

It is an exciting time for DOOR! Soon DOOR will provide opportunities in six cities: Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Miami, San Antonio and our newest location Hollywood, Calif. In our 20th anniversary year, DOOR has seen significant changes and challenges in all levels of programming, even down to our email addresses. I am humbled and inspired by the events and discussions of this year so much that I feel you, our supporters, need to know the amazing things God is doing in our midst as we help others “see the face of God in the city.”

For twenty years, DOOR cast a vision for what it means to raise up urban ministers. In 2000, we created three levels of programming to usher participants from “discover”ing the city as high school students to “dwell”ing in the fullest of leadership and service among the people of the city for a year, or as they “discern” urban ministry as a vocational calling.

This year, the vision was embraced and challenged. By convening our local board members of each city, we began a process of self-examination and future planning concerning our racism and reconciliation needs. This group met twice in the last year and has made recommendations that challenge what we do and where we’re going. Who are we raising up as urban leaders? How do we do that while confronting our racism and working toward reconciliation to truly reflect the work of God in our cities? Going forward they have set an agenda that we are all excited to work toward. Our local boards have done great work on their own organization at the city level. Our staff look to improve programming with these same recommendations.

In addition we expanded our ministry in two major US cities. In January 2007 DOOR will begin a partnership in Hollywood, California. This would not have been possible without the pioneering work of Hollywood Urban Project (HUP), a ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. We at DOOR are thankful for the vision of HUP and take seriously the task of building on HUP’s legacy.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, DOOR was invited into New Orleans alongside official and traditional partners to develop and support the work of relief efforts. However, since New Orleans and the surrounding area is still in a state of crisis and the local churches want more ownership in how the rebuilding happens, now is not the time for a traditional DOOR program. But the needs are great and DOOR is honored to be a part of the efforts on behalf of the local church there by supporting the work of the Urban Leadership Foundation created by our partners in the area.

We have redesigned our website and changed our web and email addresses. These better reflect our program, streamline participant inquiry, and provide better participant interaction.

"Discern" is for those who want to participate for one to three months exploring more deeply what it means to "see the face of God in the city". DOOR has hosted Discern participants for January terms, as well as spring semesters and summers, making sure to spend extended time in an environment of service, leadership, and learning. Each summer, we hire more than forty young adults as Discern Interns/Support staff. In each city, we will begin to offer Summer Program Coordinator positions to utilize the skills and experience of former staff but also to further develop leadership skills. We are also working diligently on partnering with various colleges to provide subsequent credit for such work.

Four years ago, our partnerships with the Presbyterian Church and the Mennonite Mission Network led to the opening of our first year-long “Dwell” units in Miami and Denver. Currently, we are hosting

one unit in Denver, two in Miami and two in Atlanta. By September 2007, we plan to have Dwell units in Atlanta, Denver, Miami, San Antonio, and Hollywood. In addition to our denominational partners, we are now working with Mission Year to provide opportunities for young married couples and participants who want to spend a second year exploring what it means to be an urban leader.

DOOR has always seen the path from short term mission to semester long experience to long term service to full time vocational ministry. More than half of the applicants of year-long programs cite experiences with short term trips where they first "heard the call." A recent PCUSA study determined that approximately 75% of year-long mission alumni are engaged in or are studying to be in vocational ministry. We are excited to work alongside the divine work of leadership development in our urban areas.

As DOOR considers its future, we invite your participation. We covet your prayers. In some cases, we need to fuel the drive with participants, so we appreciate the many of you who have recommended the DOOR experience to others. DOOR also seeks your financial support. Please consider making a contribution of \$240 – the cost of a week in DOOR for one participant – or any other amount, to help support DOOR in starting new initiatives in Hollywood and New Orleans. If you valued your participation with DOOR, your generous gift will help extend that experience to others.

I look forward to working with you in future service experiences. Please do not hesitate to call or email me with your thoughts, questions or concerns.

In Service and in Peace,

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