



The Disciples' Advocate

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Home Missions



Hope for Justice through Accompaniment: One Person's Witness

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection, outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the need of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. – Romans 12:9-13

This past year a wide variety of justice concerns around immigration reform, refugees, and asylum seekers have filled the news and, sadly, become political footballs for midterm elections. There are no easy answers. While many of our church leaders and persons of faith and conscience have banded together to call our nation to exercise compassion as well as expediency in addressing the many complex issues involved (www.interfaithimmigration.org, for example), many in our churches, feeling overwhelmed and confused, have lost hope and are disengaging from prayerful justice seeking in these areas.

Our Biblical inheritance demands that we not turn our backs and walk away from the plight of

the “strangers” in our midst...especially unaccompanied children! Orphans, widows, and strangers are the three categories of persons lifted up over and over again in the Bible as persons to treat with great love, kindness, and respect. Jesus and his parents fled Herod’s murderous violence – Jesus was a refugee from day one – but it is no coincidence that his teaching and healing ministry was an “on the road” ministry, celebrated ultimately in the Emmaus Road resurrection story in which the awesome “boomerang” (reflexive) Life giving power of “entertaining strangers unawares” is revealed at the breaking of bread together. Indeed, it is my experience that in sharing in God’s radical hospitality with strangers, one always receives back much, much more than one can ever give! As their pain becomes our pain, so too, their hope and joy becomes ours as well.

When the small, “emergent” Disciples-UCC partnership congregation in which I pastored in Lancaster, Pa., agreed to sponsor a resettling refugee family through the auspices of Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries (in tandem with Church World Service) in 2008 my life as a pastor was changed forever. I became passionately prayerful and committed to seeking compassion and justice for children and families fleeing horrific situations of exploitation and violence in



Commitment to Justice

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A Word or Two from Ron Degges

Two and a half years ago this month Disciples Home Missions published our denomination's first Justice Primer & Study Guide for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). A product growing out of the work of the Disciples Justice Table, the Justice Primer has been distributed to over 25 thousand Disciples in English, Spanish, and Korean versions. It serves as a curriculum for Sunday School classes, Elders and Diaconate groups, Disciples Women's and Disciples Men's groups, and Youth and Young Adult groups, to name but a few. Its popularity is directly related to our Disciples "Commitment to Justice," the theme for this issue of The Disciples' Advocate.

As I wrote two and a half years ago,

"Justice is at the heart of the gospel and his name is Jesus. He stood for what is right, fair, and just without any equivocation. He took lives that had gotten cold, hard, judgmental, angry, and apathetic—all traits that lead to injustice—and he touched them with a spirit of forgiveness and understanding. It was the way in which he opened individuals to the heart of God that provided a framework for just living and acting."

Some have tried to make justice an appendage to the Christian faith. They reason that if the Christian faith concerns itself only with spirituality and religion, then it will avoid the controversy generated by societal issues and the clashing of different perspectives. With each attempt to side-step justice, the Christian faith has languished. It has become weak and feeble,

losing its vigor and vitality. I surmise that demographic downturns in the life of the Christian community over these past 30 to 40 years in North America is directly related to intentional decisions to avoid controversy at all cost; namely, to write justice out of the religion and spirituality equation. Such decisions have taken their toll on youth and young adult involvement in the church.

Spirituality and religion need justice to be front and center if they are to remain true to their calling to help us faithfully search for meaning and purpose in life. And as we search for meaning and purpose, we recognize that the church who remains silent about the social injustices of its age is actually guilty of committing these injustices, since it has done nothing to prevent them. To be fully a disciple of Christ is to be engaged in ministries of justice whose purpose is to remove the injustices and exploitations present in social life to the glory of God and the freedom of the individual. As the Freedom Letter of the

Bible has taught us, "*For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery . . .*" [Galatians 5:1]. Submit instead to Jesus Justice and lead a new generation of disciples to a faith, a spirituality, and a religion that matters!

Committed-ly and justice-ly yours,

*Ron Degges
President*



Ronald J. Degges



In the Mail

Thank you for your prayers, presence and support through flowers at my mother's memorial service. Our family was blessed to be embraced by church at that time.

Blessings,

*Sharon Watkins,
Indianapolis, Indiana*

Thank you for hosting a retiree luncheon. It is very nice to be appreciated and remembered! I enjoyed seeing everyone.

*Connie Metts
Indianapolis, Indiana*



Continued on next page.

In the Mail

Thanks for your kind and generous support throughout my administration. The participation in the 50 Years March on Washington meant more than you know to the members of the National Convocation and me. We are blessed to have you stand with us.

Most grateful,

*Patricia Maples
Dallas, Texas*

I am concerned that we as a church do not hear much about or from our churches in Canada. I know that there are not many of them, but I would like to know how they are doing and what they are doing.

In your next newsletter or some other Disciples' publication, please give the church some idea as to what our Canadian brothers and sisters are doing.

Thank you.

*Rev. Sharon B. Fields
Paris, Kentucky*

Your recent WINGS OF HOPE is tremendous! Thank you. Your ministry at Home Missions is really invaluable. Keep it up and keep on!

Chaplain and Mrs. Hasenyager

On Sunday mornings, the children of Parkway Christian Church meet together for our Journey Land Children's Church program. We collect an offering every week and after talking about some of the opportunities through Kids to Kids, we decided that we wanted to donate our offering to the Family Village Farm. We are excited to read about how our money would be used, and submit this check for \$100. Thank you for ensuring our money gets to the children who need it in India.

In Christ

*The Children of Parkway Christian Church
Davie, Florida*

Thank you for your generous gift of \$1,650.00 to help support the needs of a refugee family. This gift will give refugees a second chance, a chance to build the lives they dream of and to see their children grow up in a land of opportunity. Your support of RefugeeOne is a source of strength and encouragement to all of us.

Refugees come to us from all parts of the world depending on the current political climate. This spring we were expecting refugees from various countries including Burma, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. Many arrive with serious medical and mental health problems, young children, low literacy rates – but all come with extraordinary resilience. With your support, they will begin their journey to becoming self-reliant members of their new community.

Thanks to donors like you, we can give them the welcome they deserve – greeting them at the airport, giving them keys to a home we've furnished, helping them learn English, and connecting them to their first jobs. Our staff and volunteers help clients acclimate to American culture, obtain medical care, access the public school system for their children, apply for citizenship, and secure care for elderly family members.

Almost every American family today has a story of their family's arrival, their hopes and dreams, and the challenges they faced. Thank you for honoring that history with a gift that welcomes our country's newest neighbors.

Sincerely,

*Melineh Kano, Executive Director
Sara Spoonheim, Director of Development
RefugeeOne
Chicago, Illinois*

Continued on page 8. See Mail.

Disciples Women's Commitment to Justice

Disciples Women are committed to pursuing the goal of eradicating Human Trafficking in the United States and Canada and across the world. Human trafficking was highlighted at the 2010 Quadrennial Assembly where Disciples Women across North America were stunned to discover the width and breadth of modern day slavery. As they were awakened to this knowledge, human trafficking was taken on as the social action emphasis of the 2010-2014 quadrennium. During those four years a resolution was presented at General Assembly 2011 which was passed unanimously. Women all over the continent have been educating men and women to increase awareness; thousands of calls have been made to improve legislation that might serve as a deterrent as well as to recognize



victims vs. perpetrators. Partnerships and coalitions have been formed among regions and ecumenical groups. Work was done with an ecumenical group in Indianapolis in preparation for the higher demand during Super Bowl events working to train hotel workers, cab drivers, EMTs, etc. to recognize and report trafficking. As a result of these efforts four women were rescued and 68 traffickers were arrested.

The Quadrennial Assembly is the opportunity to present the social action emphasis for our next four years of ministry together. Given all the work that has been done and the awareness of just how large a focus human trafficking requires, Disciples Women has decided to continue their focus on human trafficking with a more intensive focusing

Continued on page 29. See Women.

Setting the Table for Justice in Tulsa

Tulsa's Table, A Community Café with Food Justice in Mind, ensures that everyone is able to eat healthy, whole food regardless of what they can pay. Suggested donation amounts are posted for the fresh, locally-sourced and prepared meals, but patrons decide what to pay. From philanthropic giving that pays it forward to volunteering time or talent to cover the cost of the meal, everyone has the opportunity to dine in shared community with dignity and respect.

This kind of dining experience sets the table for justice through the intentional practice of commensality, or dining at the same table with those we might otherwise never encounter. There, we have opportunities to meet, listen to and learn from others who may be living outside the reach of everything we take for granted. In a world where we barely know our next-door neighbor, this may seem like risky business, but it's where food justice can begin.

Food insecurity is often an invisible issue. Justice begins when we "see" others who live without, such as Cindy who dined

at our last café. Cindy couldn't pay cash for her meal, but sharing her story with me was an equally valuable currency. Cindy had the opportunity that day to experience her humanity as something of worth, and I had the opportunity to listen and learn about living as a food insecure person. We both left the table enriched.

Tulsa's Table is a project of StoneSoup Community Venture, a non-profit entity that has benefitted in many ways from the historical wisdom and financial support of the National Benevolent Association. This collaborative relationship has been particularly beneficial as I work to bring the gospel message of love and inclusion proclaimed through communion into practice at diverse tables across our city.

*Rev. Christy Moore
Executive Director
StoneSoup Community Venture*



Partnering for Justice

The vision statement of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) affirms that healthy and growing churches require not only deep Christian spirituality, but also true community and a passion for justice. The mission of the Disciples Center for Public Witness is to apply the church's passion for justice and its vision of true community to public policy issues and concerns.

One way in which the Center more effectively carries out this mission is by partnering with other ministries. For example, Refugee and Immigration Ministries is now a partnership between Disciples Home Missions, the Christian Church Capital Area, and the Disciples Center for Public Witness. Central to this partnership is regular communication, consultation, and collaboration between the staff of RIM and the Center

Advocacy Team in areas of public policy advocacy, especially where the issues associated with immigration intersect with issues of poverty, worker justice, public education, and care for God's creation.

Another example of partnership is Disciples Human Rights Ministries, a shared ministry of DHM and the Center. This relatively new church-wide ministry deals with such diverse issues and concerns as criminal justice reform, human trafficking, gun violence, capital punishment, and the rights of Native Americans in the United States and First Nations in Canada.

Finally, one of the new and extremely exciting partnerships in which the Center is involved is the Ecumenical Poverty Initiative. This ecumenical ministry of the Center is increasingly becoming a real anti-poverty partnership between Disciples and our ecumenical partners, one that includes representatives from mainline Protestant denominations, historic African-American churches, Roman Catholic organizations, and local and state ecumenical bodies.

The Center has also partnered on various projects with Week of Compassion, Disciples Women, Green Chalice, the Disciples Peace Fellowship, the Disciples Justice Action Network, and the Office of the General Minister and President.

*Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston
Washington, D.C.*

Executive Director, Disciples Center for Public Witness; Director, Disciples Justice Action Network; Co-Convener, Disciples Advocacy & Witness Network; Justice Advocacy Consultant and Public Policy Advisor, Office of the General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada

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*Women of the Bible:
Seeking Justice*

BIBLE STUDY ISSUE

The Pub Church, Boston: Being the Church Anew

I once heard a church leader say that new church plants are not for the wounded. Founding a congregation is hard work, and those who are wounded do not have what it takes to participate in its formation. When I heard this, I felt my body's visceral reaction and immediately rejected the statement. If a



and many were still drawn to what it could mean to be church anew and practice living into a new divine reality. As a result, the Spirit inspired an unexpected mix of people of varied church experiences – for not everyone's experiences had been negative or hurtful – to found a pub church. We meet in a friendly, no-frills kind of pub, a dive that quickly becomes a second home for many. And this is important for The Pub Church participants, to have a church home that is a place of healing and not of wounding. For the church as the body of Christ should be where we, the wounded, are not only welcome but where we actively participate in the creation of the new thing that the gospel of Jesus Christ invites us to become. It is the reason the church exists.

new church is not good news for those who are wounded, if it is not a church they can participate in, then it is not a church at all. Who better to help envision and embody church anew than those who have been hurt by it?

