



CUIC Notes

February, 2006

Churches Uniting in Christ: Marks of Progress on a Journey Toward Unity

During my two-year tenure as President of the Coordinating Council I would like to point to at least three events that are marks of the growing maturity of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC). The first is the Consultation on Racial Justice which took place in metropolitan Chicago in March of 2004. Our churches were energized to fulfill the mandate signed in Memphis in 2002 to combat racism in every way possible way.

The second major event was the release of the document the Ministry Task Force has toiled over for three years. *The Mutual Recognition and the Mutual Reconciliation of Ministries* is now in the hands of the member churches and our partners in mission and dialogue for study and response. I might also mention early plans to sponsor a Consultation on Episcopate at the end of 2006 or the beginning of 2007. We need the help of the Church as we address remaining obstacles in our quest for Full Communion among the nine member churches.

The third event was moving forward after the conclusion of the tenure of Dr. Bertrice Wood who helped give birth to CUIC as our first Director. Our search committee is hard at work, and we anticipate announcing a new director in the Spring.

The time as President of the Coordinating Council has passed very quickly. I am gratified by a fresh view of recognition and reconciliation of ministry as exemplified in the 7th draft of the Ministry text. We in the coordinating council are expectantly waiting for responses from member communions that will help us produce a final document to present to their juridical bodies for adoption leading to Full Communion.

The Voting Rights Act is a focus of the work of our Racial Justice Task Force. Our Task Force on Regional and Local Ecumenism is working hard to provide the means by which CUIC will become more and more visible in the everyday life of Churches. From organizing occasions of common worship, to setting forth suggestions for outreach and common mission, CUIC, though not a household name, is on its way to becoming a practical means of manifesting Christian life and ministry together.

My hope and prayer is for a plenary that will be decisive about our future as Churches Uniting in Christ. I look to the day when we will not think of the member churches other than our own as *Athey,@* but rather *Awe@* who are part of one family of Communions in the One Church of Jesus Christ. Then we will have manifested the marks of perfection and full maturity to which we are called.

C. Dana Krutz, President, CUIC

A Prayer On the Occasion of the Death of Coretta Scott King

Eternal God, who has not been without witnesses in any age, we thank you for Coretta Scott King. Widowed at a young age by the forces of racism, she turned tragedy into the triumph of good over evil. In a world enchanted by the vacuous promises of violence, she held resolutely before us the promised land of your justice and mercy. In a society given to things vulgar and vain, she lived among us with regal dignity and grace to which many aspire but few attain. We celebrate her as one of your steadfast servants, a sister whose refusal of revenge makes her a saint of whom the world was not worthy. Grant her, on the shore beyond our sight, rest and joy in the splendor of eternal light. We ask this in the name of the one who came not to be served but to serve, and to give life itself for the redemption of others, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thomas E. Dipko, Interim Director

One hundred days have elapsed in my role as Interim Director as this issue of *CUIC Notes* reaches you. This has been a season of heavy and splendid traffic in phone calls, e-mail and postal correspondence and meetings of various kinds with hundreds of persons related to CUIC. Thanks to all of you who have welcomed me so graciously.

On one occasion in December, I talked with a caller who doubted if CUIC is still on the radar of our member churches. The next call was a request for permission to use the Memphis Liturgy for a local congregation's Christmas Eve Eucharist! More recently, on a day when funds seemed short, a check for \$3000 arrived, unsolicited, to help with our Ministry study process. One sign of the health of Churches Uniting in Christ is the impossibility of knowing exactly how many lives it touches every day.

Another indicator of our health is the use of www.cuicinfo.org, our website. The material prepared by our Racial Justice Task Force for Race Relations Sunday in January was number five in demand among the top thirty most used materials. The site was visited by 2,581 inquirers between January 5-31 with a total of 55,647 hits. Among the top thirty countries identified by visitors are nations as diverse as Japan and Ivory Coast.

At the St. Louis meeting on the Ministry document, described in the Reverend Rollin Russell's article, I found myself saying words that did not sound like mine! While pessimists ask why the reception process is not moving faster in our churches, the optimist in me asks could it be that the reception process is ahead of the consensus curve? Our being one has outdistanced our ability to find words to express God's gift of unity. I invite you to ponder that possibility.

