



Tomorrow's Leaders Today

The good news from HELM and higher education institutions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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Leadership Fellows study putting faith into action

All Disciples are called to be ministers, to live lives that are examples of Christ's call to love and care for each other.

As young Disciples discern their vocation, however, often they are pushed in other directions, away from their passions and toward lucrative or more practical careers. Or ordained ministry isn't a practical option.

Finding a middle ground — a place where Christ's call and a career can live together — was the focus of this year's HELM Leadership Fellows Conference. Seventeen undergraduate students gathered for a crisp fall weekend at the Tall Oaks Camp and Conference Center outside Kansas City to examine how to do ministry beyond the pulpit.

The Leadership Fellows Program nurtures college students who have expressed the desire to lead in their congregations and their church, whether that is a minister or a lay leader. During this conference, students met four people who know how to do ministry without being behind a pulpit:

- Robin Hoover, the founder of Humane Borders, explained the Biblical and

theological roots for his organization's mission of providing drinking water to immigrants crossing the treacherous deserts of the American Southwest. Hoover also pastors First Christian Church of Tucson, Arizona.

- Amy Gopp, Associate Director of Week of Compassion, explained her

call to minister for those in lands devastated by war, famine, or other disasters and how that has led her to the Balkans and Sudan as parts of her ministry.

- Anthony Flynn, Operations Pastor and Executive Director of the Power
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The 2006-2007 HELM Leadership Fellows

Running the extra mile

Hiram student adds co-chair of national student ministry group to growing list of service

Catching up with Trayce Stewart is tough, and not just because she competes on Hiram College's track team.

In addition to student teaching four days a week and carrying a full load of classes, Trayce is involved in campus ministries at Hiram and serves on the Student Ecumenical Partnership's Leadership Team.

In October, Stewart added another task to her to-do list: She will serve as the student co-chair of the Council for Ecumenical Student Christian Ministries (CESCM) through 2007. CESCM is an association of seven mainline Protestant denominations working together on campus and student ministries and is the primary relation to the World Student Christian Federation.

CESCM's primary goal for the rest of the year is to plan Celebrate '06, the quadrennial national gathering of college

students around the New Year holiday. New Orleans will host Celebrate '06, which is expected to send 1,100 students into mission fields as well as worship, fellowship, and reflection.

(See www.cescm.org/Celebrate06 for more information.)

When Celebrate ends, Trayce's year-long term as co-chair begins. Her first assignment will be to represent CESCM at the National Council of Church's meeting in Orlando January 7-9. CESCM will meet again in the spring, a meeting she will help plan and oversee.

"The co-chair is the point person with all the activities going on," she says. "When articles and assignments are due, the co-chair makes sure they're all in. The co-chair is in charge of the meetings and represents the students in other



STEWART

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FELLOWS

Center Community Development Corporation, described the rapid growth, broad reach, and inspiring creativity of New Direction Christian Church, a Memphis congregation started in 2001 that now has more than 8,000 members and is affiliated with a handful of businesses that provide jobs for an economically challenged neighborhood.

- Jamie Frazier, the president and CEO of Bridging the Gap, shared his organization's mission of sustainable growth and environmental stewardship in the Kansas City area.



ENARI

Though each guest had a different take on vocation and calling, the theme common to each was clear.

"Finding my passions and putting faith into action were messages that really hit home for me," said Allison Enari, a first-year student at Occidental College from Bloomington, Indiana. "As I continue to find my own path with Christ in a new place, I will prayerfully consider other ways I can passionately put my faith into action."

David Weuste, a sophomore at Texas Christian University from Guthrie, Okla., found something different in each presenter.



WEUSTE

"The resource staff was great talking and hanging out with us throughout the weekend," he said. "Amy Gopp revived our passions in our lives and ministries. Robin Hoover helped us think about channeling those passions into social change. Jamie Frazier

showed us new ways for ministering to God's great Earth. Anthony Flynn enlightened us to evangelizing and community development in urban areas. This weekend recharged my passion in activism."

Despite their different experiences and ministries, there was common ground.

"The common traits that I saw between our speakers was their willingness to step outside the box, let their voice be heard,



JOHNSON

and not be afraid of what might be said about them," said Katie Johnson, a first-year student at TCU from Nashville. "Their passion for what they did outshined their fear of doing what hadn't been done before."

The students also engaged in an intense discussion about the challenges facing women and different ethnic groups in church life. Like many other dialogues, the topic came back to leadership and how to lead.



