Thank you for your high approval of our first summer 2009 GCDM Quarterly Newsletter. As each of you remember, we ask everyone to suggest a name for this new publication. So, during the General Assembly in Indianapolis many men stopped by our booth in the exhibit hall and made suggestions. After all suggested names were collected, there was one name that stood above the rest …..

“The VOICE of Disciples Men”. Congratulations to Art Banks, President Disciples Men, Capital Area Region for nominating the winning name. As we grow with more articles, stories and current events for all Disciples Men please pass the word to all men in your church.

As we plan for the new 2009-2010 GCDM year, several items are very important: 1) Continue to improve the spiritual life for every Disciples Man in the U.S. and Canada 2) Start planning and developing the best 2012 Sessions program ever for Indianapolis! 3) Celebrate the continued success of the Disciples Men Cookin’ for Mission Program (International Day of Pancakes) with funds distributed to all four missions’ centers 4) Collect a greater volume of Disciples men names to receive their new quarterly newsletter. Send all new emails or home addresses for men not receiving their GCDM newsletter to Tod Iseminger, Director of Men’s Ministries tiseming@dhm.disciples.org or to General Conference of Disciples Men, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1986.

I would also like to share with you the coming year’s goals for the executive committee:

- Continue to improve communications for all Disciples Men
- Continue to improve and start new men’s groups
- Continue to promote Men’s Ministries Endowment Funds for GCDM
- Encourage travel by GCDM Executive Committee members to their assigned states or regions.

Please invite your assigned GCDM member into your state or region to attend your retreats, region meetings and gatherings. Refer to Liaison for Disciples Men located in this newsletter for additional information.

Blessings,
Gary Ochs,
President GCDM
Let’s share some thoughts about the importance of Men’s Ministries Endowment Funds and the General Conference of Disciples Men. Endowment Funds support Men’s Ministries within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This year we need to promote new endowments within our assigned states and regions.

The MMEF are managed by the Christian Church Foundation, the general ministry of the church whose primary purpose is to underwrite Christian ministry through distributions of permanent funds. Each year the Foundation makes a distribution from the Endowment to the Office of Disciples Men on behalf of the General Conference of Disciples Men. Our Executive Committee of Disciples Men uses these funds in special programs related to its work on behalf of Disciples Men in the United States and Canada. To establish an endowment fund in support of the GCDM on behalf of your men’s group, state, region or church a minimum of $1,000 is required. Additional information and brochures are available on our Web site at www.discipleshomemissions.org/Men.

Many people make a deferred gift to Men’s Ministries. Consider how you can become a good steward of your accumulated assets and help perpetuate the work of Disciples Men through: Gift by Will, Life Income Gifts (Charitable Gift Annuity or Charitable Remainder Trust), Outright Gifts, Appreciated Investment Securities, and other opportunities such as real estate, unneeded life insurance or retirement assets, such as IRAs.

Contact a Christian Church Foundation development staff member for brochures or to set up a presentation by calling toll-free (800) 668-8016, or visit their Web site at www.disciples.org/ccf. To help facilitate this ministry, the Foundation has zone offices throughout the United States.

Again, let’s share our thoughts about the importance of endowments and add ONE or TWO new ones this year.

**Gary Ochs**
Bedford, IN

President
General Conference Disciples Men
Executive Committee
In the first century, Jesus of Nazareth drew to himself a band of committed followers. Many of these men were strong, courageous and adventurous. His first followers included soldiers, fishermen and men who worked with their hands. The book of Acts records how these men were brave enough to face mortal danger for the cause of Jesus, and yet also gentle enough to care for widows and orphans.

Where do you find men like that today? Probably not in your church. If you walk into church on a Sunday morning and look around, the one demographic that will be smallest (if not entirely missing) will be men ages 19-30. Author David Murrow, in his book, Why Men Hate Going to Church, argues that this is due to the feminization of church culture. In other words, the Protestant Church in N. America tends to be organized around values and social patterns traditionally identified as feminine. The key role for men in most of our congregations is to run the property committee and to fix whatever gets broken. Murrow suggests that the elements of challenge and adventure which were prominent in the first century church, have been removed from our modern church life. Lacking challenge and adventure, the modern church fails to stir men’s souls. Murrow’s book is an excellent analysis of the way in which modern church culture is at a disconnect with modern masculinity, and I recommend it to all.

Yet I still believe that Jesus has good news and real life for men as well as women. Don’t you? As one small step toward reconnecting Christian faith and modern masculinity, my friend Scott Coyner and I cooked up a new kind of men’s event. We call it: “Men’s Spiritual Challenge Weekend.” The basic idea behind this event is to put together in the same event elements of adventure/physically challenging activities and solid spiritual messages, aimed at men’s lives today.

