



Participants in the 2010 ¡MissionWorks! festival in Cleveland, Ohio: Lloyd Van Vactor, Ed Evans, Lillian Moir, Rick Russell, Jennifer Russell, John Williams, Clint Cannon

SEVEN UCC AND DISCIPLE PARTICIPANTS ATTEND ¡MISSIONWORKS!

Seven participants representing the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Northwest Region of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ attended the fifth biennial ¡*MissionWorks!* Festival in Cleveland, OH October 7-9.

The biennial ¡*MissionWorks!* event provides an opportunity for participants to hear stories about the mission presence of both denominations in regions around the world, to meet and worship together with missionaries, to meet representatives from Global Ministries partners, learn about their work and to learn how the mission partnerships of local churches, conferences, associations and the national church are a critical presence for people in their places of deepest need.

Jean-Paul Chami, director of the Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue (FDCD) in Lebanon described an ambitious program the FDCD is doing to bring young adults of different faiths together for dialogue and break down some of the barriers of misunderstanding and intolerance between Muslim, Jewish and Christians in the region. The FDCD is a mission partner of Global Ministries in the Middle East.

Africa Area Executive Sandra Gourdet reminded participants that mission partnerships provide a wonderful opportunity to learn more about God's world. To be in partnership is to realize that we need others. But to be in partnership also requires that we need to empty ourselves of the cultural baggage we carry into that relationship. She warned that people in the west often enter into a partnership tending to answer the questions before they have even been asked. She noted that time and again, those who have formed partnerships with other faith communities are often humbled by their experiences of extravagant hospitality and by what they are able to learn about the culture, customs and ancient knowledge of their partners. Partners in the west need to shift their thinking away from the belief that the purpose of a mission trip is to go and do for others, but rather to accompany others by sharing their bread, dreams, challenges, strengths and weaknesses together.

David Vargas, President of the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Disciples of Christ said the idea of partnership should be seen as a sacred relationship, a place to meet others as a critical presence in their lives to learn and pray together and be present with those who have dreams and plans for a better day in their lives.

Global Ministries is the common witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ responsible for nurturing relationships with international partners on behalf of Disciples and the UCC.

For more information about the work of Global Ministries, contact Ed Evans, Chair of the Global Ministries Committee, edevans@aol.com. Ed can also provide the names of local Ministries and Mission Interpreters available to speak about mission in your local church.