

# 2014 ICOC Elders Service Team Report

Mid-year 2014 brings anticipation of our ICOC Leadership Conference in Singapore with the opportunity to learn and connect with more of our Asian brothers and sisters as well as leaders from around the world. The Elders committee has been busy in our pursuit of appointing elders and strengthening elderships among our Churches. The Milan Church appointed the first Italian Elders among ICOC churches and other European churches will follow soon. It is good to see elderships increasing outside of the USA as more men become qualified around the world.

## ELDER DEVELOPMENT

We continue to pursue more international elders for our committee and hope to see one added from the UK by next year. We are considering new representative elders from the Midwest and Southeast families of churches in the US. It has been to God's glory to see the number of Elders and Elderships dramatically increase over the last five years among the International Churches of Christ! We have just completed a survey by regional families of churches. God has now provided 149 Elders in 47 churches! This is from a beginning in the early 90's of less than 10 elders and 5 elderships among us in our early history. A number of churches are adding more elders and others are about to appoint them for the first time. Our 2020 vision is to see 100 churches with 250 elders. Elder training retreats and workshops are now taking place annually among families of churches in multiple countries!

## UNITY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Perhaps the greatest focus among our group has been seeking to maintain unity among disciples and churches in our fellowship and providing resolution. Jesus' final prayer in John 17 before going to the cross was that unity—parallel to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit would be among those who believe the message of the Apostles. That includes us as disciples today in the ICOC.

We can love all Christians as a concept, but we function in a tangible fellowship as cooperation churches around the world! We serve frequently through missions and HOPE *worldwide*, and we enjoy various joint meetings among our families of churches— Campus, Singles and Youth and Family conferences—and even Continental and Worldwide Discipleship Summits where our unity should be seen, felt and multiplied.

The Elders committee has a sub-committee that oversees the task of conflict resolution needs among us. We have produced a protocol for getting help—first within the family of churches, and if needed from the Elder committee or a recommended task force.

This information is available on the Disciples Today ICOC website. There have been a number of needed resolutions where outside help has been

solicited with successful outcomes. It is our desire to cultivate a brotherhood culture of love that is equipped with conflict resolution tools and resources, and that readily maintains the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Finally, we plan to bring a proposal for consideration next year recommending best practices in retirement funding that allows our younger and older staff to feel loved and cared for as they serve God and the Church for their lifetime.

*Al Baird (Phoenix)*

*Larry Craig (New York)*

*Bill Hooper (Dallas)*

*Dan Liu (Hong Kong)*

*Ron Brumley (San Diego)*

*Israell Ereola (Lagos)*

*Frank Kim (Denver)*

*Wyndham Shaw, chair (Boston)*

*John Brush (South Florida)*

*Walter Evans (Philadelphia)*

*Sam Laing (South Florida)*