

Metro Districts Conference  
February 19, 2011  
2:30 – 3:30 p.m.  
Christ UMC, Racine, Wisconsin  
Minutes

The Metro Districts Conference was called to order by Vision Team Convenor Rev. Kelly Fowler following an extraordinary RETHINKING Church Workshop and an intermission during which the Crossway Band played. Rev. Jorge Mayorga-Solis, Metro Districts Superintendent, led the group in prayer. Gail Burgess, Lay Member at Bristol UMC, volunteered to act as secretary for the meeting.

Rev. Dan Dick, Director of Connectional Ministries for the Wisconsin Conference and keynote speaker, was introduced. His topic for the afternoon was “2G Church in a 4G World: Can You Hear Me Now?” First, Rev. Dick defined the terms: 1G (First Generation Communications) is personal, face-to-face; 2G is Point-to-Point, covering a distance (including telegraph and early phone), 3G is Point-to-Group/Audience (including media such as television, radio, periodicals) and 4G indicates a large number of people connected together, with communication moving back and forth (polylog vs. dialog).

In order to make some comparisons, the advent of 2G was established as circa 1911. At that time the average church size was 65 with average attendance at 110. Most churches held three services per week. The average church building was 2100 sq. ft. in size and only 39% had electricity while only 28% had indoor plumbing. Clergy were paid \$572 per year and had no insurance benefits. By contrast, one hundred years later the average membership is 131 while only 78 attend worship and only two services are held weekly. Average size is 11,800 square feet and 39% have video projectors in the sanctuary while 28% are wired for wireless service in the building. Although total expenses are up 1400%, missions are only 3% of that total (11% including apportionments).

We need to take advantage of the technology available to us in order to develop new relationships, engaging people on several levels and reaching out to the global community. Worship needs to be God centered optimizing both clergy and lay leadership and utilizing technology as a gift. We need to continue to say, do and be Christ in the world.

Rev. Fowler reviewed 2010 Metro District Vision Team goals, noting that there has been progress in developing an urban strategy for inner city churches, packaging the Lay Leader Training in Spanish and for use in other regions, using resource feedback sheets from 2010, and offering the RETHINK CHURCH event. Other goals remain in process or have been tabled. The 2011 Goals include continuation of urban strategy conversations, relevant trainings, the Metro gathering and involvement of leadership with the Vision Team and a review of tabled projects.

A brief list of resources and upcoming dates in the Metros region were noted by Metro South Lay Leader Deanna Shimko Herman. Some concerns were raised regarding the decision to hold the Town Hall Meeting with the Bishop during the day on a week day (Monday, March 28). Also noted were the 2010 Metro District Scholarship Recipients: Albright UMC (survey), TR Weiland Company (development of cooperative parish plan for East Troy, Elkhorn Bethel and Caldwell), Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary (purchase of books School of License attendee), Bethany-Calvary UMC (equipment for Share Fair) and Waukesha First (three Christian educators to National Conference). All were encouraged to consider applying for a small grant when needs arise. Eleven district and metro region Advance Specials were highlighted.

The slate of officers for the Metro Region Vision Team was presented by Nominations Chair Gerry Harrison. The position of Circuit Liason remained vacant. A motion to accept the nominating committee report passed unanimously.

Metro North Lay Leader Mark Sheets presented the 2010 Financial Report noting a balance of \$8,796.91 brought forward to 2011. Special thanks were given to 100% giving and high percentage giving local churches. The proposed 2011 budget was set at \$16,257, a decrease from \$17,900 proposed in 2010. A motion to accept the budget passed unanimously. The District Asking (apportionment) was set at \$.60 per member, the same as the past three years; this also passed. It was noted that a "Statement of District Support" will be sent to all churches by April 1, 2011. Those attending the conference were asked to offer an explanation of what these funds provide at a future Administrative Council meeting.

Rev. Don Greer and Edgar Russell shared information about the Urban Ministry. They especially asked for support of the Shalom Zone Initiative which will be providing ministry and housing much like a refugee hostel. It was noted that North Central Jurisdiction is working on a plan to meet urban needs, with information on accessing funds to meet these needs.

An offering was taken for the Shalom Zone to help with the completing the House for Immigrants. Flowers and a card were presented to Metro Region Office Administrator Barb Ridgely.

Gail Burgess