

GA-1904

Christian Church Foundation

Gary W. Kidwell, President

Are Disciples less generous than we were 30 years ago? The decline in mainline churches—including ours—is well documented. In 1986, Disciples reported 764,413 participating members. By 2016, that number had declined to 273,966. Giving to Disciples outreach causes over the same period declined from \$31.5 million to \$17.8 million. So, are we giving less to the church than we were in 1986?

To find an answer, I looked through some old Year Books and discovered that per capita giving (total giving reported by congregations divided by total participating membership) in 1986 was \$464. In 2016, our per capita giving was \$1,408. Disciples' total giving has not only kept pace with inflation, it has nearly doubled in real dollars. I think we can stop the hand wringing over the decline in our generosity!

The Foundation's growth is a testimony to the generosity of Disciples. Every gift we receive and every investment entrusted to us represents the faith and witness of a faithful donor. We are grateful for their commitment and their examples.

Gifts and investment deposits were strong again in 2018. Through the first nine months of the year, gifts and deposits totaled \$21.1 million.

Volatility returned to the financial markets in 2018 as President Donald Trump's multiple trade skirmishes with China, the European Union, and others caused investors to question the prospect for future global growth. Withstanding volatility is a vital objective for all of our investment portfolios, which held up well during last year's stress. Through tactical allocations across numerous non-correlated assets, we will continue to navigate through volatile periods and deliver long-term value.

In November, the Christian Church Foundation's board of directors approved the creation of a new investment fund. The Bostick Select Fund will continue to uphold the Foundation's commitment to being an active, faith-based investor while also excluding investments in fossil fuels, weapons manufacturers, and companies targeted for divestment because of their involvement in perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The fund will actively invest in environmentally sustainable companies as well as those responding to an increasing global population. The Bostick Select Fund honors the ministry of Rev. Sarah Lue Bostick, one of the first African-American women ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Rev. Bostick served the church for over 40 years until her retirement. She was a devoted worker for Christian Woman's Board of Missions and the National Christian Missionary Society.

India Bobadilla became Vice President of the Great Lakes Zone on July 1, following the retirement of Enrique (Quique) Ocasio. India's area includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan,

Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Marilyn Fiddmont, Vice President of the Southwest Zone (Southern California, New Mexico, the southern tip of Nevada, Arizona, and Hawaii), added the Northeastern Region to her oversight this year. Maggie Archibald began her ministry with the Foundation on March 1 as Director of Communications.

Our treasury services team now totals ten full-time and three part-time staff—seven with a CPA, MBA, or both, and seven with at least twelve years of service to the Foundation.

The Foundation mourned the loss of two leaders who played key roles in our ministry—Marvin “Ozzie” Osborn and Orval Holt. Ozzie was one of the early pioneers in the field of fundraising. He served as a consultant to founding Christian Church Foundation President James Reed for nearly 30 years and was essential in shaping the strategic direction and model of the Foundation. Orval Holt joined the Foundation staff in 1980 and was the first Vice President for the South Central Zone. Orval’s quiet, calm, stable and pastoral style helped form how we do this work. Orval taught us that listening for gifts is much more important than asking.

We celebrate the continued faithfulness and generosity of Disciples. We are inspired by our donors’ lives and legacies, and by the amazing, creative, life-changing outreach of Disciples ministries. Thank you for your partnership in ministry.

Gary W. Kidwell
President

Recommended Action

The General Board receives this report from the Christian Church Foundation and forwards it to the 2019 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.