

X. STEWARDSHIP OF GIVING TASK FORCE

The conference Stewardship of Giving Task Force, in partnership with the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc., has been busy during the 2006-07 conference year. In the fall, a series of clergy events were held, at which Reverend David Bell, director of The Center for Christian Stewardship of the General Board of Discipleship, presented a day-long program entitled, *Encouraging the Joy of Generous Giving: A Call to Financial Discipleship*. Response was very favorable, with 750+ pastors attending. In addition, there is a noticeable increase in stewardship awareness within the local-church setting. Also, a stewardship Epiphany Bible study/sermon outline was distributed for use throughout the conference.

There are more events planned for the remainder of this quadrennium. We look forward to sharing these plans with you during the Stewardship of Giving Task Force presentation, to be given on Friday afternoon of annual conference.

Sam H. Smith, Jr., *Chairperson*

Y. TASK FORCE ON ANNUAL CONFERENCE REORGANIZATION

DREAMS AND VISIONS FOR MAKING DISCIPLES WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The vision statement of the Western North Carolina Conference is clear and concise: **Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, Transform The World.** The congregations and people of this annual conference are called to show in their lives that they are a connection of Christ-centered, disciple-making, and transformational communities.

Follow Jesus. We believe the church has the privilege to bring persons to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We are committed to bringing persons who do not know Jesus Christ into the church, that they might experience the life-changing grace of Christ and participate in the world-transforming ministry of that grace. This focus can be measured by professions of faith, increased participation in worship and in small group spiritual growth experiences, and other expressions of the church's saving life and fellowship.

Make Disciples. Our church is called to lead persons to grow towards spiritual maturity in the Wesleyan sense of perfection in grace. This growth can be measured in terms of participation in spiritual growth groups and in teaching and learning our faith. These activities promote mental, spiritual, and physical health in our laity, clergy, and congregations, as they provide biblical and theological learning experiences that lead to maturity in Christian discipleship.

Transform The World. The congregations and people of this annual conference have the opportunity to be involved in activities that change our local communities and the world towards conformation with the image of Christ. This calling is fulfilled in ministries that are local and based in specific communities where our congregations are found, and in ministries that are connectional and reach around the world. We respond in such ministries as Katrina relief, Project AGAPE, Africa University scholarships, and other efforts to care for the poor and suffering. We also engage in efforts which nurture Christian unity amidst diversity. Our response involves using both dollars and human energy in ways which make a profound difference in the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

It is with this vision in sight that the Task Force on Annual Conference Reorganization, authorized by the 2006 session of the annual conference, has pursued its work. The group has met on eight occasions, for a total of 13 days. In addition, sub-committees have met repeatedly for many days. Our conversations have been wide-ranging and lively. The total life of the conference has been and continues to be "on the table." All our explorations have been undertaken to fulfill our vision and enable our conference to be as efficient and effective as possible in our connectional efforts to bring the gospel to the people and communities of our conference and world. Part of our task is to devise means of evaluating the effectiveness of the conference and congregations in fulfilling our mission of making disciples. Consequently, we continually ask what kind of structure, staffing, and budget will fulfill the requirements of our polity and lead us to be faithful to our calling to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Throughout our work, we have invited a broad range of persons from across the conference to meet with us, and we will continue to do so. We have discussed and explored a wide range of issues and aspects of the life and ministry of the conference. These include the following (and more):

- accountability of congregations and clergy, both in terms of numbers and growth in grace, or "doing" and "being";
- the number and formation of districts which will provide the most effective and efficient support and supervision of churches and pastors and serve our growing population;
- the possibility of a new method of setting compensation of district superintendents, in which salaries would vary, depending upon a variety of factors, such as salary from which a new superintendent moves to a district, a maximum salary, and a total cap within which all superintendent appointments must be made;
- the formation of covenant peer groups for clergy and laity for purposes of mutual growth, accountability, encouragement, insight, and support, to help us "watch over one another in love;"
- where and how to house the conference's offices in the most effective and efficient manner;
- growing legal concerns about personnel and property confronting the conference and how best to be staffed for responding to such concerns;
- the conference's information technology needs and the most effective and efficient manner to provide for those needs;
- the conference staff, its size, purposes, description, configuration, and deployment, in order to provide the best resources for effective ministry to strengthen our congregations and districts;

- the organization of our conference's boards, agencies, councils, and committees in a way that meets requirements of *The Book of Discipline* and gives us the most effective and efficient structure to fulfill our mission;
- cost factors related to all aspects of our ministries and how to provide for the most effective and efficient stewardship of the financial resources provided by the generosity of our congregations.

