



Witnesses of These Things
Annual Report 2009 – 2010



National Council of the
Churches of Christ in the USA

MISSION STATEMENT

“The National Council of Churches is a community of Christian communions, which, in response to the gospel as revealed in the Scriptures, confess Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, as Savior and Lord.

These communions covenant with one another to manifest ever more fully the unity of the Church.

Relying upon the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the communions come together as the Council in common mission, serving in all creation to the glory of God.”

MEMBER COMMUNIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church
The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Alliance of Baptists
American Baptist Churches in the USA
Apostolic Catholic Church
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church of the Brethren
The Coptic Orthodox Church in North America
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Friends United Meeting
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Hungarian Reformed Church in America
International Council of Community Churches
Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Mar Thoma Church

Moravian Church in America Northern Province
and Southern Province
National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.
National Missionary Baptist Convention of America
Orthodox Church in America
National Baptist Convention of America
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox
Church in the USA
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends
Polish National Catholic Church of America
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Reformed Church in America
Serbian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. and Canada
The Swedenborgian Church
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America
United Church of Christ
The United Methodist Church



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE USA

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You are witnesses of these things.

- Luke 24:48, NRSV

One hundred years ago, representatives of Christian churches around the world gathered in Edinburgh, Scotland, for an unprecedented World Missionary Conference. The Conference began a process which brought together the missionary, faith and order, life and work, and education efforts of various churches working together, and is considered by most the birth of the modern ecumenical movement.

The anniversary of this milestone is being celebrated worldwide this year. In June 2010, more than 300 delegates and 100 other participants gathered in Edinburgh to celebrate this marker on the road to church unity and to imagine the future. The theme of that gathering was, “Witnessing to Christ Today.”

In November 2010, the discussions of what it means to be ecumenical in the 21st century continue at a centennial gathering that is part of the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches and Church World Service. The theme of this gathering is “Witnesses of These Things: Ecumenical Engagement in a New Era.” The theme is taken from Luke 24:48 which is the scriptural theme for the 2010 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity—a reminder that there is one, multi-faceted, ecumenical movement.

As we celebrate the history of modern ecumenism and recommit ourselves to the ecumenical calling, we have gathered in this Annual Report the myriad ways the 36 member communions of the National Council of Churches are living and working together ecumenically. From policy statements on the “Authority of the Church in the World” to advancing the Biblical mandates for justice in the face of poverty, environmental degradation and Islamophobia, to resourcing congregations, the work of these communions as the National Council of Churches continues to manifest ever more fully the unity of the Church.

From the Desk of the President Rev. Peg Chamberlin



Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I bring you greetings on behalf of the 36 member churches, 100,000 congregations, and 45 million Christians represented by the National Council of Churches. For over 100 years, our member communions have been in covenant relationship to manifest more fully the unity of the church as they work together in common mission, relying on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, to serve all creation to the glory of God.

I have seen this at work. I have seen relationships grow and needs being met. I have seen the joy that is the visible unity of the church. Gathered in this Annual Report is a summary of the very many ways our communions are work together as the Council. The breadth of this work is astonishing, and I commend it to your reading.

I am delighted at the work done this year toward two major goals in which I have particular interest. First, I am pleased at the efforts the National Council has made toward re-visioning and re-invigorating the Council's work with local and regional ecumenical and interfaith bodies (page 14). A stronger connectional dynamic will serve to strengthen the whole of the ecumenical movement.

I am also pleased with the work done to lift up our anti-poverty work including new staffing and funding (page 9). This work, coordinating and expanding the engagement of church leaders, member communions, and congregations on domestic poverty issues, is very important during these difficult economic times. This expansion will also connect us with broader interfaith coalitions and provide a stronger voice for all faith communities.

As President in my first year in office, I want to thank our Governing Board for their hard work and support; and also the Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon and our staff for maintaining the highest standards of excellence and efficiency in advancing the mission of the Council. With this leadership and your support we will continue to make manifest that visible unity to which we aspire.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peg Chamberlin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Peg Chamberlin
President

From the Desk of the General Secretary Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon

Dear Friends,

The National Council of Churches is what the churches call themselves when, together, they seek to manifest their unity in Christ and to engage in common mission to the glory of God. It is appropriate, therefore, to begin by giving thanks to God for the calling our member communions have heard to enter into covenant with one another, and for the way God has led them to offer common witness to the love—liberating, reconciling love—we have known in Jesus Christ.

The work of the NCC staff, much of which is set forth in this report, is to help the churches carry out this ecumenical calling, and, when needed, to hold the churches accountable to the commitments they have made to one another. When this work is “successful,” it is not our achievements we celebrate, but God’s sustaining grace for which we give thanks.

And there is much for which to be thankful! As you read through the pages that follow, please note the emphasis on strengthening relationships with interfaith and ecumenical partners, as well as among the churches; the integration of unity and justice on the Council’s agenda, all of it grounded theologically; the careful stewardship of resources; the importance given to young adult leadership and formation; the efforts to make public witness on behalf of the most vulnerable in our society and on behalf of any neighbors who are treated as less than infinitely-valued children of God.

A major challenge faced by the Council’s staff is to secure sufficient revenue to maintain (or, with God’s help, increase!) the extent and quality of ministry set forth in this report. A major challenge for the churches, discussed at length in the Governing Board, is to stop duplicating programs that can and should be done ecumenically through the community that is the NCC.

This report is an opportunity for me to say publicly that it is a privilege to work with such an outstanding group of staff colleagues! I also want to thank the members of our Governing Board and Executive Committee, including our President, the Rev. Peg Chamberlin. Among her many contributions, Peg has raised the Council’s profile among members of the current Administration, enhancing our ability to influence public discussion on major issues of the day. And I would also like to thank all of you who gave of your time, talent, and treasure to support the National Council of Churches this past year. Your contributions enable our member communions to bear witness to God’s gift of unity in a world that desperately needs such witness.