The Pub Church, my home congregation, is just what it sounds like – a church that meets in a pub. It is a church founded by a community of friends, many of whom had been wounded by their previous churches. The wounds inflicted made it so that a typical church building became a place of bad memories – of rejection, judgment, and hypocrisy. And yet, the good news persisted. Even to the wounded, the gospel embodied by Jesus and his community of friends and followers remained compelling, although now more difficult to trust. But wounded people can be stubborn people,



Xochitl Alvizo, a pub church participant and DHM Board Member, wrote this article in collaboration with other pub church participants. The Pub Church gathers weekly at The Dugout Café in Boston every Saturday at 5:00 p.m. www.facebook.com/ThePubChurchBoston



Hands and Feet of Shalom

Disciples tend to be people of action, whether it is gathering food for the local food pantry or leading Moral Monday efforts in North Carolina or advocating for clean air in economically depressed areas of California. A commitment to justice – that concept that shalom only occurs when everyone has enough and no one is left behind – is part of the DNA of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

You can see this dedication in the vacation bible school this summer in Kilgore, Texas, that was set up for kids with special needs.



Walk against human trafficking at the Quadrennial Assembly this summer in Atlanta, Ga.



Photo right: Rev. Ron Degges (left) with youth from Olive Branch Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Williamsburg, Va., on a Mission Trip in Indianapolis this summer.

It showed up in the march against human trafficking at Quadrennial in Atlanta. Every congregation that welcomes a returning citizen as he or she rebuilds a life after prison and those that welcome refugees from oppression, all of these show our core value of justice.

Other faith communities also do this work and we are often in partnership with them, particularly through Global Ministries, Week of Compassion and Disciples Volunteering. For Disciples these partnerships also highlight our foundational value of ecumenism – the willingness to work across denominational lines with “unity as our polar star.”



A couple of years ago the general ministries most involved with justice issues met to determine the topics most in need of attention. They identified immigration, care for creation, hunger/poverty and women/children. As a group this Justice Table has produced a Justice Primer and a devotional booklet that serve as head and heart support to the work of our hands. (Both are available for download by going to www.disciples.org and clicking on the “justice” quick link to reach the page where you will find links to those and other materials.)

If you are ready to get involved with immigration, you might start with Disciples Home Missions’ Refugee and Immigration Ministries. Through their web page, emails and Facebook presence, the staff alert you to opportunities to make your voice heard in the halls of government. They are also working to support refugee resettlement.

If you are ready to step up your care for creation, Disciples Home Missions’ Green Chalice ministry also uses web, email and Facebook to share valuable information, ideas and calls to action.

When it comes to hunger and poverty, most of us need look no further than our own communities, but there are also myriad opportunities to help across the country and around the globe through volunteering, giving or advocacy. This is where ecumenical partnerships locally are a great way to serve. Many councils of churches cooperate for anti-poverty programs, training and more.

As for women and children, often those same programs around poverty issues help since a disproportionate number of households headed by women are living on the edge of economic viability. Everything from tutoring programs to support for new parents to microloans for women in developing nations can help bring about God’s shalom.

And if you are ready to explore more of what makes us uniquely Disciple, there are study and video resources available on www.disciples.org under “Who We Are-Our Identity.”

Cherilyn Williams, APR, Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications

In the Mail

Continued from page 3.

Thank you (Rev. Warren Lynn) for helping Jim, my husband, and I in deciding on moving companies in 2013 when we moved from Rochester, Minn., to Grand Junction, Colo., & letting us use the Disciples moving discount, as we had retired and that was such a help moving cross country.

We have been life-long Disciples of Christ and we had a Disciples church in Rochester, but as a congregation, we decided to close our church as we were a very small congregation and we had mostly 80 & 90 year olds. There were very few of us that weren't in our 80's and we were wearing three and four hats just to keep the congregation going, as we weren't getting new members. It was a very sad time in our lives, but selling our property (the funds went to Disciples organizations) and donating our Communion Table and other items to Disciples churches in Louisiana where they were flooded several years ago, we knew we were doing good.

Since we've moved to Grand Junction, we have joined the First Christian Church here and are very happy. The congregation has people of all ages, but mostly in our age bracket. They were very friendly from the first time we visited there.

We knew we wanted to move west, as I'm from California and I missed the mountains, (and a Disciples church was a priority in where we moved or we'd not move there) and we looked at northern California, northern Arizona and northern New Mexico. While we were in Durango, New Mexico, my brother [who is a life-long Disciples and graduated from Chapman (College) University] suggested we look at Grand Junction. We came up to Grand Junction and we knew that was where we were going to retire. We came back here for the next six years (six years before we were going to retire) and went to church most of the trips here to make sure this is where our last place on earth would be.

I just wanted to say "THANK YOU" for your help in this move.

Sincerely,

*Carol & Jim Matthews
Grand Junction, Colorado*

The children departed for Camp Joe Ide Camp in the San Bernardino Mountains a few weeks ago. Where they enjoyed swimming, hiking, archery, and the great outdoors! For over seven years, Joe Ide Camp has provided young people with life-changing experiences! Your donation of \$7,640.32 for Camp Joe Ide provided scholarships for youth who could not afford the registration fees.

These activities would not be possible if it were not for generous donors such as yourselves, who believe in All Peoples. For more updates, go to our website, www.allpeoplescc.org.

We extend our thanks to you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

*Saundra Bryant, LCWB,
Executive Director
All Peoples Christian Center
Los Angeles, California*

You and Disciples Home Missions are such great partners in so many ways. We would not be where we are with Real Faith Christian Church if it were not for you.

Thank you.

*Ellen L. Mitchell
Disciples Church Extension Fund*

The 2014 Atlanta Quadrennial Assembly is in the history books. Given the many positive evaluations pouring into the QA Office, it was a highly successful venture!

This powerful event would not have been possible without the help of Disciples Home Missions. Please accept the enclosed certificate in thanks for your hard work, commitment, and willing spirit.

In his first letter to the church at Corinth, chapter 12, Paul writes that each part of the body has a distinctly special purpose, yet all of the body parts are necessary and equally valuable. So it was with the gifts offered by Disciples Home Missions that, added to the gifts of others, produced a truly special event. My prayer is that your experience of being part of the 2014 Quadrennial Assembly has been rewarding.

Blessings,

*Arlene Pimentel
2014 Quadrennial Coordinator*

Have you considered making a gift to

Disciples Home Missions

in your will?

If so, please contact Rev. Ron Degges

at (317) 713-2684.

A Commitment to Justice in Japan

The political tectonic plates in the Far East are shifting! On July 1st the Abe Cabinet passed a resolution making it possible for Japan to join in "collective self-defense," which means Japan will reinterpret its "peace constitution," allowing the nation to join the U.S. in situations of war and conflict. For the past two years "hate speech" targeted against resident Koreans and foreigners in general has become a social issue, yet the government has done little to contain these public displays of prejudice and intolerance. The government has also committed to the revision of history textbooks so that their history is portrayed in a positive light. Accordingly, the "comfort women" issue is seen as a fabrication to make Japan look bad in the eyes of the international community. In addition, the current administration is eager to discredit official war apologies made in the past, like the Kono Danwa of 1995. All of this is happening as China flexes its muscles in the oceans near Okinawa and

in the South China Sea, and North Korea shoots an occasional missile or two toward Japan.

It is easy for a Westerner like myself to raise an issue like the "comfort women" and call for justice to be done. But as my colleagues here remind me, what about the role the US continues to play in the region, quietly dominating and molding the policies of its two allies in the Far East — Japan and Korea. I just recently learned that in case of war on the Korean peninsula, the U.S. maintains the right to take command of Korean forces.

A commitment to justice calls for us to stand together as global citizens who share a vision of God's shalom. We must call our respective governments to accountability, while we stand with those who suffer, and do what makes for peace.

Jeffrey Mensendiek serves as Director with the Council on Cooperative Mission, assigned to the Gakusei (Student) Center in Japan.

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Hope *Continued from page 1.*

their homelands. As Minister of Family and Children's Ministries I cannot care for the children of U.S. citizens without also caring for refugee children, both here and around the world.

For the better part of a year, our 50 member congregation experienced miracle after miracle of God's New Life as we focused on simple daily acts of radical hospitality. As we walked side by side with our new brothers and sisters we were blessed to share not only in their trials and tribulations, but their triumphs and joys. I want to witness to these blessings as a vital source of empowerment for the ministry of accompaniment with widows, orphans, and strangers in our midst. It is the transforming power of the Holy Spirit moving in our midst we experience when, by the grace of God, we become a part of a refugee family having "hope when there is no hope." A church or family engaged in "hands on" refugee resettlement provides an important spiritual wake up call, contrasting our nation's overall wealth and consumption with the depth and strength of the human soul among persons who literally have no material possessions.

Yes, I too feel overwhelmed and confused by the complexity of immigration and refugee problems today. However, I also have faith and hope in the amazing power of God's radical hospitality to transform lives – our own as well as "the strangers" we serve. Will you please consider opening your hearts and lives in the ministry of accompaniment of "orphans, widows, and strangers" in our land at a personal level? As you experience the many gifts of God's radical hospitality transforming the lives of concrete people and places, your faith and hope for confronting the larger dynamics of the situation will increase palpably. Your perspective will change and the Holy Spirit will empower you and increase your hope for justice seeking.

The ongoing crisis with sheltering and processing thousands of unaccompanied refugee children from Honduras and other countries in Central America is being addressed by Disciples and UCC congregations near detention centers around the country. Our Refugee and Immigration and

Global Ministries folks are hard at work organizing with various aid organizations (such as Church World Service) for the ongoing moral, physical, and legal support needed by these children. Please consider supporting these efforts with monetary donations and volunteer efforts. Become informed about the issues. Whatever political leanings you may have, become engaged in taking legislative action for compassion and justice. But most of all, please, prayerfully consider seeking out refugees who are being resettled in or near your community by either contacting our Refugee and Immigration Ministries office or Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program (contact information listed on page 15). If you can't meet with them personally, hear their stories and learn about their lives through video resources listed on page 15.

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Planting Justice

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up — for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground... then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed... The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. (Genesis 2:4b-5, 7-8, 15).

Clergy Pin Now Available from DHM

Disciples Home Missions' Office of Christian Vocation has now added Disciples of Christ Clergy pins to their line of ministry insignia jewelry. With other outlets no longer making such resources available, DHM accepted the responsibility over a year ago to supply Deacon-Emeritus and Elder-Emeritus pins. But ministers also began requesting a similar wearable pin that would identify them as an active Disciples Clergy person. In response, DHM responded. You can now purchase a round gold metal and cloisonne-style pin with a white background and red chalice; on it are the words, "Disciples of Christ Clergy". The pins are available for sale on the DHM Website at: www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/clergy/christian-vocation-search-call/online-store/. They will be sold at cost for a price of \$5 each, plus postage. They are a great gift idea for a congregation to give to their pastor.