This assignment from the 2006 Annual Conference has proven to be an enormous undertaking! In pursuing it we have kept clearly in our sight the instructions to the task force from the action of the 2006 annual conference, particularly this charge:

Offer a new organizational model for the WNCC structure that assists in 'making disciples of Jesus Christ' and promotes mutual accountability between the WNCC and local congregations.

We intend to be absolutely faithful to this charge.

Although the original charge was to bring a "final report for action to the 2007 annual conference at Lake Junaluska," we have determined that a slower course of action is both required and advisable. We therefore bring to the 2007 Western North Carolina Annual Conference the following interim report.

Some recommendations have been made to other conference entities, and further information-gathering steps are being taken:

1. In response to the question raised by the conference Board of Trustees, we have communicated to them our consensus that the trustees will best serve our missional purposes by moving conference offices from the Memorial Center in Charlotte, where our offices have been housed since the 1970's. The building is owned by Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community, leased to the conference, and totally maintained by the conference. A recommendation will be forthcoming from the conference trustees regarding this matter.
2. At the task force's request, some United Methodist information technology professionals conducted a study and made a report on the conference's information technology needs. This report has been referred to the Conference Staff Relations Committee, which is in process of exploring a more effective and efficient IT program for the conference.
3. District "Listening Sessions" have been scheduled for the fall (schedule attached), at which the task force will present more fully developed thinking on the issues discussed above and give the opportunity for conference delegates and other persons to share their responses and ideas. We continue to invite input from the conference.
4. A special session of the annual conference will be held in early 2008 for presentation of and action on the final report. This report will address all the items mentioned above, and more. The date and place are under investigation.

With the exception of these four specific matters, all other concerns remain under discussion. We will gather more information and input prior to specific decisions or recommendations.

As a connectional body, the Western North Carolina Annual Conference is called to set goals, adopt budgets, and generate resources that are realistic in terms of both income expectations and achievability. Once the annual conference has claimed its vision, laity, clergy, and congregations then have the privilege of reaching those goals, funding those budgets, and providing those resources. Together, we can accomplish much more than any of us can accomplish alone. We look forward to sharing our full report with you in the months ahead.

Follow Jesus! Make Disciples! Transform The World! This is our vision. This is our calling. This is our challenge. With the empowerment of God's grace, may this be our commitment!

J. Lawrence McCleskey, *Chairperson*

Mark B. Edwards, *Vice-Chairperson*

Members: James M. (Jamie) Armstrong, Jr., Arnetta E. Beverly, Jennifer L. Burton, Jennifer P. Davis, Betty Jo C. Hardy, Donald Jenkins, Thomas A. (Andy) Langford III, Don Lineberger, Terry L. Moore, William H. (Bill) Osborne, Jr., Kenneth M. Partin, Ronald A. (Alan) Rice, Jr., Robert E. Shepherd, Ashley Crowder Stanley.

DISTRICT LISTENING SESSIONS (all at 7:00 P.M.)

September 16, 2007	Winston-Salem	September 26, 2007	Asheville
September 17, 2007	Northeast	October 1, 2007	Albemarle
September 18, 2007	High Point	October 2, 2007	Salisbury
September 19, 2007	Greensboro	October 3, 2007	Gastonia
September 20, 2007	Lexington	October 4, 2007	Charlotte
September 23, 2007	Waynesville	October 10, 2007	North Wilkesboro
September 24, 2007	Marion	October 11, 2007	Statesville

Places will be set by district superintendents and communicated later.

