



Evangelism and Congregational Transformation
Rev. Dr. R. Wayne Calhoun, Sr.
Executive and Merger Staff

December 1-3, 2021

Annual Report to the Board of Trustees for National Convocation

Beginning my 19th year in the Office of Evangelism & Congregational Transformation and Merger Staff

October 1st of this year began my nineteenth year of service to DHM and the General Church as the Executive for Evangelism, Congregational Transformation, and Merger Staff of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). I often remember so well the excitement and feeling I had nineteen years ago when I arrived at DHM to begin a new season in my life and ministry to this community of faith I have been a part of for sixty-four years. I remember how excited I was to be able to have the opportunity to help this church rediscover one of the core values, which propelled the Stone-Campbell Movement onto the landscape of the American frontier as it was then in 1801 with Barton Warren Stone in Kentucky at Cane Ridge. The excitement Barton Stone created at Cane Ridge is the same excitement I felt in August of 2003 when DHM extended me the offer to be the evangelist of the denomination.

Updates from the Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation

About four years ago, I began to reflect on my time in ministry and devoting time thinking critically about how Disciple congregations approach evangelism. In a “nutshell,” I would like to see congregations **“Reclaim the Great Commission.”** The time has come for Disciples of Christ congregations to recognize that Transformation and Evangelism are dependent on each other. In other words, “evangelism” will become a core value for Disciples congregations again. In the fall of 2019, the Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation unveiled a “new process” for doing “evangelism” in local congregations in a 21st-century context. Helping Disciples congregations to **“Reclaim the Great Commission: A New Evangelism”** is the goal and mantra of this office for my remaining tenure in this position.

Congregational Transformation in 2021 and the Future

In 2005 the Disciples embarked on a goal of transforming 1,000 existing congregations by the end of 2020. The General Assembly directed this office to lead the charge of congregational transformation, which was the third initiative of our 2020 Vision. Through the combined efforts of DHM, Hope Partnership, Regions and transformational consultants collaborating with individual Disciples congregations we successfully reached our goal of 1,000 established congregations who are intentionally and actively working on being transforming congregations. The reality is all Disciples congregations in the United States and Canada needs to be congregations in transformation.

DHM's CT process has worked well for congregations that have engaged it. The bottom line is, if Disciples congregations in the 21st century are going to be relevant in their mission and ministry context, they will need to be committed to a transformational process as they move into being transformational bodies in the world, which they now find themselves doing mission and ministry.

Black Leadership Project Grants

The Black Leadership Project was created in 1970 by the United Christian Missionary Society. Funding is provided by interest income from a bequest of the sale of Mount Beulah Farm. Funds are granted to applicants whose projects ***develop, nurture, and strengthen church leadership in African American congregations*** of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Project guidelines are as follows:

- A project, for the purpose of awarding this grant, will be defined as an event, activity, or resource that develops, nurtures, and strengthens lay and/or clergy leadership of the African American congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Project categories must include one or more of the following:
- Leadership in Congregational Life – To provide educational opportunities and/or training for leaders within the congregation such as teachers, officers, committee chairpersons, constituency groups, etc.
- Leadership in Outreach Ministries – To provide development opportunities for congregational leaders to serve the community in mission, locally and globally.
- Faith Development of Leaders – To prepare and nurture future leaders in the ministry of the Church through spiritual growth opportunities such as retreats, spiritual direction, auditing courses, and mission trips/experiences.
- Scholarship Support for Leaders – To assist participants (lay and clergy) in attending particular educational events or programs such as those provided by the Institute for African American Faith and Life of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Note: Leadership Grant funds may not

be used toward an academic degree program (other funds are available for academic training).

- Leadership in African American Programming – To assure that new and vital ministry continues to be developed and offered to the African American constituency of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The applicants can request grant amounts up to \$5,000. There is no minimum request. The deadline for Grants is May 31st of each year. Specific projects can make application and submit their projects to the Disciples Home Missions Black Leadership Project Grants staff person.

National Convocation Legacy and Vision Series

The church has experienced significant challenges over the last two years. The office of the Administrative Secretary for National Convocation developed and implemented the Vision and Legacy Series. To build and maintain community with our Pastors, clergy staffs, congregational leaders, and local congregations. The goal of this series is to support congregations with mission and ministry goals. I have agreed to serve as the host for these monthly sessions. Each one-hour session occurs the third Tuesday of the month. Zoom is the platform used for the monthly sessions. The series began in August of this year. The National Convocation office has partnered with several of our General ministry partners to be presenters.

Star Supporter Scholarship Fund

Two visionaries, the Rev. Lorenzo J. Evans, and Alfred C. Stone, conceived of the idea to develop a scholarship fund to be used for the education of Black pastors. Starting in 1949, attendees of the National Convocation were approached for a \$10 minimum donation. At that time, only a handful of pastors were seminary trained. Stone and Evans wanted to change this and have been eminently successful.

Over the last five decades, over 70% of those receiving Star-Supporter grants have entered the ministry in an official capacity within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and/or ministry in general. Another 20% have become general and regional staff persons, while 8% more are performing institutional ministries.

First you must be an active member of a recognize congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Second if you are a ministerial student attending a college or seminary preparing to do professional ministry you are eligible to apply for the Star-Supporter Fund scholarship through Disciples Home Missions.

The annual deadline for applications is March 15th. For the application to be considered, it must be received in the Office of Scholarships in Disciples Home Missions by the deadline date, no exceptions. Additional specific paperwork is due by April 15th. The

Scholarship committee of Disciples Home Missions will meet in May to make the final award decisions for the upcoming school year following August to May school year.

Hope for the Future

My hope and prayer are that DHM and the National Convocation will continue to anticipate the challenges and obstacles local congregations will encounter as they try to figure out what God is calling them to do as it relates to doing mission and ministry in a 21st century context.

As the Executive for the OECT, I humbly submit this report for your review.

Gracefully submitted,

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