The other articles in this issue give a representative picture of the scope of CUIC related events and programs. We are well served by our three Task Forces. It has been my privilege to meet personally with the three Chairpersons and to explore future plans for the work of each group.

Many of the local and regional meetings on the Ministry document represent a wonderful nexus of the work of all three Task Forces. The summary reports show high regard for racial justice concerns as we seek the mutual recognition and reconciliation of our ministries.

The next meeting of the Coordinating Council is set for March 14-15, 2006 in Charlotte, North Carolina. We will be hosted by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. A search committee, interviewing candidates as I write, hopes to present a nominee for election as Director at this meeting.

I am grateful to the Coordinating Council for this opportunity to serve as Interim Director. The Reverend C. Dana Krutz, our President, while fielding the demands of hurricane Katrina in his area, continues to give generous hours to the work of CUIC. The Ecumenical Officers of our member and partner communions are gifted colleagues who make my work a blessing. Bobbi Perkins-White, our office administrator, provides invaluable service on behalf of all of us. Thank you for including me on the CUIC team during this time of transition in leadership.

A PRAYER FOR CHURCHES UNITING IN CHRIST

Gracious and loving God, in Jesus Christ you have bound us together in a never-ending love. You have called us to become a new community reconciled and sent into the world to proclaim and make real your redeeming love. Yet with deep pain we confess that our churches remain divided, self-serving witnesses to your one Gospel. Forgive our subtle acceptance of the scandal of disunity which marks our churches and communities, while our fragmented world yearns for wholeness and a common hope.

We pray this day for all those in your world who are committed to proclaiming and manifesting the visible unity of Christ's Church. We thank you for the vision and hope expressed through the Consultation on Church Union and now Churches Uniting in Christ. May this passion for visible unity be shared by a new generation and expressed in a unity of faith, a common sharing of the Eucharist, a reconciled ministry, and a common mission of justice and peace. And save us, O God, from accepting partial goals, saying "this is all we can do at this time," when your calling and mandate is the full reconciliation and unity of all churches and peoples now. Through Jesus Christ, our reconciling Savior.

A Prayer offered by Rev. Dr. Paul A. Crow, Jr., Ph.D., D.D., L.H.D.

Dr. Crow was the Associate Executive Secretary (1964-1968), the first General Secretary (1968-1974) and a member of the Executive Committee of the Consultation on Church on Church Union (1974-1998).

INTER-COMMUNIO 2 STUDY AND RESPONSE

It has been a real pleasure for me to lead several inter-communion study sessions on the “Mutual Recognition and Mutual Reconciliation of Ministries” document of the Churches Uniting in Christ. The Ministry Task Force of CUIC wisely determined that, in addition to the study and response process that is currently taking place within each of the member and partner communions, there should be similar sessions held around the nation with representatives of as many of the communions present as possible. To that end a number of such events have been planned and some have already occurred.

Greensboro, NC: On November 19 eighteen representatives from seven of the partner churches plus one from the Moravian Church (Southern Province) were present for a day long study and discussion. Many were ministry committee members of their church judicatory and some were representatives of Christian Unity committees. Most had already received the Ministry Document through their church’s ecumenical offices and several had already participated in judicatory studies of the document. It was a thoughtful and stimulating exchange.

Denver, CO: Dr. Jim Ryan, Executive Director of the Colorado Council of Churches and a member of the CUIC Local Ecumenism Task Force, led a study with pastors from CUIC congregations in the city of Denver. It is a group which he convened several years ago and which has been meeting regularly to share their ministries and mission efforts in that particular community. The response from that event will add an important and somewhat different, local church and community dimension to our overall study.

Louisville, KY: On January 15-16 I was privileged to lead a study session with the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Council of Churches. KYCC Executive Director, Dr. Nancy Jo Kemper was kind enough to give a major portion of the Board’s retreat to the study and most seemed enthusiastic about the proposals and the possibility of their adoption in some form. Since the meeting was in Louisville, Rev. Robina Winbush, Ecumenical Officer of the Presbyterian Church (USA), joined us for the sessions and was most helpful in clarifying some of the more difficult provisions. All participants were knowledgeable and well informed church leaders and the discussion was very broad in its scope. Again, it was an enthusiastic and encouraging exchange.

