



Regional Ministries Office of African American Affairs 2021 Constituency Report



“Ever-Changing Times”

Regional Ministries has continued to invest in the communities we serve in creative and innovative ways, touching lives with God’s love in these ever-changing times. Despite domestic terrorism, natural disasters, social injustice, political game changers, and a pandemic, God’s people remained active and faithfully supported the work of the Lord.



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We share in the Pacific Union Conference's chosen theme of "Love. Serve. Lead." This well identifies the activities listed below that make up the work of Regional Ministries. By putting "Love. Serve. Lead." into action, we are fulfilling the Great Commission given to us by our loving Lord.

The tithe base for Regional Ministries remained stable. Pastors, leaders, and members went the distance to support and encourage the congregation and community during the pandemic. Young adults used social media and delivery apps to take care of individuals and families who contracted COVID-19. Volunteers delivered PPE supplies and found creative and innovative ways to address felt needs.

While church parking lots turned into vaccination and drive-by food distribution sites, worship services transitioned to streaming with YouTube, Facebook, and Zoom technology. In some cases, viewership doubled or tripled. As the world tuned-in, so did missing members, family, and friends. Individuals took advantage of the chat to inquire, "How do I accept Jesus as my personal Savior?" or "How can I get baptized?"

Groups of friends went out to feed the homeless without assistance from church budgets. Homeless men and women often reported that they had not eaten anything in days. Volunteers said they felt humbled by their experiences. Besides food, winter gear, sleeping bags, toiletries, socks, clothing, tarps, and tents were distributed during the shutdown to keep the homeless population throughout the Pacific Union encouraged by God's love.

The Capitol City church in Sacramento opened its fellowship hall as an overnight shelter during the winter months. The 54th Street church in Los Angeles relinquished a part of the parking lot for a mobile shower unit for the homeless. Bakersfield Southside teamed up with Pacific Health to host Pull up-Pick up Health Resource fairs—more than 12 of these events have occurred during the pandemic.

One of the best highlights of the past five years was the West Coast Youth Conference (WCYC) of 2018 at the Ontario Convention Center in Ontario, Calif. Hosting more than 800 youth, young adults, and pastoral families, the theme "EMPOWER" aimed to inspire a generation with passion, creativity, and a willingness to serve. Leadership training, spiritual enrichment, and service projects were featured throughout the three-day event. The year 2023 has been adopted by the union as the Year of Youth Evangelism, and the WCYC, with the theme "INFLUENCERS," will be the premier event to touch the lives of 12- to 17-year-olds in the Pacific Union. WCYC is hosted by the West Coast Black Administrative Caucus; however, it is a multi-cultural event that youth have been experiencing for 20 years.

Regional members, with passion and impact, are still finding ways to serve their communities in these ever-



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changing times. We wish to involve all our members in the theme of this session, following the Lord's command, "So Send I You." With the image of the Good Shepherd before us, we encourage others to follow Him, the one who said, "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved" (John 10:9, NIV).

SIDEBAR:

- Pandemic activities (continuing)
- Parking lot services
- Parking lot and Zoom communion
- Youth and Young Adult Sabbath School
- No-touch food distribution
- Church parking lots became vaccination sites
- Creative programming for virtual children's Sabbath School
- Drive-by baby showers, graduations, birthday parties, and health fairs
- Back-to-school backpack drives with no-touch delivery
- Virtual VBS, prayer meetings, and concerts
- Bible Instructor's Guild (BIG) conduct studies in the park
- BIG virtual Bible studies
- Continued baptisms
- COVID-restricted weddings
- Pop-up weddings
- Homeless meals
- Grandparent reading program
- Service projects with community organizations
- Free showers for homeless in LA
- Capitol City opened fellowship hall for a shelter
- Mayfair and Capitol City produced a movie
- Free mask and PPE distribution to community
- Bakersfield Southside drive-through health fair
- Virtual camp meeting and convocations
- Virtual Conscience and Justice conferences
- West Coast Black Caucus virtual conference