother Teresa.

I remember once, when I was stationed at Fort Gordon as hospital chaplain on-call, that I received a call from Sgt. T., who had suicidal feelings because of the broken relationship with his wife. He had gone to use his gun to kill himself. This soldier did not want to kill himself; he was only seeking help but did not know how. He was hurting and out of control of his rational feelings. After letting him know that someone cares about him, and that God loves him as well, I had several other sessions with him to help him to understand God's Word.

What may be the reason or reasons why someone may have suicidal ideations or be prompted to commit or attempt to commit suicide?

The Lord wants us to be sensitive and be prayerful for family members who have lost loved ones from suicide. Furthermore, our Creator does not want to criticize or judge others who have committed or attempted suicide. Because we are not perfect human beings, we too have committed sins: “There but for the grace of God go I.” Let us let God be the Judge.

When someone goes through illness, divorce or any other loss of relationship, job, home, wealth, the surrounding situations and circumstances may cause a loss of hope. We need to help others to understand that there's another day ahead of us, and that God will be with us no matter what has caused the hurt and where it is coming from. Giving a person that sense of hope lets that person know that someone cares and will be there for him or her.

How do we minister to those individuals who have lost someone by suicide?

God's forgiveness is always right in its way. We are there for the family members. Each family grieves differently, and we must give the family the space to understand the loss of their loved one. Some people may feel embarrassed over what happened, and others may cope as well as possible. Don't try to be God. The person has died, and no one but God can place him or her in heaven. There is no right answer. Let God be God, and God's Word will bring peace at His will (1 John 1:9).

We have the opportunity to minister to the family by letting them know that someone cares, and we are there for them.

If you will, let me conclude with these scriptures:

I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. (Luke 6:27–28)

None of us lives for himself only, none of us dies for himself only. If we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. (Romans 14:7-8)

This is how we know what love is. Christ gave His life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for our brother! (I John 3:16)

I am my brothers' and sisters' keeper. When a child of God hurts, we all hurt. The same goes when we lose a loved one — we all grieve. We are all God's children.

THE POETS PAGE

SHOO BRO. BLUES

Woke up this morning
Jumped out of bed.
Told ole Bro. Blues
“You get out of my head.”
Tired of complaining,
Just laying around
so shoo Bro. Blues,
I’m putting you down.
You’ve taken my energy,
Synergy, employ.
Taken my initiative,
Left me only alloy.
I’m mixed-up, puzzled and turned around,
So shoo Bro. Blues,
I’m putting you down.
I been singing your blues,
been feeling so low.
Haven’t been out lately.
No place to go.
But come Sunday morning
I’m going back to church.
No more messing around
So shoo Bro. Blues
I’m putting you down.

May Reed

Written Thurs., June 12, 2014

THOT: You might sing the blues but don’t live them.

LAUGHTER IS VERY HEALTHY

A six year old recited the memory verse perfectly in his Church School Class but the teacher also asked for the reference. “It comes from Hatchet” came the response. The mystery was solved when another child who knew the answer commented, “He means Axe.”

~~~~~  
Did you hear about the guy who stayed up all night figuring out what happened to the sun when it went down? It finally dawned on him.

~~~~~  
This little story about Bessie’s buttons is utterly delightful and a learning tool for some. Bessie was learning to sew on buttons. She sat beside an open window and had lain the pretty white buttons in a row on the window seal. They lay shining in the sunshine. Mother had marked the places to sew them on her new dress. “I’ve sewed on three,” said Bessie. As she reached for the fourth she knocked six of them out of the window. “Dear me!” she said. “I hope I find them

all.” She took off her thimble and ran out into the yard.

Mr. Toots, the big, snow-white rooster, was standing under the window and the last button was disappearing within his beak.

Bessie was fond of Mr. Toots. He was quite tame. She fed him every morning, saving the nicest crumbs for his breakfast.



But now when Bessie saw what he had done, she turned and ran back into the house, almost crying. “O mamma, mamma” she said, “Mr. Toots has eaten six of my buttons, and he will die!” Mamma looked surprised; then she smiled. “O no, Mr. Toots won’t die.” Buttons are just the sort of things he needs to chew his food with.” Bessie opened her eyes wide and her mother laughed. “You know Mr. Toots hasn’t any teeth,” she explained, “so he has to grind his food in a little tough bag inside of him, which is called his gizzard. But there needs to be something hard, like gravel stones or bits of crockery, to mix with the food and help grind it fine as the gizzard squeezes and squeezes. Your buttons, with their fine edges will be nice for that purpose.”

And just at that moment Mr. Toots answered for himself in a hearty voice, looking in at the door.

“Cock-a-doodle-doo.” – Susan Brown Robbins
[Christian Courier – May 21, 1903:p.14]

I found this little account very interesting as so many of our young people today don’t know at all how to sew on a button. My mother taught me in much the same way. I still sew on buttons with needle and thread but I find it harder to thread my needle

It was an honor once to sew on the button to the vest of the late Reverend Bill Dickerson when he came to Light of the World Christian Church, in the 70’s to do a revival. He seemed quite pleased.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

Queen Esther Mace Jackson



Queen Esther Mace Jackson was born October 25, 1921 in Learned, Mississippi to George and Esther Mace. When Esther's father, Ralph Lowe, saw this little baby, he looked at her round brown face and curious searching eyes and said to his daughter we must call this one Queen Esther, like the Queen Esther of the Bible who said, "if I perish,

I perish, but I am going to see the King." Her grandfather saw something in that face and those eyes. And so it has come to pass, Queen Esther has been a force of nature, a fountain of strength and a reservoir of determination and courage for 92 years.

Queen Esther wanted to be like her mother so she learned how to cook and sew and make beautiful things. Her sisters remember her even as a young girl making gifts, a dress out of old sackcloth, a pair of shoes out of discarded material and proudly presenting them. She also loved the great outdoors and learned how to grow things, hunt, fish, kill snakes, climb trees and feed and take care of the farm animals with her father and brothers.

Queen Esther was the first in her family to go to college. She began her educational journey at Southern Christian Institute in Edwards, Mississippi where she received a degree in home economics. It was there that she met Clyde Cullen Jackson, Big Jack, as he was affectionately called. They continued their educational journey at Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas. They married December 26, 1948 in a service officiated by the Jarvis Christian College Chaplain, Rev. Jesse Hawkins.

Her career as an educator began in Jasper County, Mississippi where she served as a teacher and basketball coach before moving with her young family to Sunflower County. She continued to serve as teacher, librarian and social worker to many students and families in north-central Sunflower County for nearly 30 years.

She and her husband raised their family in the In-

diana Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) where they faithfully served. After retirement from the Sunflower County school system they joined Christian Chapel Christian Church of Port Gibson, Mississippi which was closer to their new home in Hinds County Mississippi. And after the death of her husband and later relocating to the home of one of her daughters, she moved her membership to Cade Chapel M. B. Church in Jackson, Mississippi.

She was a wonderful example of quiet strength, unyielding determination and caring service to others. She leaves her family with a legacy of faithfulness and commitment. She is kept in loving memory by her son Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson (Tina), New York, New York; her three daughters – Ms. Mavis Yvonne Anderson, Indianapolis, Indiana; Dr. Claretta Jackson Sullivan (Walter), Norfolk, Virginia; Dr. Loretta Esther Jackson- Williams (James), Flowood, Mississippi; six grandchildren – Cullen O'Neal Jackson, Torie Esther Anderson, Walter Geoffrey Sullivan, Sarah Briana Sullivan, Jordan Bakari Williams and Taylor Briana Williams. She also leaves three sisters, two brothers and countless nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Emma C. Moses

Emma C. Moses was born May 31, 1921 in Birmingham, Alabama to the late Greene and Alberta Carger. She was the last of fourteen children. She accepted Christ as her Savior at an early age and later joined Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church.



She was united in marriage to Roy Greene (deceased). From this union, their daughter, Sandra, was born. She later married Charles Moses, Jr. (deceased) and from this union they had three children – Pauldenia, Cyrus, and Altha.

Her loving memory is cherished by her children, Sandra (William), Pauldenia (Eugene – deceased), Cyrus (Dorothy, special friend) and Altha (Anthony), as well as her seven grandchildren (two preceded in death) and nine great-grandchildren. She also had a host of nieces and nephews.

Some of her beloved friends and family include Ms. Joe Crow, Angel Wright, Elder Smith, Bertha Dudley, and her neighbor of many years, Dorothy Edwards.