O'DONNELL

"I learned something that I suppose should have been obvious to me from the beginning... that leadership is just what it says: LEADERSHIP," Johnson said. "I can't lead by following someone else's example. In order to be a leader in this world, I have to do what hasn't been done. I have to find a need and work to fix it, not just lend my time and efforts to other people's goals."

Laura O'Donnell appreciated the larger vision brought by Gopp, Hoover, Flynn, and Frazier.

"It can be challenging for leaders in the church to think beyond the local congregation," said the Vanderbilt sophomore from Zionsville, Indiana, "but this weekend provided amazing examples of leadership outside of the church that is inspired by faith. Each of them showed incredible motivation in their own lives."



Anthony Flynn and Amy Gopp discuss the continuing challenge of gender and ethnic prejudices during the HELM Leadership Fellows Conference.

They also demonstrated the importance of educating yourself on the issues before taking a stand.

"They were all very knowledgeable in the work that they were doing," O'Donnell added. "They all showed how important it is to have a grounded faith and the knowledge to back up that faith when it is tested."

If you know a student who will be entering a four-year college or transferring from a community college to a four-year college in 2007 - a student you believe has leadership potential for the church and the world - let us know. We will send information on the HELM Leadership Fellows Program. It provides mentoring on or near campus, annual educational workshops, summer internships, a grant to help pay for the student's education, and the opportunity to discover his or her role in the future of our church.

To pass along the name of a potential applicant:

call us at 314-991-3000
e-mail helm@helmdisciples.org
fax 314-991-2957.

Please make sure we have your suggestion by February 1.

Applicants must send a completed application form, three sealed references, a short essay, and a release of information - all in one packet; their current school must send a transcript. All materials must be postmarked no later than March 15, 2007.



Dr. Robin Hoover describes the theological foundation of Humane Borders as Mandy Ogunnowo listens.

STEWART

ways."

A member of Bethany Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in suburban Cleveland, Stewart joined the Student Ecumenical Partnership (STEP) Leadership Team at the beginning of 2006. Early on, she volunteered to represent Disciples students at CESC M meetings.

During her second meeting, Trayce was selected for the position by CESC M's administrative committee because of her leadership skills, says staff co-chair Douglas Fenton.

"At the [September] meeting, Trayce took a stand that was not an easy stand to take," said Fenton, the staff representative for the Episcopal Church USA. "While the council chose to go another direction, she did an admirable job making her case and showing her resolution. When it came time to select a new representative, Trayce was our choice."

Stewart is the second Disciple in three years to hold the co-chair position. In 2005, Brandon Johnson served in the position.

"The co-chair can direct and moderate conversation to help CESC M think and dream beyond the responsibilities of Celebrate," said Johnson, a graduate

of Transylvania University now studying at the Yale Divinity School. "The student co-chair learns to negotiate denominational and personality differences while moderating a meeting alongside a staff member. As co-chair you develop a deeper understanding and respect for the gifts of all those at the table."

Trayce expects the primary tasks for CESC M during her term will relate to CESC M's new affiliation with the National Council of Churches, revising CESC M's mission, and relations with Canadian student groups.

CESC M will work its way into her busy schedule. This semester, the elementary education major is student teaching third-graders at an elementary school about 10 minutes from campus. She arrives there at about 7:30 a.m. four days a week. Eight hours later, she leaves the school and has about an hour to get back to campus in time for track practice. Stewart competes for the Division III Terriers in the long jump, triple jump, 4-by-1, and 400-meter dash. She's carrying a 17-hour load this semester.

"If I don't stay busy, I get in trouble," she says with a laugh.

Stewart credits two people — and old-fashioned networking — for opening doors to the larger church.

"My home pastor (Rev. Dr. Robin Hedgeman) has been so involved nationally and regionally that as people find out what church I go to, and who the pastor is, I find opportunities to do things that might take others a while to discover."

After transferring to Hiram in 2005 from a Pennsylvania university, she found a new mentor for her spiritual development: Hiram's campus minister, Jon Moody.

"When Trayce transferred here, she introduced herself to me as a Disciples student who was interested in ministry," Moody says. "I began tossing things to her, from sitting on our church relations committee to church internships to interfaith programming to STEP. What got me about Trayce was that she caught everything I tossed her."

Trayce is already investigating seminaries for graduate work after she graduates from Hiram in December 2007.

