

## **1. Stories we tell about the National Convocation and the National Christian Missionary Convention**

Chimamanda Adiche aptly states: *“There is a danger of a single story. No one is a single story.”* Multiple stories are told about the NCCC and the NCMC in the life of the church.

**Stock Stories:** These are the stories that are most common, the ones we hear regularly, whether or not they are true.

**Concealed Stories:** These are the stories that remain hidden. They may be sad or beautiful, they may tell a story of connection or disconnect; but they remain in the shadows. These stories challenge stock stories because they give a broader view, another perspective.

**Reflection questions:** *What are the stock stories we tell about the NCCC and the NCMC? What stories are concealed?*

## **2. Mission of the National Convocation and the National Christian Missionary Convention**

The most recent formulation of the vision and mission of the NCCC is as follows:

- The vision of the National Convocation is to be a leaven in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) under One God as One Church with One Mission in the world; as a voice promoting pertinent issues related to the African American Church, carrying out the biblical mandate, and to transform lives.

The mission is “ ... to provide an instrumentality within the structure of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a forum for the discussion of pertinent issues related to black church life in the context of total church life; for fellowship, program promotion, leadership training and such other general purposes as shall support and strengthen the congregations involved in the total mission of the church.”

It corresponds with the mission that was stated in the 1969 principals for merger and with documents preceding the merger including the following:

- “Under the ONE God, the ONE Church has ONE mission in the world; the merger of the National Christian Missionary Convention and the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) must be under the disciplines of the ONE God, in ONE Church, and stand united in ONE mission in the world.” - The 1969 Principles for Merger of the National Christian Missionary Convention and the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)

**Reflection questions:** *Does this reflect the current identity and aspirations, mission and vision of the NCCC/NCMC? What does NCCC and the NCMC flourishing look like? How is flourishing embodied?*

### **3. Transforming Historical Harm**

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will engage in a church-wide process of Transformative Community Conferencing (TCC) starting in 2022 led by Rev. Dr. David Anderson Hooker. The intention of a TCC process for the entire denomination is to deepen the Church's shared recommitment to values and practices that create a unified and covenantal church that faithfully bears witness to its missional call to reflect to society the promise and possibility of God's limitless love in a world modeled as a truly open table and a movement for wholeness.

Watch this brief video to learn more about his work and approach:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AodqWQi3EzM>

The Transforming Historical Harm framework looks at historical injustices and their present manifestations through the lens of trauma and identifies the mechanisms for the transmission of historical trauma: legacies and aftermaths. These are the beliefs and structures responsible for transmitting trauma responses and traumagenic circumstances between generations. The framework then offers a comprehensive approach to transforming historical harms through **Facing History; Making Connections; Healing Wounds; and Taking Action**. Transforming historical harms must occur through the practice of all these dimensions. The order in which they are engaged can be different, but none can be omitted.

#### **Questions for reflection:**

*How do historical harms impact the work of the National Convocation? How does trauma inform the NCCC/NCMC at the congregational level, the individual level, and at the national institutional level? Are we open to the possibility of a process of working with Dr. Anderson Hooker on Transforming Historical Harm, and the related work of engaging the Transformative Community Conference process?*

### **4. Black congregations and state convocations, fellowships, and conventions**

The merger was finalized in 1960 and called upon the ministries of the whole church to serve the whole church. Three former National Christian Missionary Convention (NCMC) staff persons became staff of the United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS). They held positions in evangelism, Christian education, and Christian Women's Fellowship, identified ministry priorities.

A recent preliminary strategic plan identified the following nine goals:

- Leader Development and Faith Formation – (Ephesians 4:11-13)
- Model Oneness through the Merger Process- (John 17:21, Ephesians 4:11-12)
- Promote Faithful, Vital and Healthy Congregations- (Acts 1:8, Romans 12:1-2)
- Ministerial Recruitment and Nurture- (1 Timothy 2:5-8, Philippians 4:13, 14)
- Develop and Sustain New Congregations- (1 Peter 2:5, Matthew 28:18-20)
- Promote and Support Transformational Ministry- (Romans 12:2)
- Promote and Support Reconciliation and Social Justice- (Micah 6:8)
- Promote and encourage good stewardship – (Galatians 6:7)
- Strengthen the Biennial Session

**Questions for reflection:**

*What are the chief challenges facing Black congregations and state conventions? What are the chief needs? What are the top three priorities in the list above? Are there priorities that are not captured by this list?*