Life and relationships began in a garden. Thus, gardens are perfect places to repair broken relationships. Gardens bring people together and to God. Gardens remind us that life does indeed come after death, that amazing things come out of tiny packages, that miracles and mysteries exist, and that dirt is sacred. When we work the ground, we connect to the essence of life, and we plant justice.

Gardens help repair the earth. Plants clean the air by converting carbon into oxygen, attract birds and insects that support pollination, replenish the soil as compost, and provide healthy food. Through community gardens, Disciples' churches are growing food on reclaimed ground (asphalt, vacant lots and lawns). First Christian Church in Berryville, Ark., created a beautiful garden on a gravel plot and is experimenting with "green manure" this year to keep the weeds down and add nutrients to the soil.

Through gardens, congregations are planting justice in their communities. South

Street Christian Church in Springfield, Mo., provides fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs to the local food pantry. North Christian Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., held a weekly "reading in the garden" program where neighborhood kids came to hear stories while surrounded by vegetables and flowers. The VBS participants at Providence Christian Church in Nicholasville, Ky., harvested vegetables for the food pantry from their garden to help answer, "Who is my neighbor?," from the Good Samaritan parable.

A growing number of people want to grow their own food. However, most families do not have space, while many congregations own land that could be tilled and planted. Churches have the opportunity to plant justice in their communities. Imagine the wholeness Disciples can bring to our fragmented world through gardens.

*Rev. Carol Devine
Minister of Green Chalice*



The Disciples Home Missions' Board of Directors met at Christmount in N.C. Staff and board members from left are: Lonna Owens, Ron Degges, Valerie Melvin, Alan Hilberg, Rhonda Cole, Lee Parker, Randy Skaggs, Sheila Spencer, Mayon Marcelino, Mary Jacobs, Huberto Pimentel, Pat Donahoo, Donna Davis, Katherine Raley, Kathy Watts, Candyce Black, Dave Geenen, Richie Sanchez and Xochitl Alvizo.

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

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.

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.

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. The National Pastor, Huberto Pimentel, prayed and commissioned them.

National Pastor Huberto Pimen-

tel 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 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, Coral Gables, Arise and others. Pimentel announced his retirement in April 2016 prior to the next Hispanic Assembly.

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 of their committee.

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: Rev. Elizabeth Carrasquillo, advocate for Obra Hispana since inception;



At the Interfaith Center in San Diego, Calif.



Rev. Hector Hernández and Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley with the Director of Inter-Faith Center.



Praying and supporting both the children at the border and the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) personal.



Celebrate Faith

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; and 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; and Rev. David Cortez, vocal.

Praying close to the Border in front of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement).



Photo above: Mark Anderson, President, National Benevolent Association and Rev. Huberto Pimentel.

Photo below: Rev. Huberto Pimentel (center) with Moderator of Arizona Hispanic Convention Martin and Lori Tapia.



Working for Indigenous Rights in the Philippines

We spent this week traveling around the far corners of the Cordillera mountains meeting with indigenous groups in preparation for the Philippine Platform for Indigenous Peoples' Rights (PPIPR). 200 tribal elders and members gathered in the Catholic Diocese's pastoral center for an opportunity to share each other's struggles and hardships to help build bonds and partnerships between the tribes of far North Luzon. There are 110 distinct ethnolinguistic tribes throughout the country, yet they all face the same crises: losing their ancestral lands to mining and land grabbing, transformation of their cultures as mainstream culture makes its push for assimilation, and under representation in government institutions. In spite of the size of what they face, their strength lies in the solidarity they share among each other and with the churches that struggle with them.

The UCCP continues their support by being a venue for indigenous assemblies that help build their capacity to organize and press for their rights. Last January, the

PPIPR in the Western Visayas region held their first assembly and hosted over 1,500 attendees. Among the popular positions the tribes agreed on (PPIPRs in Mindanao, Visayas, and now Luzon) were to reform the National Council on Indigenous People (NCIP), implement a moratorium on large-scale mining in indigenous lands, and to cultivate partnerships with indigenous organizations internationally. Having won victories in stalling some mining developments and staging barriers to prevent equipment from reaching projects on stolen land, they continue to face injustice with activists among them being targets of murder and harassment. In spite of this, their resolve and commitment remain high as they work for their basic human rights to be met and their sovereignty be respected, and the ecumenical community in the Philippines works beside them.

Matthew Fehse serves as a Global Mission Intern, serving the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

The Missionary Barrel

I remember the musty smell from opening up the barrel: Someone's discarded clothes and toys became our treasures. I am not sure what the church people in the United States thought missionary kids were to do with two pairs of boxing gloves! It was that missionary barrel, however, that led me to express my commitment to the environment and social justice by choosing to purchase used clothing (called American clothing in Chile), whenever possible.

As mind-boggling amounts of resources, both natural and human, are guzzled by the apparel industry, mounds of discarded clothing are shipped around the world to be sold in shops and markets often by enterprising women. In Chile, anyone who can buy new clothes avoids used clothing, so when people admired my dress at a recent wedding, I replied "it is from an exclusive shop" and "can you believe it was on sale for only \$2500 pesos (about 5 dollars)?" Then, while they marveled at this great deal, I would shock them with: "I bought it at an American (used) clothing shop!" Invariably,

questions would follow, and the conversation would become another environmental/social justice education opportunity.

Some people cannot afford to buy new clothes, perhaps the same people who work long hours for little pay in the apparel factories, but I have a choice. Though it seems like a tiny action in the monumental challenges of globalization, buying used clothing has given me the opportunity to take a step away from the fashion chain that links environmental degradation to cruel labor practices, insatiable consumerism, and relentless production of textile garbage. One of our childhood photos is evidence that my brothers and I had a fashion blind childhood: Patched knees, no color coordination, big smiles, and a sense that we were special are the lasting gifts that came in the missionary barrel.

Elena Huegel serves as chaplain at the Shalom Center, a ministry of the The Pentecostal Church of Chile.

Hope *Continued from page 10.*

The most powerful thing to do is to commit your congregation (or family!) to sponsoring a refugee child or family. In offering God's radical hospitality to them, in getting to know them personally, your faith will be strengthened by their stories of struggle, courage, and hope. As you accompany and grow with these "strangers in our midst" in the pursuit of compassion and justice, I assure you that the Holy Spirit will transform and renew your life in immeasurable ways.

In summary, brothers and sisters, as long as we let immigration and refugee problems remain abstract and distant from us, we will continue to feel overwhelmed and helpless in addressing them. Once we share in the ministry of accompaniment – personally sharing God's radical hospitality to "the strangers in our midst" – our quest for compassion and justice will be less arduous and more hopeful. The spiritual lessons we will learn are straight from the Bible. Yes, we are called to care for the stranger because

"once we were strangers in a strange land," but more importantly, we are called to affirm the Truth of the Emmaus Road: The Risen Christ is present most dynamically amidst personal relationships with persons who have "lost everything" and are on the road as exiles and outcasts. Participating in this ministry of accompaniment offers a unique crucible of mutual spiritual and moral growth that is unlike anything else you will ever have encountered. It is about ministering to one another as brothers and sisters – as equals – in what Diana Butler Bass calls "The Priesthood of Humanity."

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. – Hebrews 13:2-4

Rev. Kate Epperly

Ministerial Student Scholarships Available

Applications for a wide range of 2015/16 academic year scholarships for full-time ministerial students will be available on Jan. 2, 2015, through Disciples Home Missions. Interest from permanent funds and cash gifts are re-invested in people preparing for vocational ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Awards are limited to those who are Under Care of regional commissions on ministry, or who have at least begun an official relationship with such a commission. Of the 11 different funds, some are targeted toward particular groups or particular schools, but others are more-broad in their reach. Students only need to fill out one application per year.

Deadline for application submission is March 15, 2015. For more information go to: www.discipleshomemissions.org/scholarships/ and click on Guidelines for ministerial student scholarships. Current application will not be available until Jan. 2, 2015) visit www.discipleshomemissions.org/scholarships/ and click on Application form for ministerial student scholarships.

Learning, Prayer and Action Resources

- Visit **Disciples Home Missions' Refugee & Immigration Ministries** website for updated information on refugee and immigration issues and actions at: www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/refugee-immigration-ministries/.
- Checkout **Disciples Home Missions' Refugee & Immigration Ministries** Facebook to stay updated on the many ways you can engage in work with refugees and to see constant updates about immigrant rights advocacy opportunities at: [RefugeeAndImmigrationMinistriesChristianChurchDoc](https://www.facebook.com/RefugeeAndImmigrationMinistriesChristianChurchDoc), or Twitter: [@StanleyRea](https://twitter.com/StanleyRea), or contact Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, RIM Director directly at ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org or 202-957-7826.
- Contact **Church World Service** Immigration and Refugee Resettlement Program at www.cwsglobal.org/what-we-do/refugees/irp-offices.html
- Check out **They are Children** website to send letters of care and hope to the unaccompanied refugee children: www.theyarechildren.com.
- See the video from the **Evangelical Immigration Table**, "The Stranger." It includes a screening discussion and prayer guide (www.thestrangerfilm.org)
- See **"Who is Dayani Cristal?"**, a film about a desert crossing. Go to the website for info on how you can hold a screening in your area (www.whoisdayanicristal.com)
- Check out **The Interfaith Immigration Coalition** website. It has many study resources including questions and additional border resources for your group's viewing of Dayani Cristal (www.interfaithimmigration.org/2014/04/22/who-is-dayani-crystal)
- See **Amnesty International's** series of four short video clips, "The Invisibles" www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/watch-invisibles-2010-11-02. These video clips chronicle the migrant journeys of Central Americans as they seek to escape the violence. The second in the series focuses on violence to women.
- Read **Joan M. Maruskin's Immigration and the Bible: a Guide for Radical Welcome** (New York, New York, Women's Division, The General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 2012)

Is your congregation TRANSFORMING?

1,000 congregations
TRANSFORMED by 2020.

Disciples Home Missions is working toward the 2020 Vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to transform 1,000 congregations. Join the growing list of churches now in the transformation process and learn more at www.discipleshomemissions.org/transformation.



CONGREGATIONAL
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Arizona UCC to provide sanctuary to immigrant family facing deportation

Marco Tulio is desperately trying to stay in the United States with his wife and children. But complications with Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE) and other aspects of the legal system make his deportation seem more likely every day. On Wednesday, June 25, advocates from the United Church of Christ and a number of immigrant rights groups will rally together in Arizona to support the Tulio family in their time of desperation by accompanying Tulio to submit one more request for a stay of removal and offering him sanctuary at Shadow Rock UCC in Phoenix.

"Marco Tulio is a human being with a beautiful family doing the best he can do," said the Rev. Ken Heintzelman, pastor of Shadow Rock UCC. "This is the bottom line which motivates the actions of our congregation."

Tulio previously had a stay of removal from deportation, but despite numerous attempts to apply for renewal, ICE has refused to accept his applications. On Wednesday, Tulio, joined by clergy including Heintzelman and the Rev. John Dorhauer, conference minister of the Southwest Conference of the UCC, will once again deliver a request for a stay of removal, as well as an order of supervision, which would require Tulio to check into an ICE facility once per year. After submitting his applications, Tulio will take sanctuary at Shadow Rock UCC until ICE grants him deferred action or an order of supervision, ensuring that he can remain in the United States with his family.