We get a group of men together for a weekend of camping, 36-48 hours of time. During the days, we get the men white water rafting, rock climbing, shooting paint balls, and such. Then, evening and morning, we have spiritual challenges. In year one, we had three sessions which looked at issues in the life of King David as a young man. The three issues were vocation, facing challenges (giants), and finding friends for the faith journey. At the end of the retreat, the men took home small arrows, to remind them of how a friend, like Jonathan, supports and stands with other men. The guys cook “man food” over open fires. The Spiritual Challenge Weekend also structures in some time just to be together around campfires under the stars. It is kind of like Promise Keepers meets Jedediah Smith. We have done this event for two years now and have had a dozen or more men ages 18-50, each year. (Sacramento First Christian church’s average Sunday morning worship attendance is 105.)

Stan, a father of two young children has gone both years. He writes, “What do you usually expect from a men’s retreat? Eat, sit around, listen to lectures, eat, sit some more. If that’s what you want, this retreat is not for you! This event is exhilarating! It will get you on your feet and face to face with the majesty of God’s creations. It gets to the core of who you are, what you’re made of, and what God really has in mind for you.” He articulates well the goal of the event, to get men in touch with God in a way that grabs them, both body and soul.

In order to get more younger men involved, we find ways to subsidize the overall cost of the event. Additionally, we have a two tiered price structure for the event also, men ages 18-25, pay $20 less than those 26 and older. The expectation is that men age 25 and younger do not make as much money as older guys. We do the event over a weekend, because young adult men tend to be busy, and whole week events are hard to schedule. If you would like to know more about the Men’s Spiritual Challenge, contact me at firehrev@yahoo.com.

Ted Firch
Pastor
Sacramento First Christian Church
Saundra Bryant
Speaker
Director of All Peoples Christian Center

Dean Phelps
Music / Entertainment
Minister of Church Multiplication in Indiana

General Assembly D.M.
Display Booth @ DHM Exhibition area

Group picture of the Capital Area Men’s Retreat

The first Sessions 2012 Planning Team meeting at CTS in Indy on October 16 & 17, 2009
To Retreat or Not to Retreat?

By: Tod Iseminger
Director of Men’s Ministries
Disciples Home Missions

This fall I have had the opportunity to attend a few men’s retreats around the country. Each retreat I have attended has its own unique characteristics. The men attending are different and the locations are different but there are many similarities.

Each man who has attended a retreat that I have been at is there for a specific reason and wants to have his faith life enriched in some way. Also, each man that I ran into this fall wanted more men to attend the retreat they were at and were curious as to why there weren’t more men there.

In order to get more men at your retreat you have to understand how men think when it comes to attending an event like a fall retreat. Most women, for example, see an event coming up and they write it down in their calendars to make sure they can attend.

Men, on the other hand, need to know the facts about an event but they also need to hear them many times and in many different ways. In addition, men might not even check if he is available that day unless he becomes convinced that we would like to attend that retreat.

So in order to get more men at your next retreat, try these steps in order to reach more men:

1. Pray, and ask God to move men to attend your retreat.
2. Provide a brochure and make sure the brochure is eye catching and is of professional quality.
3. Put up a poster- a man may not read a brochure but he’ll see a poster.
4. Design a bulletin insert- if his mind wanders during a worship service, he may give it a look.
5. Send him a postcard in the mail to arrive at his house mid-week.
6. Send him an e-mail with a personal invitation to attend the retreat.
7. Use your church’s web site to make a splashy announcement and think about doing a short video to put on that web site.
8. Talk a man out to lunch and personally invite him to the retreat and offer to drive him there as well.

Give these tips a try and I hope your “cup will be overflowing” with new men at your retreat next year!

Upcoming Events

Nebraska
Next March!!!
51st Annual Men’s Mid - Winter Rally and Buffalo, March 27, 2010.
Our guest will be Rev. Dr. Richard Lowery and our entertainment will be The Beissner Family. It should be a terrific evening!

Northern California
Next April!!!
Pacific Southwest Disciples Men’s Retreat, Loch Leven, April 30th-May 1st.
Dr. David Matson will lead the retreat.

Tell us about upcoming events, gatherings and retreats. And don’t forget to send us pictures as well!
Getting to know each other

Ralph has been an active member of Michigan Park Christian Church in Washington, D.C. since the age of 5. He is the acting Treasurer for the Michigan Park Disciples Men’s group, as well as a youth leader and sound engineer for the multi-media ministry at MPCC. Ralph is also a Higher Education Leadership Ministry Fellow Alumni of the Christian Church (DOC), class of 2005 graduating from Delaware State University. Presently, Ralph is a member of the General Conference Disciples Men Executive Committee.

Away from his church duties, Ralph is an aspiring Voice-Over Artist, as well as a Public Address Announcer (Stadium/Arena Announcing for Sporting events) which he truly has a passion for, having worked with teams such as the Washington Redskins (NFL) to the Washington Mystics (WNBA). He also has a career working in radio as a Producer in Sports Talk Radio (ESPN 980, home of the Redskins). With 6 jobs, some seasonal, Ralph spends his time wisely in hopes of perfecting God’s gifts respectively.