



Tomorrow's Leaders Today

The Good News From HELM and
Higher Education Institutions of the
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Higher Education and
Leadership Ministries
of the Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
www.helmdisciples.org
helm@helmdisciples.org
314-991-3000

Produced by Higher Education and Leadership Ministries

February 2006

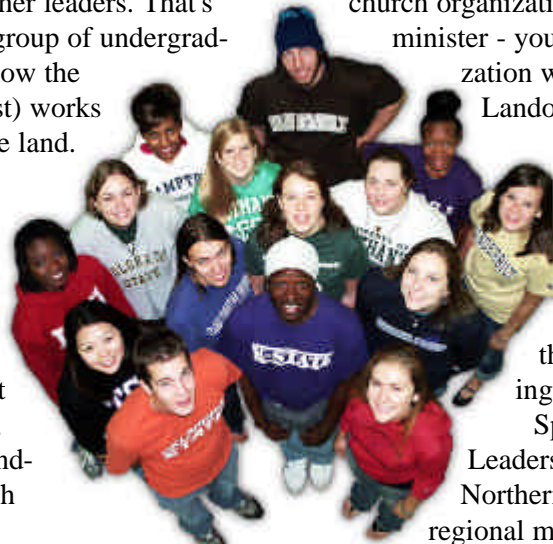
Learning from Leaders

HELM brings undergraduates and church leaders together to see "behind the scenes"

Leaders often learn best from other leaders. That's especially true in the church, and a group of undergraduate students got a chance to learn how the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) works from people who know the lay of the land.

The Higher Education and Leadership Ministries Leadership Fellows Program recognizes undergraduates who demonstrate the ability and willingness to lead in the church. Each year, the fellows gather to examine a particular aspect of leadership; this year's conference, held in Nashville, Tenn., was a behind-the-scenes look at the way the church works.

"To learn how to lead a congregation or other



2005-2006 HELM
Leadership Fellows

church organizations - whether as a layperson or as a minister - you have to understand how the organization works," said HELM President Dennis Landon, "whether it's the nuts-and-bolts of the legal structure or the interpersonal dynamics that shape actions and reactions. We chose our four guests not just because of their titles or resumes but because of their leadership experiences in the church and the way the roles they play are changing the church."

Spending the weekend with the HELM Leadership Fellows were Ben Bohren, Northern California-Nevada transitional regional minister; Charisse Gillett, immediate

See FELLOWS, page 2

Campus Chaos and resource reviews:

Two new ways STEP hopes to get students involved

The Student Ecumenical Partnership will focus on strengthening student ministries during the rest of the school year in two very different ways: resource reviews and the new Campus Chaos tournament.

STEP is the primary student ministry of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Eight members of the STEP Leadership Team met in St. Louis in November to find new ways of ministering to and with college students.

Two Disciples join Lead Team - Page 3

"STEP aims to get students excited and involved in issues that affect them through campus and student ministries," said Brad Lyons, STEP's Disciples staff representative. "Conversation led us to the conclusion that college students have a need

for quality resources for theological discussions and new ideas for attracting students to campus ministries. With our two new ideas, we have the feeling we're on to something."

Campus Chaos: College basketball's annual springtime playoff creates new, intriguing matchups of teams that rarely play each other, and STEP hopes to bring the same competitive format - Campus Chaos - to discovering new ways to get student ministries involved in social issues.

UCC and Disciples student ministries are encouraged to submit 200-word entries and photos describing a project that got students involved in ministry; each ministry is encouraged to send as many entries as possible. Then, all submissions will be bracket-

See STEP, page 2

Three new HELM projects aim to support campus ministries

A renewed commitment to campus and student ministries will begin with a trio of programs to bolster an important but neglected ministry.

The nine-member Council on Ministries in Higher Education, an advisory board that meets annually to help HELM strategize how to minister with campus and student ministries, met January 20-21 in St. Louis.

The conversation at that meeting, focusing on ways HELM, in spite of limited financial resources, can support student

See CAMPUS, page 4

FELLOWS

past moderator; Verity Jones, editor and publisher of *DisciplesWorld* magazine; and Rick Morse, lead minister, New Church Ministries.

Examining how the church works inevitably turns up examples of how the church doesn't work. Speakers took on those hard topics.



HARVICK

"I really appreciated their openness and honesty of our speakers about the challenges that they have faced and how they met them," said Michelle Harvick, a senior at Texas Christian University. "It was especially great to hear about everyone's hopes and dreams for the future of the church."

Despite the troubles the church faces, a message of hope - that better times are here already - permeated the conversations.



CURTIS

"It was encouraging to hear the message not to abandon ship on the church," said Chapman University sophomore Tiffany Curtis, "because I often play with the idea of whether I can be more effective in the world within or outside of the framework of the Church. It is easy to see the denomination as 'not really my church' unless you are around people who are passionate about the church and about your leadership in it, and who believe that you can shape the future of the church."

