

STONE-CAMPBELL DIALOGUE ADDRESSES RACE AND RACISM IN THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

December 20, 2015: The 20th session of the Stone-Campbell Dialogue took place on November 14-15, 2015 in Baltimore, Maryland focused upon the theme "Addressing Race and Racism within the Church and Society."



About 90 persons from across the Baltimore area attended a daylong seminar at Mountain Christian Church, Joppa, Maryland on November 14 to explore the issues of race and racism within the church and our North American context. The seminar was sponsored by the Stone-Campbell National Dialogue Team in partnership with the Racial Unity Leadership Summit. The goal of this event was to share insights on how the church might develop sustainable steps for greater racial unity, reconciliation and justice.

The Dialogue continued November 15 with debriefing and planning among 17 members of the Dialogue's national team, followed by a joint Communion service that evening, hosted by Westside Church of Christ, Baltimore.

The Stone-Campbell Dialogue has met at least annually for 16 years to foster understanding and trust among three "streams" of the Stone-Campbell Movement whose roots in the United States trace back to the early 19th-century. For many decades, these three streams have remained distinct as individual churches: the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); the Churches of Christ; and the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ.

The Maryland meetings were an example of the Dialogue's recent approach to its purpose, that is, to express and experience our unity in Christ by concentrating together on specific issues, challenges and opportunities before Christians in our nation and world today.

The Racial Unity Leadership Summit (RULS) began in 2013 as an outgrowth of Dr. Jerry Taylor's sabbatical study. Taylor, assistant professor of Bible at Abilene (Texas) Christian University, has organized RULS gathering in cities across America.

Five speakers made presentations at the event at Mountain Christian Church: Daryl Reed, lead pastor of D.C. Christian Church; Doug Foster, professor of church history, Abilene Christian University; Travis Stanley, pastor of Norwalk (Iowa) Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Travis Hurley, vice president of development with Ozark Christian College, Joplin, Missouri; and David Fleer, professor of Bible and communication at Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tennessee.

Don McLaughlin, preaching minister with the North Atlanta (Georgia) Church of Christ, moderated the program. Robert Welsh, president of the Council on Christian Unity of the Disciples of Christ based in Indianapolis, Indiana, hosted a panel discussion with testimonies from three local church leaders from the Baltimore community in response who have worked to build racial unity and understanding to the killing of Freddie Gray. The three local leaders were Lawrence Rodgers, ministering evangelist at the Westside Church of Christ; Beverly Goines, assistant pastor with the National City Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Washington, D.C.; and Ben Cachiaras, senior pastor with Mountain Christian Church.

The goal of Stone-Campbell Dialogue, which meets annually, is to foster understanding, trust, and partnership among three separate, but related, churches.

Members of the Stone-Campbell Dialogue present at this meeting included:

- Beverly Goines, Cathy Hubbard, Paul Tche, Robert Welsh, and Newell Williams from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
- Albert Acosta, Tiffany Dahlman, Doug Foster, Gary Holloway, D'Esta Love, and Jerry Taylor from the Churches of Christ; and,
- Bill Baker, Alicia Crumpton, Aaron Monts, Terry O'Casey, Mark Taylor, and Guthrie Veech from the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