Z. DISCIPLE BIBLE OUTREACH MINISTRIES OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC.

Chartered in 1999 as a ministry of the Western North Carolina and North Carolina conferences, Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) has been transforming lives in prison and pew with the power of God's word! This transformation is achieved through three powerful ministries:

1. **Local Church DISCIPLE Bible Study ministry.** As the DISCIPLE Bible Study liaison of the two conferences, DBOM provides DISCIPLE Bible Study promotion and training to local churches throughout the state. DBOM's new district training initiative provides training in all four levels of DISCIPLE Bible Study and RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP, at no cost to the participants! This is the only program of its kind in the country and makes these powerful Bible study programs accessible and affordable to every lay and clergy person in North Carolina!
2. **DISCIPLE Prison Ministry.** In the area of prison ministry, DBOM's DISCIPLE ministry is known throughout the country as a model of lay empowerment. DBOM recruits, trains, and mobilizes volunteers from local

churches as DISCIPLE Bible Study teachers in the prisons. To date, 7,000 inmates have participated in this ministry, and more than 400 volunteers have been trained and certified as DBOM prison missionaries.

3. **RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP Youth Outreach.** As in the DISCIPLE Prison Ministry, DBOM sends volunteers forth for ministry in the state's Youth Development Centers with the RINGS OF FELLOWSHIP outreach. RINGS is a youth Bible curriculum based on the model of DISCIPLE. Currently, RINGS is the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice's faith-based program and is active in youth development centers throughout the state. Recently updated and enhanced by a new DVD, RINGS is now available to local churches as an exciting new middle-school Bible school curriculum.

DBOM's Vision: "Making disciples through Bible Study to offer God's grace to a hurting world."

DBOM's Mission: "Developing and strengthening Bible Study ministries to transform lives, make disciples, and empower Christians for outreach ministry."

We wish to thank our brothers and sisters in the Western North Carolina Conference for their generous support of our August special offerings. Together, we will continue to offer the transforming power of scripture to a world in need!

Mark C. Hicks, *Director*

Gray Southern, *Board Chairperson*

Elected WNCC board members: Lynne B. Caldwell, Ed Campbell, David H. Christy, James H. Graves, Randolph H. Harry, Janet M. Hitch, Patricia Pegram, Mike Smith

Advisory Committee: J. Lawrence McCleskey, *Resident Bishop*

AA. FINCH-HUNT INSTITUTE FOR HOMILETICAL STUDIES

The Finch-Hunt Institute for Homiletical Studies, established through the generosity of the late George D. and Lucy Finch, of Thomasville, North Carolina, and the vision of Bishop Earl G. Hunt, Jr., and other conference leaders, is devoted to the strengthening of Western North Carolina Conference pulpits. Laity and clergy both support the institute and benefit from its emphasis on continuing education as a means towards vital and effective preaching.

The primary offering of the institute occurs in February, when the annual Finch Lectures on Preaching are presented as part of the Mission to Ministers, which has in recent years been cosponsored by the Western North Carolina Conference Commission on Witness Ministries, Division on Evangelism.

Over 300 pastors from the conference gathered on Tuesday, February 6, 2007, to hear two outstanding speakers. Dr. Alyce M. McKenzie, from Perkins School of Theology, was the 2007 Finch Lecturer on Preaching. Dr. Nancy Grisham, director of Livin' Ignited, was the 2007 Lecturer on Evangelism. The institute expresses appreciation to the staff and congregation of Providence Church, Charlotte, for hosting this year's event.

The 2008 Mission to Ministers will be held Tuesday, February 5, at Myers Park Church, Charlotte. Other programs of the Finch-Hunt Institute include the annual Bishop's Reading Program and awards to those who demonstrate excellence in preaching.

Finances

The treasurer's report was received and approved by the Board of Trustees in the annual meeting on February 5, 2007.

Beginning balance as of 02/07/2006		\$15,038.24
Receipts	\$ 4,706.82	
Disbursements	<u>4,100.47</u>	
Ending Balance as of 2/06/2007		\$15,644.59
Operating Funds Available		9,411.59
Holy Land Award Funds Available		<u>6,233.00</u>
Balance of Funds Available		\$15,644.59
Endowment Account – First Citizens Investor Services		<u>80,320.65</u>
Total Assets		\$95,965.24

Submitted with great appreciation to the laity and clergy who support the Institute.

