

## A History of the United Christian Ministry Serving North Carolina Central University

The United Christian Campus Ministry is an ecumenical ministry supported by various denominations, board members, local churches and other contributors. This ministry is designed so that all sectors of the university community may work together in living and expressing their respective religious beliefs. The UCCM office has served the North Carolina Central University community for more than forty years. While affirming the given unity of the Christian Church and sponsoring a program of common interest for all denominations, the United Christian Campus Ministry encourages individuals to participate in the life and worship of a local church.

The United Christian Campus Ministry seeks to assist members of the University Community to explore broader perspectives on moral imperatives and life planning. This United Christian Campus Ministry serves as a vehicle through which judicatories, churches, and individuals provide resources for campus ministry. The Campus Minister assumes leadership for planning and coordinating opportunities for spiritual nourishment and growth. Through the different programs and services, the University Community members are able to deepen their spirituality and integrate it into their daily lives.

While worship in local churches is primary, there are also weekly opportunities for corporate worship for the entire North Carolina Central University community.

The first task of both faculty and students is the learning process through which the United Christian Campus Ministry seeks to promote disciplined study within the context of the Christian faith. Therefore, the ministry sponsors Bible studies and seminars centered on various issues related to Christian understanding. In addition, it organizes activities throughout the year that provide spiritual interaction and encourages all members of the academic community to seek out the Campus Minister for confidential discussion and guidance in areas of personal concern.

### **HISTORY**

The United Christian Campus Ministry was founded in 1962 as a non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a united Christian ministry to the academic community at North Carolina Central University (NCCU). The antecedents of the University's mission to provide religious guidance for its faculty and students began with NCCU's founder, Dr. James E. Shepard.

Like most historically black institutions, North Carolina Central University was founded in order to "seek the regeneration of the Negro," as outlined by W.E.B. DuBois in his seminal 1903 work, *The Souls of Black Folks*. Seven years later, when Dr. James Edward Shepard founded the National Religious Training School and Chautauqua, known today as North Carolina Central University, he incorporated DuBois' vision in his mission statement for the university. For Dr. Shepard, the regeneration was possible only to the extent that the university was able to develop in young men and women the character and sound academic training for real service to the city of Durham, to the state of North Carolina, and to the nation.

The emphasis on service continued with the appointment of faculty to coordinate religious programs on campus. One of the faculty appointments was Dr. J. Neal Hughley, who came to NCCU in 1941 to teach in the Social Sciences. Upon the death of Dr. Shepard, President Alfonso Elder appointed Dr. Hughley as Director of Religious Education. His significant contribution was promoting religious awareness through establishment of the Religious Emphasis Week Programs and designing vespers services. In 1955, Dr. Hughley became the first campus minister.

In 1962, several judicatories decided to establish the United Christian Campus Ministries at universities and colleges throughout the State of North Carolina. They include the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, United Methodist Church, Episcopal Diocese of Raleigh, Presbyterian Church – USA, Diocese of Raleigh – Roman Catholic, United Church of Christ, and The Lutheran Council.

From 1965-1966, Reverend Hank Elkins became director of the United Christian Campus Ministry. Judicatories, local businesses, and churches, across denominational lines, lent support through finances, buses, vans, and representatives to serve on the Campus Ministry Board. The University provided work study funds. However, during Reverend Elkins' tenure, the State of North Carolina, through the Governor's Office, began to question the use of state funding for a religious organization. Later, the Institution had to pay back the work-study funding. From 1966-1967, Reverend John Chappell took the reins of the campus ministry. According to Dr. Howard Fitts, an active board member, "Chappell openly opposed some of the University's policies such as [requiring] young ladies to check out before leaving the dormitory." He was asked to resign.

Tension continued over the role of the ministry at a state-supported institution throughout President Albert N. Whiting's administration. From 1967-1970, Reverend Herbert Eaton served as the campus minister. The tumultuous years of the civil rights movement pitted Reverend Eaton against the administration. On several occasions, through his liberation theology, Reverend Eaton supported the civil rights activities of the students against the position of the administration.

Finally, President Whiting decided that the campus ministry must be responsive to the Chancellor and to the University. The Campus Ministry board responded by stating that the campus ministry could not be restrained by the administration; it had to be free and independent. As a result of this impasse, President Whiting placed the ministry in an off-campus location, two blocks from the campus on Lincoln Street.

In 1972, Reverend Eaton was replaced by Reverend Robert Murray, who served for one year. Subsequently, Reverend Marvin Morgan served from 1975 to 1976.

Reverend Yvonne Beasley became the first African American woman to serve as campus minister from 1976 to 1980. She was replaced by Reverend Getho-Sontho Hill who developed various programs and enhanced community involvement during 1980-1985.

In 1986, Reverend Paige Chargois, who brought a dynamic leadership, began serving as the campus minister and continued for four years. According to Reverend Joe Clontz, who joined the Campus Ministry board in 1985, Reverend Chargois was "a very imaginative person who used various strategies to involve both the campus and community ministry to support the religious development of college students." She brought the Worship and Praise Inspiration Chorus under the tutelage of the campus Ministry. One of her other significant accomplishments was organizing a state-wide retreat for Historically Black Universities. Reverend Clontz assisted Reverend Chargois in making the first retreat a successful one.