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

by Pastor PJ Banks-Anderson, D.Min, LCDR, CH,
USN (RET)



“Your own soul is nourished when you are kind; it is destroyed when you are cruel.”
King Solomon, Proverbs 11:17

How often do you hear conversations about humanities trinity? Religiously, we hear about the divine trinity: God the Creator, Christ the Word, and God’s breath, energy, grace, and Presence in the Holy Spirit. We meet these three Persons throughout Holy writ. In Genesis, for example, where it is written “Let us (plural) make humanity in our Image and after our likeness.” Genesis 1:26. We experience the Presence of the Holy Spirit in Genesis 1:2b which reads “...the Spirit of God was hovering over the water. This is the same Spirit that came upon Samson (Judges 15), the strongest man in Holy Writ, the same Spirit associated with both the gifts (1 Corinthians 12) and the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22); it is the same Spirit that dwells within every human being; and, most importantly, it is the same Spirit promised (John 14:26) and is ever ready to be acknowledged and received as the Gift of Life, Love, Liberation, Conviction, and Guidance (1 Corinthians 6:19). The Presence of the Trinity is most notable at Jesus’ baptism (Matthew 3:15-17).

And so it is with humanity. We are also tri-fold, so to speak: Body, Spirit, and Soul. The Spirit gives the body life and the Soul gives the Spirit after-life. Thus, when the Spirit and Soul departs, the body dies. It is a mystery – life from the womb to beyond the tomb. I have studied world religions and have come to understand the three beliefs that they all have in common: The narrow path that few find is the path of love; there is one God [known by many names]; and that no one and no living thing dies. Giving room for those who have yet to believe, even they cannot deny that there is life now. Could the question of the ages, undergirded by those in denial be “where is the person who is now beyond the veil of the spiritual placenta?”

The physical death of my soul/Godson on Easter Eve was not the end of him. During not so few of our many conversations, Oliver talked about his relationship with Jesus Christ. He said things like “I know I am saved and at one with God, I know Jesus is my Savior and Lord.” The use of such language is rare

among ‘Christians.’ It was after his physical death that I was made aware that his favorite song was IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL – that spiritual womb that we nourish with Love, Life, and Eternal Life. How do we do the nourishing? Stay tuned.

Please pray for American and Coalition soul’s killed-

It’s Time to say “Enough”

Rev. Charles H. Webb, Jr.

When I read in Matthew 2:16-18 about Herod, in a furious rage, ordering the deaths of the male children in the region of Bethlehem a start of recognition went thru me or perhaps it was a shudder. I took note of it but went on with my sermon preparation in another direction. But every since then the news continues to blare out the sad tidings that our male babies are still dying. One day I heard that a governor thought it more important to build jails than schools, more important to increase the line item for jailers than to increase the pay of teachers.

When my son was in first grade, I went to observe the classroom and to spend time with him. As I left he ran up to get a hug. The little boy next to him reached for my neck and then there was a line. The teacher tried to shoo them away, saying, “He doesn’t have time for all of you”. But I did. I tried to visit from then on at recess or lunch so I could get my hugs without disturbing the classroom but I continued to be awestruck by the need of the boys for a hug. It seemed that by third grade the teachers were beginning to be afraid of the little Black boys who were restless and outspoken; some unchallenged by the curriculum, some left out, others already behind and losing ground fast. It gets worse quickly. For too many, between ages 10 and 20, life ends or abruptly takes a downturn. I’ll leave it to others to declare the why but our Black boys are dying, killing each other, or rotting away in criminal (in)justice systems built just for them, in anticipation that there will be more for a long time. It’s time to say “enough”, enough have died, enough are in jail, enough have had their lives ruined, enough are denied the chance to hug their sons and visit their classrooms. Enough blood has stained the sidewalks of America, enough mothers have cried, enough potential has been taken from us. I don’t know how Herod is getting the guns to our sons, I don’t know how Herod is flooding our streets with crack, meth, heroin, weed and other drugs but enough is enough. I don’t know why our

sons are angry, but I know they get angry at an early age and that Herod has decided to throttle their souls and spirits. When will we, all of us say “enough”? I’d like somebody of national stature to stand up for the boys, to declare a Sunday when all the churches will preach on one theme. Let’s invite and bring our young men to church, with their saggin’ britches, too big shirts and fractured spirits, and hug them and let them know we have time for them. If they’ll come forward or if they won’t, pray for them, over them, with them. When will we wise up to Herod? It is time to stand up for the boys, to declare “enough”.

... the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,

Eph 3:10-11 (NKJV)

Appreciation from an Elder

Dear John,

Words are just impossible for me to express my gratitude to you and Norma for the recent publication of The Oldtimers’ Grapevine. It was so full of news from various parts of the United States. It certainly brought hope and inspiration to us in our Golden Years and encourages us to continue to climb though the rocks be rugged.

So proud of you all, our present leaders. All leaders are not enablers. All leaders are not enablers but you all are certainly both.

Again, congratulations!!
Love! Peace! Joy!
Ruth P. Hobbs

Foulkes Notes

Doris Daugherty, the treasurer for The Oldtimers’ Grapevine, surprised me last week with the news that our bank balance will only fund a few more issues. The “Good Faith Donations” have found other services. We take the concept of “grapevine” very seriously as noted in our president’s article in this issue. We will publish quality news for our readers most of which are no longer in active ministry. Pray for us as we serve dependent upon resourcing.

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.
(II Cor. 8:1-4 NIV)

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We are accessible through our editorial office at 5314 Moonlight Dr. Indianapolis, IN 46226-1755, (317) 545-9335 and oldtimers.grapevine@gmail.com. Contributions should be sent to our treasurer at 3611 Bangor St. SE, Washington, DC 20020-1245.

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Oscar Haynes: January 18, 1916 - July 31, 2014

"An Attitude of Gratitude"

Oscar Haynes, 98, died peacefully at his home in Herndon, VA early Thursday morning, July 31, 2014, surrounded by his loving family. Oscar, the only child of Oscar Haynes and Nannie Bradley Haynes was born in Rogersville, Tennessee on January 18, 1916. He moved to Washington, DC upon graduation from Swift Memorial Junior College and became a member of Twelfth Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

He attended Howard University and Tuskegee Institute before being drafted into service for World War II (1941-45), serving in Tampa, Florida, India-Burma and Kearns, Utah. Upon leaving the military, Oscar became a journalist with the Afro American Newspapers. During his tenure he was part of a team of investigative journalists reporting on the Martinsville 7 Trial in Virginia.

He was active in the Civil Rights Movement in Washington, DC. He joined Mary Church Terrell and other activist in "sit-ins at the bus station and local restaurants. He was among the thousands at the March on Washington when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech.

Oscar served as president of: the Capital Press Club in Washington, DC; the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); and the Board of Managers of Greenwood Cemeteries, Nashville, TN. During his tenure as president of the Capital

Press Club he gave President Harry S. Truman an award for desegregating the Military.

As a businessman and State & Regional Manager for Fromm & Sichel/Christian Brothers Wines & Brandy, Oscar forged partnerships with the State Department to increase the sale of American wines abroad. When he retired in 1984, Christian Brothers Wines and Brandy were being sold in 28 nations.



Oscar served on numerous boards including: Thurgood Marshall Community Center, Washington, DC; National City Christian Church Foundation; Christian Church--Capital Area Region; Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, TN; Trustee, Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, KY; United Campus Ministry Board, University of Maryland, College Park Campus; and the Reston Community Orchestra.

Oscar received honors that included: John James Audubon Medal, Audubon Naturalist Society; Public Service Award YMCA, Washington, DC; The College Park Lions Club; Diplomat,

National City Christian Church Foundation, Washington, DC; Liberation Award, National Convocation, Christian Church (1998); Tribute of Appreciation, Secretary of State, American Businessmen Abroad Committee (1967); CANDL Foundation Light Award (2011).

Oscar continued his love for journalism and writing when he accepted the invitation from founding Publisher/Editor, Rev. Dr. William K. Fox of the Oldtimers' Grapevine to assume its leadership. He understood the publication of this newsletter to be his ministry. He thoroughly enjoyed keeping both oldtimers' and younger people connected to the larger church. The readership grew to over one thousand as he gathered and shared: stories, book reviews, denominational events, poems, biographies, health advice, and humorous anecdotes from around the country. He established a Permanent Fund with the Christian Church Foundation as a visible sign of faith that this valuable tool of communication would endure for many years to come.

On July 29, 2008 the Disciples Historical Society of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Nashville, TN named an Exhibit Hall in his honor.

Oscar married his wife of 40 plus years, Lula Mae Smith in 1949 and they raised 5 children together in

Washington, DC. She preceded him in death.

He is survived by his loving wife, Rev. Joan Bell-Haynes, his children: Toni Ross, Fort Stockton, TX; Oscar Sherwood Haynes (Robyn); Kim A. Atwater (Jay); Donna N. Taylor; and Christina H. Haynes; nine (9) grandchildren: Danielle Ross, Fort Stockton, TX; Shei Haynes (Kim), Kristen Haynes; Jason Atwater (Carolyn); Justin Haynes; Brent Atwater; Zoe Haynes; Zachariah Haynes; eight (8) great grandchildren: Drake Lovelle White, Ronnie Tomae White and Davin Nikosi Ross, all of Fort Stockton, TX; Kiara NiJai Aull and Kaidyn Ni'Shei Aull, Dalyn Bell, Jalil Atwater and Hailey Atwater. Son-in-law: Rev. LeBaron Taylor, Ponchatoula, LA; Cousin: Emily Gillespie (Gary), Rogersville, TN

Oscar was a member of United Christian Parish where his wife is Pastor. He was also a member of the Rotary Club, Herndon, VA.