"We have long witnessed families unjustly torn apart by an overzealous government agency whose policies are executed with little regard for family security," said Dorhauer. "I am proud of Shadow Rock UCC, and of the pastor the Rev. Ken Heintzelman, for showing the courage of their convictions and taking Marco Tulio into sanctuary. May it be that he finds in their loving arms the safety that America refused to offer him."

Shadow Rock UCC was initially involved to offer assistance to other congregations that were in line to provide sanctuary

to Tulio, as a sanctuary church option would improve his leverage in the case. But as options – and time – began to run out, Heintzelman felt it was his duty and responsibility to offer his church as the safe space Tulio and his family needed to ensure they could stay together.

"The offer of sanctuary is like a card the legal team has but does not want to play unless they have to," Heintzelman said. "I understand that part of my pastoral office is to provide sanctuary as a sign of God's mercy to whoever I discern God has brought to us."

After much conversation, the board of Shadow Rock UCC voted unanimously on June 17 to support Heintzelman's offer of sanctuary for Tulio, which will be recognized with a community worship service at 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

"Marco's life is caught up in the machinations of a broken system arbitrarily enforcing unjust laws created by bigotry and unfounded fears," Heintzelman said. "The congregation of Shadow Rock United Church of Christ wants to stand between Marco Tulio and the system which would rip him away from his family, thus we offer him and his family sanctuary."

"We do not know, nor can we help, every deserving and suffering family that lives under the threat of deportation and devastation, but we do know Marco, his family, and his story," Heintzelman continued. "We stand with him and act with compassion and justice. All other political, economic, and legal arguments and rhetoric fail in the light of this human family and their need."

*Emily Schappacher
United Church of Christ*

Update - On Wednesday, June 25, Marco Tulio was granted an order of supervision for one year by Immigration Custom Enforcement, allowing him to stay in the United States with his family.



Marco Tulio, with his wife and family.

The United Church of Christ are ecumenical partners with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who are working hard to protect family stability.

Contact Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries and see a Resource Toolkit to learn how your church might consider becoming a sanctuary congregation. Go to the Disciples Home Missions website. Under the pull down menu select DHM Ministries. Click on Refugee & Immigration Ministries. Then the Resources link.

Encountering IMMIGRATION ISSUES through devotions: Living as Spirit Blessed Communities



John 20:19-22

DAY 1—vs. 19

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

In seven sessions, you are invited to read the scripture passage at left, and then to read a short devotional thought below. Each corresponds with a theme in the scripture passage and with a key immigration issue. With the devotion, you are also invited to study an accompanying issue brief. Each brief provides opportunities to encounter further background information, statistics, and especially human faces impacted by immigration challenges. All issue briefs have been developed by partner members of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition. A short prayer is likewise provided with each devotion. May these reflections guide your ongoing prayers and strengthen your actions on behalf of the millions of migrants who face daily concerns in our communities. For all seven sessions, visit www.discipleshome-missions.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Disciples-Living-as-Spirit-Blessed-Communities-Devotions.pdf.

DAY 1: Refugees, asylees, and survivors of domestic violence

Our passage tells us that "...it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear..." On the night of Jesus' resurrection,



tion, fear kept those who loved and had followed Jesus huddled and hidden. It was still only hours since Mary Magdalene's discovery of Jesus' missing body and later encounter with her Teacher, and confusion and chaos swirled together with the hope that came from the new reality of the resurrection. What punishment or consequences might come upon Jesus' followers by those who had crucified him just days before? Would they be blamed for Christ's disappearance from the tomb? Who—even among Jesus' closest disciples—fully yet believed the story that Mary had run back from the tomb to tell?

The pedestal of the Statue of Liberty proclaims, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." For well over a century, these words from poet Emma Lazarus have called out a welcome to the generations of immigrants that have shared our shores and shaped our heritage. They proclaim the intention, and offer the presumption, that those who have been huddling would find in the United States an opportunity to stop shaking, to build stability, to find both political security and stable relationships. They are words that understand well the trauma and fear that dominate the days of immigrants throughout their journeys to escape dangers, adjust to new realities, and re-define their communities in a new time and place.

What kinds of companionship might newcomers facing adjustment and anxieties find in knowing the disciples also faced fears amid their new reality after the resurrection?

Read the "**Refugees, asylees, and survivors of domestic violence**" (www.discipleshomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/IIC-on-Refugees-Asylees-and-Survivors-of-Domestic-Violence.pdf) issue brief and consider the challenges that Hana and millions like her face when coming to and living in this country. How can your faith lead you to establish personal relationships with, and fight for just policies for, refugees, asylees, and survivors of domestic violence?

Prayer: God who has guided your peoples through anxiety in all times, strengthen our ability to welcome those arriving at our shores. Increase our hospitality for the suffering, and make us sensitive to offer relationships that reduce the fears of those who endure daily transitions and uncertainties in their new lives as neighbors among us. Amen.

--Devotion offered by: Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea,

Director of Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
sstanley@dhm.disciples.org. Member, Interfaith Immigration Coalition

Disciples Support Legal Assistance for Central American Children Fleeing Violence

-- and Encourage Others to Join the "Third Tithe Challenge!" --

The letterhead of North Chevy Chase Christian Church in Maryland claims their congregation is committed to outreach. Now their generosity and rapid response to assist the critical concerns of Central American children fleeing violence has confirmed their words in a big and generous way! As soon as church mission team members heard that over 15% of the nearly 38,000 children seeking safety from gang extortion and drug violence were joining relatives among the already existing Central American communities of DC, Maryland, and Virginia, they contacted the Refugee & Immigration Ministries office to ask how they could help. RIM Director, Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea preached with the congregation, and the church mission team went into immediate action!

Of the many ways to assist the children (see these "Top 10 Ways to Join Local to Global Responses for Central American Children in Crisis" at: www.discipleshomemissions.org/rim-resources/ and "DOC Ways to Help Children in Crisis, Seeking Refuge" at: www.discipleshomemissions.org/Disciples-Opportunities-to-Serve-Children-in-Crisis-Rev.pdf), they learned that one of

the most crucial needs is to provide legal services to aid the children in preparing for their required immigration hearing. Indeed, 9 of 10 children are likely to be deported immediately without the assistance of a lawyer to listen to their story, understand the violence they have endured, and represent their possible eligibility for a trafficking, special immigrant juvenile, or other visa protection.

The church also learned that Disciples Week of Compassion had given \$15,000 in recent months to support the children—and they developed a vision to form a "tithing partnership" to support both local and national legal help. Week of Compassion agreed early this week to contribute a \$1,500 "new tithe" seed amount (based on their amounts so far given). And then the church went forward to see whether they could "match the tithe" with a \$1,500 contribution of their own. Two days later, they were

Continued on page 32. See Challenge!



From left: Jen Smyers, Church World Service; Rob Rutland-Brown, Executive Director, National Justice for Our Neighbors; Rev. Dr. Bob Perry, Interim Regional Minister for the Christian Church Capital Area and also member of North Chevy Chase Christian Church; and Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Director of Disciples' Refugee and Immigration Ministries.

Looking for Uniquely Disciples Certificates?

The Rev. Robert L. Whiteley of Christian Graphic Arts, LLC., has in stock certificates for Baptism, Dedication to New Life, Christian Marriage, Servant Leadership, Membership, Thank You Notes, and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Name Badges.

He produced these certificates for Christian Board of Publication at which time his product lines were shifted to Cokesbury. Cokesbury no longer markets these certificates. The certificates are high quality cover stock for the embossed covers, and high quality stock for the printed text. The certificates are boxed 12 per box with envelopes. The price per box of 12 certificates is \$20.00. Visitor Badges come 100 to a packet for \$6.00 each package. Note cards are 25

cards to a box for \$8.00 per box. Or you can get a Visitor Folder with a sampling of 10 items for \$8.00 per folder.

If you are a congregation in need of replenishing your stock of certificates, please contact Christian Graphic Arts, LLC., today! Order by Fax: 772-569-9769 or email: christiangraphicarts@yahoo.com.

Christian Graphic Arts, LLC is located at: 1906 33rd Avenue, Vero Beach, FL 32960 For more information call: 772-569-9769.



Commitment to Justice: Justice Table

The Justice Table was convened by Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins to help representatives in the life of the church explore opportunities to remember and celebrate the important part justice plays in the lives of Christians and more specifically in the lives of Disciples of Christ.

Together the team wrote and published a justice primer (see page 24) to help Disciples better understand our Vision as well as a call to be involved in the just community Jesus calls us to live out. The table also focused on four areas for concentration: Women and Children, Hunger and Poverty, Creation Care, and Immigration. Workshops devoted to each of these areas will be included in the justice track at the 2015 General Assembly. A devotional resource was developed to provide opportunities to study and pray on these emphases. This devotional is downloadable from www.discipleshomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/DW-2013-Justice-Devotional.pdf. A sample follows:

Employee or Slave?

Acts 16:16-19

One day, on our way to the place of prayer, a slave girl ran into us. She was a psychic and, with her fortunetelling, made a lot of money for the people who owned her. She started following Paul around, calling everyone's attention to us by yelling out, "These men are working for the Most High God. They're laying out the road of salvation for you!" She did this for a number of days until Paul, finally fed up with her, turned and commanded the spirit that possessed her, "Out! In the name of Jesus Christ, get out of her!" And it was gone, just like that. When her owners saw that their lucrative little business was suddenly bankrupt, they went after Paul and Silas, roughed them up and dragged them into the market square. (The Message)

Manipulator or Slave? Evil or misguided?

Scholars tell us that the fortunetelling done by this girl was done involuntarily, that it was a demonic spirit that spoke through her. She did not choose to tell fortunes, was not interested in misleading anyone or even attempting to make a living. The spirit spoke without her intent or intervention. This spirit uses the term "Most High God" to talk about who it is these men are preaching about...this is not the only time we have seen a demonic spirit recognize the presence of God even when others did

not. Demons seem to recognize that there is one, all powerful God even while believers debate.

When we read what she says it is sometimes difficult to understand why Paul would be upset about it. But, it is believed that she is being disrespectful or saying it in a mocking fashion because it is not she who is speaking but a spirit speaking through her. Paul has had enough and he casts out the demon by calling on Jesus' name.

Her owners are furious because they have been making quite a bit of money from her fortunetelling. They did not give her the information, they did not invite her participation, and they give her none of the profits. She is a slave and is only a possession to them, although a valuable possession because of the income they get from her activities. Once Paul has cast out the demon she is worthless to them and they have lost their comfortable way of making a great deal of wealth with no real effort from themselves. They don't see what Paul has done as rescuing this girl from a demon but rather he has destroyed their business.

As Disciples Women working to combat Human Trafficking and other forms of Modern Day Slavery there is a natural connection to this story of Acts 16. This woman is indeed a slave, a human, trafficked by owners who insist that she perform for their profit, against her will or ability to choose,

Continued on page 26. See Justice Table.