St. Louis, MO: On January 27, 85 persons representing all of the CUIC churches plus our Roman Catholic and Lutheran observers gathered at Eden Theological Seminary for a full day of study, discussion and worship. The event was organized by Dr. Michael Kinnamon of the seminary faculty, Rev. Suzanne Webb of our Coordinating Council, and Rev. Warren Crews of nearby Emmanuel Episcopal Church. The larger representation created the context for numerous insights into our common journey toward Full Communion. The preacher for our service of worship was Dr. Tom Dipko, our Interim Executive Director.

Seminary Events: Dr. Fritz Mutti, member of the Coordinating Council used the Ministry Document study in a History and Polity class at St. Paul Seminary in **Kansas City, MO**, I conducted a seminar with a class on Ecumenical History at Duke Divinity School in **Durham, NC**. Those sessions were both lively and stimulated animated discussion among students of CUIC churches as well as those from other traditions. These will be added to the numerous sessions that are being conducted at various denominational seminaries with students and faculty.

Scheduled Events: A study and response session will take place in **Columbus, OH** during the week of February 6. It has been organized and will be led by Rev. Rebecca Tollefson, Executive Director of the Ohio Council of Churches, and a member of the CUIC Task Force on Local Ecumenism. On Wednesday, March 8 a study and response session will take place in **Minneapolis, MN**, organized by Rev. Herman Weinlich of the Coordinating Council, and I will be leading the discussions. Reports on all these events will be part of the response material which the Ministry Task Force will review as it begins the process of revising the document.

Other Planned Events: Study and response sessions are being planned for other areas of the country but have not yet been scheduled. CUIC task force or Coordinating Council members are planning events for **Upstate New York** and in other areas, the dates to be announced and carried on this web site. Such inter-communion studies will be scheduled through April, and all will make an important contribution to the overall study and response process. --Rollin Russell, Ministry Task Force

Briefly Noted

Churches Uniting in Christ was remembered in *These Days* on four of the days of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2006. We are grateful to the publisher for including material prepared by Kathy Reeves, Chairperson of the Local and Regional Ecumenism Task Force, Michael Kinnamon, a former General Secretary of the Consultation on Church Union, Lydia Veliko, United Church of Christ Ecumenical Officer and Rebecca Tollefson, Executive Director of the Ohio Council of Churches.

As a CUIC pilot project in Denver, pastors representing seven of the nine member communions of CUIC have been gathering for lunch and discussion every month or two for over a year. Jim Ryan, Council Executive of the Colorado Council of Churches convenes the group.

The November gathering was spent in discussing the Reconciliation of Ministries document. Episcopal, Presbyterian, UCC and Disciple ministers were present on this occasion. Each had read the document before coming.

There was strong affirmation of paragraph 18 and the ministry of the whole people of God. There were the obligatory concerns over bishops and ordinations, but the vast majority of time was spent in discussing energy—as in, where is the energy for this effort? None of the clergy experience any energy around CUIC or reconciled ministries coming from the leaders of their communions or from fellow clergy. They are well aware of and theologically understand the “shoulds” of this effort, but have difficulty seeing from where the energy would be generated to lead their communion to adopt this document by 2010.



**“...so that
they may be
one...”**

John 17:11

The consensus of the group was that the primary focus of the CUIC Coordinating Council and Ecumenical officers over the next couple of years must be the generating of a force of energy that will drive this effort.

Submitted

Rev. Dr. James R. Ryan
Colorado Council of Churches

Introducing Acting Chairperson for the Racial Justice Task Force



The Reverend Dr. Taylor T. Thompson, Pastor of St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church in Cleveland, Ohio, has consented to serve as the Acting Chairperson of the Racial Justice Task Force for four months. The current Chairperson, the Reverend Jayne Oasin, of the Episcopal Church, has asked to be relieved of her duties during a three month sabbatical and the General Convention of her church. Dr. Thompson will assume the duties of the Chairperson on March 1, 2006, with the consent of the President of Churches Uniting in Christ, the Reverend Dana Krutz.

