



2024
National President's Report
127th National Convention
Church of Christ (Holiness) U.S.A.

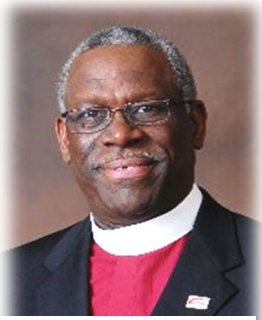


Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia
Dunwoody, GA

Theme: "The Call to Courageous Living

July 16 - 22, 2024

"Don't Stop . . .
Keep Moving
Forward"



Bishop Lindsay E. Jones

**“Don’t Stop ...
Keep Moving
Forward!”**

To: **Senior Bishop Vernon E. Kennebrew**, First Vice-President, Bishop Dale L. Cudjoe, Second Vice-President, Bishop Maurice Nicholson, Board of Bishops, District Chairmen, Ministers, Missionaries, Deacons, Deaconesses, Boards, Auxiliaries and Ministries Leaders and Delegates. It is indeed a privilege to share this ‘parting’ **2024 National President’s Report**

“Don’t Stop – Keep Moving Forward!” That’s the mechanized message belched to passengers, as they transition from the security area to baggage claim at Kansas City’s new \$1.5B airport. Why? The tendency is to stop and pause when approaching the double set of glass doors separating the two zones. But, if you keep moving forward through the first set of doors, the second set will automatically open. In the same way, as COCHUSA transitions to its future, I challenge you, **“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”** in five (5) key areas:

- 1. **The Movement:** *Inception*; 2. **The Metrics:** *Indicators*; 3. **The Mission:** *Impacting Community*;
- 4. **The Making Room:** *Intentional About Transition*; 5. **The Mountain:** *Intimacy With God*.

The MOVEMENT: *Our Inception*

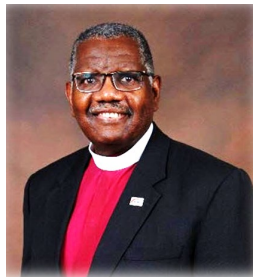


Bishop Charles Price Jones,

As we gather for this 127th *National Convention*, we stand on the shoulders of our great Founder, **Bishop Charles Price Jones**. It’s certainly fitting that this Convention is held in Georgia, where our founder was born in 1865 near Rome, GA – a ‘whopping’ 70 or so miles from here!

Come to think of the Peach Tree State – and Atlanta in particular -- we are indeed grateful to our hosts: the **Southeastern Diocese**, led by **Bishop H. Vonzell Castilla** and **Lady Tiffany Castilla**!

We welcome special guest violinist, **Ms. Christie Campbell**, who will bless us –and God -- during our opening *“Glorious Gathering Celebration Service.”* The Word will be delivered by Second Vice President, **Bishop Maurice Nicholson**, the retiring Presiding Bishop of the Eastern Diocese. And on Monday, the closing ‘book end’ message will be proclaimed by Former Senior Bishop, **Bishop Emery Lindsay**, retiring Presiding Bishop of the Western Diocese.



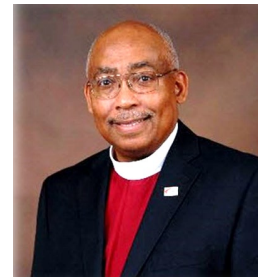
Bishop Vernon E. Kennebrew



Bishop H. Vonzell Castilla



Bishop Maurice Nicholson



Bishop Emery Lindsay

Don't Stop ... Keep Moving Forward"

The **MOVEMENT: *Our Inception***
(Con'd)

"Reopening & Consecration of State-of-the Art Mother Church"

The *Reopening & Consecration Service* of Christ Temple Church in Jackson MS—the **Mother Church** -- was held on Wednesday, May 22, 2024. This facility is located on the founding site that Bishop Charles Price Jones established the Holiness Movement and the Church of Christ (Holiness) USA.



This special service was the culmination of Phase 1 of the South Central Diocese and Bishop Glake Hill-led major renovation of this facility that's vital to the Diocese and National Church.

After the renovations, the building is now positioned to be a leading church facility within the city of Jackson and National Church. With renovations performed to the amount of **\$500,000**, the **Mother Church** has new parking lot surface to facility safe and larger gatherings. Restrooms and infrastructure have been updated to provide quality to those in attendance. Water and drainage issues were addressed, and air conditioning heating was improved. The Pulpit was enlarged, and new furniture was added to modernize the setup.