A Service of Internment was held at National City Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Oct. 11th.

Tributes to Oscar

Letter From Board President

Norma Ellington-Twitty, PhD

O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.

Psalm 55:6 (NRSV)

Rev. Joan Bell-Haynes made the following announcement to her parishioners:

“On July 31st at 3:30 am in the morning my beloved Oscar Haynes (and yours too!) got his wings. He was surrounded with and filled with the love of his family as he took flight home... A dear friend of Oscar's daughter: Kim Atwater, said: “we can all take a page out of Oscar's playbook. He truly believed that if we loved each other, family, friend or stranger, we would be the kingdom of God here on earth as it is in heaven.”

This letter starts with a quote from Oscar's wife of many years, because her example in handling the loss of her husband can serve as a source of inspiration for us all.

Joan Bell-Haynes displayed that confidence in God's purpose for her life, as articulated in the Jeremiah passage; by keeping a commitment she made to be the keynote speaker at the Christian Church of Mid-

America Regional Assembly in St. Louis on October 10, 2014. Although the Assembly Planning Team would have fully understood if she had cancelled her appearance, considering the great loss she had experienced: she indicated her intention to come to St. Louis, where she fully expected to be comforted and re-energized by connecting with the people of God.

She CAME, she PRESENTED, and she CONQUERED the hearts and minds of Assembly attendees by delivering an uplifting and thought-provoking keynote address (more about that in another issue). As Joan departed, she thanked me for having her and indicated that the love and encouragement she experienced in St. Louis are the building blocks for her healing process.

What a role model and inspiration you are Rev. Joan Bell-Haynes! Your example shows us that dealing with loss is not only about dealing with our sadness over the loss; but moreover is about dealing with life and how we honor the person who is no longer with us by living our best life - A life that recognizes what Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us: God still has a plan for us; to prosper us, not to harm us, to give us a hope and a future. Thank-you Joan for your example, as we deal with the loss of Oscar here on this earth, yet try to exemplify his rich legacy of love and Christian service.

Oscar's service to the Oldtimers' Grapevine is legendary. In this issue there will be a well deserved emphasis on the life and legacy of our beloved Oscar Haynes, Grapevine Publisher Emeritus, who died on July 31, 2014. In an interview with Ernest J. Newborn, published in the Newsletter of January/February 2004, William K. Fox, the founding editor and publisher of the Grapevine, reflected on the Newsletter's progress: "Since Oscar Haynes succeeded me as the editor of The Grapevine in January 2001, Oldtimers' issues have had mounting success...The Oldtimers' Grapevine, under Oscar Haynes' sacrificial leadership, continues to manifest the wholeness and togetherness in Christ by the content of its copy and multiracial readership and financial support."

Oscar retired as Publisher and Executive Editor of the Grapevine in January 2013 at the young age of 97 years!! He was quite pleased to transfer "the baton" to John R. Foulkes; who like himself was fully committed to the Grapevine vision and objectives as originally articulated by their friend and mentor, Rev. Dr. William K. Fox.

And finally, on June 3, 2014, Oscar ended his service with the Grapevine by participating in a Conference Call of the Board. His warm and articulate comments were quintessential "Oscar Haynes". Although gone from this place, we will never forget you Oscar!!

Your Sister in Christ,

Norma Ellington-Twitty, PhD, Board President

What a Hero Looks Like

by Ellen Crowder

I had the privilege of working with Oscar for about 6 years on the *Oldtimers' Grapevine* newsletter, which he'd taken up and faithfully carried on, when his friend, Dr. William Fox, asked him to. More than a thousand subscribers and loyal donors, and who knows how many readers, have loved this little publication -- not because it's slick and trendy, or has all the Disciples church news right on the minute, but because it was like sitting down for a chat with Oscar Haynes and a few friends, talking about nice people managing to do some good. In a world full of bad news, Oscar's *Grapevine* has always brought good news. His enthusiasm in leading and encouraging the staff made it really fun to be involved. I'm grateful for all the admirable people I got to know by working on the *Grapevine*, especially his wonderful family.

As the staff met regularly while working on the newsletter, I became more clear on the qualities that made Oscar a hero to so many of us.

His manner was always cheerful and welcoming, but I don't think he had any illusions about the ways the world can be mean. He just chose to confront this with forbearance and creativity. He took the long view, and played the long game. And for all the recognition he received in his lifetime, I have the sense that some of his biggest achievements may have been things somebody else got the main credit for, because Oscar and his "co-conspirators", as someone put it, had envisioned that that was the way to make it work.

I am in awe of the extraordinary self-discipline it took to operate in the fields of business, and public service, and church politics, at the time when he did, without going to anger or resignation. He just kept forming the character he intended on, one that was modeled on his unshakeable personal faith. He seemed to really live by that saying, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." More than most of us, he also seemed to have a real faith in the capacity of human beings to improve. He was very, very good at putting people up to being our better selves.

Oscar was a person of uncommon sympathy. If he knew you were worried about a problem, he remembered, and talked with you, and often let you know he was praying for you.

More than anyone else I've known, Oscar was a master of acknowledgement. If you did the slightest little useful thing, he was generous with thanks and praise. We all flourished in the light of his appreciation.

Now, it's lovely that this great man's earthly remains will be here at the church he helped so much, along with those of friends and fellow leaders. And when I pass the columbarium on Sunday mornings, running to the early service, I know I'm going to think of Oscar's smile, and feel like I'm hearing him say, "Good morning!"



Remembering Oscar is joy!!!

By May Reed

We recall when the Convocation was held in 1990 at Arlington, TX. It was warm and most of the eating places were full to overflowing one afternoon with all of us in town. We had tried several restaurants but had had no luck in getting seated. We decided to try just one more and to our delight our dear Oscar and family were there seated at a large round table. When Oscar saw us he waved for us to come and join them. Well need I say more; we were blessed, and happily fed with good company and warm friendly palaver.

There are so many occasions to recall but I must say that in 2011 when we renamed the museum at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society in Nashville, TN., to the Oscar Haynes Exhibit Hall it was truly a stupendous honor. The smiles were radiant on Oscar and Joan's faces, and the warm laughter that bubbled throughout the hall will be a picture in my mind's eye forever.

Oscar Haynes Vignette

Ruth P. Hobbs

"I can tell where the lamplighter was by the trail he left behind him".

Harry Lauder

Oscar Haynes was a truly dedicated servant of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Throughout his lifetime, he stood like a Druid of Old as he served in various areas, local, state and national.

I cherish those times, when during the National Convocation, Oscar would choose a time after a night session, and invite some lay persons and ministers to his hotel room for a Pow Wow. As we sat in a circle on the floor, we commented on the positive programmatic activities, and brainstormed on some suggestions how some could be improved.

Oscar was a great listener. Even though he didn't always agree with suggestions made, he respected everyone's input.

His name is certainly listed with other Disciples of Christ heroes and I do pray that we may continue to carry the lighted torch of commitment and service he demonstrated for many, many years.

Heroes in Compassion

by Jimmy Mohler

You can understand, beloved Old Timers' Grapevine readers, why I feel compelled to write from my home in Kansas City: *How about those Royals?!* As I write, the Royals have a 2 game lead in the American League Championship Series. News outlets report poll results that people in 47 of the 50 states are favoring the Royals because of the team's amazing turnaround. No matter how it turns out for the remainder of the postseason, this team has ended the embarrassment of being the only one in pro baseball, football, basketball and hockey that had not made a playoff appearance in 29 years!

Not too far from Kauffman Stadium, where the Royals play, is the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. If you have not seen it, you would be impressed with this one-of-a-kind tribute to Negro Leagues Baseball. Having played for and managed the Kansas City Monarchs in that League, baseball hero Buck O'Neil had the vision of preserving the chapter in our nation's history when baseball – the national pastime – was just another segregated institution. In part because of the national attention Buck O'Neil gained when he was featured in Ken Burns' BASEBALL series on public television in 1994, Buck was able to attract the money and attention to get the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum open and keep it open. Buck was an articulate spokesperson for the slice of history that was segregated baseball, and he helped another Monarch, Jackie Robinson, sign for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Jackie broke the color barrier as a player, and Buck broke the color barrier as the first black coach in the major leagues.

Buck O'Neil not only dedicated seven decades to professional baseball, including time as a scout for the Kansas City Royals, he dedicated decades to compassionate community service in Kansas City. His special focus was inner-city youth, providing opportunity for recreation where there had been none. Despite the fact that his baseball achievements did not earn him the votes needed to be a baseball Hall of Famer in Cooperstown, there is a statue of Buck O'Neil there. And his service to community and country gained Buck O'Neil the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the U.S.