In 1990, the Campus Ministry encountered financial difficulties with the Internal Revenue Service that resulted in laying off the staff. Reverend Bill Turner from Duke University secured funds to hire an intern from Duke University Divinity School, Ms. Sherrie Cook. Ms. Cook's job was to maintain the student programs. She worked primarily with the Lutheran campus ministry in one of the university's residence halls.

Reverend Roland Cunningham, a retired military chaplain, succeeded Ms. Cook in 1991. He served as part-time Interim Campus Minister. The Ministry board raised enough money to pay off its debts and was able to renew positive relations with the University administration, especially the Chancellor's Office and Student Affairs. Reverend Cunningham provided worship services twice a month on Sunday evenings.

Reverend Cunningham was replaced by Reverend William J. Barber, a graduate of North Carolina Central University. He served as campus minister for less than a year, during 1992-1993. In that capacity, he was assisted by a Duke University intern, Sir Walter Mack, who provided fifteen hours of assistance per week. In 1993, Reverend Barber accepted a position in the Governor's Office.

In 1993, former Duke University intern, Sir Walter Mack, became Executive Director of the Campus Ministry and brought stability to the ministry by serving five years, from 1994-1999. He also pastored a church in Oxford, North Carolina, while serving as part-time Executive Director of the Ministry. Mack rejuvenated the student groups and established some new ones, including the Dance Group and the Step Group. He established a strong bond with the Chancellor's Office and Student Affairs and increased student and community involvement. In 1996, Rev. Mack accepted the pastorship at a church in Winston Salem, North Carolina.

The Board invited one of its members, Reverend Michael Page, to apply for the position of executive director. He agreed to accept the position for one year. His leadership so impressed the Board, however, that the position was offered to him on a permanent basis.

Reverend Michael Page became the fourteenth executive director. According to Reverend Clontz, former Chair of the Board, his leadership has been dynamic, characterized by strong linkages with students, community, and the NCCU administration. He is a member of the Durham Public School Board and a part-time pastor of First United Antioch Baptist Church. He has been able to use his time and energy to restructure the student organizations and create streams of funding through the annual See and Taste fund raiser. According to Mrs. Florine Roberson, Board Member, Reverend Page has also "increased funding from the various judicatories."

Reverend Page has expanded student involvement in the National Baptist Student Union, the Baptist State Convention, and the Spring and Fall Choir tours.

The United Christian Campus Ministry of North Carolina Central University is the longest existing cooperative ministry in North Carolina. It has represented the collaboration of community, judicatories, and the university for forty years. Currently, it works with the Lutheran Campus Ministry, the Catholic Ministry and the Presbyterian Ministry.

The United Christian Campus Ministry faces challenges of sustainable fund-raising. Though the support from church groups, judicatories, and the Campus Ministry Board has increased, funds for student conferences and creative programs remain a perennial concern.

According to Reverend Michael Page, since September 11, 2001, the United Christian Campus Ministry has played a more functional role on campus by providing enhanced opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to openly seek spiritual guidance. The Campus Ministry will continue to represent a beacon of intellectual and spiritual light in the lives of all who are associated with North Carolina Central University.

Prepared by Beverly Washington Jones, Ph.D and Howard Fitts, Ph.D  
With Contributions from  
Reverend Michael Page  
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## APPENDIX A

### The United Christian Campus Ministers of North Carolina Central University, 1965-2005:

Rev. Hank Elkins	1965-1966
Rev. John Chappell	1966-1967
Rev. Herbert Eaton	1967-1970
Rev. Robert Murray	1972-1973
Rev. Marvin Morgan	1975-1976
Rev. Yvonne Beasley	1976-1980
Rev. Getho-Sonto Hill	1980-1985
Rev. David Parham	1985-1986 (Interim)
Rev. Paige Chargois	1986-1990
Ms. Sherrie Cook	1990-1991 (Interim/Intern from Duke Divinity School)
Rev. Roland Cunningham	1991-1992 (Interim)
Rev. William J. Barber, II	1992-1993
Rev. Sir Walter Mack, Jr.	1994-1999
Rev. Michael D. Page	1999 – present

## APPENDIX B

### Student Organizations

Christian Student Fellowship (formerly BSU)  
Men of FITT: Faith, Integrity, Truth and Trust  
Steppers for Christ

## APPENDIX C

Board of Directors – United Christian Campus Ministry

Reverend Herbert Davis, Chairperson  
Mr. Freeman Walker, Vice Chair  
Ms. Janice Nicholson, Secretary  
Reverend Joe Clontz, Assistant Secretary  
Ms. Mary Hawkins, Treasurer  
Dr. Howard M. Fitts  
Dr. Frances Graham  
Mr. Terry Huff  
Mrs. Mary M. Irving  
Dr. Kristin Herzog  
Reverend Lawrence Johnson  
Reverend Clarence Laney, Jr.  
Bishop Elroy Lewis  
Ms. Theodora Speight Manley  
Mrs. Juanita B. Massenburg  
Reverend Bryan Moss  
Mr. Ramon Patterson  
Mrs. Florine Roberson  
Mrs. Queen Scarborough  
Mrs. Gertie Tatus  
Reverend Rick Trexler  
Reverend Jerome J. Washington  
Mrs. Louise Weeks  
Mr. Robert White  
Reverend Michael Page, Executive Director