

Annual Report of the Executive Director
March 31, 2008
John W. Crossin, OSFS

Last Spring [2007] my Annual Report to the Board emphasized some long-term projects that have come to fruition. These included

- ✓ The Doctor of Ministry in Ecumenism degree at Wesley,
- ✓ Our participation in The National Workshop on Christian Unity 2007 here in Washington.
- ✓ Our work on Theological Education and Disability
- ✓ Our Certificate Programs
- ✓ The National Group of Consortium Directors
- ✓ Our faculty project on Love for the Poor

This past Fall [2008], I reported to the Board our successes and challenges in fulfilling the Objectives of the Strategic Plan.¹ **The plan still seems to be going extremely well.**

In the Spring 2007 report I noted some immediately developing projects. These were:

- Our Arts Faculty Group will be presenting its Arts Semester next fall. This will include the Faculties' Convocation, *Arts and Theological Expression*, on September 24 at Washington Theological Union. A national juried exhibit, **The Body of Christ**, will be shown in participating Consortium Schools-- opening in late October.
- The Science and Religion group is still seeking a publisher for its series of booklets for parish/congregational use. The group continues to be a vibrant monthly meeting ground for the ongoing dialogue.
- The Board Survey—and the proposed fall extended meeting—will provide an opportunity for the Board to improve its own functioning.

I am very happy to report that:

¹ Copies are available through the Consortium Office.

- (1) The September 24th Faculties Convocation was the best attended in my 10 years as Executive Director. The day was superb. The **Body of Christ** exhibit took place on 7 campuses and was extremely well-received. Union/PSCE reported the largest attendance in recent memory for an Arts Event; Wesley, WTU and VTS reported excellent crowds—including many of the winning artists. All seven participants [Cathedral College, John Leland, LTSG, Union/PSCE, VTS, WTU, and Wesley] took advantage of this opportunity to enhance their arts programs.
- (2) The Science and Religion Group is putting some of its material on the Websites connected with the *Alban Institute*. The learning materials on Evolution have already been downloaded by over 500 congregations.
- (3) I compiled the results of The Board Survey before the Board Retreat in October. These results show widespread satisfaction with our operations. There were numerous suggestions for improvement.

Other **highlights** for this year include:

The **Tachmindji Event** was extremely significant. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware and Father Paul McPartlan discussed the Ravenna Agreed Statement between the Orthodox and Catholic representatives at some length. The event had over 100 in attendance, many of whom had come a great distance in inclement weather. ***This Event moved us toward having events of national significance.***

Mr. Jack Figel pledged to support the **Consortium Ecumenism Award(s)** for the next decade. The recipient will be asked to present a major address at the Prayer Service for Christian Unity. This will be the annual **Figel Address**. This address will be made available to a wide audience.

The **October Board Retreat**—the first in recent years—enabled the Board members to have time to get to know one another. Several significant decisions were made at the business meeting—including affirmation of the efforts at collaboration of the Chief Financial Officers.

The **Executive Committee meeting for Presidents** on March 3—coordinated by Michael Cooper-White and David McAllister Wilson—enabled the CEO's to share with one another about their experiences. A similar meeting will occur on October 6, 2008.

We had the first ever meeting of **Associate and Affiliate Member representatives** this month at the Cathedral College on March 13. The topic was Communications—“Branding”. We will plan a similar event for the fall.

The **Chief Financial Officers** met in December and intend to meet again this year. Various areas of financial collaboration are being explored.

Some of the Consortium Projects are more **Long-Term**:

- ❖ Our **Membership**—we will vote on permanent membership for **Capitol Bible Seminary** today. Two other schools have expressed interest. I met with the representative of *Reformed Theological Seminary* earlier this month.
- ❖ We have sent in an initial proposal to the Templeton Foundation for a **Consortium Visiting Professor of Science and Religion**
- ❖ Our **Certificate Programs** are developing slowly. Two students received the first Consortium Ecumenism Awards in May; two others have expressed interest. The first courses have been offered toward the Certificate in Muslim-Christian Dialogue. Professor Richard Jones of VTS has been a leader in getting one of the required courses ‘up and running.’ One student has expressed interest in the Certificate. We will need to ‘tend to’ these programs over the next several years.
- ❖ We will need to continue **to refine our communications strategy**. Marguerite Connolly has assumed responsibility for communications with the departure of Kathy Pluth. We will emphasize the website. Two friends of the Consortium will be helping us with aspects of our communications.
- ❖ Our **Friends Reception** has evolved into a Spring Event supported primarily by the Public Trustees. This year it will be held in the Pilgrim Gallery of the National Cathedral on Thursday, April 24. At this event we will present the *Consortium Service Award* and will hear a *presentation by Father John Ford of Catholic University* on “Hispanic Ministry—A New Ecumenical Possibility.”

Finally, many yearly activities continue to take place:

1. The Orientation of New Students at Caldwell Hall [CUA] and neighboring religious houses;
2. The Orientation of New Faculty [Library of Congress];
3. The Ecumenism Awards to Rev. Joan Brown Campbell and Brother Jeffrey Gros at the John Leland Center during the *Prayer Service for Christian Unity*.
4. The Student Ecumenical Essay Contest—the winner this year is Marc Delmonico of Catholic University.

5. The Spring Event for faculty members—and students they wish to invite—this year was a presentation by Drs. Tony Campolo and Michael Battle on their book on Racial Reconciliation at Wesley on February 11th.
6. This year there were 7 active Board committees, 13 active faculty groups and 4 active administrative groups. Most groups meet once a year to conduct their business. Excluding the faculty group meetings that take place at the Annual Faculties' Convocation in September, we had 26 faculty group meetings, 10 Board committee meetings, 6 meetings of administrators and 4 student board meetings.

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