After Buck died at 94 in 2006, the Kansas City Royals converted Buck's seat behind home plate to the "Buck O'Neil Legacy Seat." The Royals invite fans to nominate individuals whose compassionate living exemplify the spirited life of Buck O'Neil. At each home game, one of those heroes gets to sit in the Buck O'Neil Legacy Seat and is recognized on the big screen.

We in Kansas City were blessed to have had Oscar Haynes with us for many weeks in 2001 as he married our Associate Pastor Joan Bell. Oscar got to meet Buck. Don't you know that those two (then) octogenarians had stories and experiences to share?!

How I wish now that we had nominated Oscar for a night in the Buck O'Neil Legacy Seat at Royals Stadium. How I would have loved hearing the PA announcer summarize Oscar's life of service. How I would have loved seeing Oscar's beaming smile on that huge screen looming over the Kauffman Stadium outfield. But I do have a vision of Buck and Oscar in heaven, both honored by God for having answered hatred with loving patience and compassionate service.

Personal Reflection on Oscar Haynes

by Norma Ellington-Twitty

"...Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13: 34b-35 (NRSV)

If anyone was the embodiment of the above scripture about "love", it was Oscar Haynes. Oscar did not have to wear a T-shirt with the word Christian displayed on it; nor did he have to say he was a Christian: Oscar's warm smile; his ability to focus in on you as if you were the most important person on earth; his warmth; his charm; as well as his stated desire to be of whatever service he could be; in all these things and more – Oscar radiated the love of Christ. Oscar filled a room with love and when he left your presence you continued to feel and be energized by that love.

The last time I was in Oscar's presence was on the June 3, 2014 Grapevine Board Conference Call. (Thank God for technology!) At the time of the Call, he was on hospice care. I did not know he would be

joining us. As people were checking in, we heard that voice – Oscar Haynes. Immediately I had a big smile on my face and extended a warm welcome. He contributed to the call, bid us farewell, thanked us, and wished us the very best.

What love; what humility; and what an awesome legacy Oscar has given us. What a gift, what a role model Oscar continues to be for us: "Serve as long as you can and as well as you can; without fanfare or hoopla. Remember it is all about Christ and kingdom building; it is not about us."

Thanks for your abiding love Oscar: for even though you are no longer with us; we feel your love and hopefully we are sharing God's love freely with "God's beloved", a favorite phrase of your lovely and loving wife, Joan Bell-Haynes. Something else Joan says and was true of you, and I hope true of me: "The love of Jesus looks good on you."

To God Be The Glory – you have overcome the world!

Oscar's Tribute

By John Richard Foulkes, Sr.

John's Gospel details Jesus' preparation of the disciples for his departure. In John 16:7 (MSG) he states, "So let me say it again, this truth: It's better for you that I leave. If I don't leave, the Friend won't come. But if I go, I'll send him to you."

It is reported that a friend of Joan told her before she and Oscar became husband and wife that she thought that Oscar was in love with her. Joan's response was, "Oscar loves everybody."

Oscar as lover of everybody focused by Jesus' preparation for his departure statements begs the question, What happens when a symbol of love goes home?

When applying Jesus' purpose for preparing the disciples for his departure the only conclusion is that the void is filled by application of the symbol's essence.

In a day when most communication is digital The Oldtimers' Grapevine will continue to apply the essence of Oscar's love to our ministry designed for those who may not do digital well.

Meetings



"Be Still and Know" ... and act! *Biennial Session celebrates past, future*

There is an African proverb that says, "A people with no knowledge of their past are like a tree without roots." The board of the National Convocation made sure that participants in the 23rd Biennial Session in Columbus, OH have some roots.



Dramatic interpretations celebrating several personalities from the history of the black Disciples movement were included in plenary sessions. Jacoby Kenoly, the first black Disciples missionary to Liberia, visited through the performance of Rev. Jesse Jackson, telling

of his call and the tools he used to carry it out. Several women were portrayed including Rosa Page Welch (Marilyn Williams), Sarah Lue Bostic (Sheryl Nelson) and Lucille Compton (Dee Long). Stories of the Struggle and a celebration of the merger agreement forming the National Convocation were also shared. And beautiful African traditions of dance, drumming and libation offerings were lifted up.



Associate General Minister and Administrative Secretary for the National Convocation Rev. Dr. Timothy James shared his report on the state of the black Church reporting the strength of 479 congregations, remembering Eugene Randall and Raymond Brown and celebrating the current executive leaders of the denomination that include nearly 20 percent of regional ministers, Division of Overseas Ministries President Julia Brown Karimu and the new transitional president for Higher Education and Leadership Ministries, Rev. Chris Dorsey.

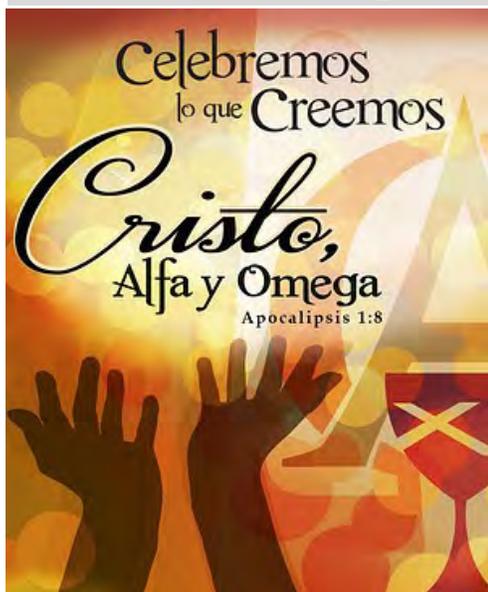
And there was preaching! Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale of Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, GA, kicked off the lineup that included Rev. Julian DeShazier (a.k.a. J Kwest) from University Church in Chicago and Rev. Dr. Irie Sessions, first woman called to pastor Warren Avenue Christian Church in South Dallas and president of the Disciples Black Ministers Association.

In addition, national staff of the NAACP visited to bring the participants up to date on some of the legislative and educational efforts of the civil rights organization. Hilary O. Shelton, director of the Washington bureau and senior vice president for policy and advocacy, brought report cards on congressional votes, legislative priorities, a current action alert re: voting rights legislation and an opportunity to join the Quick Response Membership Network. Rev. Keron R. Sadler, HIV/AIDS specialist in the health advocacy branch, shared their three areas of work for institutional and systemic change - the Affordable Care Act, childhood obesity and HIV/AIDS. A grassroots effort to engage churches in the conversation about HIV/AIDS includes faith leader training and curriculum for seminaries (theblackchurchandhiv.org).

And as for action, Patricia Maples presided over reports during the business sessions which followed up on efforts for strategic planning, nurture of clergy, the elder's efforts, a task force to eliminate racist language from Church governing documents, program audit reports as well as accomplishments such as more than 100 Disciples participating in the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington.

The following officers were installed during the final worship service: president - Rev. Jesse Jackson, Oklahoma City; vice president - Pat Penelton, St. Louis; secretary - Felicia Wright, Houston; and treasurer - John Tiggie, Roanoke.

Hispanic assembly time to celebrate faith



From the opening worship Wednesday to the banquet Saturday evening the assembly of Obra Hispana was a celebration of faith in Jesus - "Let's Celebrate What We Believe - Christ, Alpha and Omega". Animated preaching by National Pastor Huberto Pimentel, Dr. Samuel and

relationships with both the Disciples and the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries. He was forthright in laying out the financial situation and called for a youth development fund. Sadness at the departure or closing of 28 Hispanic congregations was shared. But he also lifted up in joy the growing vibrant churches, which included Casa de Oración, Corral Gables, Arise and others. Pimentel has announced his retirement in April 2016 prior to the next Hispanic Assembly.

Rev. Dr. Noemi Pagan was accompanied by lessons from the book of Revelation.

And as with most meetings of this kind, there was business to be done and reports to be heard. Many general ministries as well as General Minister and President Sharon Watkins gave an accounting of their work and current initiatives. Reports from the Hispanic Conventions highlights were shared. Richie Sánchez, chairperson of the search committee for the next national pastor presented the names of the members and a projected timeline.

More than 120 volunteers from Casa de Oración in San Diego welcomed assembly-goers to the church, supplied valet parking, cooked and served gourmet meals, and provided energizing music for worship.

At Saturday's banquet, the assembly came together to celebrate and honor the following individuals with "Somos Uno" awards for their contributions to Hispanic ministries:

Samuel Pagan explained in a series of lectures that the texts, when viewed in their context, are not intended to cause anxiety, but rather bring hope, not judgment but salvation. He made his points with a gentle humor and candor.

Rev. Elizabeth Carrasquillo, advocate for Obra Hispana since inception

They make room at the Hispanic Assembly to witness at the border. About 25 Disciples - both lay and clergy, local and general ministry staff - took time on Saturday to travel to the border with Mexico where they prayed on behalf of Central American children arriving at the border. Pastor Huberto Pimentel, prayed and commissioned them.