Warm regards,



The Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon
General Secretary



FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION

The Faith and Order Commission works “to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and common life in Christ, and to advance toward that unity that the world may believe.” While Christian churches already share some degree of unity by virtue of their common confession of Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Lord and Savior of the world, they are also aware that their unity is incomplete. In the center of this reality, and driving the theological exploration of its meaning is the Faith and Order Commission.

This year the theologians and other church representatives on the Faith and Order Commission furthered these goals through active and creative engagement of the following initiatives:

Ecumenism from the Margins. These ongoing consultations bring the perspectives of under-represented groups into ecumenical dialogue, and reflect critically on their role in shaping such discourse. Sessions have included African-, Latino-Cuban-, Haitian-, and Native American, as well as Western Rite Antiochian Orthodox (Afro-Caribbean), and Metropolitan Community Church presentations. The spring 2010 session, with the theme of mission, was presented in cooperation with Union Theological Seminary.

Policy Statement. The Commission presented to the Governing Board, a policy statement based on the Faith and Order text, “Authority of the Church in the World,” and after revision, will especially serve as a basis for the Council’s work in other areas, esp. in social justice matters.

Edinburgh 2010. The Council was represented at this landmark conference by both Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon and Dr. Antonios Kireopoulos, both of whom had significant roles in the program. Dr. Kireopoulos delivered a paper, entitled “Ecumenical Charity as Christian Witness,” based on work done within the Unity and Mission study group. He also represented Faith and Order, and the Council in general, at the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism meeting, which followed the Edinburgh conference.

Study Themes. The Commission studies in Unity and

Mission, Justice and Salvation, and The Nature and Mission of the Church are progressing toward their quadrennium goals. The Commission will facilitate the on-line publication of these study group outcomes.

Publications. Six papers written for the Unity and Mission study group (plus an introduction) were published together in the Spring 2010 issue of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (Vol 45, No 2). It is anticipated that the remaining papers still being written for this study group will be published together in a subsequent issue of *JES*. Afterward, all UM papers will be published collectively in a new Faith and Order book.



Dr. Anton Vrame, Chair

In addition, papers from the Oberlin II conference are in the final stages of preparation for publication by Paulist Press, in a book entitled *Some Ecumenical Directions in the US Today: Churches on a Theological Journey*. This volume was edited by Dr. Kireopoulos, with the assistance of Ms. Juliana Mecera (who served as an intern at Faith & Order and Interfaith Relations).

The Commission also provides the *Faith Forum*, a program for congregations, adult religious education groups, campus ministries, ecumenical youth groups, and anyone interested in having conversations with Christians of various denominations to promote oneness in Jesus Christ. The *Faith Forum’s* easy-to-use guides encourage Christians of various denominations who live near each other to meet regularly; fellowship with each other; and deepen their faith by reading and discussing some of the NCC’s books and booklets.

General Assembly. Faith and Order commissioners have produced the paper on “Christian Understanding of Unity in an Age of Radical Diversity,” which will be discussed with four other papers (on mission/interfaith relations, economy, environmental stewardship, and peacemaking) at the 2010 General Assembly.

Thanks. Dr. Anton Vrame (Commission Chair) and Dr. Kireopoulos wish to thank the Faith and Order commissioners for their continued dedication to our common task. They also thank the members of the Governing Board for their continued support.

INTERFAITH RELATIONS COMMISSION

Our Work. Christian churches come together in search of theological unity within a pluralistic society. As we make this journey, our shared commitments lead us to a common witness for justice and peace. This journey is very much enriched by our friendships with people of other faiths. The building up of these friendships between Christian and other religious communities is the work of the Interfaith Relations Commission. It is here that we nurture relationships with interfaith colleagues, and ensure that the issues important to member churches get voiced in conversation with our dialogue partners. Of significant importance also is the facilitation of collaboration on issues of common concern.

The Commission's primary task is to articulate a Christian theology for interfaith relations, provide educational materials to churches (to enhance dialogue and cooperation), train church members in interfaith relational skills, and create ecumenical opportunities with other faith traditions. The initiatives and work of the Commission this year includes:

Christian Zionism Brochure #2.

The Christian Zionism Task Group, taking its direction from the Governing Board, has authored a second resource, entitled "The Scriptures and Christian Zionism." This brochure will be introduced at the 2010 General Assembly.

General Assembly Preparation. Members of the Commission helped to write the first draft of the paper, "Christian Understanding of Mission in a World of Many Religions." This paper will be discussed with four other papers (on Christian unity, economy, environmental stewardship, and peacemaking) at the 2010 General Assembly. After review, these papers will be commended to the churches for study in local congregations.

Response to Islamophobia in the US. The Council has been actively speaking against the rising tide of Islamophobia in our country, particularly in taking a stand during the ongoing controversies surrounding the mosque and community center near Ground Zero and

the (planned and then cancelled) Qur'an burning in Gainesville, Florida. The Commission wrote the Council's statement on the issue; Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon has participated in national interfaith and press events about specific incidents; and Dr. Antonios Kireopoulos wrote an op-ed on the ignorance at the heart of this situation. The ongoing problem was the main topic for the 2010 meeting of the National Muslim – Christian Initiative.



Dr. Diana Eck, Chair

Muslim – Christian Dialogue. The National Muslim – Christian Initiative continues to provide a place for discussion and understandings between the traditions and work on common issues such as a vigorous public call to end Islamophobia. This unfortunate context may provide an opening to enhance local Muslim-Christian dialogue throughout the country.

Jewish – Christian Dialogue. The first Jewish – Christian dialogue table met in the spring and seems to be at a crossroads. Given tensions over the ongoing Israeli – Palestinian

conflict, members of this table left the meeting with the assignment to consider if and how this dialogue should continue given our inability to move beyond our respective positions on Mideast policy. A second Jewish – Christian dialogue table, met in the fall, more specifically focused on domestic policy issues. Conceptually both tables would move forward together, as each conversation complements the other. The Council and its member churches' contribution to these tables will be enhanced by the opportunity Dr. Kireopoulos has had (and will have again next year) to participate in a program at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem.