The technology was vastly improved. A state-of-the-art sound system was installed with increased number of microphones and directed array speakers. Spotlights and ambient light were added for effects. Four PTX cameras were added for live stream and video production. Finally, a 10' x 16' LED screen was added for viewing in the sanctuary. This screen is 4K compatible with the potential to 8K with available.



Great job, Bishop Hill and the SCD!

“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”

The METRICS: *Our Indicators*

One-Year Membership Decline (‘Some Concern’)

After last year’s modest membership increase of **114** or **1%**, membership decreased this year by **-368** (from 11,366 to 10,998) or **-3%**. However, most -- though not all -- of this year’s declines can be traced to corrections or miscalculations from last year. This ‘reduced-alarm’ assessment seems to be supported by the ‘record high’ of **27** local churches that grew by **7% or more** in 2023-2024. (See “Local Churches That Grew By 7% or More” on **Page 6**.)



So, overall, we *salute* the two (2) dioceses that numerically grew this year. The **Northern Diocese** increased by **58** members (from 1,340 to 1,398) or **4%**. And the **Northcentral Diocese** grew by **63** members (from 251 to 314) or **25%**.



Eight+ Years Trend (‘Much Concern’)

But, the **8-year trend** (2016-2024) presents a starker reality. During this era, membership declined by **2,700** (from 13,698 to 10,998) or **-20%**. Of course, the pandemic affected not only COCHUSA’s world – but the entire world! During this **8-year span**, all Dioceses experienced declines of double-digit percentages -- except two. Our largest diocese, **South Central Diocese** experienced only a small decline of **-4%** (from 4,605 to 4,439). And the **North Central Diocese** grew by **7%** (from 293 to 314).

“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”

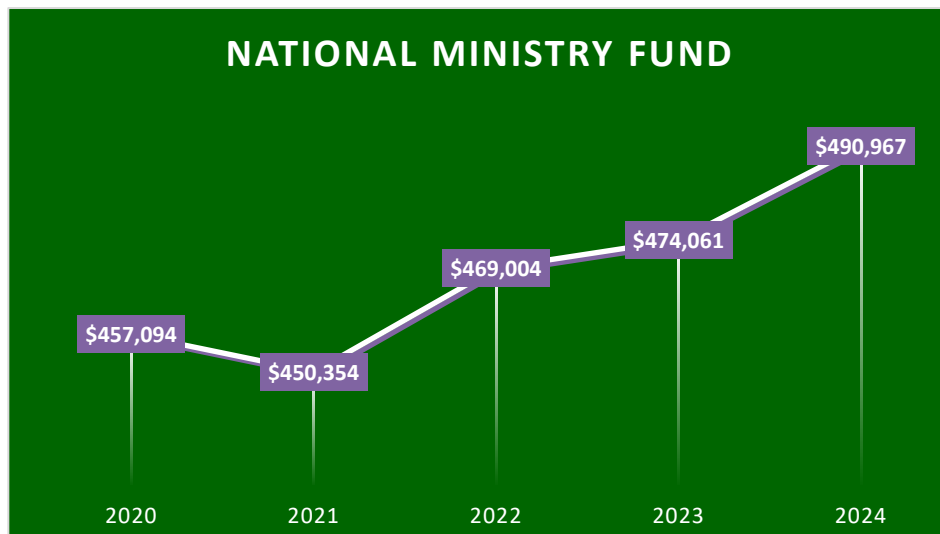
The METRICS: *Our Indicators*
(Con’d)

Five-Year Uptick In National Ministry Fund

When it comes to ministry, people tend to vote with their “feet” and “finances.” Post-pandemic, fewer ‘feet’ have been showing up in some – but not all-- churches. **But God has been blessing our churches – and COCHUSA – financially this past year!**

Led by the **South Central Diocese** achieving a record high of **\$200,322**, this year’s National Ministry Fund of **\$490,967** is a near 15-year high; second only to **2006** (base year of \$509,882) and **2013** (\$493,864).

In addition to the **South Central Diocese**, the following five (2) Dioceses are commended for single-double digit percentage increases in this key metric: **Eastern Diocese; Northcentral Diocese; Pacific Northwest Diocese, Southwestern Diocese; and the Southeastern Diocese.**



Be sure to access at **COCHUSA.org** the **Stewardship Initiative** training resources by the **National Budget Committee**. On the Home Page, click on ‘Resources.’ Click on the **National Budget Committee Stewardship Initiative** button. There you will find a ‘wealth’ of material and information to encourage faithful stewardship for children, youth, young adults, middle-aged adults, and seniors in the areas of:

INVESTING

TITHING

BUDGETING

“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”

The METRICS: *Our Indicators*

(Con’d)