Antonio "Tony" Rodriguez, second vice moderator for the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Pastor Isay Alvarez and the Primera Iglesia Cristiana de Vista, San Diego

Pimentel shared not only a sermon but also his personal reflections on the context of the ministry of the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries. His message reminded the congregation of our mission to bring grace and truth to the broken by reflecting God's love in the world as Jesus did. In his report, Pimentel issued a call to the Hispanic churches to renew their

Rev. Mary Harris of Christian Theological Seminary

The Executive Hispanic Board of Directors was also installed on Saturday as part of the business section including: Rev. Joel Saucedo, Moderator; Pastor, Sammy Ramirez, Moderator Elect, Pastor Lori Tapia, Second Vice Moderator, Rev. Lorna Hernandez, secretary; Millie Sempritt, sub secretary; Guillermina Percales, women's ministries vocal; Rev. David Cortez, vocal.

NAPAD Sings the "Lord's Song" in Chicago



Friday evening featured the popular NAPAD Banquet and Cultural Night where a variety of cuisines were featured, including dishes from China, Filipinines, Japan, Korea and Thailand. Disciples had an opportunity to showcase their talents through dancing, singing, and playing instruments. A highlight of the evening featured a youth group from Sinapi Seed Fellowship of Palo Alto, Calif. Youth sang and played instruments ranging from French horn to viola as Rev. John Wu led the group by playing the "erhu," a traditional Chinese instrument. Also featured was the artistry of Shirley Lin Kinoshita, who expressed her talent through painting throughout the evening.

With festive music, dynamic preaching and a cultural night featuring talents of the attendees and delicious cuisine, the North America Pacific/Asian Disciples 18th Biennial Convocation filled the hearts of Christ-followers with song and spirit.

The NAPAD Convocation convened at the Disciples Divinity House, University Church, and Hyde Park Union Church next to the University of Chicago campus from August 6-9. This session's theme, "Singing the Lord's Song in the New Land" was based on Psalm 137:4. Preaching by Dr. Rick Lowery, Dr. Timothy James, Dr. Janet Casey-Allen and keynotes by Dr. Russell Moy and Dr. Russell Yee gave spiritual direction for ministry in the "new land," how to sing the Lord's song, and provided a look into the rich history of NAPAD within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

As with many assemblies within the church, NAPAD took some time to conduct business by electing new officers and recognizing members of NAPAD that recently were named to leadership roles within the wider church. Janet Casey-Allen, the presiding moderator for NAPAD, led the meeting. The new officers for NAPAD are moderator Rev. Dr. John D. Roh, moderator-elect Deanna Scobbie, and secretary/treasurer Shirley Lin Kinoshita. Rev. Vy Nguyen, Executive Director for Week of Compassion, and Rev. Paul Tche, moderator-elect of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), were also recognized as leaders within the wider church.

The business session was also a time to recognize emerging church leaders, including the recipients of the David Kagiwada and SoonGook Choi Scholarship Awards, NAPAD Interns, and the Dr. Geunhee Yu Covenant Grants recipients

10th Annual Women In Ministry Conference September 15th-19th



Attending the Women in Ministry Conference, "Shifting The Atmosphere: Defining and Redefining Success in Ministry" was indeed a gift from God for which I am grateful.

Being in the company of 200+ women in various aspects of Christian ministry was food for my soul and oil for the lamp of my spirit. I joined other phenomenal Disciples clergy women for this transformative shifting experience, Rev. Patricia Maples, Dr. Christal Williams, Rev. April Johnson, Rev. Andrea Foster and Dr. Judy Cummings to name a few.

As a result of this precious time of divine impartation, I no longer feel alone; I understand that the obstacles, challenges, and discouragement (O.C.D.) I sometimes experience, are not unique to my ministry context or to me personally. Women in ministry all over the world have and are still, going through the same or similar struggles. Each of us is engaged in warfare that is spiritual in nature. For indeed, we wrestle not with flesh and blood but principalities and powers, spiritual wickedness in high places.

Especially transformative for me was the opportunity to learn from the experiential wisdom of each trail-blazing woman who served on the panel; Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, Dr. Cecilia Bryant, Dr. Elaine Flake, Dr. Claudette Copeland, and of course, The Bishop herself, Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale. Their authenticity and transparency enabled me to connect with each of them in a way I never imagined. I sensed a genuine sisterhood. And I now feel part of that sisterhood.

From the conference I also took away the following:

- ◇ A renewed sense of commitment to my call to pastoral ministry; because yes, I am called by God;
- ◇ A revitalization of my own strength and power through the Spirit; I am capable;
- ◇ Memories to remind me that every woman in ministry faces the daily assault of sexism in and out of the church;
- ◇ A necessity for persistent spiritual nurture--prayer, connection and communion with God;

- ◇ An assessment of my spiritual need for wisdom and courageous leadership.

Looking forward to next year.

Rev. Dr. Irie L. Session, Senior Pastor
The AVENUE-Warren Avenue Christian Church
Dallas, Texas



Church deems lock-in a success

By WTHR Channel 13

INDIANAPOLIS -

Church leaders at "Light of the World Church" are calling Sunday night's youth lock-in a success.

They had planned for 1500 attendees — their theme was "No Teen Turned Away" — but 2000 youth showed up.

"I came here because I felt inspired," said Abraham Keita. "I heard the word of God and I was really anxious to know about it. I think this is a great opportunity for us to get close as one and become a family."

"Light of the World Church" on North Michigan Road planned the youth lock-in from 8:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m. to help keep teens out of trouble and teach them a message of peace, building on the success of a similar event **held back in March** when nearly 1,000 teens — some from rival gangs — came together under one roof away from the violence.

Once the church hit capacity Sunday night, youth began to congregate outside the building, and that's when church leaders had to call for police.

Those who were outside were sent home to their parents, but those who were able to get in were allowed to stay.

Unfortunately, not all of the teens turned away left peacefully. A few fights broke out.

Police were called to deal with a few scuffles outside.

Inside, a peaceful celebration included a brief message from the pastor, Dr. David Hampton, and a dialogue with IMPD Chief Rick Hite and other officers about how do interact with police peacefully and respectfully.

"(We want to) spread the love of Jesus Christ and also want to give the kids an outlet," said Hampton. "These are some very talented, intelligent, articulate young people ... just an opportunity for them to express themselves in a safe environment."



The church says the situation in Ferguson, Mo. brings up a lot of issues that need to be dealt with in many communities, including Indianapolis. Giving teens positive outlets and educating them about responsible decisions can go a long way toward accomplishing that.

But, the church knows it can't do it all alone.

They would love to partner with other churches and hold a city-wide lock-in to meet the needs of every youth in the community.

"Of course, we're a church, we believe if you have a relationship with God that he can turn those things around," said Anderson Smith, a representative with the church. "We kind of challenged the kids that if you aren't happy with how things are going, give the church and give God a try. We had 40 or 50 kids that either for the first time made a confession of faith or re-committed to join church or commit those lives to God. So, to me that alone was worth it right there."

Ruth P. Hobbs, 100 Years Young on February 18, 2015



Dear John,
 Sure hoping you and family are doing OK. You and the staff are certainly doing a SUPER job with The Old Timer's Grapevine. May the Good Lord continue to bless you!!

I am quite busy now, my garden is doing great! I am canning chow-chow, bread & butter pickles. My grands have already put in their orders for Christmas.

John, pray that I'll keep alert and well so I can enjoy celebrating my birthday, February 18. You know I'll be 100.

Take care and may the Good Lord continue to bless you.

Hoping all is going well with you and family. The weather is really hot down here hoping it will soon cool off.

You will find included an article, hopefully, there will be space in The Oldtimers' Grapevine for it.

Oh, you just don't know how happy I'll be if you are able to come to my birthday celebration. My daughters Ramona and Falvia are taking care of the invitations.

Love! Peace! Joy!

Ruth P. Hobbs



FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

The Rev. Harold R. Johnson (1921-2014)

The Reverend Harold R. Johnson-the "Grandfather" of NAPAD-died peacefully on September 6, 2014. He was 93 year old. Johnson was born on March 18, 1921 in Martins Ferry, Ohio, as the son of Harry E. and Ruby Zane Johnson. He graduated from Bethany College, West Virginia, and the University of Pittsburgh.

Johnson served churches in Pennsylvania before moving to Indiana, where he spent the rest of his life, engaged in various forms of ministry. Initially he served Indiana congregations as director of youth and, later, as director of Christian Education. From 1961 to 1968, he served on the general church, the United Christian Missionary Society. When the Disciples restructured in 1968, he joined the staff at the Division of Homeland Ministries, serving first as Executive Coordinator of Program and Strategy and then, from the early 1980s until his retirement in 1990, as the Executive for Evangelism. While at DHM, Johnson also assisted the Board of Church Extension, to train ministers for new congregations, and the Council on Christian Unity, to help it engage in ecumenical conversations with the Consultation on Church Union.