J. Lawrence McCleskey, *Chairperson*
 Julianne Brittain, *Executive Vice-President*
 Patricia W. Wiseman, *Secretary*
 David B. Wall, *Treasurer*

BB. TRUSTEES OF THE EUGENE M. COLE FOUNDATION

The will of Eugene M. Cole established the foundation in 1944 to provide benefits for retired ministers and surviving spouses of the Western North Carolina Conference. In 2006, the foundation directed monthly payments to the conference treasurer to supplement the cost of health-care benefits to retired ministers and spouses. The monthly payments totaled \$204,000.00 in 2006. The trustees have determined that the monthly payments for health-care benefits shall continue for 2007. The trustees will also sponsor a breakfast for retired clergy and spouses at annual conference.

The foundation is governed by three (3) trustees elected by the annual conference: James C. Windham, Jr., chairperson; Juanita T. Henderson, vice-chairperson; and R. Anthony Orsbon, secretary.
 James C. Windham, Jr., *Chairperson*

Proposal: Cole Foundation Trustee

(Petition 17)
(Adopted on June 8, 2007)

The trustees of the Eugene M. Cole Foundation propose that R. Anthony Orsbon, whose term as trustee expires in 2007, be re-elected for another three-year term, expiring in 2010.

**CC. THE UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION
 OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA, INC.**

Since 1985, the board of directors and staff of the United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc., have been in ministry with faithful United Methodists throughout this great conference of ours. We take our ministry with you very seriously and are constantly looking for news ways to engage with you. This past year was no exception, with the development of the UMF Loan Program and UMF Development Fund.

The UMF Loan Program was created in June 2006 to help churches and church-related institutions by providing low-cost loans to fund additions and renovations to existing physical plants, as well as new construction for new ministry starts. Within the first six months of this program, we had loaned out in excess of \$1 million and plan to double the amount loaned by mid-2007. The complementary ministry to the UMF Loan Program is the UMF Development Fund. It not only gives churches and church-related institutions the opportunity to invest in a fixed income-type vehicle, but it also is open to individuals. This ministry exemplifies United Methodists helping United Methodists by keeping invested monies within the connection that are used for the UMF Loan Program.

Another program in which we have taken a leadership role over the last year is the conference-wide, quadrennial stewardship initiative. With help from the membership of the Stewardship of Giving Task Force, we have begun to provide not only financial support but also administrative support and direction to the various events designed by this group. Our goal as a foundation is to continue this emphasis past the current quadrennium with on-going, relevant educational opportunities for United Methodists in western North Carolina.

In addition, we still offer our ministries of endowment development, planned giving, fund management, and grant making. By December 31, 2006, we reached an all-time high in total assets of \$95 million. In addition, over the last 12 months, a total of approximately \$300,000 has been distributed from the UMF Ministry Fund, various permanently restricted endowments, and the Royce and Jane Reynolds Fund of the United Methodist Foundation. Ministries supported include: world-wide initiatives, conference and district initiatives, local-church initiatives, and Hispanic and other minority ministries.

The foundation appreciates the opportunity to be in ministry with and for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our 2006 *Annual Report* will be available at the 2007 session of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference for your perusal. In addition, our ministry tent will be located on the grounds of Lake Junaluska. Please feel free to stop by and get to know our staff that will be available to address any questions you might have. We encourage you to become familiar with our ministries and look forward to the time when we will be in ministry with you.

Sam H. Smith, Jr., *Chairperson*
 David A. Snipes, *President*

**DD. BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD OF THE
 WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE**

We want to thank all the laity who have become non-beneficiary members of the Brotherhood/ Sisterhood and have allowed us to suggest that the benefit be raised to \$9,500. The Brotherhood/Sisterhood is an important connection of the clergy of the conference. It is one way that we can pull together and express our gratitude for the life and ministry of another of our brothers or sisters in ministry.