Each of the speakers gave students insights into the chal-



ESTHER LEE

Each Leadership Fellows conference includes time for students to discuss their leadership development projects, creating opportunities to provide suggestions and to seek advice on solving problems. The student ministries small group took advantage of a crisp fall afternoon when choosing their meeting spot.

lenges that came with their positions - be it administrative, theological, ethical, or personal. The conversation that followed was often painfully honest and revealing, but also the most valuable part of the conference.

"I really enjoyed the honest discussion of the 'state of the church' that went on with leaders within our denomination," Curtis said, "the time spent in fellowship with our resource

staff, and the ideas that were tossed around about the future of our church."

One recurring theme was that too often, congregations - like the denomination itself - focus too much on survival. The church will flourish if Disciples reflect the belief that God is a God of mission, transformation, and abundance.

"I believe that is what God is calling us to as Disciples of Christ," Harvick said. "I took home with me a great sense of hope for our future as a church, as well as a sense of purpose that if we want to really 'do something,' the time is now."

Like any church gathering, though, fellowship created the bonds that will last longer than a weekend. Saturday's dinner was at the well-known Bluebird Café, where Nashville songwriters perform old songs and new, as well as a late-night touch football game that began when most people had settled in for the night.

"I am grateful for the time we get to spend together, whether it's in theological conversation or a game of football," Harvick said. "We are building relationships that will last well



Regional Minister Ben Bohren chats with Leadership Fellows Titus James and Michelle Harvick during a break.

beyond our graduation from the Leadership Fellows Program. It gives an opportunity to bond together as student leaders and share with one another in ways that we might not be able to on our home campuses."

That fellowship provides other ways to look at ministry.

"I was exposed to people who showed me some of the great alternative ways I can involve myself with leadership in the church in the future," said Chris



MILLER-McLEMORE

Miller-McLemore, a sophomore at Vanderbilt University. "I also enjoyed the usual friendship and fellowship that is present at every meeting of HELM Fellows and the HELM staff."

Applications are now available for the HELM Leadership Fellows Program. Current high school seniors and community college students planning to attend a regionally accredited four-year college or university as a full-time student beginning in 2006 are eligible. All materials must be received by March 15, 2006. For more information, visit www.helmdisciples.org or call 314-991-3000.

STEP

ed, and projects will advance through the brackets by a vote of the people. A champion will be crowned in late March and will be recognized at Celebrate, the national gathering for college students and ministers, in New Orleans late next year.

"Campus Chaos is a challenge to all campus religious groups to get out there and make a difference both on their campuses and in their communities in a new and innovative way," said Katie Griffin, a STEP Leadership Team member at Eastern Kentucky University. "Imagine having a set of activities and ideas that have been proven to be successful in campus ministries across the United States."

Resource reviews: The vast supply of resources for discussion groups can be overwhelming. STEP hopes to provide some quick help by creating reviews of socially oriented resources for college students.

In response to STEP's summertime survey that showed college students were

Get in the game!

Does your congregation have a student ministry? Encourage them to join in Campus Chaos. Guidelines are online at www.stepnetwork.org. All on-time entries will be considered!

most passionate about civil rights, students and campus ministers are invited to submit their own reviews of Bible studies, social-issue curriculum, movies, music, poetry, novels - anything that can be used to minister to college students about civil rights. After that, one curriculum or resource will be chosen as the subject of the "STEP Book Club," encouraging campus ministries across the nation to use the same resource and share their reflections online next fall.

Two resources have already been reviewed: "Faith and Community Voices Against Poverty: Let Justice Roll" by Holly Sklar and The Rev. Dr. Paul H. Sherry, and the UCC's "One Nation Under God, with Liberty and Justice for All."

Still going to Celebrate! in New Orleans

Every four years, Celebrate! gathers college students from across the church over the New Year's holiday for worship, learning, fellowship, and service.

This year's Celebrate! is going to be a can't-miss event.

Celebrate! was already heading to New Orleans before Katrina devastated the city last summer. Now the event will provide an opportunity to engage in service and learning in the midst of real-life disaster and rebirth.

"Celebrate! will be a very different kind of event in 2006," said Dennis Landon, who visited New Orleans in February for a plan-

ning meeting. "In the past, Celebrate! has focused on big speakers and workshop sessions. This time it's going to focus on service work and the context of that work -- the politics, environment, faith, and music of New Orleans."

Landon reports New Orleans officials and volunteer service coordinators are thrilled that up to 1,400 college students willing to work will be in town. "They'll already have a place to sleep and food provided; that's the biggest logistical headache for the relief effort right now."

Hold the dates December 28-January 1, and look for more information on Celebrate! at www.cescm.org.



Two Disciples join STEP Leadership Team

The STEP Leadership Team, which helps organize ecumenical events for college students and is the primary national ministry for Disciples and United Church of Christ college students, has added three new students.