Thanks. Dr. Diana Eck (Commission Chair), Dr. Peter Makari (Vice Chair) and Dr. Kireopoulos thank the Interfaith Relations commissioners for their continued dedication to our common task. They also thank the members of the Governing Board for their continued support.

JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY COMMISSION

The Justice and Advocacy efforts of the National Council of Churches have enjoyed a period of robust growth during the present quadrennium. There are now more ecumenical staff engaged in work to advance Biblical mandates for justice than at any time in NCC's history. Most of these are **grant-supported or seconded personnel**, focused in specific areas of advocacy and education on issues of concern to the churches. **The Justice and Advocacy Commission** and related working groups provide an interface with the member communions.

In turn, this ecumenical team works in partnership with professional **staff employed by 18 NCC member communions** working in or near Capitol Hill. Strong mutual support adds value to all participants' work.

Beyond this base of advocacy by the NCC family is a multi-faith force – including Catholic, Jewish and Muslim organizations – that encompasses more than 100 advocacy personnel who make up the **Washington Interreligious Staff Community (WISC)**. They organize coalitions and work groups to coordinate many initiatives of the larger faith community on legislative issues.

Pat Pattillo of NCC serves as convener for a **monthly dialogue meeting of directors of Washington offices** of all these WISC faith groups, to strengthen these partnerships.

ANNUAL COMMISSION MEETING

The Justice and Advocacy Commission reviews and correlates the work of an array of justice initiatives undertaken by the Council staff, member communions, and NCC-related advocacy movements. The 2010 meeting of the Commission was held March 18-19 in Alexandria, Virginia. There were special focus sessions on:

- **Gun Violence**, featuring Bryan Miller and Therese Miller of Heeding God's Call, a Pennsylvania citizens' movement opposing irresponsible handgun sales.
- **Natural Disasters**, with Episcopal pastor Rosemari Sullivan, who is helping coordinate NCC communions' responses to the crisis facing Haiti's churches.
- **Poverty**, with a report on NCC's participation in

“Fighting Poverty with Faith,” an interfaith campaign to heighten commitment to poverty reduction.

- **Nuclear Weapons**, with a presentation by Rev. Holly Beaumont of the New Mexico Conference of Churches on activism at the Los Alamos nuclear site. The Commission agreed to support a forthcoming national conference on nuclear weapons to be held in Santa Fe, which will press issues including Los Alamos.

In addition, many commissioners participated in an after-session **Racial Justice Forum**. The commissioners also engaged in a visioning session to begin considering new organizational strategies for the next NCC quadrennium, which begins in January 2012.



ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY DAYS

Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD), one of the most successful efforts to equip and mobilize grassroots Christians for effective public witness, is a tangible demonstration of the power of ecumenical cooperation. This annual gathering, launched in 2003, is now supported by 49 Christian communions, mission agencies and movements, and consistently attracts more than 700 clergy and lay participants from all over the nation.

The 2010 meeting, focused on issues of immigration reform, was held March 19-22 in Alexandria, Virginia. Preparations for the annual event involve a steering committee, a conference coordinator, and a large planning team of dozens of Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic advocacy staff working together across many months. This year's conference featured platform messages by Disciples General Minister Sharon Watkins, United Methodist Bishop Minerva Carcaño, and Roman Catholic Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*. A series of workshops and roundtables focused on key issues in public policy. On Sunday afternoon, EAD registrants also joined with tens of thousands of marchers on the National Mall in support of immigration reform. On Monday, the final day of the conference, participants journeyed to Capitol Hill for visits with their members of Congress to discuss immigration reform. For more on EAD, see: www.advocacydays.org.

ECUMENICAL POVERTY INITIATIVE

Through grants from foundations and funds from the Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Church of the Brethren, the NCC has continued its longtime work on poverty issues. In September, Rev. Michael Livingston, former executive director of the International Council of Community Churches and 2006-2007 President of the NCC, was appointed coordinator of the effort, responding to a major multi-year grant commitment from the Marguerite Casey Foundation. Livingston's work will:

- identify strategies for broader church institutional participation on poverty issues;
- coordinate and expand the engagement of church leaders, member communions, and congregations; and
- educate the ecumenical faith community on the current challenges of poverty from a faith perspective and outline opportunities to address poverty.

Through the poverty website (www.nccendpoverty.org), the initiative hopes to serve as a central resource on various domestic poverty issues. Over the past year, the initiative has conducted advocacy on a range of issues, partnering with NCC member communions ecumenically and with broader interfaith coalitions.

With the Washington Interfaith Standing Committee on Domestic Human Needs (WISC-DHN), we have worked on such legislative issues as jobs and employment, affordable housing, child hunger, budget and appropriations, and the child tax credit.

The Council has now joined as a partner in the 34-member interfaith coalition "Fighting Poverty with Faith," an initiative that encourages faith communities to host events and projects each fall to highlight the importance of addressing poverty. The initiative developed various resources to help congregations take action in October on poverty issues. For more about this coalition, see

www.fightingpovertywithfaith.com.

ECUMENICAL TASK GROUP ON IMMIGRATION

At the 2008 NCC/CWS General Assembly a *Resolution on Immigration* and *A Call For Action* created an Ecumenical Task Group on Immigration, with a three-fold mandate to **disseminate** theological and educational materials to congregations, **support** churches in serving

immigrants, and **encourage** churches to advocate with government for improved immigration policies. Since the establishment of the task group, pressures for and against state and national legislation on immigration have escalated significantly. A nine-member panel, drawn from staffs of member communions, regional councils of churches, and NCC and CWS, has been meeting regularly to fulfill that mandate, under the leadership of David Leslie of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. They have established a website (www.nccusa.org/immigration), where they have published links to a variety of faith-based statements and resources on immigration. They have joined with the Interfaith Immigration in a holiday card campaign during November and December, and fostered a pastoral letter by denominational leaders encouraging local church leadership to be involved in advocating for immigrants.