Churches That Grew By 7% or More

Southcentral Diocese

Caney Creek, Jackson, MS, Elder Sherrid Griffin
Christ Temple (JXN), Jackson, MS, Elder Robert Washington
Collis Hill, Terry MS, Elder Kevin Ware
Christ Temple, Crystal Springs, MS, Elder Mark Kangar
Greater Damascus, Hazlehurst, MS, Elder Clifton Goodloe, III
Galilee, Jayess, MS Pastor, Elder Jeffre Conerly
Spring Beulah, Ruth, MS, Elder Eulis Brown
Vicksburg COCHUSA, Vicksburg, MS, Elder Howard Batchelor



Southwestern Diocese

Christ Temple, Arkadelphia, AR, Elder John Madlock
Christ Temple, Conway, AR, Elder Kenneth Myers
Christ Temple, Pine Bluff, AR, Elder Ron Sasser
St. Matthew, Monroe, LA, Elder Quincy Gardner
Mt. Zion, Hackley, LA, Min. Fred Dillon
Plainview, Mt. Hermon, LA, Elder Albert Brumfield
New Hope, Bogalusa, LA, Elder Lenward Thompson
Christ Mission Temple, Beaumont, TX, Elder Adrian Hopkins
Christ Temple New Orleans, LA, Elder Rick Andrews
Oak Grove Memorial Church, Hammond, LA, Min. Eddie Brown, Jr.

North Central Diocese

Christ Temple Church, Omaha, NE, Min. Gene Hollins,
Christ Temple Cathedral, St. Louis, MO, Elder Don Williams
Blessed Church, St. Louis, MO, Elder Brad Buchanan
First Holiness Church, Brownsville, TN, Min. Xavier Andrews

Northern Diocese

Metropolitan Church, Harvey, IL, Elder Melvin Rone,
Christ Temple Church, Inkster, MI, Elder Walton Johnson,
Mt. Zion Church, Toledo, OH, Elder Perry Waddell,
First Church, Indianapolis, IN, Rev. Gerald Trotter

Western Diocese

Bethel COCHUSA, Elder Darrell Jones, Fresno, CA

“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”

The MISSION: *Our Impact*

First COCHUSA African American Church Evangelism Cohort Graduates

In Fall 2023, the first cohort of pastors in the African American Church Evangelism Institute, graduated after 2 years of training. 11 Pastors and Bishops were trained in the concept of creating and modeling evangelism



practices with the goal of creating **“Conversion Communities”** within our churches. Leaders learned how to evaluate their passion for outreach and effectively reach the unsaved.

A Second Cohort Launched In 2024

In the spring of 2024, the second COCHUSA cohort was launched. Like the first cohort, these sessions are designed to help pastors revitalize their congregations This cohort is led by Bishop Glake Hill, Bishop Leroy Divinity, supported by Dr. Michael Henderson:

- Elder Adrian Hopkins (SW)**
- Elder Willie Owens (SW)**
- Elder Michael Hudson (N)**
- Elder Perry Waddell (N)**

- Elder Anthony Miller(SW)**
- Elder Brad Buchanan (NC)**
- Elder Bertram Goodloe (SC)**
- Elder Kendrick Barnes (SC)**

- Elder Osborne Turner (SW)**
- Elder Arlandis Powell (W)**
- Elder Clifton Goodloe III (SC)**
- Elder Perry McNeil (SC)**



COCHUSA @ ITS BEST Revitalization Initiative

COCHUSA @ ITS BEST worked with five churches over the last year. The five churches are part of a pilot program in the Southwestern Diocese for revitalizing churches. Four of the five churches experienced growth, of which three had growth greater than 7 %. In fact, two of the churches experienced growth in the double digits. The churches participating are as follows:



- Elder Robert Peters (LA)**
- Elder John Madlock (AR)**
- Elder Quincy Gardner (LA)**
- Elder Willie Owens (TX)**
- Elder Robert Nichols (AR)**

“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”

The **MISSION: Our Impact**
(Cond’)



“Local Church Evangelistic Grants Renamed In Honor of Deacon James A. ‘Tony’ Ross”

The NCE&MB announce **20** grants totaling **\$25,000** were approved for 2024 across the COCHUSA footprint. This Ministry will be renamed in the honor of its Grant Committee Chairman, Deacon James Tony Ross.

