

Equipping the Church for Ministry: Clergy Circuits

As Conference leaders our task is “to equip the church in disciple making ministry...”

The Bishop and Cabinet of the California-Nevada Annual Conference take seriously the leadership task assigned by the Discipline and the Annual Conference. We have come to the conclusion that, for the sake of the ministry of our Conference, we must re-define and restructure the way we do our work together.

Understanding that:

- The purpose of the Annual Conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all for the glory of God (§ 601)
- The Bishop and Cabinet work with the clergy and churches “to equip the church in disciple making ministry... and to facilitate initiation of structures and strategies for the equipping of Christian people for service in the Church and in the world in the name of Jesus Christ, and to help extend the service in mission...” (§401)
- Specific tasks of Superintendents are outlined in §§419-23 with an emphasis on spiritual leadership and cooperative work with clergy and laity to the end of enhancing ministry within districts.
- Beyond the Discipline, basic management principles and practices hold that:
 - Work done in teams is more effective than work done alone.
 - Decisions are best made locally.
 - Effective “span of supervision” is 5-12 direct supervisees.

Therefore, in order to implement greater leadership for disciple making, improve spiritual support for pastors and congregations, and facilitate structures and strategies across the Conference to accomplish our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, our work together will be organized differently beginning July 1 of 2009.

Basics for 2009-2010

The Conference will maintain 7 districts, staffed by the current administrative assistants who know the churches within the district. These administrative hubs

will serve as regional information centers in the Conference, providing resources, referral, and basic information to clergy and churches.

There will be 5 District Superintendents. Superintendents will each meet regularly with 8-12 circuit leaders (see below) and will work with the Cabinet, other Conference leaders, and boards and agencies to provide leadership development, consultation, and strategies to enhance the ministry of the Conference. Superintendents may supervise circuits across district lines.

District Superintendents for 2009-2010 are the Revs. Ben Silva-Netto, Jerry Smith, Renae Extrum-Fernandez, Mariellen Yoshino and Kristie Olah.

There will be one Conference Superintendent who will work with Bishop Brown and across the Conference to facilitate this reorganization for the equipping of the church, to serve as Dean of the Cabinet and to assist the Bishop in proactive leadership development within the Conference. The Conference Superintendent for 2009-2010 will be the Rev. Ted Virts.

There will be 40-50 clergy circuits. Each circuit will have 8-12 members, including a named circuit leader. Circuits will be a covenant for mutual accountability and support. Guided by circuit leaders, pastors will support, challenge and encourage each other within circuit meetings. Pastors will collaborate for ministry development, spiritual growth, mutual accountability, vision-sharing and strategic development toward the making of disciples and extending Christ's service beyond the church. Through the circuits, pastors will develop new ways of working together that are appropriate and effective in their given geography. The circuits will meet regularly throughout the year. Because circuits are a central place for ministry development, participation in circuits is mandatory.

Each District Superintendent will meet regularly with the circuit leaders under his or her care in a Leaders Group. The Leaders Group will provide spiritual and covenantal connection, support, encouragement, and accountability for the circuit leaders. Circuit leaders will share information with each other and with the Superintendent about the growth, plans, struggles, covenants, needs, barriers, hopes, and results within circuits, pastors and congregations. This partnership among the circuit pastors, circuit leaders and Superintendents will strengthen the effectiveness of the ministry within the Conference.

District Superintendents will visit each circuit meeting at least once per year beginning January 2010. The DS will contact each pastor and each SPRC chair at least once per year. DS will review annual profiles for churches and pastors as well as the reports from SPRC and pastors regarding appointments. The DS will visit each church at least once each one-to-two years. The Superintendents will hold events, trainings and celebrations among groups of circuits throughout the year. Superintendents will be freed to use their gifts and graces for leadership development across the Conference.

Superintendents and Cabinet, and *not the circuits*, remain responsible for:

- **Legal matters** such as immigration, contracts, law suits, employment, and property issues.
- **Disciplinary matters** such as complaints, Conference relations, interpretation of the Discipline, approvals of matters required of the DS and stated in the Discipline.
- **Personnel matters** such as leaves, vacations, approvals, and pastoral staff decisions.
- **Process questions**, including ordination and appointment decisions.
- **Evaluation** of pastoral effectiveness and, when necessary, decisions related to remedial or Disciplinary action regarding pastoral performance. Superintendents will continue to consult with Staff-Parish Relations Committees regarding the work of the pastor within the local church.

During the transition period

- Spiritually based leadership development will be at the center of our evolving work and changing roles.
- The connectional nature of The United Methodist Church will be emphasized.
- We will grow into the new direction through prayerful focus, humble listening, gracious forgiveness, and focused discipleship.
- As colleagues in ministry, we will work through difficulties so that ministry can be enhanced and new ministries can grow from shared vision at the local level.

On behalf of Bishop Brown and the Cabinet,

Ted Virts
Dean of the Cabinet