**Treasurer's Report
 Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements
 July 1, 2005 – March 13, 2006**

Receipts:

Advance Payments for Calls	\$ 4,897.58
Revenue from Calls: Clergy	61,519.71
Revenue from Calls: Lay Members	59,367.00
Revenue from Notes: Clergy	10,320.00

Interest Income	1,159.22	
Other Revenues	<u>1,919.08</u>	
Total Receipts		\$139,182.59
Disbursements:		
Death Benefits	\$ 61,967.50	
Net Salaries	17,100.30	
Federal Taxes	1,998.00	
State Taxes	955.00	
FICA Taxes	2,688.36	
Medicare Taxes	628.94	
Office Supplies	144.36	
Printing and Outside Copies	1,501.05	
Postage and Shipping	5,940.54	
Computer Expenses	720.00	
Rent Expense	600.00	
Telephone Expense	1,690.68	
Payroll Tax Expense	0.00	
Laity Expense	972.96	
Dir. Operating Expense	5,184.24	
Professional Services	371.00	
Investment Handling Fees	0.00	
Travel/Mileage	1,263.48	
Transfer funds to Cash Invest.....	18,000.00	
Other Operating Expenses	<u>3,048.19</u>	
Total Disbursements		<u>\$124,774.60</u>
Change in Cash During Period		\$ 14,407.99
Cash Balance, Beginning.....		<u>10,547.49</u>
Cash Balance, Ending		\$ 24,955.48

Proposals

(Adopted in meeting of Brotherhood/Sisterhood membership)

1. That the assessment rate for clergy members be \$8.00 per call, that lay participants contribute \$3.00 per call, that the initiation fee for new clergy members be \$10.00, and that the benefit paid to beneficiaries of deceased clergy be \$9,500.00 (up from \$9,000.00).
2. That both laity and clergy be encouraged to include the Brotherhood/Sisterhood in their wills.
3. That clergy members be encouraged to pay in advance an annual estimated assessment of \$112.00, based on an average of 14 assessments per year.
4. That persons with notes be encouraged to begin payments on any outstanding balances.
5. That assessments are to be paid upon receipt of notice or within 60 days of the notice.
6. That each local church be encouraged to observe Brotherhood/Sisterhood Sunday on the third Sunday in February or on another Sunday more suitable to the particular congregation.

Rex L. Gibbs, *President*

A. Owen Peeler, *Vice-President*

Christopher M. Westmoreland, *Recording Secretary*

Robert W. Combs, *Executive Director*

James A. Harrell, Sr., and Jack Young, *Co-Directors of Laity*

Brotherhood/Sisterhood Roll 2007-2008

Adams, C.L.	Auman, G.E.	Beard, D.R., Jr.	Bowman, G.O.	Cagle, J.F.
Adams, G.L.	Auman, J.L.	Beaty, F.D.	Bradley, E.F.	Caldwell, L.B.
Adams, H.C.	Auman, T.L.	Beck, B.R.	Branton, T.R.	Campbell, D.J.
Adams, T.D.	Autrey, S.L.	Beck, H.C.	Bremer, D.C.	Campbell, R.H.
Addo, P.E.A.		Benfield, C.M.	Briggs, L.T.	Campbell-Robinson, H.
Aldridge, J.M., Jr.	Bailey, D.A.	Beverly, A.E.	Brittain, T.B.	Cantor, E.D., Jr.
Allcorn, D.K.	Ballard, M.J.	Biggers, E.L.	Brooks, G.A.	Carpenter, K.D.
Allcorn, S.M.	Banyai, P.D.	Bigham, W.O.	Brown, A.W., Jr.	Carter, E.K.
Allen, C.W.	Barbee, W.L.	Billings, J.W.	Brown, H.A.	Carter, H.S.
Allen, D.R.	Barden, L.E.	Bingham, K.W.	Brown, W.A., Jr.	Carter, M.C., Jr.
Allen, T.L.	Barden, B.J.	Bishop, S.B.	Buckner, F.W.	Carter, R.L., Jr.
Allred, G.H.	Barden, M.L.	Black, E.L.	Bumgarner, L.G.	Cartner, J.D.
Alventosa-Brown, J.	Barnes, S.E.	Blalock, J.F., Jr.	Bunch, R.P.	Cash, D.R., Sr.
Alvord, V.G.	Barnhardt, D.R.	Blanton, W.N., Jr.	Burson, R.N., Jr.	Cash, L.W.
Amason, J.D.	Barnhardt, R.T.	Blizzard, L.K.	Burton, G.A.	Cassady, T.L.
Andrews, H.F.	Barr, C.B.	Boggan, R.E., Jr.	Burton, J.M., Jr.	Caudill, C.J.
Andrews, W.M.	Barringer, G.R.	Boggs, J.S.	Burton, J.M., Sr.	Caulbe, R.L.
Armstrong, J.M.	Bartley, E.J.	Bogle, J.R.	Burton, M.K.	Cecil, J.H.
Armstrong, J.M., Jr.	Baxter, D.L.	Boliek, A.P.	Butler, D.H.	Champion, B.J.
Arnold, C.L.	Beall, T.M.	Bottoms, F.G.	Byers, R.T.	Childers, D.W.
Ashe, D.W.	Beam, D.W.	Bowen, J.E.	Bynum, L.E.	Childers, W.H., Jr.