Freedom Fellowship (SE)

Atlanta, GA

Spring Beulah (SC)

Spring Beulah, MS

Community of Hope (SE)

Atlanta, GA

Greater Mount Bethel (SC)

Jackson, MS

Future Church (E)

Richmond, VA

Higher Calling Ministry

Atlanta, GA

Bethany Church (PNW)

Seattle, WA

Farmhaven Church (SC)

Farmhaven, MS

Christ Temple Mission (SW)

Beaumont, TX

Cynthia Church (SC)

Jackson, MS

Greater Pine Grove (SC)

Pine Grove, MS

Galilee Church (SC)

Jayess, MS

First Church West Memphis (SW)

West Memphis, TN

St Matthew Church

Monroe, LA

First Church Starkville (SC)

Starkville, MS

First Church (SW)

Houston TX

New Home Church (SC)

Jayess, MS

Christ Temple Covington

Covington, LA

Christ Temple Cathedral Stl

St. Louis, MO

Christ Temple Cathedral Little Rock

Little Rock, AR



Saints on Standby (SOS) was active ministering “beyond the four walls” of the church in 2023-2024. Financial aid was provided to victims of the Maui, Hawaii fires, Jackson, MS tornado-stricken areas, and a devastating fire in Monroe, LA. Also, Mission Trip II to Rolling Fork, MS was impacting.



“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”

The **MISSION: *Our Impact***
(Con’d)



“COCHUSA Receives \$300K Grant from Lilly Endowment Inc to Encourage Community, Congregational Life”

Praise God! In December, COCHUSA received a **\$300,000** grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. This COCHUSA’s largest grant in our 127-year history! The purpose is to help establish **“COCHUSA FORWARD,”** the newest church revitalization initiative launched by the ***National Church Evangelism and Mission Board*** (NCE&MB), Bishop H. Vonzell Castilla, Chairman.



COCHUSA FORWARD will support congregations in expanding their post-pandemic engagement capacities by developing and partnering in outwardly focused ministries. With a view towards re-igniting the zeal for the missional mandates of scripture, Pastors and congregants will create collaborative networks designed to serve the church and community in a **post-pandemic era**.

"This program will provide a vehicle for COCHUSA to show communities across the nation that we take seriously the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to show love to the downtrodden and dispossessed, those he called 'the least of these.'"

Says Bishop Castilla, "Our people, especially our young adults, want to be a part of a church which addresses the unique issues facing our communities, including racism and economic disparities." He added, "This program will provide a vehicle for COCHUSA to show communities across the nation that we take seriously the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to show love to the downtrodden and dispossessed, those he called 'the least of these.'"

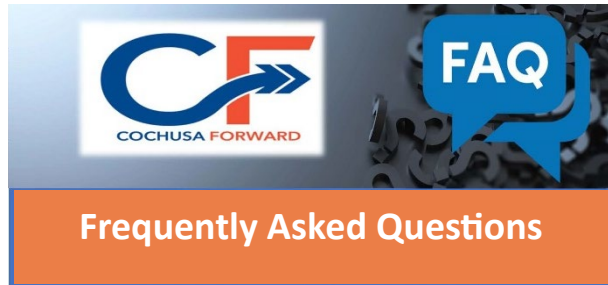
PROGRAM TOUCHSTONES:

- **Community Engagement**
- **Technological Advancement**
- **Congregational Enhancement**
- **Leadership Development**



(See ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ Next Page)

“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”



1. Are there restrictions on how funds may be used?

Answer: Yes, the funds may only be used to help designated churches thrive post COVID in accordance with the proposal and budget approved by the Lily Endowment.

2. How will the money be spent?

Answer: - Personnel and Administrative Staff - Administrative and Travel Costs
- Missional Outreach Projects - Church Leaders/Teams Meeting Costs
- Church Technological Upgrades

3. How many churches will be able to participate and receive resources?

Answer: Initially, thirteen (13) participating churches:
-7 from the South Central Diocese
-6 from the Southwestern Diocese
*Eventually 26-30 churches including other Dioceses will be selected to participate over four-year period.

4. How will participating churches benefit from being in the cohort?

Answer: Participating churches will thrive numerically, financially and relationally (“in-reach” and community outreach) because of participation in the cohort.

5. How were/ will the churches be chosen?

Answer: The Presiding Bishop of the diocese is empowered to make the selection.

6. Who are the leaders of COCHUSA *Forward*?

Answer:

Grant Administrator:
Bishop H. Vonzell Castilla

Program Coordinator:
Sis. Angela Pierre

Administrative Assistant:
Sis. Elisha Campbell

Cohort Facilitators:
Bishop Leroy Divinity
Bishop Blake Hill

“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”

The MAKING ROOM: *Intentional About Transition*

If there’s any area COCHUSA must heed the call to ***“Don’t Stop ... Keeping Moving Forward,”*** it’s ***‘Gracefully Passing the Baton’*** of leadership to the next generation. Observes George Barna: “Boomers have to graciously and joyously let go of the reins... which now rightfully must be passed on to the next generation.” He goes on to call upon us Boomers to *“anticipate and support new models of ministry – even if it is not what we might have done.”* Wow!

