

Tri-District Ministry now Christian Church In Kentucky-West Area (CCK-West Area)

A combined meeting of West Area Districts 1, 2 & 3 Cabinets was called for Princeton, October 8, 1961. Considerable negotiation had gone on behind the scenes. These conclusions emerged from the meeting:

1. The organization would be called Tri-District Ministry.
2. It would have a Board with three representatives elected by each of the three KACC districts. The KACC General Minister would be an ex officio member.
3. The Tri-District Board would relate to KACC through the KACC Personnel Committee and meet with them at least annually. Details of the Tri-District Ministers job description and the "Articles of Fellowship and Work" (constitution and by-laws) were hammered out in meetings with the KACC Personnel Committee.
4. Financial support from all congregations for both the student ministry and Tri-District would flow through the treasury of the three KACC districts. Congregations were to be goaled on a per member basis (\$3.00 to start). KACC would promote the goal as an "approved outreach cause."
5. The Tri-District Minister would:
 - lead the student ministry at Murray
 - serve as executive secretary for each of the three KACC districts
 - preach as needed for supply and revivals. Honoraria were to be paid to the Tri-District treasury
 - help with oversight and development of the KBY site
 - and such other duties as may be assigned.

Billy Williams began his ministry in June 1964 with the start of summer school. His job description remained the same as previous Tri-District Minister, Joe Whitmer. Getting the student ministry off the ground was the first priority. Moak involved him in every KACC meeting possible and gave him laudatory introductions at every opportunity.

UCMS had nominally supported the Murray Center for a number of years and there were close ties with their Department of Campus Christian Life. During the 1964-65 regular school year a CCL evaluation team conducted an extensive study of Disciples ministry at Murray. Riding the crest of ecumenical enthusiasm and related funding a United Campus Ministry was organized that would operate out of the Wesley Foundation. The Wesley Foundation Director and Williams would share campus ministry responsibilities. Williams continued to have an office at the Christian Student Center. No program operated at the Center, but it was still available for student use if they chose.

The program grew rapidly and Williams' office was moved to the Methodist building with the start of school in 1966. The student center property was rented to a family. Offering a coffee house, faculty luncheons, contemporary worship, study groups, guest lectures for MSU classes, and the only facility available for Black student to gather, the demand for UCM leadership grew. The relevance of the UCM was enhanced by the issues of the times: Vietnam War, in loco parentis, M. L. King assassination, compulsory ROTC, "Death of God," Situation Ethics, etc. It was an exciting but demanding place to minister.

The workload on the district minister side of Williams' responsibilities was also expanding. Changes in the environment of pastoral ministry were increasing demand for assistance with congregational leadership.

- Small congregations once able to attract full-time resident ministers with marginal salaries were no longer able to do so.
- Seminaries that accommodated student ministers with two-day and four-day class weeks were going to five-day scheduling and insisting on assimilation into the academic community at the expense of a student minister's time on the field.
- Grants, and full scholarships were readily available as seminaries competed for students. Preference was given to full time resident students. In-town employment was more attractive than a student church.

- Travel was more expensive and took away from the increased time the seminary demanded.
- There was a surplus of ministers available for churches paying a living wage and few opportunities for small church ministers to move up. Minister and minister family stress had increased and minister dropouts were more common.

College of the Bible had regularly provided students, who served as far away as Sebree and Slaughters in Webster, and in Daviess and Ohio Counties. They could no longer do so. Vanderbilt had provided as many as 15-20 students at a time to serve in Kentucky during the 1950's and early sixties. By 1968 only the best paying, near full-time, resident pastorates nearer Nashville could be satisfactorily arranged.

In 1967 James Moak arranged for Williams to handle minister relocation with all but the 7 or 8 larger congregations in the Tri-District. A program to serve smaller congregations by using lay ministers, who were recommended and supervised by their pastors, was beginning to emerge. The demand for assistance in arranging for minister leadership of smaller congregations was growing. Minister support groups were the vogue.

Starting with the 1968 school year the UCM and Tri-district arranged for the Disciples and Presbyterian (US & USA) Churches to jointly fund a full-time UCM minister through the Kentucky Commission/United Ministries in Higher Education. At the same time the Tri-District Minister would become full time and the office would be moved to Madisonville, a more central location. CCK would pay about 25% and the Presbyterians 50% channeled through KC/UMHE, Tri-District about 25%. The Christian Student Center building had been sold for \$11,000. Those funds were applied to making the transition in campus ministry and relocation of Williams and Tri-District office to Madisonville, July 1, 1968.

KC/UMHE, an ecumenical agency through which CCK's campus funds were channeled and campus programs coordinated statewide, continued to finance the UCM position. Porter resigned in the early 1980's. The UCM lapsed and Wesley Foundation resumed a Methodist campus ministry. Williams' successor, David Webb, attempted a mostly volunteer approach to student ministry, "New Directions," in 1983. It lasted a year or two, before a Disciples presence on campus came to an end after 40 years.

A change in the funding process for Tri-District occurred along with the move to Madisonville. From 1961 until 1968 local church treasurers sent their contributions to their respective district treasure. He or she in turn would forward them to the Tri-District for deposit. This was a procedure Moak had agreed to at the outset to legitimize accepting gifts from congregations and also allow a KACC subsidiary to influence Tri-District funding. It was a cumbersome process for budgeting and accounting purposes, predicting cash flow, and for receipting and acknowledging contributions. With the move to Madisonville congregations then sent gifts directly to Tri-District. KACC continued to goal and promote Tri-District as an approved outreach cause and the change in procedure went unchallenged.