Trayce Stewart, a junior at Hiram College, is majoring in early childhood education. She is a member of Bethany Christian Church in Willoughby, Ohio.

Kelly Rand, a sophomore at Texas Christian University, is majoring in social work and religion. Her home church is St. Andrew Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Olathe, Kansas. Kelly is also a HELM Leadership Fellow.

The new UCC representative is Sarah Lohrbach, a sophomore theology and GLBT studies major at Elmhurst College. Sarah is a mem-

ber of St. John United Church of Christ in her hometown of Bourbonnais, Illinois.

Stewart, Rand, and Lohrbach will join five returning members of the STEP Leadership Team, including two Disciples. Katie

Griffin (Eastern Kentucky University) is a senior elementary education major from Bethany Christian Church in Evansville, Indiana, and Beau Underwood (Eureka College) is a senior religion/philosophy and political science/history major from First Christian Church in Princeton, Illinois.

Three Disciples will be departing the team as their terms expire:

Natalee Cayton (Webster University) is a photography major from Oklahoma City who is now a member of Webster Groves



STEWART



RAND

CAMPUS

ministries creatively, resulted in several ideas for strengthening the bond between the church and student ministries.

“The continued revitalization of our church requires creative leaders, both lay and clergy,” said HELM President Dennis Landon. “Nurture for leadership in the church begins in home congregations, but college is a time when people create lifelong habits and develop important skills. Student and campus ministries join with these future leaders at a vital time. We’re ready to help in every way we can.”

In the coming months, HELM will work on three specific areas to support campus ministries:

- **Networking:** HELM will be contacting regions this winter to verify contact information for as many Disciples-related campus ministries as can be identified. The central source for campus ministry contact information, the Higher Education Ministries Arena (HEMA) web site, lists most of these ministries, but a random check of the database indicates many known campus ministries, including ministries supported by Disciples-related colleges and universities, have not yet registered.

- **Communication:** HELM will initiate a newsletter directed toward campus ministers to let them know of important denominational news, scholarship opportunities for students, national, regional, and ecumenical events, and new resources for campus ministry. Campus ministry success stories will also be circulated to the wider church. HELM will also begin a “Campus Ministry of the Week” feature on its web site, encouraging each ministry to provide information about how they work in their campus community.

- **Development:** Since campus and student ministries receive minimal financial support through church structures, they must increasingly look to new sources of funding. HELM has entered conversations with the Christian Church Foundation to help provide fund-raising workshops for campus ministry staff and boards.

“Campus ministry is a highly competitive marketplace dominated by multi-million-dollar para-church organizations,” Landon said. “The church has shortchanged campus ministries and underappreciated their contributions over the years. Campus ministry is a unique and an incredibly important ministry.”

As these initiatives progress, information will be available on HELM’s web site, www.helmdisciples.org.

STEP TEAM

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in St. Louis;

- Leslie Dobyms (Culver-Stockton College) is an arts management major from First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Peoria, Illinois;

- Jon Hall (Transylvania University) is a religion, sociology and anthropology major from First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Huntsville, Alabama.

The STEP Team will meet next in Cleveland at the national setting of the United Church of Christ from February 17-19.

STEP’s ministries receive significant support from the James I. Spainhower Campus Ministry Endowment and the Raymond F. McCallister Campus Ministry Endowment.

HELM in brief

HELM Board adds elementary teacher, aeronautical engineer

Two new faces will join the HELM Board of Directors when they gather April 28-30 in St. Louis.

Frank C. Gillette, Jr., retired from Pratt & Whitney in 1998 but continues to be involved in aeronautical engineering by lecturing at the U.S. Air Force Academy and serving on a panel for the National Academies of Science. A graduate of the University of Florida, Gillette is a member of Tropical Sands Christian Church in Palm Beach Gardens and serves on the Florida Regional Board.

Sheila P. Spencer is a bilingual elementary educator in the Los Angeles Unified School District, where she has been nominated for teacher of the year. A member of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Lynwood, she has served a six-year term on the boards of both the National Convocation and Disciples Home Missions. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California

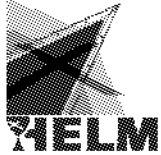
Spencer and Gillette will each serve a four-year term.

Are you looking for a new voice in your church newsletter?

HELM’s web site has new stories every week from college students across the country. Subjects range from involvement in campus activities to reflections on scripture and God’s world. Go to www.helmdisciples.org/helm/news.htm and look for “Leadership Fellows Tell Their Stories.”

HELM interns program

Would a college student be interested in a summer internship at your church or service organization? Your congregation could have a lot to offer a young leader. HELM can connect you with a summer intern. Your congregation would need to provide travel, food, lodging, and an allowance as well as a \$2,000 stipend at the end of the summer. Contact HELM if you would be interested in hosting a summer intern.



**If you would like a print copy of this
or other HELM publications, please visit**

<http://www.helmdisciples.org/orders/index.htm>

or call

314-991-3000.