ECUMENICAL RESPONSE TO LONG-TERM RECOVERY IN HAITI

The January 12 earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, killed 200,000, left two million homeless, and destroyed the infrastructure – including churches and homes – serving hundreds of thousands more. Almost a year after this

devastating event, the NCC and its communions are actively engaged in planning a long-term effort to assist in the recovery and rebuilding of the nation. Canon Rosemary Sullivan is currently serving as part-time seconded staff from the Episcopal Church to the NCC to coordinate this ecumenical U.S. Haiti Response. Key staff from NCC member communions convened in April to assess current work and relations already established by our member communions and possibilities of coordinated work. A "Haiti Response Committee" was appointed by

the NCC General Secretary. In September, Washington advocacy staff and U.S. congregational and faith-based leadership met to consider priorities, including potential advocacy work on Capitol Hill along with focal areas for NCC communions, such as education needs, support of pastoral and lay leaders, and the need for decentralization of support for long-term sustainability.



Dr. Miriam Burnett, Chair

ECO-JUSTICE PROGRAMS

The Eco-Justice Program supports the ecumenical environmental ministries of the Council's communions through education, worship resources, training, outreach, and advocacy. With a strong national network of member communions, state ecumenical agencies, religious leaders, and faith activists, the program brings the theological and religious voice on eco-justice issues such as climate change, energy, lands, environmental justice, water, green buildings, and environmental health.

This successful program, directed by Cassandra Carmichael and supported by foundation, individual donor, and cognate funds, works in cooperation with the **Eco-Justice Working Group**, comprised of representatives from member communions. It focuses on bringing the faith voice to climate change by engaging congregations, pastors, and senior religious leaders on the need for climate justice. We have continued with our **African-American Climate Initiative** in the Southeast, reaching churches in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Arkansas. The Council coordinated a daylong conference in Virginia to explore the impacts of climate change on communities of color with congregations and pastors.



Carmichael

In addition, we have continued to engage denominations at the national level, providing leadership and coordination to develop a **public witness around the need for a national climate policy**. Recently, the program has coordinated the delivery of more than 15,000 postcards and conducted more than 100 educational visits with Members of Congress including meeting with the members of the Congressional Black Caucus. In addition, we have coordinated 3 roundtables around the country exploring the role and importance of renewable energy in our communities. Over the last year, staff of the eco-justice program have worked with clergy to submit **more than 20 op-eds and 10 letters to the editor** (focused on the impact of climate change on communities of color) to various print media.

The program continues its strong emphasis on education and outreach, and has conducted more than 50 presentations to a variety of audiences including seminarians and

African-American congregations. The program continues to deliver highly acclaimed resources including a worship and education resource on the religious response to the Gulf oil spill, an African American adult education curriculum on climate justice, and a action module on protecting the Chesapeake Bay.

The environmental health initiative collaborated with the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and our state ecumenical and interfaith partners on environmental health to develop and release an Interfaith Statement for Chemical Policy reform that draws on theology from the five largest faith traditions of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. With 18 organizations and 300 religious lay leaders endorsing the statement, we have begun to help activate a broad interfaith initiative. In addition to participating in a House of Representatives stakeholder process and meeting with policy-makers at the state and national level, which brought to light the moral message on toxic chemicals, nearly 600 letters have been sent to Members of Congress regarding environmental health.

The Eco-Justice Program draws upon the full breadth and depth of Christian faith so that the program can help embody the love and salvation of Christ as we carry out the Christian eco-justice ministry. Our concern for justice on behalf of vulnerable populations disproportionately impacted by environmental problems is woven throughout each program area. For more information on the Eco-Justice Program initiatives, visit www.nccecojustice.org or www.ncccotenders.org.

JUSTICE FOR WOMEN WORKING GROUP

Chaired by Kim Robey, representative from The Episcopal Church, and staffed by Rev. Ann Tiemeyer, this working group oversees the work of a highly active Women's Ministries Program, with focus areas of Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking, Language and Poverty. The Working Group reports these recent achievements:

A Language Matters Gathering, held in Chicago August 9-11 with funding from five NCC communions, was phase #1 of the expansive language project and included a diverse group of 25 participants. An article summarizing the event can be found online at <http://www.nccusa.org/womensministry/>. The project's vision is to encourage many conversations that take diverse contexts seriously in exploring the power of language and how it can be used in life-giving ways that extend the hospitality of the church's mission within the church and community.

The working group is actively seeking additional support of both funding and in-kind services from member communions for phase #2 of this project.

A grant from the Religions for Peace – Women of Faith Network was secured to promote and expand the education to advocacy project, the **NCC Fistula Stories Resource**. Coordinator Meagan Manas worked with Rabbi Bonnie Margulis (Jewish Consultant) and Tahira Ebrahim (Muslim Consultant) to expand Fistula Stories, adding a multi-faith perspective section to the website with free resources at www.fistulastories.org. Future plans include a congregational resource exploring the intersection of maternal health and race in the USA context.

Young Women’s Leadership Experience at the United Nations – NCC and Church Women United (CWU) will host a joint delegation for six to ten young women at the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in February 2011. Initial funds have been raised jointly with contributions from six NCC communions.

Phase II of **The Circles of Names campaign** – found at www.circlesofnames.org – recognizes women’s leadership in the churches, has organized women’s gatherings across the nation throughout the fall, and has a goal of raising \$100,000 by end of 2010.