While he distinguished himself as a leader of the general church, Johnson's most significant legacy lies in the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD). Johnson, more than anyone else, was instrumental in establishing this community centered on Asians and Pacific Islanders within the Disciples. It was he who first envisioned and advocated for a denomination-wide community of Asians and Pacific Islanders, something that was not part of his DHM portfolio. His efforts led to the establishment of the Fellowship of Asian American Disciples in 1978, which became the American Asian Disciples in 1979, before becoming NAPAD in 1996. In building NAPAD, Johnson worked closely with other key leaders in the community, especially Grace Kim, David Kagiwada, and Soongook Choi.

Though a European-American, Johnson saw himself as one with the Disciples of Asian and Pacific Island heritages-and was accepted as such. For this reason, Johnson was affectionately referred to by fellow NAPADers as the "self-appointed advocate for Disciples of Asian origin" and the "Grandfather" of NAPAD. Johnson was recognized for his contributions at a luncheon at the 2009 General Assembly in Indianapo-

lis, where he was presented with a plaque that honored him as a founder of the NAPAD.

Johnson was preceded in death by Ruth, his wife and partner in ministry for 64 years. The couple had no children, but Johnson is survived by brothers, cousins, nephews, nieces and beloved friends at Downey Avenue Christian Church and NAPAD. Downey Avenue Christian Church plans to hold a memorial service sometime in October; NAPAD will also hold an event to celebrate Johnson's life and achievements.

Rev. Dr. Roland K. Huff

The Rev. Dr. Roland K. Huff passed away September 4, 2014 at the age of 95 after a short illness. Huff was born in Danville, IL, was ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1940 and for 20 years served local pastorates in Kansas and Oklahoma, as well in Manchester, England. He met his wife Kitty while they were students at Phillips and they were married in 1940.

In 1958 he joined the national staff of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), with major responsibilities in the area of stewardship which included a stint as director of Week of Compassion and work with Church World Service. He was president of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society from 1973 to 1982. He was also interim regional minister in Michigan from 1986-1987.

Huff graduated with a BA, MA, and BD from Phillips University in Enid, OK. He later received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, IN.

He is survived by Kitty, his wife of 74 years; daughter Kay Jones and husband Lee of Ira, VT; grandson Lance Jones, his wife, Licenia and their children Lammont and Opal of Ira, VT; granddaughter Krista Jones of Perth, Australia; granddaughter Dante Huff of Calgary, Canada; daughter-in-law Jude McMurry of San Antonio, Texas; sister Miriam Shirts of Sunrise, Arizona, and multiple nephews and nieces. He was predeceased by his parents, two sisters, and his son, Roland Huff Jr.

A celebration of his life was held at the Gables in Rutland, VT, Sept. 8, with subsequent inurnment in the Crematorium at the National City Christian Church in Washington, D.C.

Delores Jean Moore (1942 - 2014)



First Lady of Garden Grove Christian Church, Houston, Texas

Rev. Will Moore,
Pastor & President
Texas Christian
Missionary
Fellowship

the Metropolitan Board of Zoning Appeals. He was active in the Kiwanis Club, working each year on the Abe Lincoln Awards program. He worked with the Boy Scouts of America and was given the Silver Beaver Award from the Crossroads of America Council in 1985. He established Club 31 for retirees from the General Offices of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. He worked with the Central Indiana Council on Aging and volunteered at Community Hospital East. Wade went wherever he was needed, he helped however he could.

Wade met Margaret Eleanore Clark and married her August 8, 1964 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He died August 1, 2014, one week shy of their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Wade had two sons, Mark Alan Rubick and Steven Jay Rubick. He had six grandchildren – Stephanie, Reagan, Quin, Olivia, Ava and William – who loved him dearly. Wade is survived by his wife, his sons, his daughters-in-law and his grandchildren.

Wade D. Rubick (1921 - 2014)



Wade Drew Rubick was born June 20, 1921 in Kansas City, Missouri. He was the second son of Francis and Lorette Rubick.

Wade served in the United States Army in World War II, assigned to the Pacific Theatre and later served during the occupa-

tion of Japan. Wade retired from the United States Army Reserves in 1981, having earned the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Wade earned his Bachelor's Degree at Park College in 1941 and earned his LLB at the University of Missouri School of Law in 1949. He practiced law in Kansas City until moving to Indianapolis in 1960 to serve as General Counsel of the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. As General Counsel, and through his work with the Board of Church Extension, Wade helped to establish church congregations around the world.

Wade served his community wherever and however opportunities arose. He served on the Parks Board in his beloved Kansas City, and served in Indianapolis on

Ellen Cox Lawson Strong



The Lawson Family would like you to share in the loss of our dear loved one Ellen Cox Lawson Strong who made her transition from mortality to immortality September 22, 2014 after suffering a paralytic stroke on August 23, 2013.

Ellen (a twin) was born in Roxboro, North Carolina. She was a product of the Person County educational system and a 1955

graduate of Person County High School. Upon completion of high school, Ellen attended Tennessee State University Nashville, Tennessee where she received a bachelor's degree in 1961.

In 1964, Ellen relocated to Indianapolis, Indiana where she became gainfully employed with the Indianapolis Public School System. Later, she enrolled at Ball State University where she earned a master's degree in education 1969. Ellen pursued a variety of career options in the Indianapolis Public School System and finally retired in 2000 as social worker/guidance counselor under the leadership of Dr. Roberta Bowers who considered Ellen a very valuable employee.

Ellen's overt personality led her to become active in

numerous clubs, organizations, and societies. She was a member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Indiana State Teachers' Union, The Red Hat Society, The Indiana Society of Washington, DC, Tennessee State Alumni Association, Phi Delta Kappa and The National Education Association. In 2006 Ellen joined Light of the World Christian Church where she served in the Pastor's Partners ministry. Yet, Ellen's true ministry was to help and encourage others which she continued to do until her transition from earth to eternal life.

While working in the Indianapolis Public School System, Ellen met and married Theodore Strong June 17, 1972. The two loved to travel. No place was too far. Ellen and Ted would often reminisce and share with others their adventures on excursions to Alaska, China, Japan, Hawaii, etc. and of course their most memorable and unforgettable highlight contestants on the "Price is Right" "Come on Down!"

Ellen was an extraordinary woman whose greatest passion was her family. Her loving union with Ted blossomed into five children: Zelda Loretta, Adris Elizabeth, Jimmy Harreld, Alex Haywood, and Anthony Wayne. However, Ellen reserved her greatest affection for her beloved grandson, "Lil Man" (Lenny Lawson Anderson).

To cherish her precious memories, Ellen leaves her husband, Theodore; daughter, Zelda; grandson, Lenny; twin sister, Mary White (Donald), Shirley Conley (Robert), Salomia Jeffers (Benjamin), Francene Brown (Glen), and Cordelia Lawson; brothers, Lawrence Lawson (Eunice) and James Monroe (Ruth); beloved nephews, Dennis and Chris (Michelle); numerous other nephews, nieces, aunts, cousins, and friends. Ellen is predeceased by her parents, Rev. Equilla & Elizabeth Lawson; oldest sister, Ann Mathews (Reginald); and brother, Robert Lawson (Clara).

Maurica C. Thompson (1948 - 2014)



Maurica Claytor Thompson, 67, died on August 1, 2014 in Gilbert, AZ. Maurica was born on March 1, 1948 in Roanoke, VA. She was the daughter of Archie Claytor and Daisy Lee. She attended High School at Christiansburg Institute in Southern Virginia and college at Durham Business College. In 1967, she married her high school sweetheart Dan-

ny Ray Thompson and throughout the course of their 47 year marriage traveled the globe. They lived throughout the United States and Europe with their 2 sons S. DeWayne Thompson and Shawn Michael Thompson. Maurica had a passion for playing the piano, spending time with her husband, spreading Gods love.

Billie Lee Caton Watkins (1931—2014)



Billie Lee Caton Watkins was born on July 19, 1931, in Helena, Montana, the first child of Ellen and Edgar Caton. She was christened Wilhelmina Leontine, but Billie Lee was the name her mother really wanted. The family soon moved to Portland, and Chester, Sandra, and John enlarged the family circle. Billie Lee attended Richmond Grade School and

Franklin High, becoming the first person in her family to graduate from high school.

Friends invited the Catons to Central Christian Church, where Billie Lee was baptized. She was active in Camp Fire Girls and Christian Endeavor, delivered the evening Oregonian, and took violin and piano lessons.

During her senior year in high school, her pastor offered a class in New Testament Greek. Since Billie Lee planned to attend Northwest Christian College (now University) in Eugene, she enrolled. Among the 32 students was a high school senior from another congregation, Keith Watkins. At the end of the year, only Billie Lee and Keith remained in the class. They were married after their junior year at NCC.

After graduation in 1953, Billie and Keith moved to the small farming community of Somerset, Indiana where Keith served as student minister while attending seminary. There, Sharon and Marilyn were born. In 1956, Keith was called as pastor to the Christian Church in Sanger, California where Michael joined the family. In 1959, the family moved to Richmond, California 3 weeks before Carolyn's birth.