Disciples Resources on the Prevention of Gun Violence

- “God Before Guns Ministry: A Place of Peace” -- Cleveland, Ohio: www.disciple-christian.org/god_before_guns_ministry/. Gun violence in our nation and our community is a primary concern for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We recognize and deplore the gun violence which kills and injures the brothers and sisters in our communities and particularly American children and youth. In the name of Christ, who came “and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near” (Ephesians 2:17) and challenged all his disciples to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9), we call upon the church to affirm its faith through vigorous efforts to curb and eliminate gun violence.
- Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pages/God-Before-Guns/241489902671238
- Disciples Home Missions -- January 30, 2013, Rapid Alert references Assembly Action in 1968: www.discipleshomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/RR-013013-GunViolencePreventionActionAlert.pdf. Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Weekend, March 19-22, 2015: <http://marchsabbath.org/>
- National Council of Churches Ending Gun Violence: A Resolution and Call to Action: www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us/common-witness/2010/gun-violence.php
- Children’s Defense Fund - “The State of America’s Children® 2014 - Gun Violence” www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/state-of-americas-children/gun-violence.html
- North Carolina Lectionary on Gun Violence (Year C of the common lectionary but may be an important resource during any season of the Church): www.ncchurches.org/2012/12/lectionary-on-gun-violence/

Quotes on Gun Violence:

- “By our readiness to allow arms to be purchased at will and fired at whim... we have created an atmosphere in which violence and hatred have become popular pastimes.” -- *Martin Luther King, Jr.*
- “We challenge the culture of violence when we ourselves act in the certainty that violence is no longer acceptable, that it’s tired and outdated no matter how many cling to it in the stubborn belief that it still works and that it’s still valid.” -- *Gerard Vanderhaar*
- “Much violence is based on the illusion that life is a property to be defended and not to be shared. -- *Henri Nouwen*
- “The cause of violence is not ignorance. It is self-interest. Only reverence can restrain violence – reverence for human life and the environment.” -- *William Sloane Coffin*
- “There will be no justice as long as man will stand with a knife or with a gun and destroy those who are weaker than he is.” -- *Isaac Bashevis Singer*
- “We have cracked down on library books, cell phone calls, fertilizer purchases, and wearing shoes in the airport, but we have done almost nothing at the state level to make it harder for either a terrorist, garden variety armed robber, or young person to get their hands on a handgun.” -- *Sarah Brady*
- “I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.” -- *Mahatma Gandhi*

General Assembly Resolutions on Guns

Continued on next page.



- 6846 – Calls for the licensing of guns and commends Congress for banning sale by mail of handguns, rifles and shotguns. www.discipleshomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/6846-GA-Resolution-Control-of-Firearms.pdf.
- 7762 – Calls for prohibition of ownership and possession of all hand guns (except for law enforcement and a few other categories). www.discipleshomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/7762-GA-Resolution-Handgun-Control.pdf.
- 7940 – (not adopted) Supported continued lawful ownership and use of firearms. (In response to 7762)
- 8842 – Calls for a two week waiting period for the purchase of a handgun and restriction of automatic rifles to military and law enforcement www.discipleshomemissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/8842-GA-Resolution-Gun-Control.pdf.

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Surveying the Landscape for Mission

Study of our context for ministry

The truisms are everywhere – technology is reshaping our communications; people are living longer; the demographics of North America are changing; cultural norms are shifting. Last summer at the General Assembly in Orlando, General Minister and President Sharon E. Watkins invited those present to take a few moments to consider these shifts.

A four-part video study takes a fresh look at the environment in which we are doing ministry today. It is available for download from www.disciples.org on the

Resources page. Entitled “The Landscape for Mission,” the videos are introduced by Watkins and include statistics, how Disciples are a movement suited to this day and age and also asks what is next for your congregation and the Disciples as a whole. You are invited to share your thoughts and discoveries on the Vision for Mission Facebook page.



(This would make a good introduction for a further study of the Disciples identity as described in the accompanying article, “(Re)Discover the Disciples” on page 32.)

Hite Heightens Our Resolve . . .

At the invitation of the Rev. Ron Degges, President of Disciples Home Missions, Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Chief Richard Hite met with the Disciples Center's Anti-Racism Teams. The meeting marked the conclusion of DHM's annual Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism Team Retreat. Chief Hite proved to be quite the af-



Photo above Ron Degges with Chief Hite.

fable guest. Throughout his conversation he demonstrated a genuine interest in each participant, inquiring about our backgrounds and the places we call home. In many ways we experienced him as both disarming and disquieting. In his opening remarks, the Chief made the group very comfortable describing the nature of our shared values for public safety. Then, without warning he confronted each of us about our most cherished values. He challenged us to imagine having that which we most cherish being taken away. In the end he caused the group to identify with the experience of the people his agency is called to "serve and protect."

The meeting proceeded with a series of prepared questions from the team targeted at securing the Chief's insights and perspectives on the escalating gun violence in the city. He suggested in response to a question about the root causes of gun violence that a number of current dynamics are at play – namely changing family/community models and hopelessness bred from a lack of education. He shared some of the current programs in place through the IMPD that offer mentorship, tutoring and leadership training in conjunction with community partners—inviting volunteerism from both individuals as well as the faith community. He extended his call for the faith community in general and Disciples

of Christ specifically, to continue to understand themselves as partners with the police department.

Our meeting with Chief Hite occurred one week after the killing of an unarmed young man in Ferguson, Mo. and the protests that followed. Responding to the question "How would IMPD address a similar incident if it were to occur in Indianapolis?," he emphasized his department's intentionality toward community policing. The IMPD endeavors to have a presence in communities before a tragedy occurs when possible in order that officers are recognized members of the communities they serve.

Finally he shared an anecdote of how this same practice can be embodied by the Church. He describe two middle-aged women who decided to re-claim a corner across from where drug deals occurred by simply showing up daily with the Bibles. Their presence and resolve for relationship with the drug dealers ultimately made the drug dealers surrender the corner to the church ladies. This appeal from Chief Hite sealed our time together and confirmed the context for which our Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism mission priority bears witness. We are very grateful to Ron Degges for facilitating this opportunity and to Chief Hite for his generosity of spirit providing an excellent ending to a very productive retreat.

*Rev. April Johnson
Minister of
Reconciliation*

Photo left: April Johnson, Michele Degges, daughter of Ron Degges; Rev. Lee Parker, Regional Minister of Virginia, and Chief Hite.



Photo above from left: Ron Degges and Chief Hite. Circle from left: Chandra Haskett, Sharon Coleman, Timothy James, R. Wayne Calhoun Sr., Kathy Watts, Wilma Shuffitt, Brenda Tyler, Huberto Pimentel, April Johnson, Lonna Owens, Lee Parker, Bridget Steen, Sharon Merchant and Pat Sanborn.

Members of the Pro Reconciliation Anti-Racism (PRAR) Team of Disciples Home Missions, DHM Staff, April Johnson, Convocation Administrative Secretary, Timothy James, and individuals from other General Ministry Offices dialogued with Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Chief, Richard Hite, on the escalating incidences of crime, homicide, and gun violence in our community and in communities across the U. S. Chief Hite encouraged people of faith to go out and walk the streets and get to know their neighbors and neighborhoods. The gathering brought to a conclusion DHM's Annual PRAR Retreat.



Disciples Women Calls Program Director/Merger Staff



Chesla T. Nickelson

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.

Week of Compassion Calls a New Executive Director

The Rev. Vy Nguyen has been named the new Executive Director of Week of Compassion of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). He began his new position on September 1, 2014.

Nguyen 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 (LVC) office in Berkeley, Calif., 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.

"It is an honor and a privilege to serve as your new Executive Director of Week of Compassion," said Nguyen.

"During these first months of transition, it has been common for people to ask me how I pronounce my name, Vy Nguyen. The easiest way I can explain its pronunciation is, 'Vee' and 'Nwin.' While I am new as a staff person to Week of Compassion, I am very

familiar with this life-saving ministry and its many decades long history of offering hope and healing both to individuals and communities.

"I am one of the many individuals who received this life-saving gift over three decades ago.

"Week of Compassion's partnerships with Disciples' Refugee and Immigration Ministries and Church World Service made it possible for me, as a child refugee, to come to the United States after the war ended in Vietnam in the 1970s. Because I received this life-giving gift so long ago, it's an honor and a privilege today to come full circle with Week of Compassion and now be part of this life-saving, world-changing work.

"As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund for our church, we have always and will continue to respond to natural and human-caused disasters with our sisters and brothers during their time of greatest need. Together as a church and with our resources, we are able to provide hope and healing to vulnerable communities whom we might have never met otherwise, and we will continue to walk and journey with them along their struggles. This is our work as a church: We are the presence of hope and comfort when hope seems lost. This has always been our mission and will continue to be our guide as we move forward."



Rev. Vy Nguyen

A Prophetic Call from Colombia

For the past ten years, the Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia has documented the impact of the South American country's armed conflict. Each year we publish the Prophetic Call Report that recounts the dozens of cases of human rights and International Humanitarian Law violations that occurred the previous year against members of Protestant, evangelical and Anabaptist churches. To put it plainly, we report on murders, violent attacks, death threats and forced displacement.

I have often written and spoken about the scale of this pain and suffering and its inevitable impact on churches in Colombia. As of last year we had documented over 17,000 violations. These are attention-getting numbers, and rightfully so. The conflict in Colombia, which has pitted left-wing guerrillas against right-wing paramilitaries and the Colombian Armed Forces for the past 50 years, has been brutal.

But there is a second section to each of the reports that we publish; a section called Seeds of Hope. There we write about ministries and projects of Colombian churches addressing this violence, responding to the

suffering and injustice in their communities. Over these ten years we have reported on more than 60 different Seeds of Hope.

Salvador Alcántara, Foursquare pastor and community leader, summed it up this way: "Defending human rights in Colombia is a way of life; it is a collective project that one must take hold of with body and soul in order to bring about change. Once you start there is no going back, because once you take that first step you are no longer responsible just for yourself, but rather for the entire community." Though it hasn't gotten as much press as the violations, perhaps this low-profile commitment to justice and peace, in the midst of such violence, is the most important testimony of the Colombian churches.

Michael Joseph serves with the Restoration, Life and Peace Commission of the Council of Evangelical Churches (CEDECOL) in Colombia, South America. He provides a pastoral critical presence to church leaders and lay people who are living in life-threatening situations.



... what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. – Micah 6:8 (NRSV)

This Justice Primer and Study Guide includes three reflections that highlight a facet of what it means to be a disciple, a follower of the living Christ.

Deep Christian spirituality, true community and a passion for justice together represent the vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Available in Spanish and Korean as well as English and can be downloaded from the Disciples Home Mission's website at: www.discipleshomemissions.org/the-disciples-justice-primer/ or copies can be requested by calling (317) 713-2369.



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CHRISTIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION

Helping Disciples Make a Difference

The Peace Tree

If the canelo tree could talk, what stories would it tell? Would it remember the days when it was venerated by the Mapuche people (first nation of southern Chile) who believed that it had curative properties, its branches interconnecting the universe? To them, the canelo was a symbol of peace and treaties were agreed to in its shade. Would it weep for the thousands of canelos cut by the Spaniards when they discovered vitamin C in its bark, a cure for scurvy in the days of sailing ships? Would it tremble in fear as its evergreen leaves turn brown and fall, succumbing to radiation filtering through the hole in the ozone and the pressures of climate change, heat, and drought? Would it celebrate with the youth at the Shalom Center as they plant another canelo sapling?

The canelo is a southern tree; the last place in northern Chile where it grows is the foothills of the Andes Mountains on the Lircay River where the Pentecostal Church of Chile has its peace education, environ-

mental education, and spiritual development program. The Lircay River is also the last stop south on the Incan trading route from Machu Picchu thousands of miles to the north in Peru. The Incans did not dare to invade the lands of the Mapuche peace tree.

People suffer from cognitive dissonance when they hear that the Pentecostal Church of Chile has a nature reserve dedicated to caring for and learning from the environment. Aren't Pentecostals supposed to concern themselves with saving souls and the afterlife? Pentecostals also believe, however, that it is our responsibility to care for God's creation. If the canelo tree could talk, I think it would rejoice at the Shalom Center where the diversity of creation is celebrated as evidence of the greatness of God.

