



## National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Board Report for Rev. Dr. Irie Lynne Session, Board President  
December 2021 Board Meeting

### **Meditation:**

For this afternoon's meditation I'll begin with a quote from Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes book, "I Bring the Voices of My People." In this quote she discusses the nature of authentic racial reconciliation. She writes,

*"Racial reconciliation is part of God's ongoing and eschatological mission to restore wholeness and peace to a world broken by systemic injustice. Racial reconciliation focuses its efforts upon dismantling white supremacy, the systemic evil that denies and distorts the image of God inherent in all humans based upon the heretical belief that White aesthetics, values, and cultural norms bear the fullest representation of the imago Dei. White supremacy thus maintains that White people are superior to all other peoples, and it orders creation, identities, relationships, and social structures in ways that supports this distortion and denial."<sup>1</sup>*

**Scripture:** John 10:10 (NRSV) - *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly*

The National Convocation has a unique opportunity to restore wholeness to a broken world and a broken church by partnering with God to dismantle white supremacy, the evil that distorts the image of God. It is my firm belief that rather than emulating, accommodating, and adopting white cultural values, practices, and strategies, the National Convocation and its leadership can mine the brilliance, creativity, communal ethics, innovation, and knowledge production of Black folk to construct a way forward. A way where all God's children can experience the abundant life Jesus came to offer. May we pray together.

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<sup>1</sup> Chanequa Walker-Barnes, *I Bring the Voices of My People: A Womanist Vision For Racial Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2019), 10-11.

## Board Report

It has been an adventure serving as Board Chair during the COVID-19 Pandemic. My work and ministry, like that of other clergy and leaders of our denomination, had to adapt to virtual meetings for planning and handling business. We were able to accomplish the following in digital space, which includes email correspondence and Zoom meetings:

- Held telephone meeting with Treasurer, Belinda King to discuss financials. Specifically, sought clarification regarding line items for travel budget for President and Vice-President and when budgets go into effect. The proposed budget is on a calendar year January-December, inclusive of financials however, officers are installed in August, why wouldn't this be on a fiscal year. Belinda and I also discussed potential racial disparity in the application and funding of the Technology Grants offered by Disciples Church Extension Fund (DCEF).
- Requested updates in National Convocation Online Meeting Center – missing documents
- Reviewed Board Minutes from 2019 to ensure compliance with stated responsibilities and support for Interim Administrative Secretary, Dr. Yvonne Gilmore. Reached out to Don Gillette to ensure the current Board received status reports. A Zoom meeting was convened with immediate past Board President, Don Gillette, General Minister and President, Terri Hord Owen, for clarity.
- Represented and spoke on behalf of the National Convocation during the Poor People's Campaign March of Washington
- Met with Interim Administrative Secretary to formulate December 2021 Board Meeting Agenda.
- Thoroughly reviewed Articles of Operation for convening a new Advisory Committee to select a settled Administrative Secretary. Given that I was in discernment relative to offering myself as a candidate, I held a series of conversations with a small and select group persons (3) along with the current Convocation Vice-President to discern my role in the selection process and the best course of action for assembling a new Advisory Committee to search for a settled Administrative Secretary. Based on the Articles of Operation of the National Convocation it was determined that it was the responsibility of the Board President to select and offer names to the Board for vote. To circumvent any potential concerns of impropriety I chose not to make those selections. But rather, to enlist the wisdom of the Convocation Vice-President and Secretary for that purpose. All Advisory Committee members voted and approved by the Board were selected by the Vice-President and Secretary of the Board of the National Convocation; and thereafter presented to the Board me, as President during our September Zoom meeting.

- Participated in Zoom meeting with GMP, Terri Hord Owen and Vice-President Crowder following concerns raised by Interim Administrative Secretary regarding the selection process for the new Advisory Committee. The Interim Administrative Secretary provided us with the Executive Search Model adopted by the General Board in 2013 as the guide that she said ought to have been used. Since joining the Board in 2014, it was my first time seeing or hearing about the document. To address the issue, it was suggested by the GMP that Dr. Crowder, rather than myself, convene another Board meeting to re-present the Advisory Committee and request any Board member planning to offer their names as candidates refrain from voting. Two attempts were made to re-convene the Board, but a quorum couldn't be reached.
- During that meeting, it was also suggested by the GMP, Terri Hord Owen that since both the Interim Administrative Secretary and I planned to apply for the position of the Settled Administrative Secretary, that Dr. Crowder, Board Vice President-convene monthly meetings with the Interim Administrative Secretary.
- Had a conversation with Dr. Crowder related to a grievance lodged by the Interim Administrative Secretary lodged against me to the Moderator of the CCDOC. Dr. Yvonne had concerns about me having any communication with her (specifically, asking questions pertaining to the Board agenda or other matters). Dr. Yvonne believed any communication by me toward her represented a conflict of interest. It was also communicated that the Interim Administrative Secretary mentioned the possibility of a lawsuit. The Moderator, according to Dr. Crowder, suggested I have no communication with the Interim Administrative Secretary.
- Selected persons to serve on the Nominating Committee for 2026 slate of officers. Persons selected are Dr. Jack Sullivan, Dr. Judy Cummings, Rev. Myron Goins, Cherisna Jean-Marie, and Rae Karim.

*Dr. Irie L. Session*