“Boomers have to graciously and joyously let go of the reins... which now rightfully must be passed on to the next generation.”

-George Barna

So, with ***Transition*** afoot, we ***‘Do Stop ...’*** first to say ***‘THANK YOU’*** to these COCHUSA leaders – no matter the generation – who are currently serving:

National Auxiliary Leaders!



Elder Fred Taylor, President, ***National Sunday School & HYM Congress***, is commended for excellent leadership of the Congress during 2021-2024. We believe God will continue to prosper the Congress, as Elder Taylor and Team have left ‘no stone unturned’ in preparing for a great Congress Session.



Sis. Linda McDonald, President, ***National United Christian Women’s Ministry***, is greatly thanked for greatly embracing the call to be *“Always Praying!”* Her prayer this UCWM Session is that attendees be empowered *“to walk with purpose and be equipped with knowledge.”* Her leadership is effective and compelling.



Deacon Eric Tanner, President of the ***National Brotherhood Ministry***, is honored for his fervor and passion that are unmistakable and infectious. His boldness and courage are a model for others to emulate. He has been a great motivation to the teen-age, young adult, and adult men he leads.



National Boards and Ministries Leaders!

Bishop Vernon E. Kennebrew, Board of Bishops,
Bishop H. Vonzell Castilla, National Church Evangelism & Mission Board
Elder Fred Connors, National Evangelists
Elder James E. Harper, National Council of District Chairmen
Missionary Linda Kennedy, National Missionaries
Bishop Dale L. Cudjoe, National Publishing Board
Deacon Arthur Kendrick, National Deacons Ministries
Elder George A. Miller, National Board of Benefits & Pensions
Bishop Leroy Divinity, Jr., COCHUSA @ It’s Best Ministry
Bishop Joseph R. Campbell, Master Plan Maintenance Committee
National Education & Trustee Board, Deacon Reginald Castilla
National Music Department, Sis. Beverly Golden

“Don’t Stop ... Keep Moving Forward”

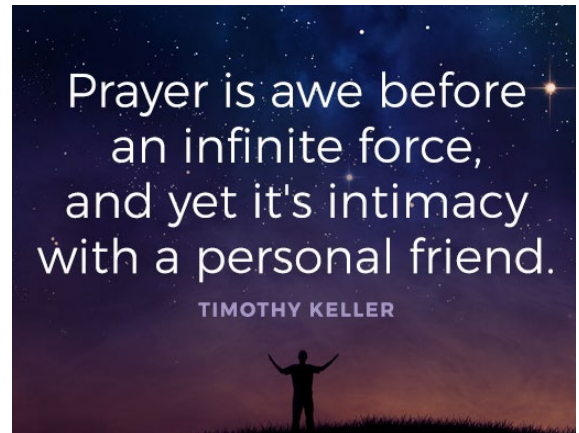
‘The MOUNTAIN’: *Our Intimacy With God*

Tim Keller was ‘spot on’ when he declared that *“Prayer is awe before an infinite force, and yet it’s intimacy with a personal friend.”* Did you notice the connection between *prayer* and *intimacy*?

Prayer -- at its best -- is not the time where we *‘intimate’* or order God concerning what we want. But rather, prayer is a time where we experience *‘intimacy’* with God – and what *He* wants!

And so, my ultimate heart’s desire for COCHUSA is that we ***“Don’t Stop, but Keeping Moving Forward”*** by scaling the

‘Mountain Place’ called “Intimacy with God.” Or stated another way, personal holiness is not so much about what we “don’t” do.



To be clear, there are some things we “shouldn’t” do! For as J. C. Ryle well stated, *“Backsliding, generally first begins with neglect of private prayer.”* But at the heart of Biblical holiness is ‘what’ – and Who – we do pursue.

As we pursue the ***Great Commission*** “To Go ...” (Matthew 28:20), let’s not neglect the ***Great Commandment*** “To Know Him ... Intimately” (Matthew 22:37)!

May I share the insights of Daniel Henderson one last – or one more -- time: *“If all we ever do is seek God’s hand, we may miss His face; but if we seek His face, He will be glad to open His (hand) and satisfy the deepest desires of our hearts.”*

So, as we come to the end of this 8-year journey and exit the ‘secure area’ of our recent and distant past, ***“Don’t Stop ... Keeping Moving Forward!”***

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“SEE YA’ IN BAGGAGE CLAIM!”