Elena Huegel serves as chaplain at the Shalom Center, a ministry of the The Pentecostal Church of Chile.



Justice Table *Continued from page 19.*

with none of the profits going into her pocket. When she is unable to earn money for them she loses any value to them even though, as a person, nothing has changed.

Slavery and trafficking of humans, sadly, is not a new phenomenon. Unfortunately, there are some mistakes we seem to repeat over and over and are often completely unaware of participating in them. Any time a human is forced or coerced to engage in activities against their will we should be ready to recognize it as slavery. When humans are bought and sold for profit we should be ready to recognize it as human trafficking.

There is no debate that human trafficking or any kind of modern day slavery is morally wrong, yet often it can be right in

front of us and we do not recognize it or name it for what it is.

My hope is that as we become more aware we will also become more courageous in speaking up to name it where it is found and to continue to trust that the truth of God's power is greater than even this devastating act of sin.

When we feel like looking the other way, or thinking we don't have enough information, remember the hotline number 888-3737-888. You can call any time night or day and well-trained workers will follow up and make sure that each report is investigated. Like the young girl of Acts 16, there are many young girls who are waiting for the servants of God to get them released from evil forces.



Bridge of Hope and...

**3 ways you can end & prevent homelessness
for single mothers and their children in your community**

Your Church



Become a OneChurch Site if...

- Your passion is to expand the local outreach of your church
- There are at least 8-12 others in your church who would befriend a mom and children
- You want the training and support for this ministry of mentoring friendship
- You may already have a specific homeless single mother in mind

Your Christian Faith-based Agency



Become a Program Site if...

- You want to engage groups of mentoring friends from local churches with single mothers and their children
- You want to add that next step toward long-term stability for those you serve
- You want to supplement case-management services with church-based support networks and a rapid re-housing approach

Your City



Start a Bridge of Hope Affiliate if...

- Your passion is to expand local outreach by bringing together many churches to address the issue of homelessness for single mothers and their children
- You have the network and energy to start a new nonprofit in your community
- There is not a Christian agency in your city that wants to be a Bridge of Hope Program Site

Local Bridge of Hope affiliates and sites bring together professional staff and trained church-based mentoring groups to empower homeless and at-risk single mothers to attain:

- permanent housing
- financial stability through employment
- life-changing friendships
- increased self-esteem and growth in areas of holistic living

Bridge of Hope National provides

- complete mentor training
- training and ongoing support for social work staff
- extensive strengths-based program materials
- tools for demonstrating long-term measurable outcomes

www.bridgeofhopeinc.org

Meaningful Service and Transformative Connections

In late August, a diverse group of twelve Disciples' young adults will begin a 10-month spiritual journey called XPLOr. Four residents will be living in three intentional faith communities across the United States. In partnership with the NBA (National Benevolent Association), these Residents will be hosted and welcomed by Disciples' congregations and ministries from Ohio, to Missouri, and California.

Hands-on Service/Justice Work is one of the Four Cornerstones of NBA XPLOr where Residents are placed in non-profit community agencies – in and among neighborhoods to empower local mission efforts while gaining awareness of systems of injustice.*

We believe that the impact of such justice and advocacy experiences will be profound and life changing! We are excited to share with you about two specific examples of NBA XPLOr Service Sites this fall.

The Hiram Farm Living and Learning Community is a nonprofit organization that provides opportunities for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to grow, learn, work, and live in a setting focused on respect and support for individuals and the environment. This community-based project is providing inspiration and a meaningful place of work for people with this disorder. Although this disorder impacts development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills, each individual still finds a unique way to express

themselves and make connections. We anticipate that the XPLOr Resident working with the community at Hiram Farm Living and Learning Community will experience meaningful work and transformative connections with amazing people!

The South Fernando Valley Rescue Mission is a Christian non-profit organization that ministers to the needs of the less fortunate in Southern California through emergency and long-term rehabilitation services. Through this program, NBA XPLOr Residents will experience first-hand how time, dedication, compassion, and openness can impact and change the lives of others. With great hope, we imagine that the XPLOr Resident partnering with the South Fernando Valley Rescue Mission will experience the blessings of being in relationship with people receiving and also giving of their services with one another.

Other XPLOr Residents will be working with organizations that provide: justice and advocacy programs with and for HIV-AIDS clients, children's programming in low income neighborhoods, address local hunger and food insecurity concerns, peace and human rights efforts in Central America, and women's empowerment and health issues to name just a few.

*Rev. Dr. Ben Bohren, NBA Mission Specialist
Ms. Shemeka Ferrell, NBA XPLOr Resident
2014-2015*

Prophetic Witness: DJAN and the Church

The Disciples Justice Action Network (DJAN) came into existence partially as a response to the elimination of Church and Society by the Division of Homeland Ministries (DHM). The goals of this grassroots network were to fill the void in social witness created by this situation and to help move the church towards a recovery of this social witness.

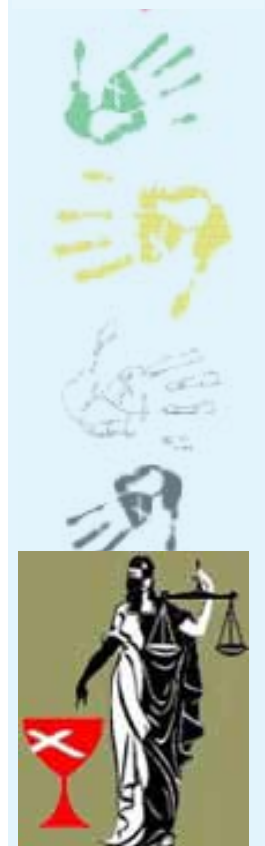
After years of prophetic witness and justice advocacy, DJAN now sees definite signs of hope within the life of the church. These include the strong presence in public

life by our General Minister and President, the increasing involvement of Disciples Home Missions in public policy advocacy, the inclusion of "a passion for justice" in the church's vision statement, the identification of pro-reconciliation/anti-racism as the top priority of the church, the excellent work on human trafficking by Disciples Women, the formation of the Justice Table as a place where the major ministries of the church can identify and pursue possibilities for collaborative work in the area of justice advocacy,

Continued on page 39. See DJAN.



**To learn about all the Cornerstones of NBA XPLOr, visit www.nbacares.org/xplor.*



#Bringourgirlsback

I once thought justice only meant cracking down on brutal criminals endangering our children. I labeled these people as thugs, gangsters, and terrorists to dehumanize them so we could indiscriminately bang the gavel down on their kind. We rarely care to question why they do what they do.

Well, they do what they do because they want opportunities for themselves and their families — the same reason those who are stolen from have so much excess to be stolen. Here in Kenya, most accept this distributive injustice and do the best they can with what they earn. Many Kenyans break their backs at the most disgusting jobs making little more than a dollar a day, yet when these working class men and women speak to you they are so sweet — you get the feeling some feel honored you even acknowledged them.

In Kenya, as in much of the world, the most brutal criminals are those like me who wear clean dress clothes to their towering office buildings. We sip our lattes as we glance at the ants out our windows and navigate CNN on our smartphones to judge the perpetrators of terrorist attacks

and tweet things like “#BringBackOurGirls.” But the terrorists of Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Shabaab here in Kenya who commit such horrifying atrocities are recruited with the promise that they might finally earn a daily wage equal to just the cost of our lattes. We can't hoard the world's resources and be incredulous and vengeful when desperate people take desperate measures.

Let's create an economically just world so we don't have to “be careful” downtown after the show or suffer through another commercial with a 15 pound 5 year old. Let's revisit our morals inside our wallets and outside our borders. Let's regulate the bankers and educate the children. But first, we must acknowledge that we are the criminals. Our relative extravagance perpetuates billions others' desperation, and if we lived in a true Christian society, we would deserve to occupy its prisons. Let's stop justifying ourselves and start seeking true justice.

Joel Cooper, communications intern, CWS Africa, serves as a Global Mission Intern with Church World Service East Africa in Nairobi, Kenya.



Whole: A Call to Unity in Our Fragmented World

The Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in her new book, “*Whole: A Call to Unity in Our Fragmented World*,” shares her vision of how the good news of Jesus calls American Christians to unite around justice, mercy, and openness in the 21st century.

Available from Chalice Press: www.chalicepress.com/Whole-P1437C1.aspx

Watch the Book Trailer: www.chalicepress.com/Streaming-Video-Whole-P1459C143.aspx

NEW! Free Whole Study Guides!

Download the study by chapter format:

www.chalicepress.com/assets/PDFs/WholeStudyGuideChapter.pdf

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www.chalicepress.com/assets/PDFs/WholeStudyGuideModular.pdf

Welcome to the Neighborhood

The Rev. Linda McCrae and members from Central Christian Church, Indianapolis, Ind., welcomed the Disciples General Ministries to their new offices with a big "Welcome to the Neighborhood" card and lots of cookies.



Photo left from left: Mindy Hamm, Rev. Linda McCrae and Deniese Degges.



Women *Continued from page 4.*

on three areas: sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and demand. As Disciples Women have been educating and advocating, much of the concern has been for sex trafficking victims and their rescue and recovery. However, recognizing that there are three times as many labor trafficking victims in the world than sex trafficking victims, we will be putting more efforts into this area. Additionally, like any "commodity" the best way to reduce the sales is to reduce or remove demand. One of our areas of focus will be on finding ways to educate on use of language, media images, etc. to improve the way we think of our brothers and sisters so they are not marginalized based on gender, orientation, origin, or any other category used to diminish or make it easier to objectify them. When we recognize others as being made in the image of God we will be less likely to see them as commodities or to see them as objects to be bought and sold.

Disciples Women is already working with regions and other partners to consider

better training of pastors and church leaders to recognize people in their own congregations who may be in the midst of trafficking victims sitting in the pews. With this recognition is the need for training on how counseling might be different for a person in this situation as well as the knowledge that how we speak about others (gender, race, socioeconomic status, etc.) can change how we interact or deal with each other and how that leads to marginalizing and devaluing of people...that all leads to seeing humans as commodities.

A new logo for the work against Human Trafficking was revealed and a commitment to continue to work to educate, advocate, and rescue was celebrated at QA 2014. If you want to get more information visit the new webpage www.discipleswomen.org/linkbylink.

Rev. Patricia Donahoo
Disciples Women

Children's Disaster Services Contracts with New Gulf Coast Coordinator

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) has contracted with the Rev. Joy Haskin Rowe to work as the CDS Gulf Coast regional coordinator. She lives in North Port, Fla., and also serves part-time in a pastoral ministry position with Central Christian Church in Bradenton, Fla.



Joy Haskin Rowe

This position is a partnership with the Church of the Brethren and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Rowe holds a master of divinity degree from Christian Theological Seminary and is an ordained minister with the Disciples of Christ. She has had experience in program planning and implementation, ecumenical and mission work, congregational ministry, children's ministry, and chaplaincy.

She is working with Kathy Fry-Miller, the associate director of Children's Disaster Services, to expand CDS efforts in the Gulf Coast states. In particular, Rowe will network with other disaster response organizations, set up volunteer training, call CDS leaders, and support the creation of Rapid Response teams to be able to respond to disasters in the area with more urgency and flexibility.

Disciples Home Missions (DHM), Week of Compassion, and the National Benevolent Association (NBA) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), have collaborated with the Church of the Brethren Children's Disaster Services (CDS) to create this new position and initiative that will help meet the needs of children affected by disaster.