Women’s Ministry Director Rev. Ann Tiemeyer participated in Disciples Women’s National Quadrennial gathering, Union Seminary / UNFPA event on Women of Faith and Development, Denominational Women Executive gathering, and several initial planning meetings with Women’s Funding Network and the Sister Fund regarding Women of Faith Moving Millions. For more information, see <http://www.nccusa.org/womensministry/> and facebook.com/womensministries

RACIAL JUSTICE/HUMAN RIGHTS

NaKeisha Sylver Blount, a theologically-trained attorney, holds a recently established program position in racial justice and human rights, funded by the United Church of Christ, housed in the NCC office and serving UCC and other NCC communions to advance policies that will help confront systemic racial inequalities, and dismantle structural barriers to people of color. She reports recent work on the following issues:



Blount

Crack-Powder Cocaine Sentencing Disparity. Cocaine sentencing reform is now law! Following passage in the

Senate by unanimous consent, the House went on to pass a bill that reduces down to 18-1 the former 100-1 disparity between how crack cocaine is sentenced, as opposed to powder. The President has signed the legislation into law. This represents a major victory for thousands of individuals, particularly in African-American, Latino, and low-income communities, even as we continue to work to eliminate the disparity completely.

Ending Gun Violence. We drafted a proposed NCC resolution and call to action on ending the gun violence crisis, and invited Bryan Miller and Therese Miller of Heeding God’s Call to the March meeting of the NCC Justice and Advocacy Commission to discuss ways in which NCC communions can be in partnership with Heeding God’s Call, consistent with the resolution and call to action.

Democracy Restoration Act. We are working in coalition with our partners to have the Democracy Restoration Act (“DRA”) passed into law. The DRA would restore voting rights to people who have had felony convictions, once they have served their time. We participated in a Senate briefing on this issue.

Judicial Nominations. We sit on the panel of faith groups called, “The Pew and the Bench,” which reviews the records of Supreme Court nominees, and analyzes their potential impact on issues of significance to our respective communions/churches/religious groups. We engaged in this process for Justice Sonia Sotomayor, and are currently undergoing the same process for recent nominee Elena Hagan.

Transportation Equity. We are working with the Transportation for America coalition to analyze the ways in which current transportation policy fails to adequately meet the needs of low-income communities and communities of color, while also dumping a disproportionate amount of pollution into these communities. With our allies, we are advocating for comprehensive reforms in transportation policy that will make it more equitable for all.

Racial Justice Working Group. During its March 2010 meeting, the Justice and Advocacy Commission approved a recommendation to reconstitute the Racial Justice Working Group as a committee of the JAC. The Commission has called for nominations from communions that will allow this committee to begin its work before the end of 2010.

Ecumenical Bail Bond Fund. During its March meeting, the Justice and Advocacy Commission endorsed our recommendation to reconstitute the NCC's Ecumenical Bail Bond Fund. We are looking forward to reinstating this highly successful ministry under the supervision of the new Racial Justice Working Group.

Healing the Interracial Disconnect. We invited Rev. Brenda Girton-Mitchell of Grace and Race Ministries to present a session on confronting racial bias/inequity through the use of popular culture. Drawing on the motion picture *Crash*, Rev. Girton-Mitchell led participants at the March JAC meeting through a thought-provoking examination of potentially latent bias.

Faithful Democracy. We are participating on behalf of NCC in Faithful Democracy, a joint effort of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Unitarian Universalist religious communities, who seek to offer a more respectful and responsible approach to engagement than is often portrayed in the media.

ECUMENICAL PEACE WITNESS

Through a partnership with the Church of the Brethren that began on July 1, the NCC is now able to provide a renewed focus on its peace witness, through the staff

leadership of Jordan Blevins, who previously was part of the Council's eco-justice team. In its first months, the program participated in **Peace Among the Peoples**, an ecumenical peace conference held in Elkhart, Indiana, in preparation for the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation next summer. Jordan Blevins and Deborah DeWinter each brought greetings to the conference on behalf of the Council. Additionally, a message was sent to the Governing Board and all Ecumenical Officers, marking the **anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki**, and calling for nuclear disarmament, specifically the ratification of the new START treaty with Russia.

The NCC Justice and Advocacy Commission has affirmed a partnership with the New Mexico Council of Churches to host a **Nuclear Weapons Disarmament event** in Santa Fe in 2011, and Jordan will serve in a liaison role with that project. The Justice and Advocacy Commission also approved for further conversation the **Resolution on the War in Afghanistan**, to be presented at this Governing Board meeting.

Upcoming action will include partnering with the **U.S. Decade to Overcome Violence Committee** to coordinate follow up for the decade, as well as continued involvement with issues of nuclear disarmament, and web-based resources on a variety of other ways churches can bring common witness on issues of peace in the world.

HEALTH TASK FORCE

The National Council of Churches Health Task Force serves as the primary point of focus of the Council's work in network development, education and advocacy related to health ministries and healthcare policy reform. The Health Task Force, with more than one-third of the member communions as well as specialized ecumenical health related groups has been in place for over three years. The Task Force relates to a NCC Health Network comprised primarily of congregations of member communions that are concerned with some aspect of health education, direct service or policy advocacy. To address the interests and concerns of the Network the Health Task Force has developed three foci including: Network Development and Capacity Building, Health Care Policy Reform, and Emergency Preparedness.

The Task Force website serves as an important education and advocacy resource for individuals, congregations, and organizations, providing health electronic alerts,

background documents, links to relevant websites, etc. (www.health-ministries.org)

The Task Force, along with other partners, gave sustained and coordinated leadership, making certain that the voice of the faith community was a part of the discourse as our country debated and ultimately passed historic health care reform. Church leaders were supported with the educational base and network development necessary to engaged in faith-based policy dialogue in a balanced and nuanced manner, lending the Council's and its member communions' moral authority in a credible way.

The HTF continues its work to insure that those most in need of them will have access to the services and resources made available through this reform. Also in this next phase of its work, the HTF has identified initiatives in the areas of immigration and health care, clergy burnout, childhood obesity and HIV/AIDS initiatives.

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES COMMISSION

The Education and Leadership Ministries Commission, staffed by the Rev. Garland F. Pierce, has fourteen program committees working on faith formation, leader development, ecumenical formation, and education and advocacy.

