

**REPORT OF THE ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH OFFICER  
for the Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission  
to the  
120th Annual Convention of the Diocese of West Missouri**

The General Convention this summer agreed that our church would enter into full communion with the Moravian Church. This will take effect after its adoption by the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church in 2010. This agreement will permit the same level of shared ministry that exists between our church and ELCA. The Convention also adopted a theological statement for use in interreligious dialogue, giving a rationale for conversations with Jews, Muslims, and other religions. The Convention endorsed the continued dialogue with the United Methodist Church and expanded that dialogue to include the historical black Methodist churches, AME, AME Zion, and CME. The Convention directed the Standing Commission on Ecumenism and Interreligious Relations to enter into a dialogue with the Church of Sweden, with the eventual goal of full communion with that church.

In April I participated in the National Workshop on Christian Unity and the annual meeting of Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (EDEIO) in Phoenix. The Workshop was an opportunity, as always, to pray for unity as one people of God and to learn more about how we can best live into that unity. The worship services, plenary speakers and seminars were both inspiring and educational for our ongoing ecumenical work. Participants represented the following churches: African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Armenian Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal Church, Greek Orthodox Church, Latter Day Saints, Lutheran Church (ELCA), Moravian Church, Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church.

I continue as the Chair of the Missouri Churches Uniting in Christ (MoCUIC) and a member of Missouri Christians Against Racism and Poverty (MoCARP). Together we sponsored our second annual breakfast forum in Jefferson City as a place for dialogue with legislators and religious leaders. This forum focused on the issue of Health Care for All Missourians. Bishop Howe was one of the leaders participating. The 2010 Legislative Breakfast Forum will be on Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City. All legislators and religious leaders will be invited as well as others from the faith community who are interested.

In connection with my work on MoCARP I participated in a Poverty Summit in Columbia on June 9<sup>th</sup> sponsored by Missourians to End Poverty Alliance. Nearly 500 people were in attendance to hear representatives of various organizations tell stories of the severity of poverty in our state. We spent time in focus groups to brain storm ideas about how to reduce poverty. Nearly 800,000 Missourians live in poverty; 263,484 of them are children. The number of uninsured people in Missouri rose to 772,000 in 2007. Low income families pay an average of 46% of their income just for housing and energy.

Poverty is a moral issue and therefore it is an issue that should be seriously addressed by the churches in Missouri. It is an area where churches can work together without theological hangups and can have more influence and accomplish more than churches working independently.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ross W. Stuckey, Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer