General Conference 2012

In the months leading to General Conference 2012 (GC 2012), we told you that the future of the work we began with you was uncertain. Strong efforts were underway to combine all general agencies into one super agency and to reduce agency funding in ways that could have diminished or ended the work of Discipleship Resources International.

Now that GC 2012 is behind us, I am happy to tell you that GBOD, and our work with you and your publishing teams, will continue. I am referring to the work of Discipleship Resources International—to increase Central Conference access to United Methodist literature and build your capacity for developing contextual resources.

Here are some highlights of GC 2012 that are relevant to Central Conferences.

- General Agencies will continue in their current structure but with smaller boards of directors. This saves money that can be used for mission.
- General Agency budgets in 2013-2016 will be 10% less than before.
- General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), however, planned well and had already made our work with Central Conferences a priority. Therefore, the work of DRI (our work with you and the publishing teams) will continue without a reduction, at about the same level as it is now.
- $5 million (US) will be devoted to strengthening theological education in Central Conferences. A special commission was created to administer the fund with GBHEM (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry).
- A proposal to develop a global Book of Discipline did not get acted on, but informal efforts did progress.
- Central Conference delegates made a big impact. 40% of GC delegates came from Central Conferences—in Asia (the Philippines), Africa, and Europe/Russia. This is because church membership is growing in Africa and the Philippines, as well as in new missions in other parts of Asia.

At the GBOD display, we met many publishing team members and dozens of Central Conference delegates who were eager to find out about the resources you are publishing. We gave out sample copies of the Africa Ministry Series and discovered promising new authors.

Walking with God, step by step, we are creating the future.
LittWorld

Christian publishers worldwide convene in Nairobi, Kenya.

28 October - 2 November 2012

LittWorld is the only international Christian publishing conference of its kind. Join more than 150 professionals from Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and the Middle East for LittWorld 2012. Gain intensive training on strategic publishing-related topics.

PREPARE

Two persons from each existing team in Africa and the Philippines will gather at LittWorld for learning, strategic planning and team building.

Start now to prepare:

1. Send names to Steve Bryant, sbryant@gbod.org.

2. Do research on necessary VISAs, passports and plane tickets.

3. Talk with your team about dreams and vision and collaboration with other teams.

AT THE EVENT

1. Attend workshops that will strengthen your existing team.

2. Learn and share ideas with publishers from around the world.

3. Meet with DRI, Africa and DRI, Philippines colleagues to plan for the future.

AFTER LITTWORLD

1. Educate your team members about learnings and insights.

2. Review and adjust existing publishing plan.

3. Implement new strategies and plans across the DRI family.

The Africa Ministry Series is written by pastors and lecturers. The series contributes practical resources, African perspective, and faithful scholarship to strengthening the vitality of the African church in the 21st century.

PUBLISHING

Discipleship Resources: International published the first five titles of the Africa Ministry Series in December 2012. The first contributions were authored by pastors and faculty at the United Methodist Africa University (AU) in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

The second five titles are in production. Bishop Eben Nhiwatiwa of the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area and faculty from (AU) are the authors.

TRANSLATIONS

The current titles in the Africa Ministry Series were written in English. Each of these books are also in the process of being translated into French and Portuguese. They will be available electronically to each Publishing Team, who is responsible for translating into indigenous languages and printing.

FUTURE PLANS

We hope that growing publishing teams across Africa will submit proposals and manuscripts that have wide application and appeal for the United Methodist Church in Africa.
DRI and GENERAL CONFERENCE

DRI sponsored two informal meetings at General Conference for delegates who were concerned about resource development and publishing in Central Conferences. The room was full; 60-70 delegates attended. Someone in the assembly had challenged the United Methodist Publishing House to publish in multiple languages and to serve Central Conferences. So, in our gathering, we explained how the UMPH receives no World Service funds; it is 100% self-supporting. That is why the UMPH is not able to serve well beyond the USA. Even if its books and curriculum were more available, they would not be affordable or appropriate to many cultural contexts.

I also outlined with the help of a power point presentation how the work of Discipleship Resources: International from GBOD is currently addressing the need. Here are some points we covered:

- DRI is GBOD’s response to a GC 2008 action called the “Central Conference Sustainable Resourcing Initiative” which is a growing part of GBOD’s work.
- Since 2009, DRI has been collaborating with leaders in Africa and Asia to build a publishing system that serves the needs of Central Conferences.
- Our aim is to increase Central Conference access to basic United Methodist resources and to build capacity for contextual resource development.
- This happens mainly by activating publishing teams in Episcopal Areas, which then network to share resources, receive training, and develop 3-4 year plans with seed money from GBOD.
- So far, the network includes 8 publishing teams that are actively developing, distributing, and selling resources in the Philippines, Mozambique (2 teams), Malawi, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Cote d’Ivoire, and Central Congo.
- We also publish the Africa Ministry Series to make the best material available to all teams and to encourage African scholars and leaders to write for the African church.
- How do you start a team? Some of our publishing team leaders were also GC delegates, so they helped answer questions for others at their tables.

Leaders from many additional areas of Africa and Europe came and learned. Nearly everyone expressed a desire to connect with our work. New conversations began with Sierra Leon, Nigeria, Berundi, Kenya, South Africa, North Katanga, South Congo, Finland, and Russia. So in 2013-2016, our network of teams is sure to grow. The future for publishing in Central Conferences is promising.
Distribution Centers: Africa

All resources are available electronically at www.drint.org.

Hard copies of books may be ordered from any of these distribution centers.

Africa Upper Room Ministries
Anathoth
Johannesburg, SA
Roland Rink
rrink@aurm.co.za
Nancy Herron
nherron@aurm.co.za

Discipleship Resources: Zimbabwe
Zimbabwe Area Offices
Harare, Zimbabwe
Rev. Phillip Musharu
pamusharu@yahoo.ca

Discipleship Resources: Liberia
Bookshop at the LAC Campus
Monrovia, Liberia
Rev. Joseph Garkpee,
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Contacts

Publishing Teams

Eight DRI publishing teams are now in place, plus one contributing partner*, producing numerous additional resources to meet local needs in UM churches and schools, in official and indigenous languages. For more information on local team resources and publishing plans, contact the team publishing leaders or contact DRI/GBOD:

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PHILIPPINES
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A Ministry of the General Board of Discipleship