ELMC MONTHLY PRAYERS AND LEARNING MOMENTS

ELMC strives to be a space for formation, spiritual discernment, and mutual support through prayer and resourcing. To this aim, the commission continues its spiritual practice of the **ELMC monthly prayer**:

www.nccusa.org/elmc/elmcprayer.htm.

Various commission members and other colleagues related to the Council offer these monthly prayer offerings, praying for our shared ministries, personal concerns, current events, celebrations and observances in the liturgical year and secular calendar, and the global church. The commission also seeks to be an intentional learning community as is evident by the design of the commission and program ministry meetings that include moments of shared learning and its online feature called “**ELMC Learning Moment**” which allows commissioners and others opportunity to offer brief contributions for the purpose of educating the community on trends, subjects, resources, etc. that might be of interest and import in the areas of faith formation, leader development and education and advocacy. To view them, please visit:

www.nccusa.org/elmc/elmclearningmoment.htm

YOUNG ADULT FAITH FORMATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND ECUMENICAL FORMATION

The **Ecumenical Young Adult Ministries Team (EYAMT)** partnered with the New Fire Ecumenical Young Adult Network in its pilot seed grant project, providing small grants to young adult groups starting innovative initiatives in ecumenical young adult ministries and/or young adult ecumenical formation.

The **Ecumenical Campus Ministries Team (ECMT)** has initiated a project to offer technical assistance in fundraising and board development for local campus ministries

staff and leadership. The project is led by a consultant with many years of experience in campus ministries, The Rev. Dr. Galen Hora of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (www.higheredmin.org)



Dr. Daryl Ingram, Chair

The **New Fire Ecumenical Young Adult Network** continues its work and is gaining momentum, reinvigorating its fundraising efforts through the *Ecumenists of All Ages Campaign* to sustain this important work and continuing to do outreach in order to connect with other groups of young adults and other interchurch and ecumenical organizations. New Fire has partnered with Active Voice to sponsor five screenings across the nation of a powerful film, *Have You Heard from Johannesburg*, from California, to Texas, to DC. It has been planning the New Fire Gathering and will be fully engaged in the celebration processes and the assembly. In partnership with Church World Service, NCC will have 12 young adults participate in the **2010 Young Adult Stewards Program**, our ecumenical formation and leadership development program of the General Assembly. (www.faithconnectsus.org)

CULTURE-SPECIFIC MINISTRIES

The **Committee on Black Congregational Ministries (CBCM)** continues its work on expanding its signature resource for congregations, *Resources for Special Occasions in the Black Church* and is in the initial stages of a Black Congregational Development for the Gulf Coast Region initiative.

The **Pacific Asian American Canadian Christian Education Ministries (PAACCE)**, in partnership with the Institute for the Study of Asian-American Christianity (ISAAC) produced an *Asian-American Christianity Reader*. It is also nearing completion of an Asian-American/Canadian worship resource, *Worship on the Way*.

FORMATION AND ADVOCACY MINISTRIES

The **Committee on Public Education and Literacy (CPEL)** gave significant leadership to the Governing Board's adoption of *A Pastoral Letter on Federal Policy in Public Education: An Ecumenical Call for Justice*.

The statement has been a vehicle for serious dialogue within and among communions about strategies for access of all of the nation's children to quality public education. Likewise, because of this statement there has been a series of conversations with the US Department of Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, and other federal officials as well as grassroots organizational leaders. These dialogues and this work continue.

The Committee on Disabilities (COD) and the Committee on Families and Children (CFC) met jointly in September at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI and subsequently are planning a project to help congregations explore and create inclusive worship with children with disabilities. The Committee on Disabilities also has partnered with the NCC Eco-Justice Program to explore environmental health issues and persons with disabilities.

COOPERATIVE CURRICULUM AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The work of the **Committee on the Uniform Series (CUS)** continues to be foundational to the overall work of ELMC, given the strong symbiotic relationship between the work of CUS and the work of its other program ministries. The Annual Study Plan Committee met in early September to begin its work on the 2016-2017 outlines, doing much of its interim development work via wiki-technology. CUS has also been engaged in an intentional process of critical review of its curriculum outlines for children; this evaluative work continues in partnership with members from the Committee on Families and Children.

The **Committee on Outdoor Ministries (COM)** resourced many camps this summer for a fun time of community building, lessons on creation care and faith formation

LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECUMENISM

NCC member communions are also represented in the membership of more than 200 local and regional ecumenical and interfaith communities across the country. These local and regional communities are autonomous and diverse, but they are all part of the one ecumenical movement. NCC strives to maintain strong relationships with these partner organizations as well as with the National Association of Ecumenical and Interreligious Staff (NAEIS) and the State Ecumenical Executives (SEE) colleague group.

NAEIS, SEE, and NCC have jointly organized a local and regional ecumenism consultation for November 12, 2010 in

through the engagement of the rich stories of the Bible. This year's New Earth curriculum theme was *Be a Hero: Living like Jesus*, focusing on biblical and contemporary heroes: <http://www.nccusa.org/pdfs/beahero2010.pdf>. There is a new editor and project manager for the curriculum, Jenny Youngman, a United Methodist experienced in curriculum development.

Aware of the changing landscape in formation, camping, and communion life in general, the Committee on Outdoor Ministries sponsored an **Outdoor Ministries Summit**, September 20-23, 2010, at Highlands Presbyterian Camp and Retreat Center; Allenspark, CO, to explore and strategize around issues of sustainability, resourcing, and leader development ecumenically.

PROFESSIONAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Professional Church Leadership (PCL) met in December at Eckerd College; St. Petersburg, FL. This was a joint meeting with Denominational Staff for Theological Education and Candidacy (DSTEC) and the Ministry Development Council (MDC). The continuing education presenter was Dr. Diana Butler Bass, author of several best sellers on American religious life, who helped the group discuss how the churches can prepare ministerial leadership in the midst of profound change for the purpose of congregational transformation.