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 the Disciples Home Missions, the Na-

tional Benevolent Association and Week of Compassion helped create this new role of a gulf coast coordinator. This position will support the developing and training of a larger network of volunteers in Mississippi, Florida, Alabama and Louisiana. By engaging the strength and networks of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregations and their significant children's ministries we see great potential to better meet the needs of children in this disaster prone area.

The partnership includes the training of interested church members and others in the region as caregiving volunteers and for leadership roles supporting volunteer coordination and volunteer training. A primary goal of this initiative is to train 250 potential volunteers in the next three years. After completing a certification process including a criminal record check, these volunteers will provide direct care to children in shelters and service centers after a disaster. The volunteers will be organized into rapid response teams to be the first caregivers responding after a disaster in their region. These volunteers will also be called to serve larger disasters outside of the region.

"The Church of the Brethren is excited for this expanding partnership between the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Children's Disaster Services. For several years our two churches have been in conversations on how to work together as peacemakers. I can think of no better way than for our volunteers to join their gifts and talents in providing a caring service ministry for children affected by disaster. It is a ministry that seeks to reconcile the lives of some of the most vulnerable victims after disaster, the children," shared Stanley Noffsinger, Church of the Brethren General Secretary.

For years Disciples of Christ members have been volunteering with CDS, providing care to the smallest of disaster survivors. Together we can expand this ministry in



About Church of the Brethren Children's Disaster Services

Since 1980 Children's Disaster Services has been meeting the needs of children by setting up child care centers in shelters and disaster assistance centers across the nation. Specially trained volunteers arrive with a "Kit of Comfort" carefully selected toys that promote imaginative play and support the healing process. To learn more, visit www.childrensdisasterservices.org.



About the National Benevolent Association

Serving as the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the NBA partners with local congregations, regional and general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers. The NBA incubates new and emerging Disciples-related health and social service ministries, initiates ministry programs designed to establish and grow partnerships around health and social service ministries, and connects direct care providers, emerging social service ministries, local congregations and mission partners so that all may learn, collaborate and grow stronger together. To learn more, visit: www.ncares.org.

Continued on page 33. See CDF.

Time of Exile

All over the world, people know life changes in a moment. For Westview Christian Church in Indianapolis, Ind., the moment was 2:30 am, the Fourth Sunday of Advent 2012. Firefighters stood where the chancel had been, spraying water onto the smoldering ceiling; smoke rolled out the doors; ashen goo sloshed through the education wing. The sanctuary was in ruins; the rest of the building was covered in soot. Leaders stood in the freezing, smoke-filled, pitch-dark narthex, realizing our first task was finding a place for morning worship. The power was cut, phones were dead, and dawn was approaching. My cell phone held one nearby minister's home number. "I know it's 4:30 Sunday morning, but Westview had a fire. We need a place to worship this morning." Without a moment's hesitation, she responded, "Of course you can come to Speedway Baptist."

By the time members straggled into the daycare area of Speedway Baptist Church, an instrument had materialized for our use, chairs were set up, coffee was brewed, and doughnuts were set out. Our regional minister, Rick Spleth, joined us with words of comfort and support. Week of Compassion made contact before worship began.

We could not articulate our feelings then, but eventually we recognized we were in exile. One painful night destroyed our home, the secure and familiar place we trusted and

took for granted. For months, the fatigue of exile continued, but we learned our identity did not rest in the building; that God's presence travels wherever we are.

Speedway Baptist's ongoing generosity helped us survive. They never treated



Joint Easter sunrise service where Disciples and Baptists worshipped together.

us as intruders; we were welcomed sisters and brothers in Christ. Although we made monthly donations to them, they were clear, worship space came without charge.

We learned invaluable lessons during those months, but greatest was discovering the tremendous treasure hospitality can be when people need refuge. As we return to our building, we carry the memories, promising God and each other that we will live out the holy hospitality we experienced. We remember the feeling of powerlessness and loss, and the tremendous gift of being offered a place of safety and rest.

Mary Alice Mulligan

Senior Minister

Westview Christian Church, Indianapolis

The Sunday morning aftermath of the fire at Westview Christian Church in Indianapolis, Ind.



Disciples Thumbnail Sketches

Updated by Disciples Home Missions, Disciples Thumbnail Sketches is your one-stop solution for Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) handout materials relating to: Baptism, Characteristic Beliefs of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Volunteering to Work with Children, Disciple History, The Lord's Supper, The Meaning of Church Membership, Being a New Member, Our Church and Stewardship.

Available from Chalice Press for \$45.99, this downloadable electronic PDF allows unlimited printing for up to one year after purchase. The documents are designed to print in a two-column format on 8.5 x 11" paper for easy reading. Each subject has been designed with its own background color to help differentiate easily.



(Re)Discover the Disciples

Exploring Disciples Identity

Whether you are a “cradle Disciple” or just joined by confession of faith, you are invited to spend some time in your congregation celebrating what binds us together as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

The Council on Christian Unity is proposing the idea of an “identity month” and wants to encourage a series of four (or more) weeks of study, sermons and sharing stories in every congregation to occur before the 2015 General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio.

- You might start the first week of October with a sermon on the concept of “wholeness” as part of your commitment to pro-reconciliation with the Reconciliation Offering. Midweek you could come together to watch one of the short videos related to our Disciples “identity



statement” (posted for download online: go to www.disciples.org and click on “Who We Are” and then click “Our Identity,”) and use the discussion guide (also available under the “teaching tab”) to explore the concepts with others. (Note: Captioned videos and translated study guides are

Continued on page 39. See Discover.

Challenge! *Continued from page 18.*

ready with their match—and last night, a \$3,000 check was presented at a DC based event to support the legal aid work of our ecumenical partners Church World Service and Justice for our Neighbors.

In the presentation, Stanley-Rea read from a letter by Rev. Dr. Cheryl Tatham and the North Chevy Chase congregation that stated, “It is our moral obligation to help these children.” (See letter at: www.disciple-shomemissions.org/NC4-CWS-Challenge-Letter.pdf) Stanley-Rea likewise shared the challenge from Deuteronomy 26:12 which urged the Israelites to give a “THIRD TITHE”: “When you finish tithing all your income in the third year...you must give it to...the resident foreigners, the orphans, and the widows so that they may eat to their satisfaction in your villages.” Participants were then invited to “Be the Third Tithe” by providing their own matching amount through their churches and communities.

Rev. Dr. Bob Perry, Interim Regional Minister for the Christian Church Capital Area, also spoke as a member of North Chevy Chase Christian Church: “I am grateful to be a part of a church that has so generously responded to the needs of children who have risked their lives to escape

the dangerous conditions in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. They are in great need of protection—and we challenge you all to keep multiplying the generosity of this ‘matching tithe’ gift within this region and around the country.”

Ms. Jen Smyers, Associate Director of Immigration & Refugee Policy for Church World Service, commented as she received the check, “Thank you so much for your incredible generosity. Please pass on our heartfelt thanks to all the members of the congregation, and all those who were part of making the donation a reality. We are so blessed to have the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as our partners!”

Please contact the office of Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries at: sstanley@dhm.disciples.org or 202-957-7826 for further information about how you also can help the kids—and perhaps join the “THIRD TITHE CHALLENGE!” Communicate with us on Facebook about the children on our “Refugee and Immigration Ministries Disciples Home Missions: page, see frequent updates on our website at: www.disciple-shomemissions.org, and follow us on Twitter at: [@StanleyRea](https://twitter.com/StanleyRea).

See the “Top 10 Ways” Your Church can help Central American Children by visiting the Disciples Home Missions website. Under the pull down menu DHM Ministries click on Refugee & Immigration Ministries. Then select Resources link.

CDF *Continued from page 30.***About Week of Compassion**

Week of Compassion is the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. We seek to equip and empower disciples to alleviate the suffering of others through disaster response, humanitarian aid, sustainable development and the promotion of mission opportunities. To learn more, visit www.weekofcompassion.org.

**About Disciples Home Missions**

Disciples Home Missions is committed to equipping disciples for Christ and connecting people to the life changing love of God. Disciples Home Missions is the enabling and coordinating division of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the U.S. and Canada in the areas of congregational program and mission in North America. To learn more, visit www.discipleshomemissions.org.

critical disaster prone areas to better meet the needs of children and families impacted by disasters," comments Roy Winter, Associate Executive Director of the Church of the Brethren.

Kathleen Fry-Miller, Associate Director of Children's Disaster Services, shares that, "Children have unique needs following disaster. They feel the chaos and stress of the disaster and need opportunities to express their feelings and their experience through play. Our dedicated leaders and volunteers are well-trained to provide the nurturing adult presence and open-ended play experiences that support the healing process for children. This partnership will allow us to expand our program in areas of high need."

At this critical time in the history of CDS, this partnership helps grow the program beyond the capacity of one denomination.

Leaders throughout the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are excited about the increased connections and partnership with CDS ministries.

Rev. Brandon Gilvin, former Associate Director of Week of Compassion says, "As part of our ministry as the Disaster, Development, and Refugee Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Week of Compassion looks for partners in our denominational and ecumenical families to respond to critical needs in the wake of disasters. The partnership between Disciples Volunteering, DHM's Children and Family Ministries, the National Benevolent Association (NBA), and Children's Disaster Services will provide a new avenue for volunteers to show the love of Christ to children impacted by tornados, floods, and other devastating events."

"Disciples Volunteering is thrilled to share in this endeavor, partnering with ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Church of the Brethren in response to the needs of children, who are among the most vulnerable following disaster. Together, we look forward to expanding and enhancing the critical work of Children's Disaster Services while equip-

ping Disciples to offer their gifts in service to their neighbors," reflects Rev. Josh Baird, Director of Disciples Volunteering at Disciples Home Missions (DHM).

Disciples Home Missions (DHM), Rev. Olivia Updegrove also reflected on her excitement about the emerging partnership. "The love for children and the need to care for our children at all times and in all situations flows from us as compassionate, faithful people. The Family and Children's ministry team stands in an ecumenical relationship of both Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ. This relationship opens doors for more people and congregations to be prepared to respond when disaster strikes, and God's love is not found in a name or title, but in a response to heal the soul."

The collective endeavor of Disciples ministries and the Church of the Brethren supports the work of creating communities of compassion and care, a primary commitment of the ministries of the National Benevolent Association (NBA). Mark D. Anderson, NBA President and CEO, says, "this new collaborative partnership creates some significant connections among Disciples congregations and also Disciples-related health and social service agencies especially those serving families and children. The partnership provides more opportunities for faithful Disciples to be trained and equipped to respond in times of crisis as well as to resource agencies who provide care to children each day. We are eager to nurture these increased opportunities for compassionate care."

General Minister and President for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, expresses her added support of Disciples ministries and Children Disaster Services. "As Disciples, we are a movement for wholeness, God's wholeness. We respond in times of human need and disaster for we recognize our connectedness to one another. This partnership is truly part of our call to be a faithful witness."



National Convocation Biennial Session Highlights

I have attended several Biennial Sessions over the years but the 23rd Biennial Session was special. It was the first one that I served as Vice President with significant programming responsibilities. But even before that, the Local Arrangements Committee and Ohio Disciples did an outstanding job of hosting all of us and troubleshooting (which comes along with that job).



Rev. Patricia B. Maples receives distinguish service from Hope Partnership and distinguish leadership from National Convocation. Maples just completed her term as President of the Board of Trustees

Having attended Biennial Sessions as a young pastor, one of my points of emphasis was to try and give congregations tangible ideas to take back home to their congregations. President Maples allowed me the flexibility to

add the element of drama to the worship services. That is why we opened the worship with a dramatic interpretation of historic Disciple Missionary, Jacob Kenoly and that continued through the dramatic presentations of historic Disciple African American women.