Dr. Thompson is a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and holds degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. His Doctor of Ministry degree was awarded by United Theological Seminary of Dayton, Ohio, where he was a Proctor-Moss Fellow. He served four local churches of his communion before coming to Cleveland in 2003. He is active in the work of the A.M.E. Church in a wide range of roles including editor of key publications, membership on its General Board, and as a representative to the World Methodist Council Executive Committee and the National Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation.

His vocational gifts are rooted in experience in a large firm owned by his family as well as in non-profit endeavors like community development corporations and housing enterprises. He has served on the boards of diverse community service agencies. Pastor Thompson is married to Dr. Barbara J. Hunter Thompson. Their home is in Berea, Ohio.

A National Treasure: The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell ⁴...er they had been encircled for seven days." Hebrews 11:30



One year ago in January during an interfaith worship service an interracial choir sang an anthem with the title something like "The Jericho Walls Came Tumbling Down" as part of the pre-inaugural ceremonies for the first elected African American mayor of Baton Rouge. With the repetition of the words of the hymn it really felt like some walls were coming down! There were lots of walls that came tumbling down for Kip Holden to be elected. I wonder what walls God will cause to tumble down in 2006, and I wonder what walls God might tumble down in my life that now keep me from growth and change.

Tom Brokaw in *The Greatest Generation* claims that those who went to war during WWII and built up America after the war are a unique group of people. I know there are countless stories of profound change after the war having to do with a greater role for blacks in American society. Blacks for the first time since the end of the civil war felt a new sense of freedom in the land. Though Martin Luther King, Jr. was still a teenager when WWII ended, it was Dr. King who was able to take the advancements and learning of WWII and lead our country in a virtual transformation in its social fabric. What had been learned in the military was enhanced and became a part of a new consciousness in America. Martin Luther King made the difference in that time, and the impact of his contribution will be a lasting one.

I was a student at SMU in Dallas in the middle sixties when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., made a visit to our campus and spoke in a periodic lecture series in the main campus auditorium. Partly from curiosity and partly to hear this rising religious leader and preacher I attended that lecture. No, I can't quote from his remarks, but I can tell you that he was special to me. I had never heard any one speak and preach quite like what I heard from the rostrum from McFarland auditorium that afternoon.

In the spring of 1968 I was in my last year of undergraduate school, and was planning to attend seminary in the fall. One evening while out on the campus driving my car to the library, as I recall, the news came on and reported the death of Dr. King. I was sad, I wept, I was afraid. I remember thinking that the country was in for trouble with the unjust death of someone whom I'd begun to think was a hero and now a martyr.

I don't know if he had in mind the ultimate sacrifice. He certainly was not afraid, and I believe Dr. King provided others the courage to follow in his footsteps. Resurrection happens in different ways as does suffering of the cross. There was a way in which Dr. King bore the cross of suffering, but I also see in his life signs of the resurrection. His faith and philosophy of nonviolence in his approach to the civil rights movement surely calls to mind the words of Jesus about taking up the cross. Though walls of division were created between people, they have come down. Bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood have been built in their place. A new society is being born. His example is another legacy of an era that has his name in the chapter heading in this part of American History. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a national treasure.

We enter Black History Month this February as Coretta Scott King lies in state in the rotunda of the state capital of Georgia. With her death, the story she lived with her husband and extended to a new generation becomes history. Her great dignity, poise and persistent witness to nonviolence on the road to racial justice have endeared her to all of us. As we ponder her contribution to the dream that her husband placed vividly before us, including her role in winning a national holiday in honor of a martyr for the cause of racial equality, we know that she, too, is a national treasure. May God grant her, with Martin, the peace that the world can neither give nor take away.

By Rev. C. Dana Krutz, President of CUIC

MEMPHIS, TN — In the city where Churches Uniting In Christ was inaugurated, sharing and dialogue continue among congregations even as clergy and lay leaders look for new causes that unite. Four years after CUIC was born during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity many of the city's churches continue to join for worship and mission. If there were a scorecard it would show that Memphis has kept the light shining.

- Eight special worship services, each drawing a diverse crowd of hundreds, have been held at various churches in the city, usually in conjunction with special days on the Christian calendar. The next joint service is scheduled on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday in April, 2006.