MISSION EDUCATION

This program ministry has a long history predating the NCC. Its work this year has informed the planning of the 2010 Ecumenical Centennial Gathering, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Edinburgh Mission Conference, marking the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement.

which some 100 people will gather to envision the future of local and regional ecumenism. NCC will do its part to carry out that vision in the coming years through the activities of a newly formed permanent committee created by the Governing Board. The **Local and Regional Ecumenism Committee** is charged to facilitate relationships among and between local, regional, and national expressions of the ecumenical movement. The committee will primarily be composed of staff, board leaders, local church leaders and others involved with local and regional ecumenism. This stronger connective dynamic should serve to strengthen the whole of the movement, allowing us to do together what we could not do apart from each other. For more information, see www.nccusa.org/lre

INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN CHICAGO

The NCC Communication Commission was one of 80 denominational, ecumenical and interfaith groups co-sponsoring the **Religion Communication Congress 2010**, April 7-10 in Chicago. More than 500 international registrants participated in professional workshops and heard a blue-ribbon array of platform speakers, including historian Martin Marty, UCC pastor Otis Moss III, Ingrid Mattson of the Islamic Society of North America, NPR correspondent Barbara Bradley Haggerty, and media watcher Jeffrey Cole of the University of Southern California.

INTERFAITH TELEVISION WITNESS

The Commission carries a leadership role in the **Interfaith Broadcasting Commission (IBC)**, a partnership with the ABC, CBS and NBC television networks. Pat Pattillo serves as president of this joint venture of the NCC with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Islamic Society of North America, Union for Reform Judaism and the New York Board of Rabbis. Shirley Struchen manages marketing and production. Begun in 1980 as a result of the deregulation of the broadcast industry, IBC offers the Abrahamic faith community twelve opportunities to present documentary programs, plus two or three Christmas, Easter and High Holy Days specials, on up to 1,000 local affiliates of the three networks, with a cumulative audience of several million viewers each year. This year, ministries of the PCUSA, Episcopal Church, ELCA, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, UCC and United Methodist Church were among those featured in the NCC productions. Topics included Asian tsunami victims, the challenges of aging, conscientious objectors, revisiting Hurricane Katrina, and persons with disabilities. For Christmas 2010, NCC-related specials were scheduled to air on all three networks.



Rev. Jerry Van Marter, Chair

ANNUAL MEETING IN WASHINGTON DC

The Commission held its **2010 annual meeting** in the nation's capital September 27-30, with 70 registrants forming its largest meeting in more than a decade. Joining the Commission gathering were interfaith partners from Odyssey Networks. Substantial grants from Odyssey,

WGBH-Boston, Pew Trust and PBS underwrote the program and meal costs. In addition to ongoing professional workgroups, the agenda included:

- Four hours of briefings -- hosted by the Pew Forum and the First Amendment Center -- on American religious literacy, religion media coverage, and religion in public schools. PBS anchor Ray Suarez moderated three distinguished panels of experts who discussed these topics at the Newseum on Pennsylvania Avenue.
- The annual UCC Everett Parker Lecture in Communication Ethics, at the National Press Club, with an address by Federal Communications Commissioner Mignon Clyburn.
- A seminar on current multimedia trends, hosted at their headquarters by the staff of Discovery Communications.
- A 60-minute preview segment of the six-hour epic series, "God in America," which aired on PBS stations in October.

The producers and writers for the series, from Boston's WGBH, were present for a dialogue.

MEDIA ADVOCACY

The commission's ongoing program of **advocacy for equity in mass media** focused this year on an appeal to the Federal Communications Commission to assure that broadband internet service is regulated to protect equal access rights for religious groups and minorities in both the production and reception of material that requires maximum bandwidth for transmission --avoiding toll booths and elite-only lanes on the nation's information superhighway. A resolution to the FCC on this topic was approved by the Commission. The NCC is also a member of the new interfaith coalition "So We Might See," which maintains active advocacy efforts around media coverage, advertising standards, program content, and equal access. The coalition met for planning during the Commission's week in Washington.

ELECTRONIC RE-LAUNCH OF ECU LINK

EcuLink, for many years a print publication of the NCC, was transformed in 2010 into a monthly electronic feature magazine, www.eculink.org, by editor Melissa Dixon. It is envisioned as a companion piece to the NCC website, edited by Phil Jenks, which continues to serve as the "publication of record" and the primary news and information source for programs and projects of the Council. The e-publication hopes to generate new audiences for the Council.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2009-2010

This past year has brought forth a continued and expanded common witness as member communions work together to more fully manifest God's gift of unity. A significant number of Council programs have restarted or begun, especially in our Justice and Advocacy ministries thanks to new and innovative ways our communions work together as the Council. As you read through this Annual Report you will see the full breadth of what we are doing together. At the same time we have focused on cost reductions and resource development to ensure these ministries fulfill our calling as the National Council of Churches.

The economic environment continues in turmoil. While markets fluctuate, and, as of this writing, our investment portfolios are in positive territory, unemployment and other measures of economic stability are still down. This has continued to put pressure on congregational and communion giving, which often translates to a reduced ability of our member communions to increase resources for their work as the Council.

We are so very grateful for all of our communions that see the opportunity God has given them to work together as the Council to accomplish not only its shared mission goals but their own mission goals in continuing and expanded ways. They have worked very hard this year to maintain their support of the Council. Saying that, member communion giving was just under budget this year, which is quite remarkable given current conditions.

Our increased focus last year on resource development has yielded a significant increase in individual and congregational giving (up 61% year-over-year). Foundation grants were down even with our continued focus there, mostly we believe, due to a reduction in foundation giving nationwide. We will continue to work harder in these two areas this year, and would note, since the end of the fiscal year we have received a significant foundation grant for our anti-poverty work. Other income from royalties, sales, interest and dividends was flat year-over year.

