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—Marcus Bigelow

We need more church plants than church burials.

—Lynn Anderson

HOPE REALIZED IN TEXAS REUNION

San Antonio, TX—Approximately 250 leaders from the conservative Christian Churches and Churches of Christ and the *a cappella* Churches of Christ met in San Antonio, Texas, Feb. 5-8, at Oak Hills Church, home of pulpit minister and best-selling author Max Lucado, to celebrate the second annual Hope Network Reunion.

Lynn Anderson, author of *Looking for a Homeland*, organized the event for members of Hope Network, a nationwide mentoring group he founded for those who are affiliated with the *a cappella* Churches of Christ. In an irenic effort to reach out to the conservative Christian Churches, Anderson contacted Larry Winger, President of Church Development Fund, Inc., Anaheim, California, to invite leaders within the Christian Churches to attend the strategic event. Many senior ministers, parachurch leaders, Bible college presidents, and the editors of *Christian Standard*, *The Lookout*, and *One Body* responded to the call.

The four-day event saw the breaking down of many barriers as leaders from the *a cappella* churches were introduced to ministry opportunities that were available to them to increase their evangelistic outreach and ministry. Marcus Bigelow, President of Stadia: New Church Strategies, presented Stadia's vision to start 5,500 new churches by the year 2025. Bigelow said, "It has long been my conviction that we will unify faster when we unite around compassion for the lost rather than trying to iron out all our differences. It is my prayer that a church planting movement will spring up not only in the Christian Churches but also in the Churches of Christ. Moreover, it is my prayer that through this planting we will see a new spirit of unity and cooperation as we reach out to those who need Jesus."

Bigelow continued, "It was the consensus of opinion that we move beyond talking about unity to actually working together in uniting ministry efforts. The Hope Network Reunion appeared to be a step in that direction."

Several leaders from the Churches of Christ present expressed the desire to work with Stadia in the process of starting new churches. Lynn Anderson said, "We need more church

plants than church burials."

Speakers at the historic meeting included Anderson, Bigelow, Rick Atchley, Gene Wilkes, Bob Russell, Rubel Shelly, and Randy Harris. Atchley, who made a passionate plea for unity at the 2003 North American Christian Convention (see *One Body* Autumn 2003), said "Let's fix something that never should have been broken." Anderson stated, "We have been separated far too long over far too little."

Max Lucado invited Bob Russell to speak at the Sunday morning services of the 4,000-member Oak Hills Church. Russell was warmly greeted, receiving a standing ovation at the conclusion of his message.

For more information on Hope Network Ministries and Stadia, contact:

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Some data and quotes in this report are taken from "Unified by Compassion" in Stadia News (Autumn 2003) and "Hope Network Reunion" at www.christianchurchtoday.com

STONE-CAMPBELL DIALOGUE

Indianapolis, IN—"Models of Unity" will be discussed at the Stone-Campbell Dialogue, April 25,26 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Dialogue has met twice a year since the initial session in 1999.

A "Heritage Celebration" will be held April 25, Sunday, at 6:00 p.m. at the East 91st Street Christian Church. Presentations will be given by Paul Blowers, Doug Foster, and Newell Williams on *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*.

Three "Models of Unity" will be presented by Foster, John Mills, and Robert Welsh on April 26, Monday, at 10:30 a.m. at the Disciples Center, 130 East Washington Street. The dialogue will continue in the afternoon session.

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