The inaugural Emerging Voices Breakfast, sponsored by Phillips Theological Seminary was tremendous. But that was to be expected as the preaching and worship were dynamic from top to bottom. With Dr. Cynthia Hale starting us off and Dr. Irie Session closing us out and every worship experience in between, God was praised. We left Columbus with the mindset of ministry not maintenance as our goal.



Rev. Dr. Irie Session



Rev. Dr. Jesse Jackson, Vice President

Photo left: Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President leading installation for new Board of Trustees.



Clergy leadership participants for National Convocation Pre-Event.

Disciples Partnership is Walking Alongside Real Faith Christian Church

Real Faith Christian Church was in the middle of a major building campaign when disaster hit. The once thriving congregation was a pillar in the city of Clarksdale, Miss. In 2009, the congregation was in the process of

adding onto the current 98-year-old structure that included a gym and fellowship hall for community use, narthex, a new sanctuary, classrooms and media room.

However, due to a stream of unfortunate events caused by people who didn't have the church's interest at heart, including problems with the construction project that were beyond the congregation's control, the building project was put on hold indefinitely.


Employing the principles behind the African proverb "It takes a village...", Disciples of Christ ministries are walking alongside Real Faith Christian Church to provide assistance to the congregation. To date, Disciples Church Extension Fund, Disciples Volunteering, Disciples Home Missions, Disciples Women, Great River Region, Reconciliation Ministry, Week of Compassion, National Convocation and Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation are helping this church bounce back from this disaster not of their own making by pitching in to help complete the project.

In addition to construction assistance, this Disciples partnership hopes to raise \$150,000 from donations to complete the Real Faith facility and have the growing congregation in their new sanctuary by Easter 2015.

To volunteer or provide financial support to the Real Faith Christian Church project visit www.disciplescef.org/real-faith/ or call 800.274-1883. To view Youtube videos visit: www.disciplescef.org/real-faith/



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NAPAD Holds 18th Biennial Convocation

With exuberant music along with singing and dance, the North American Pacific/Asian Disciples (NAPAD) began their 18th Biennial convocation at Hyde Park Union Church in Chicago, Ill. on August 6 to 9. This year's convocation theme was, "Singing the Lord's Song in the New Land" (Psalm 127:4). It was a theme that resonates with many within the NAPAD community. It was a theme that was passionately articulated through the sermons by Rev. Dr. Rick



Left, Lauren Kim, Christina Cheon, Faungaofe Uesi, Sang Hoon Park, Jj Mulipola, Hang Lam Meng and Amy Kim.

Lowery, Rev. Dr. Timothy James, and Rev. Dr. Janet Casey-Allen.

At the morning sessions, keynote speakers, Drs. Russell Moy and Russell Yee, held conversations on how Pacific/Asian immigrant churches can celebrate and re-claim their cultural heritage through creative worship expressions. As a ministry that is involved in anti-racist and pro-reconciling work, NAPAD held an anti-racism training as their pre-event program. Their facilitators, Rev. Sandhya Jha and Rev. Yvonne

Gilmore, taught about structural racism within society.

During convocation, workshops were offered for convocation participants to learn practical ways to transform society while fully embracing its diversities. During its business session, after electing new officers to their board, NAPAD offered their blessings and celebration for the ministerial journeys of Rev. Vy Nguyen and Rev. Paul Tche. Rev. Nguyen began his work as the executive director for Week of Compassion and Rev. Tche is the moderator-elect of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Cultural night at convocation was a great way for NAPAD to celebrate its rich diversity with cultural singing, dancing and instrumental performances. Disciples Peace Fellowship's intern, Jonathan Cahill, sums up his convocation as a time of "lively worship, impassioned preaching, delicious food, and a memorable cultural night."



Photo above: youth and young adults at convocation front left, Hamin Yang, Kimberly Wu, Lauren Kim. Back left: Jonathan Cahill, Reyleen Gogo, Victor Esau, Caleb Wang and Candelin Unutoa.



Photo above left: Rev. Dr. LianTaithul, Rev. Youngjun Yang, Rev. Sandhya Jha, Rev. Lian Jiang and Rev. Jinsuk Chun.



We Are Called by God

Did I miss seeing you at Quadrennial? For more than two years we were all geared up to see each other at QA. We came together and had a marvelous time. We took time to build networks, meet new people, and reconnect with those we already knew. We went to workshops, did the WALK, the Pilgrimage ...everything we could do, we did. We adopted "Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking: Link by Link" as our social action emphasis for the next four years.

Disciples Women are going deeper and stronger as God's abolitionists. We will focus on three areas of human trafficking, three links of the chain: (1) sex trafficking, (2) labor trafficking/immigration, and (3) demand. As Dis-

ciples Women, we know we cannot break all the chains of human trafficking, but we can work to break it link by link.

Disciples' Women have been modern day prophets/prophetesses — like Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, and the daughters of Phillip — women called by God no matter their status. Some were married, some widowed, others single. All took a stand. We claimed our social action emphasis long before the media began highlighting the crisis of thousands of immigrant children making their way across North America.

Today we are faced with a choice. We can close our eyes, look the other way, and choose not to address the fact that in order to break the chain of labor trafficking we need immigration reform. For decades the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has been committed to welcoming refugees and immigrants. I encourage you not to give up. We are part of a movement— a movement made up of ordinary people, like you and me, called to work for justice by confronting injustice. I

actually have a lot of hope, because people like you are paying attention, lifting your voices, applying pressure, taking one step at a time, and not giving up. God calls each of us to not only share the gospel in words but to be agents of reconciliation across all of our relationships in order to create a flourishing world.

When I was little girl I loved when my mother would make me a promise.

I had to be committed to do my part, and then I trusted her. This reminds me of God's promises. God never fails. In Isaiah 58:9b–12 we find a tremendous promise for any nation. We are called to administer true justice, to show mercy and compassion to one another, to the foreigner, and to the poor. Mercy and grace lay the foundation for justice. As Anne Frank said, "No one has ever become poor by giving." Giving is beyond money, it is also shown in hospitality.

What does the Lord require of you? I like this paraphrase of Micah:

"But he's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, and don't take yourself too seriously — take God seriously."

Bendiciones!

*Arlene Pimentel,
QA Coordinator*



Photo above and below right: Pilgrimage to The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Celebration of 50th Anniversary of Civil Rights Act.



Feeding the Hungry: Disciples Men Cookin for Mission

Last year, I had the opportunity to visit the FDR memorial in Washington, D.C., with 40 young people from the Ohio Region. One of the scenes portrayed with brass statues were people standing in food lines. The young people squeezed in between the statues and took on the poses of others standing in food lines. Hunger is still an issue today. It affects people of all races, sexes, ages, and nationalities.

According to FeedingAmerica.org 50 million people in America or 1 out of every 6 people goes hungry. One in five children go hungry. Disciples Men have decided as a focus of their ministry, to deal with the issue of child hunger.

To help alleviate child hunger, Disciples Men is challenging 200 congregations to participate in the "Men Cookin' for Mission" project. The mission for Disciples Men is to help feed hungry children both in the Local Community and in our four mission stations. What can you do? The steps for participating doing so are easy:

1. Raise Funds. This can be done by "Cookin'" a meal and selling it to the Congregation or the Community. We encourage Disciples Men's groups to do this with an eye toward evangelism. Some Disciples Men's groups do this at county fairs. Do whatever makes sense for your group and your circumstances.
2. Take one half the proceeds and give them to a local ministry of your choice

that feeds hungry children. Many communities have "Backpack" ministries that help feed children who on school days would have free lunches in school but often go hungry over the weekend. This is the suggested local mission but any mission that helps feed hungry children is acceptable. Again, do not just donate the money. Find other ways to partner with groups with this in their mission. It can become a way of loving your community in the name of Christ.

3. Send the other half of the money you raise to the Disciples Men "Cookin' for Mission" to feed hungry children at our 4 mission centers:

- Yakama Christian Mission in White Swan, Wash., www.disciplesnw.org/Yakama/;
- Inman Christian Mission in San Antonio, Texas, www.inmancenter.org/;
- All Peoples Community Center in Los Angeles, Calif., www.allpeoplescc.org/;
- Kentucky Appalachian Mission in Berea, Ky., www.kentuckyappalachianministry.com/.

4. Send articles and pictures from your event that Disciples Men can share online, on Facebook, and in "The Voice!"

Send them to sbentley@dhm.disciples.org. Contributions should be sent to:

Men Cookin' for Mission
C/O Kelly Harris
P.O. Box 1986
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1986

*Rev. Stephen Bentley
Regional Associate Pastor
Christian Church in Ohio*



Discover *Continued from page 32.*

available also in Spanish, Korean and French.)

- If sharing personal stories is a better fit for your faith community, you can use General Minister and President Sharon E. Watkins' new book, *"Whole: A call to unity in a fragmented world,"* as a basis for study and discussion. Each of the six chapters highlights key concepts in our identity, which include discussion questions -- making it a good fit for a midweek or Sunday morning study group.
- Maybe it would work best to use the "study guide for individuals" as part of your new member classes (online under the "teaching" tab), and when you arrive at the chapter using the video resources, have others from the congregation join the new members for a discussion.
- Do a sermon series or borrow the readers' theater service (see resources under the "preaching tab") while offering Sharon Watkins' book during the Sunday School hour.
- After engaging with these concepts and stories, you are encouraged to come up with your own congregational "slogan" (if you don't already have one), and turn your evangelism and communications crews loose using some of the "telling tactics" information to refresh your presence in the community.

For a brief tour of the resources available, go to the Our Identity page and click on the video just below the identity statement: "Tour this Page."

Please share any comments or results from your time together (whether it is a new slogan, a video or a new mission focus) by joining the "Vision for Mission" Facebook group. Or, you may share your experience of "(Re)Discovering the Disciples" with the Council on Christian Unity at rwelsh@ccu.disciples.org.



Ecumenical Advocacy Days

In 2013 there were 42 Disciples who attended Ecumenical Advocacy Days.

In 2014 there were 36 Disciples who attended Ecumenical Advocacy Days.

Disciples Home Missions offers scholarships to help defray the cost of attending.

Dates for the 2015 Event will be April 17-20, 2015, Washington, D.C.

<http://advocacydays.org/>





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DJAN *Continued from page 27.*

the official recognition of the Disciples Center for Public Witness as a ministry of the church, the development of a Justice Primer and a Justice Devotional, the development of a Justice Track at the next General Assembly, the continuing justice ministry of the Division of Overseas Ministries, and a stronger commitment by all major ministries of the church to gatherings such as Ecumenical Advocacy Days.

DJAN strongly affirms and celebrates all of these important efforts to recover and expand the social witness of the church. Nevertheless, there are still important areas in the life of the church, perhaps especially those areas related to employment, where subtle and not-so-subtle forms of racism, sexism, and homophobia continue to infect our spirituality and undermine our best efforts at true community.

In response to both signs of hope and the areas of church life that still need much work, DJAN will continue our principled approach to justice advocacy: When the church speaks out and acts, DJAN will strongly support the church. When the church does not speak out or act, DJAN will encourage it to do so. And when the church will not speak out or act, DJAN will--and does.

*Rev. Ken Booker Langston
Washington, D.C.*



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SAVE the DATE

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www.discipleshomemissions.org/black-ministers-retreat