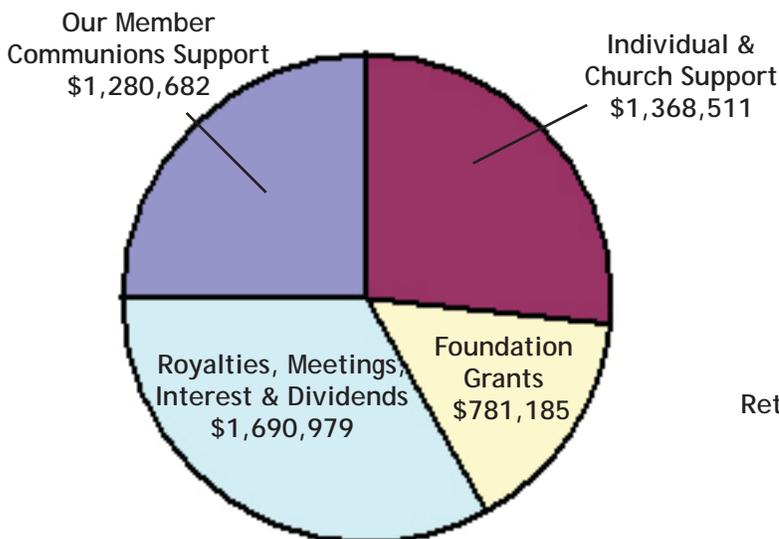
Given the upswing in the financial markets this past year, when we include realized and unrealized gains on investments, the Council had positive net results for the year, while at the same time reducing the budget deficit by two-thirds year-over-year. We are continuing to look at new ways to do our work together including shared operating resources, shared staff, seconded staff and strategic partnerships. And, at the same time, we continually look for cost savings in the administration of our mission programs. We are grateful for our experienced and dedicated staff whom effectively and efficiently lead and deliver Council programs.

The Governing Board, officers and staff of the Council are very thankful of the many generous individuals who support our common work—they are listed on the next two pages. We look forward to their and your continued financial support as we continue to respond to the Gospel message.

Sources of Income 2009-2010

\$ 5,121,357

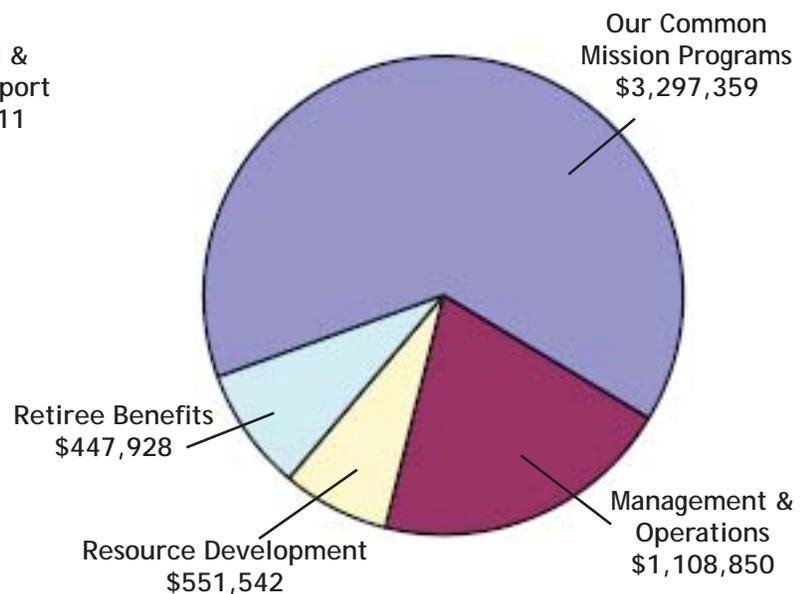
(excluding realized and unrealized capital gains & losses)



Mission Programs & Administration 2009-2010

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(excluding actuarial adjustments for retiree benefits)



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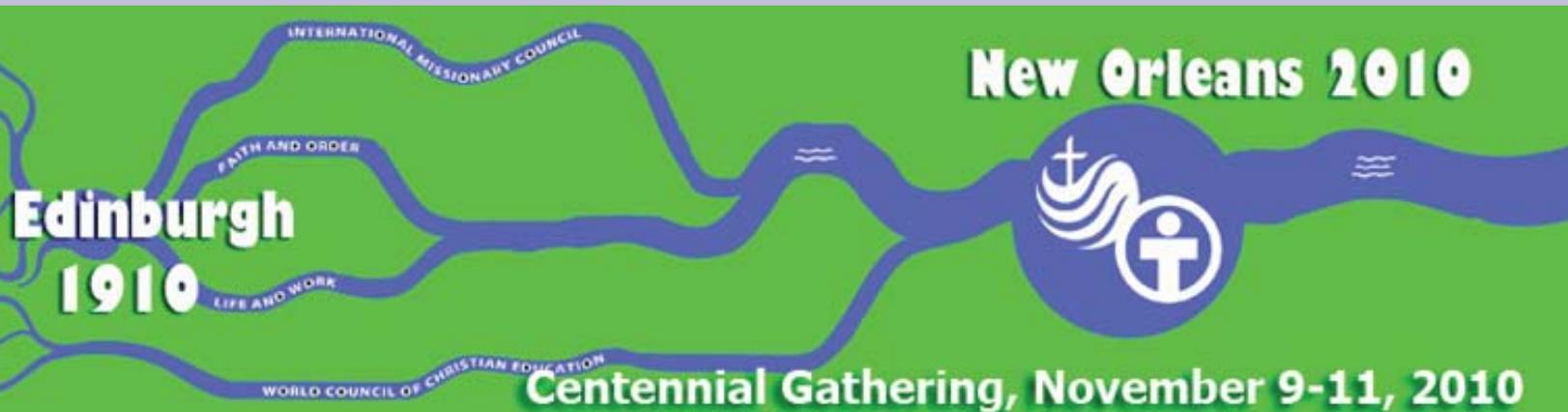
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