Keith was called to the faculty of Christian Theological Seminary in 1961, and the family moved to Indian-

apolis. Kenneth was born a year later. Billie managed a limited household budget and encouraged the activities of her five kids, acting as car-pool mother, Girl Scout cookie chair, and library volunteer and math coach in the local public schools. At University Park Christian Church, Billie taught the kindergarten class, was a mainstay in Christian Women's Fellowship, and sang alto in the church choir. She joined a community choir and was a founding member of a recorder ensemble that played at community gatherings, the Indianapolis Art Museum, and Governor's Mansion. In Indiana and later in Oregon, Billie was a leader in Church Women United and served on regional Nurture and Certification Teams that counseled seminary students preparing for ordained church leadership.

Upon Keith's retirement in 1995, they moved to Sun City West, Arizona. Billie joined another recorder group, enjoyed line dancing, and participated in regional church work. She joined Keith in interim ministries in Portland and Albany, Oregon before she and Keith settled in Vancouver, Washington in 2002. During her decade as a member of First Christian Church in Portland, she sang in the Sanctuary Choir, served on the World Outreach Committee and as an elder, participated in the Christian Women's Fellowship, and min-

istered lovingly to many.

Through all of these years Billie maintained a home marked by tranquility and love. She provided an ethical barometer for her five children and nine grandchildren, recognizing the light of God in each of God's children, and treating every person she encountered with dignity and respect and love.

Billie spent 1993 in a full series of treatments for breast cancer. Her cancer returned in 2006. Through a long series of treatments, she continued her life with steadfast purpose and grace. She died at home on August 12, 2014 in Vancouver, Washington, surrounded by family.

She is survived by her husband of 62 years, Keith; her children: Sharon (Rick Lowery), Marilyn (Cy Ulberg, deceased), Michael (Diane), Carolyn (Alan Wallace), and Kenneth (Susan); nine grandchildren: Bethany, Spencer, Carl, Jimmy, Chris, Lee, Erik, Kendra, and Claire; brother John Caton (Linda) of Vancouver, WA and sister Sandra Tannler (Mike) of Morro Bay, CA. Liturgies celebrating her life are taking place at First Christian Church in Portland and Central Christian Church in Indianapolis. Burial is in Crown Hill Cemetery, close to her long-time Indianapolis home.

Articles & News

New African Executive Named



Global Ministries is delighted to announce the selection of Rev. LaMarco Cable as the Area Executive for the Africa Office. Rev. Cable is an ordained minister

in Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). He brings an extensive background in advocacy and grass-root community organizing to this position. His work experience includes serving as Deputy Director of Organizing for Bread for the World. He led staff in the Southern Region of the United States in creating synergy and work strategies for the Organizing Department; evaluated and prepared legislative agendas, built coalition support for the organization's legislative agenda, led presentations on hunger, justice, po-

verty and represented Bread for the World at coalition meetings. Also, his work included providing advocacy and policy training to regional staff and grassroots members of Bread for the World, as well as the cultivation and development of relationships with congregational donors.

Rev. Cable served for 4 years with Global Ministries in several different capacities. He served as the Program Associate for Advocacy and Education, where he developed public advocacy positions on global issues important to Global Ministries and its partners in Africa and Latin America. He researched and wrote regular mission stories related to global advocacy to share with constituency via the web, e-mail updates, and multi-media presentations. He led overseas advocacy fact finding trips, traveled overseas to work with partners to develop priorities and strategies, and planned annual advocacy and educational symposiums. In addition, Rev. Cable administered the Short-term Volunteer program and the Global Mission Intern Program. Also, he served as interim Mission Personnel Executive with primary responsibilities of recruiting and screening fully supported missionaries. Rev. Cable comes to us with pastoral

experience. He pastored Broadway Christian Church in Winchester, KY from November 2005 to March 2008. Rev. Cable received his undergraduate degree from Transylvania University and his Master of Divinity degree from Lexington Theological Seminary. He will begin his ministry on October 1, 2014 with French language training. We are excited to have this new addition to our staff as one reference stated, "He will bring a new network of young leaders to engage with Global Ministries."

Alzheimer/Dementia and the Church

By Rev. Dr. Willie Kizer Crum, Jr.



What are Alzheimer and Dementia?

According to *Medical Dictionary (For the Nonprofessional)* by Charles F. Chapman, "Alzheimer's disease [is] a progressive loss of mental ability and function, often accompanied by personality

change and emotional instability. It is a common disorder, affecting both men and women; it usually starts between ages 50 and 60, often with memory lapse and changes in behavior." The Alzheimer's, in other words, can lead to dementia, which Chapman defines as "a progressive state of mental decline, esp. of memory function and judgment, often accompanied by disorientation, stupor, and disintegration of the personality. In other cases, it is caused by a disease (e.g., Alzheimer's disease), brain injury, or degeneration brought about by aging that causes changes that are irreversible."

I thank God for giving me the opportunity to work as a consultant for a hospice program. I did not know that God was preparing me for my mother to come down with dementia. This experience has helped me to understand the illness and that how it affects others may not be the same.

One of my first patients was a woman who was about 93 years old and could not tell you what she had for breakfast, but she could tell how good God is to her. She always looked happy and did not complain about pain or her illness. One of the things that surprised me was that when I was reading the 23th Psalm she was voicing it with me without missing a word. She was always praising and thanking God for sparing her life. I never went to see her when she was sad.

I cannot say the same about her daughter, the care keeper. Her daughter looked depressed and spent a great deal of time and energy attending to her mother's needs. Ironically, one year later the 94-year-old woman is still living but her daughter died without any major illness noted. I am sharing this situation to explain to you that most of the time, the caregiver needs just as much support and counseling as the patients.

When you are caring for your loved one that is suffering with Alzheimer's or dementia, the illness does not just have an impact on the patient but also affects you as the caregiver who provides and is involved with day-to-day care for the welfare of the patient.

How can the church minister to members suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia and give family support too?

As church leaders and members, we need to reach out and to get help for the family members as they care for their loved ones. Now these patients need the support from the church through visitation and providing services for patients, sitting with a patient reading scriptures, singing with the patient, as well as doing things for the caregiver because this can be a very stressful period for the family. An excellent way to help is by relieving the caregiver for a break.

Certainly, the caregiver is taking care of the patient, and this is what God wants us to do for one another to show compassion for one another. It is great to come to the aid of others during these types of stressful situations in a family. There are also patients that do not have any loved ones around. Especially if these patients have been very active in the church, now it is time to give back to these individuals to show that we care about them.

The church needs to communicate with its members concerning these illnesses and that members in the church may be ill one day. The church can start having workshops about these issues and how to care for its members, most of all, by teaching how to minister to these individuals

How to help the family access other programs and support services in the community

Community services such as home health, hospice and Respite care have treatment programs that will follow up with the patients on a daily basis for the caregiver as well as provide for the person's physical and mental and spiritual needs. This can really help take a great burden off the family members. If we are Christians, we will be there for others.

As I stated earlier, God prepared me with the skills and patience to be able to accept my mother with this illness. My mother has been ill with dementia for about two years. It is very painful to see that your mother cannot have a rational conversation with you anymore. There are times when she looked to be in another world and lost for words. She is unable to remember what she ate a few moments ago, and she doesn't know where she lives. However, the moment you talk about God, she is right there with you. There is "power in God's name" and in His holy Word, so that no matter what their condition may be, people still praise God. Sometimes mother seems to be cognitive and coherent, she seems to be connecting to what is being said, and then in a second she is back into the confusing stage.

I must say I miss those days that I could share things with mother and seek for her blessings and understanding of what I may have been experiencing. There have been very special moments in my life as I sit now looking into her eyes, trying to communicate and to understand what she may be feeling or thinking. I feel she is here spiritually and physically but not mentally. What was there before is fading away. You look into her eyes and see confusion. She doesn't know what's going on. It is amazing that she still hasn't forgotten about God, and the Spirit of the Lord is still with her.

The only thing that I can do for my mother is to let her know that I still love her while keeping her as com-

fortable as possible and maintaining respect and dignity.

Conclusion

We are our brothers' and sisters' keeper. You only have one life. You cannot come back to make what was wrong right. Live each day for God's people, and you will live forever in our Lord's care. Visit the sick, because they need to hear that God loves them, too. Sharing God's Word to Alzheimer and dementia patients helps them to reach their spiritual needs and healing grace.

LOOKING AT THANKS / GIVING

By May F. Reed

Looking at thanks or looking at giving is a deeply thoughtful process. We just cannot be thankful enough for the many mercies given to us in our years of living. And we most certainly can't or don't give enough tangibly in most cases. But God, in His myriad manner bestows constancy in blessings, keeping us ever unceasingly engulfed in His much goodness. Thanks is but a word but living in thankfulness is a way of life. Live life full, and live it well.



Dear National Convocation,

Norman and I want to thank all of you for your prayers, calls, and cards during this past year of alarming illness. None knows what tomorrow has in store but holding fast to the promises of Jesus and having blessed friends like you can cause miraculous healing blessing. We are healed, and we thank, and praise the Lord for His Word is true.