- National church leaders have been attracted to participate in CUIC events in the city. The Rev. James Forbes, of Riverside Church in New York City, was a featured speaker on World Communion Sunday in 2004. Dr. Paul Crow, Jr., a long-time leader in the national ecumenical movement, came to the city in 2003 for worship and to conduct a workshop.

- Churches involved in CUIC — at last count more than four dozen in the city — have been encouraged to establish better relations with other churches in Memphis across racial, economic and cultural lines. This has led to churches working together on service projects and holding joint reconciliation discussions.

- In late 2005, at a CUIC worship service held at Grace St. Luke's Episcopal Church, a new nonprofit agency helping homeless people with severe addictions and mental illnesses was commissioned in its work. The Door of Hope was started by members of several Midtown Memphis churches wanting to reach out significantly to the homeless in the city.

"I would say our Churches Uniting efforts are alive and well," said Julia Allen, who with her husband Ray has been a CUIC volunteer from the first days in Memphis. Long-time ecumenists, they also participated locally in the forerunner of the movement, the Consultation On Church Union.

"Of course, we have so much to do," she added. "We need to get more churches and more people involved. We need to find new ways to engage them. I think we have a special challenge in reaching out to the smaller churches." Since the beginning, the CUIC efforts in this city have been led by separate clerical and laity councils. This year, the two have decided to meet together in order to combine efforts.

Racial dialogue has taken many forms in Memphis. These have included pulpit exchanges, after-school education programs, workshops on identifying institutional racism and how to combat it, and alliances among mainly-white and mainly-black congregations to carry out missions, programs and ministries together. The city also has a growing number of mixed-race congregations.

The homeless agency grew out of an ad-hoc effort started by concerned members from churches representing six communions. They met and decided to tackle the most difficult cases by teaching volunteers how to build lasting friendships with people living on the streets. Through one-to-one relationships, the Door of Hope intends to begin moving each individual into housing and human services programs.

"Along the way — even before we incorporated as a not-for-profit entity — we realized we were the result of an ecumenical effort," said Dr. June Avery, the agency's executive director. "We talked about needing help from our churches — prayers, money, volunteers looking for a meaningful ministry. Then one of our board members suggested that we also could use an official 'ordaining' of our work. That led to a meeting with the local CUIC leaders who were more than happy to commission us. So we used a joint worship service as our launching pad."

Door of Hope is leasing space from a local Catholic charity, and partnering with a nursing school and the University of Tennessee's Center for Occupational Therapy to help its first dozen clients get off the streets.

The Local and Regional Task Force has attempted to meet twice a year since its formation in 2002. The Task Force meetings have been well attended and most of the CUIC communions have been represented at the meetings.

The Task Force has identified several categories of strategy to guide our work. They are:

- **Communication:** We developed a web page and an on-line newsletter. Carlos Malave, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been managing the web page. The CUIC Director's office edited the on-line newsletter.
- **Theological Institutions:** The Task Force met at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville. When we met at Eden Seminary, we met with students and David

Greenhaw, president of the seminary while we were there. When we met at Louisville Seminary, we led a CUIC liturgy in the morning chapel service. On both occasions, Bertrice Wood was invited to preach.

- **State Councils of Churches and Middle Governing Bodies:** Jim Ryan, member of the Task Force, enlisted CUIC member churches in Denver to become involved with a “pilot project” intended to encourage those congregations to become more engaged with CUIC, especially through finding ways to combat racism together and through participation in regularly scheduled CUIC worship services. The project in Denver began by having clergy from CUIC churches in a Denver community gathering regularly to become better acquainted with each other, and with each other’s churches.
- **Youth and Young Adults:** The Task Force would like to invite youth and young adults to meet with us to give us ideas about what would attract them to become active in CUIC.

In addition to these efforts, Rebecca Tollefson, a member of the Task Force has been trying to recruit CUIC congregations to study *“Journey Toward the Vision: A Curriculum Designed to Enliven the Vision of Churches Uniting in Christ in the Local Congregation.”* This Curriculum was prepared by the Kentucky Annual Conference Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns of the United Methodist Church in 2004. The Local/Regional Task Force was asked to encourage CUIC congregations to engage in the curriculum and then offer an evaluation of the curriculum.

CUIC NOTES is a publication of Churches Uniting in Christ
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