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888.525.6530 (toll-free) or 405.525.6530 www.okdisciplesfoundation.org

An Encouraging Word On Being The Church

Please visit with us at:

July 8: Kyle preaching at Central Christian Church, Enid ~ Devon McAnally Ordination

July 21-25: General Assembly, Fort Worth, TX

July 29: Kyle preaching at Disciples Christian, Newcastle

August 14: Oklahoma Disciples Foundation Board Meeting, Northwest Christian Church, Oklahoma City

August 19: SW Area Assembly, Chickasha

August 20: NE Area Board Meeting, Owasso

An encouraging word on being the church comes from John M. Buchanan, editor/publisher of *The Christian Century*, as he participated in a recent pastors consultation sponsored by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (216 denominations) in Switzerland.

Amazing stories were told about unbelievable ministries: Gideon Khabela of South Africa serves a rural church composed of 27 different local congregations. Khabela preaches in each every few months and the rest of the time congregational elders are in charge of the preaching, teaching and pastoral care. Zsigmond Gyorgy Vad described the resilience of the Hungarian Church under communism and its rebirth with multiple Sunday worship services and hundreds of baptisms. Jang Bin Chang of Seoul, Korea recounted his weekly schedule – preaching on Sundays, and preaching every morning at multiple prayer and praise services attended by thousands. When asked by the Americans when he had a day off, Jang Bin Chang did not seem to understand the question (but his wife did).

Buchanan and the other Americans gained a new sense of how privileged they (and we) are with our abundance of resources and freedom. Being church is a constant struggle for congregational leaders to take the lead, with attendance and baptisms on the

decline, and evidence of the Spirit not always clear; we have much to learn from sisters and brothers in Christ living in developing nations who know how to be church in different ways and in very demanding settings.

Are our resources too great? Have our freedoms turned into indulgence and unconstraint? As the church in a developed nation, have we lost our purpose and the discipline to regain it? Are we the new mission field? Is God calling us to find new ways of being the church by listening to those who obviously have energy and leadership for a new day? Hopefully these questions will stir us to hear an encouraging word and call us to action in our own congregations.

The Oklahoma Disciples Foundation is here to serve you and your congregation in managing financial resources in the form of permanent funds or charitable gift annuities in order for the church of tomorrow to have the support for listening, hearing, and responding to God's call. Call us (888-525-6530 or 405-525-6530) or email us: kymaxwell@okdisciplesfoundation.org.



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Charitable Gifts Set New Record in 2006

Americans set a record for giving to charitable causes in 2006, donating an estimated \$295.02 billion, according to an annual report released by the Giving USA Foundation at Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy on June 25.

Giving to religious organizations accounted for 32.8 percent of the total giving, while 13.9 percent went to universities, private schools and other educational institutions.

Giving USA Chairman Richard Jolly noted that "What people find especially interesting about this, and it's true year after year — that such a high percentage comes from individual donors." Individual giving accounted for 75.6 percent of the total. When combined with bequests, contributions from individuals increased to 83.4 percent.

The report also showed that approximately 65 percent of households with incomes below \$100,000 give to charity. In an Associated Press story about the report, Claire Guadiani — a professor at New York University's Heyman Center for Philanthropy — is quoted: "It tells you something about American culture that is unlike any other country." A Charities Aid Foundation 2006 comparison, noted Guadiani, shows that Americans give twice as much as the next most charitable country. In that comparison, taking philanthropic giving as a percentage of gross domestic product, the U. S. ranked #1 at 1.7 percent, with Great Britain ranking #2 at 0.73 percent.

Do you need more closet space?

No, the Disciples Foundation is not involved in a new commercial venture. The question is: do you find yourself running out of room for *things*? In our consumption-driven culture, it is easy to acquire too much stuff. We buy bigger houses (the average size has increased almost 40% since 1970) with larger rooms and walk-in closets that sometimes resemble caverns — all to accommodate our material possessions. Then we hire clutter experts to help us get organized and dispose of the excess.

If you have reached a point of exasperation with accumulated stuff — and even if you haven't — consider some options.

- ◆ Next time you get ready to buy that extra pair of shoes or replace your second television or upgrade to a fancier car — give yourself a different gift by putting that money to work at the Oklahoma Disciples Foundation.



- ◆ Next time your spouse/sibling/child asks you what you want for your birthday, anniversary or Christmas, suggest that they honor the occasion with a gift to your chosen endowment fund.
- ◆ When offering condolences, substitute a lasting memorial gift for a short-lived floral arrangement.
- ◆ Next time you want to honor a special person or thank someone, a check to ODF can show your heartfelt appreciation.

This kind of giving can become an enduring family tradition.

~ Collect memories, not things ~



For a complete list of the Oklahoma Disciples Foundation Named Endowment funds, please go to our website, www.okdisciplesfoundation.org and click Giving Opportunities. Then click the Named Endowment List link to read a short history of each fund and the year it was established. The Donate Now link will take you to a secure online donation page.