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Disciples Home Missions

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Annual Report to the Biennial Session 2020 of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Beginning my 17th year in the Office of Evangelism & Congregational Transformation and Merger Staff

October 1st of 2019 began my seventeenth year of service to DHM and the General Church as the Executive for Evangelism, Congregational Transformation, and Merger Staff of the National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). I often remember so well the excitement and feeling I had sixteen years ago when I arrived at DHM to begin a new season in my life and ministry to this community of faith I have been a part of for sixty-two years. I remember how excited I was to be able to have the opportunity to help this church rediscover one of the core values, which propelled the Stone-Campbell Movement unto the landscape of the American frontier as it was then in 1801 with Barton Warren Stone in Kentucky at Cane Ridge. The excitement helped create at Cane Ridge is the same excitement I felt in August of 2003 when DHM extended me the offer to be the evangelist of denomination.

Updates from the Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation, Disciples Home Missions

The Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation has unveiled a “new process” for doing “evangelism” in local congregations in a 21st-century context. Helping Disciples congregations to **“Reclaim the Great Commission: A New Evangelism”** will be the goal and mantra of this office for moving forward. As the world around us has transitioned from a 20th-century context to a 21st-century context, the church must also come into a 21st-century context. About two years ago, I began to reflect on my time in ministry and devoting time thinking critically about how Disciple congregations approach evangelism. I realized that evangelism was an afterthought rather than a core value in too

many congregations. Granted, congregations expressed desires to grow; however, they expressed reluctance to engage in evangelism. This reluctance to do evangelism gravely concerned me until my suspicions were confirmed. An overabundance of congregations lacked an understanding of how to do evangelism in the 21st-century. After prayer and reflection, I determined that I would develop an evangelism plan to roll out to congregations.

In a “nutshell,” I would like to see congregations “**Reclaim the Great Commission.**” So, for the next six years my goal will be helping Disciple congregations to **Reclaim the Great Commission.** The time has come for Disciples of Christ congregations to recognize that Transformation and Evangelism are dependent on each other. In other words, “evangelism” will become a core value for Disciples congregations again. Jesus instructed his disciples in the latter part of Chapter 28 in the Gospel of Matthew, *Go! And make disciples! And baptize! And teach the world! About this Savior name Jesus who transforms lives!*

Report on the third initiative of the 2020 Vision, Congregational Transformation

Disciples congregations are presently working on a vision and mission called the 2020 Vision. This office has direct charge of congregational transformation, which is the third initiative of our vision. The goal of the third initiative is, by the year 2020 we will have transformed 1,000 of our established congregations. In other words, the goal by the year 2020 is to have at least 1,000 Disciples congregations who are intentionally and actively working on being transforming congregations. At this juncture in our journey, we have about 750 congregations in transformation.

Hope Partnership Services in Disciples Church Extension Fund and the Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation in DHM have come to a mutual agreement on how both general ministries will better serve local congregations and regions on matters of transformation. Both ministries are committed to working on transformation in collaboration to better serve all our ministry partners. Our collective goal will be to encourage and aid Pastors, congregational leaders, and congregations to seek out a transformational process they think might work best for their ministry context and work that process toward being a transformed congregation. The Office of Evangelism and Congregational Transformation does offer and have in place a very effective congregational transformational process that it offers to congregations. Likewise Hope Partnership Services also offers an effective transformational leadership process that it offers to Pastors and congregational leaders.

DHM’s CT process has worked well for many of the congregations that have engaged it, but there are other effective and good processes available in the marketplace. This office is not concerned whether Disciples congregations

engage the services that OECT offers in becoming a transformed congregation, but simply that congregations engage a process to become a transformed community of faith. The bottom line is, if Disciples congregations in the 21st century are going to be relevant in their mission and ministry context, they will need to be committed to a transformational process as they move into being transformational bodies in the context, which they now find themselves doing mission and ministry.

We are about four months out from the end of the year 2020, and we are approximately 250 congregations from our goal of 1,000 congregations in transformation. Therefore, I hope that you will continue to pray with me as I continue to pray that we reach our goal of 1,000 congregations in transformation by January 1, 2021. Although the goal is 1,000 congregations in transformation, the reality is all 3,200 plus of our congregations in the United States, and Canada needs to be congregations in transformation.

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

Gracefully submitted,



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Executive for Evangelism and Congregational Transformation

