

## “Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity:” The Transformation Continues

**Central Christian Camp & Conference Center**, near Guthrie, Oklahoma, served as the site for the Foundation’s second workshop this year on “Creating Congregational Cultures of Generosity,” October 18-20, 2010. As with the preceding May event, Oklahoma Disciples Foundation contracted with the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving to present the interactive workshop discussing congregations, stewardship and giving as a way of life.

First, the groundwork was laid by Rev. Klopp as he discussed *the landscape of religious giving*, i.e., research findings on charitable giving patterns among respondents who indicate a religious affiliation. While church

strategies for *congregational renewal through generosity*.

Rev. Klopp observed that problems in talking about faith and giving arise because both clergy and laity tend to see money-talk as taboo. Sources of this perception within the larger culture and congregations were discussed in terms of *generosity as leadership with theological integrity*.



Although this concludes a year-long program for Oklahoma Disciples churches with the objective of helping *transform the culture of giving* within their congregations, participants expect the spirit of the workshops will extend far into the future. Richard Klopp, director at the Lake Institute, served as the workshop leader. (Rev. Klopp’s biography and more information on the Lake Institute, as well as the May workshop is in our Summer 2010 newsletter online at [www.okdisciplesfoundation.org](http://www.okdisciplesfoundation.org).)

attendance is directly related to all charitable giving, religious/congregational giving is on the wane.<sup>1</sup> He also discussed the proposition that “the most formidable rival to generous voluntary financial giving is America’s institutionalized mass consumerism.”<sup>2</sup>

Transparency (openness in the way a congregation conducts its affairs) and organizational accountability were emphasized. Among key prerequisites identified for putting generosity to practice: telling the story with passion, having a keen sense of vision, and excellent communication.

For more information on this initiative, contact Kyle Maxwell at [kymaxwell@okdisciplesfoundation.org](mailto:kymaxwell@okdisciplesfoundation.org) or 405.525.6530.

References/footnotes:  
<sup>1</sup>Center on Philanthropy data; Hoge, et al. (1996) *Money Matters*  
<sup>2</sup>Smith, et al. (2008) *Passing the Plate*

Workshop participants included 16 pastors from 12 Oklahoma Disciples churches. Also, one or two active laypersons from each congregation was recruited to attend, so clergy and laity could function as a team.

The concept of generosity was thoroughly explored in terms of its social dynamics and factors that encourage it. Workshop participants were encouraged to share their philanthropic biographies and to reflect on how such stories can contribute to building a culture of generosity. Group exercises gave the clergy-lay teams time to explore



### My Enduring Gift

*I/we wish to make a perpetual gift to the Oklahoma Disciples Foundation, Inc.*

Please select the endowment fund(s):

- Camps & Programs
- Senior Adult Care
- Pastoral Care
- ODWF     ODMF
- Disc. Scholarships & Institutions
- Regional Ministries
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Full list at [www.okdisciplesfoundation.org](http://www.okdisciplesfoundation.org))

Disciples Club  
 Annual Gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Tax-Deductible Gift Enclosed:**

Check \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ installments @ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Gifts are recorded in the calendar year.)

Credit Card \$ \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard  VISA  Discover

Name on Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Questions? Call 888-525-6530 (toll-free)*

**Donor Information:**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please list my/our donor name(s) as: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I/we attend \_\_\_\_\_ church in \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:  
 Oklahoma Disciples Foundation  
 301 NW 36th  
 Oklahoma City, OK 73118

*If you have received this newsletter in error, or no longer wish to subscribe, please email [vrose@okdisciplesfoundation.org](mailto:vrose@okdisciplesfoundation.org) or call Vicki Rose 888.525.6530*

The following commentary was delivered by **Elaine Schuster** in November 2010 during the *Service of Giving* at **Crown Heights Christian Church** in Oklahoma City.

Elaine's remarks are reminiscent of the message on our newsletter's masthead:

"Touch A Life – **Today** ... and **Tomorrow**."

The headline in the Church Newsletter this week was "SECURE THE PRESENT - SHARE THE FUTURE". What I am about to tell is an example of that headline: After the last worship service on November 22, 1992 of University Place Christian Church which was located at N.W. 28th and McKinley [in Oklahoma City], the members transferred our memberships to other churches, including a number of us who came to Crown Heights.

In the process of closing the church, there were funds that had been given regularly and there were funds that had been given for specific purposes. There were the proceeds of the sale of the church property itself. All those funds were given as an endowment to the **Oklahoma Disciples Foundation** with designated beneficiaries.

Rev. Joe Samuels had been a pastor at University Place for over thirteen years and moved to be pastor of a Kansas church before he retired. When he retired, he and Helen returned to Oklahoma City, as they still owned a home here. Joe began the yearly University Place Reunions on an October Sunday afternoon. Invitations and notices were sent to everyone who had been members. These reunions were well attended by persons who lived here and many who came from out-of-state. The reunions were scheduled at various area churches where members had transferred their membership and at the Christian Home.

On October 10 this year, we had our Tenth Reunion at the Regional Office of the Christian Church in Oklahoma over on N.W. 36th Street. Richard Keith, who grew up at University Place, is the Financial Administrator for the Region. The offices of the Oklahoma Disciples Foundation (ODF) are also there. Dr. Kyle Maxwell, the pastor emeritus of First Christian Church in Edmond, is the Executive Director of the ODF. On Friday, October 8, he heard we were meeting. He asked Richard if he could come and give a report on the University Place Endowment. They conferred with Joe and Dr. Maxwell was to come.

There are three remaining Trustees of University Place, Wilbur Patton, Lee Bacher and I, and we are members of Crown Heights. Wilbur and I were at the Reunion. While everyone was gathering, Dr. Maxwell told some of us that the Children's Home in St. Louis was not accepting the endowment income and was returning the checks to ODF. In about fifteen minutes conversation before the reunion program and meeting began, Wilbur, Richard, Joe, Dr. Maxwell and I considered what we could do with those funds to meet the purpose of the endowment. We concluded that these funds should be divided into two parts: one-half to be added to the 1992 established endowment for [Central] Christian Camp in Logan County where so many programs of the church in Oklahoma occur, including camp for the youth and young people and many other meetings. The other one-half should be designated for the Senior Ministries program which is a recent development of the Region related to the Fellowship of John funds for support of needy senior members of the church. The program even has an Assistant Regional Pastor to oversee the program.

During the meeting, we heard Richard's report on the Region and Dr. Maxwell's report on the University Place Endowment at ODF. He included the news of the Children's Home refusing to accept the funds. At that point I moved that the designated Children's Home Endowment funds be divided into two parts and re-designated with the endowments for Central Christian Camp and the Senior Ministries. Wilbur seconded the motion. There was some discussion and a vote was called. The vote was a unanimous thirty-two votes by the show of hands of all those in attendance.

As a result those funds that had been placed in endowment with ODF in 1992 will continue to be used in the work of these two Christian Church programs through the ODF as we, the members of University Place, intended.

University Place was organized in 1905 and its Mission style church building some of us remember was built in 1911. The modern church building was built in the 1950s. It is now owned by United Way of Central Oklahoma so it continues doing the work of the Lord for the benefit of the people of Central Oklahoma. In recognition of the history of the church at that location, the United Way mounted in the inside wall of the foyer of the building the very large cornerstone of the 1911 church building which says "University Place Christian Church 1911."

So you see when the Crown Heights newsletter used the headline "Secure the Present — Share the Future" in the campaign for the 2011 church budget, it was saying we in the Christian Church mean exactly that.