Giving is a grace that you can assign your soul to render in all you do. Maybe with a smile, a hug, compliment, a note/letter, a song, prayer, a handshake, a thumbs-up wink, a meal fashioned in interesting and good conversation. Giving is good. Good for the giver and good for the receiver....."The more you give, the more you live." Good goodness is just plain good and let it be given a topping of good, and warm laughter ☺ ☺

MORE LAUGHTER:

"Nothing improves one's hearing like overhearing."

Round as a biscuit, busy as a bee, the Ohio and Mississippi can't fill it up.

-What is it?- Send answers. (See next issue).

NOW LOOKING AT "THANKSGIVING"

- 1621 was the earliest harvest thanksgiving in the U.S.
- Congress recommended days of thanksgiving yearly during the Revolution.
- Washington proclaimed such a day in 1789 and again in 1795.
- Thanksgiving Day, was an annual festival for the mercies of the closing year.
- From 1863 to 1939, presidents' issued proclamations that the last Thursday in Nov. be Thanksgiving Day.
- In 1939-1941, F.D.R. proclaimed the day a week earlier to lengthen the shopping season between the Thanksgiving and Christmas season but in 1942, the traditional day was restored by congressional action.

May you all enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving this year.

GIVE THANKS ABUNDANTLY.

Share your peace and love with family, and friends as you travel this Christian highway.

I DON'T NEED THESE

I sat down to interview myself
After purchases I'd made.
I frowned and scratched my head
as I looked where there they laid.
I listened to what I had to say
But nothing seemed quite true.
An interview, oh yes, but my words
in disarray.
Isn't that the way it is
sometimes when we speak
without a thought,
Or even why we purchase things
we should ought not have bought.
I asked myself "did you need these
Things?" and of course I really did not.
So I canceled the interview and took
back the whole dear lot.

May Reed
Written Sun., Sept. 7, 2014

Unity Strengthens Our Spiritual Journey

By Ruth Hobbs

Several months ago, Reverend John Shearer, minister of the First Christian Church in the Jackson Metropolitan Area, suggested that each 5th Sunday from 5:30-7:30PM, a Get Together Fellowship would be held. The congregations would rotate in hosting the event. The other ministers, Reverend John Holifield, Covenant Christian Church, Reverend Russell Myers, United Christian Church, and Reverend Fred Rohlf, North East Christian Church, wholeheartedly accepted the idea.

The activities are inclusive of first, refreshments, provided by members of the congregations, followed by a Sing-A-long.

The minister where the event is held serves as the leader.

This event has really given a great spiritual uplift to all the congregations.

Rolling Up Our Sleeves

By Jesse Jackson

I greet you in the name of our Lord, Jesus, whom we proclaim as the Christ. This is my first message to you as President of the National Convocation. I would like to begin by commending the Local Arrangements Committee in Columbus for a fantastic job hosting the 23rd Biennial Session. It takes a cast of hundreds to make a successful Biennial, and they did it, led by the very capable Jackie Compton Bunch.

In our transition meeting on Sunday, July 27th, I shared with those present a couple of initiatives that I believe deserve our attention NOW! I believe that God has called our "Church" for such a time as this. Our communities, urban, suburban and rural are in the midst of an virtual avalanche of violence. Our children are dying and some of our children are killing. Our communities, many of them ground zero for the so-call War on Drugs, have made encounters with law enforcement increasingly lethal.

I believe that our church can and should, lead the way in developing strategies to slow and eventually stop, the genocidal and suicidal behavior that cause so much pain in our communities. Many of our congregations are already engaged in ministry in this area or, are working with local coalitions doing this work. We need to share those ideas and together, develop a comprehensive strategy to combat this problem. I am well

aware that one size does not fit all, but this is a necessary journey, that must be fought up close and personal. We cannot theologically or culturally drone this problem.

The reality is that there are a host of other issues that contribute to this violence that must also be addressed. Things like the accessibility of cheap guns; substance abuse; the stigma of living with mental health challenges; mass incarceration; the state of public education; poverty; health disparities, including obesity, caused in part by “food deserts” in many communities; HIV/AIDS; voting and returning the right to vote to felons; law enforcement relations/police brutality and so on.

While we are seeking strategies to move forward as a church, we do not do it alone. I had a brief, preliminary conversation with our own Dr. Matt Harris who has a particular set of skills that are extremely useful on this journey.

The second piece to this agenda I am calling The Africa Initiative. In March of this year, I was blessed to be part of a delegation that traveled to Ghana, in West Africa. The ministry and fellowship that we found there left me planning for the next phase of ministry, even before we left the continent. While we have partners there, we do not have a decisive presence as we do in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A personal concern that I had was the colonial nature of the theology and the schools that are all “church” schools, supported by churches in the United States that tend to be in opposition to liberation. Again, that is my personal assessment.

As part of the Africa Initiative, our brother, Paul Turner, will embark on a mission journey in Congo at the end of this year, and who was present at this year’s Biennial, needs and deserves our support. I want our Church to develop creative ways to support him in time, talent and treasure so that his work; our work, will be as productive as possible. The advocacy part to this Congo mission would be to creatively let the world know about the genocide that “first world” leisure causes in regards to the mineral, coltan, which is used in cell phones, laptops and other devices that is mined at the expense of Congolese lives.

We are blessed to have Julia Brown Karimu where she is with the heart and passion that she has for ministry, and we plan to work closely with her as well. We will begin reaching out to a few people as we form working groups to tackle both initiatives. I am hoping that those who have a passion to “roll up their sleeves” for this kind of ministry will contact me via jessejackson@cox.net.

Dr. Glen Stewart to retire



Dr. Stewart started his ministry in Tennessee on February 14, 1994. He came to Tennessee after serving eight years as Associate Regional Minister at the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Greater Kansas City. Glen has also served as pastor of congregations in Ohio and Kentucky.

Dr. Stewart currently serves of the General Commission on Ministry and the Administrative Committee of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). He is currently serving as the Treasurer of the Board of the Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt University. He serves on other Boards of organizations within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Dr. Stewart said: "I am grateful for all that God has done in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) while I have served in Tennessee. I have always heard that time flies when you are having fun. These 20 years have flown by."

Glen and his wife, Joyce, plan to continue to live in Nashville in the future. They have one grown son, J.P., who lives in Seattle.

Church Life

BY Ron Deggs

Church life can get pretty rough and rocky along the way. Do you know what I mean? Whether you are an ordained or commissioned ministerial leader or a congregational leader without the benefit of ordination or commissioning, you have probably experienced some rough and rocky seasons in your congregation's life. If you have not, then something is definitely wrong.

Some people get discouraged and walk away from congregational life. Others believe that God and the congregation have let them down and take a back seat. There are others who plug along and try to make sense out of it all, hanging on by a thread. No one likes those rough and rocky times, not even those who seem to thrive in the midst of it. If you stir up a beehive, you are always the first to get stung.

I took a course the other day on smooth landings. A seasoned pilot by the name of Wally told the story of another pilot who once told him that "it is possible to make a bad landing from a good approach, but it is almost impossible to make a good landing from a bad approach." Wally continued, "I have proven that theory to be correct on many occasions."

Those of us who are leaders in the church should learn, if we have not already, that it is all in the approach. If your approach is good, you might mess up along the way and need to go around a second, or third, or fourth, or seventy-seventh time for a smooth landing. God is a God of forgiveness and we are human. There is always room for growth, learning, and improvement.

But I guarantee you this, that if your approach is bad, you have little or no hope for a good landing. If you sense that your approach is bad, then take some corrective action before discouragement and lethargy set in. Before people walk away, or take a back seat, or just plug along and hang on by a thread. Such a scenario saps the joy and life out of a church.

Was it not Jesus who said: "I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly?" A bad approach will never produce abundant life. With practice, a good approach will. So watch your approach and may there be smooth landings ahead for you and your congregation!

Message from the General Minister and President

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who loves us, feeds us, calls us!

October is the month set aside to honor those called to ministry, and I want to take a moment to offer a word of gratitude and support for you as you serve God's mission with God's people.

You are often the most evident manifestation of God's care in your community - a holy calling. To hold the hand of

the suffering, laugh with the joyful, bring the Word to life, invite all to the table and then lead the people forth - are labors of God's love.

Admittedly, it is at times, LABOR. The unpredictable schedule, the emotional demands, the sometimes thoughtless treatment at the hands of those you serve - it is not an easy calling.

But I want you to know you are indeed appreciated. I pray for each of you to be filled with the bread of life and the breath of the Spirit as you respond to God's sacred call - renewed, rejuvenated and ready to continue your good work among God's people.

Blessings on you and your families -

THANK YOU

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We are accessible through our **editorial office:**
5314 Moonlight Dr. Indianapolis, IN 46226-1755,
(317) 545-9335 oldtimers.grapevine@gmail.com.

Contributions should be sent to our treasurer at:
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