"I have felt more of an urge to start my own church outside of Ohio that is inclusive of all ages. That's been a struggle for a lot of young adults and youths: how do they fit in at a church that only ministers or focuses on the needs of adults."

Tell me a story

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" or "Student Ecumenical Partnership News and Essays." Here are a few examples of this fall's stories.

A lesson in rugby



WALLING

Believe it or not, Kristen Walling is a rugby player. She joined the college club team, learned the rules of the game, and made new friends. Then the competition began. It ate up a lot of her time and energy, made some rookie mistakes, and distinctly remembers the sound of her head cracking on the ground. She almost quit, but the drive to push her limits is just one reason she's still on the field. God calls us to push our limits and take chances. It might not be easy at the time, but hopefully we'll be better people for the effort.

Peace and the World Cup

Rebekah Cypert spent most of the summer traveling as a Disciples Peace Intern, but a vacation to Germany to watch soccer's international championship, the World Cup, reminded her of home in an unusual way: Soccer and UNICEF teamed up with a message of unity and peace. That peace shows up in the sometimes-rough world of soccer is a hint that peace should be in all aspects of the world we share.



CYPERT

What changes, what stays the same

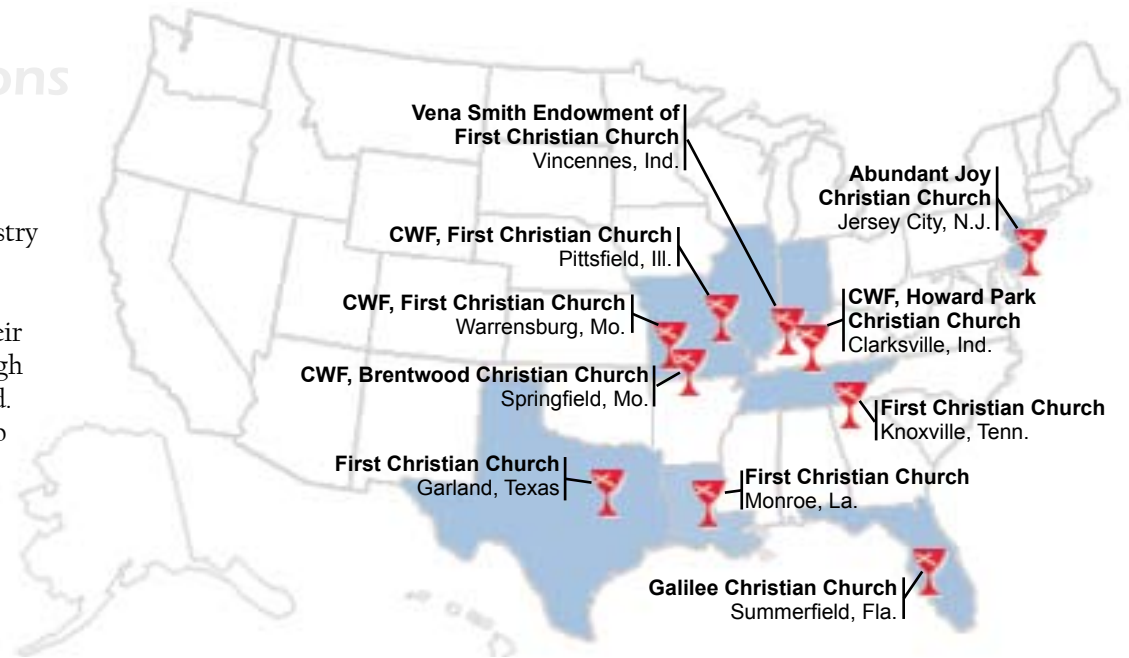
Katie Griffin headed home after years away at college, and it reminded her of seeing a friend she hadn't seen in a long time: "so much about them has changed, yet so much has stayed the same as well." Her faith has changed a lot during college, and sharing her updated faith has provided a few awkward moments with the people who know her best. But one thing has stayed constant — Katie's never lost her faith.



GRIFFIN

Second Mile Congregations

HELM recognizes congregational partners whose interest in our ministry of leader development has led them to make gifts in 2006 above and beyond their support of our work through the Disciples Mission Fund. We give heartfelt thanks to these congregations.



HELM's General Assembly banquet no trivial matter

disciples.org/ga/.

Information on purchasing tickets and other details will be available in the next "Tomorrow's Leaders Today."