Chloe, D.C.
 Choplin, P.P.
 Chrisawn, J.R.
 Christy, D.H.
 Christy, J.C.
 Christy, J.P.
 Christy, M.H.
 Cirksena, R.J., Jr.
 Clanton, R.A., Jr.
 Clark, L.J.
 Clayton, R.L., Jr.
 Clifton, L.B.
 Clinard, H.C.
 Clinard, R.M.
 Clodfelter, B.C.
 Clodfelter, J.P., Jr.
 Clodfelter, W.D.
 Cockman, E.A.
 Cole, J.W.
 Cole, P.B.
 Coles, A.L.
 Collins, G.D.
 Collins, M.W.
 Colson, J.D.
 Combs, J.F.
 Combs, R.W.
 Combs, S.R.
 Compton, H.R.
 Conder, A.R.
 Conder, T.E., Jr.
 Conover, C.H., Jr.
 Conrad, D.E.
 Cook, D.A., Jr.
 Cook, E.A., Jr.
 Cook, F.B.
 Cooke, J.H.
 Cooke, R.J.
 Crady, B.M.
 Crady, L., Jr.
 Craig, P.A., Jr.
 Cranfill, K.R.
 Crawley, J.W.
 Creech, H.L., Jr.
 Croom, S.A.
 Crouse, K.D.
 Crowder, R.J.

 Dalton, G.W.
 Daniels, J.C.
 Darnell, J.D.
 Davenport, J.P.
 Davis, B.F.
 Davis, C.
 Davis, C.N.
 Davis, D.C.
 Davis, E.V.
 Davis, G.M.
 Davis, J.
 Davis, J.B.
 Davis, J.E., Jr.
 Davis, S.W.
 Davis, T.A.
 Dawkins, H.C.
 Day, A.P.
 Dean, E.E., Jr.
 Dean, R.I.
 DeBerry, P., Jr.
 Dennis, B.J.
 Deyton, J.H.
 Dickens, J.G.
 Dickson, C.H.
 Dinging, W.H.
 Dodd, R.V.
 Donahue, C.E.
 Donnell, S.S.
 Doser, W.R.
 Doub, R.D.
 Dougherty, B.G.
 Dowdle, J.O., Jr.
 Dowdy, A.M.
 Dukes III, L.S.
 Duncan, D.J.
 Duncan, G.M.
 Dunker, C.F.
 Duvall, J.A.
 Dyar, W.H.

 Dye, M.J.

 Eanes, R.H., Jr.
 Easter, K.L.
 Edmonds, O.R.
 Edwards, F.H.
 Edwards, J.F.
 Eggers, L.A.
 Eller, K.R.
 Ellis, L.D.
 Ellison, W.B.
 Emory, M.J.
 Epps, J.F.
 Ervin, B.N.
 Ervin, J.L.
 Evans, J.H.
 Everett, A.

 Faggart, J.R.
 Faggart, W.H.
 Fair, L.O.
 Falls, Fred, Jr.
 Farabow, M.S.
 Ferguson-Allen, L.L.
 Ferree, J.K.
 Few, J.F.
 Finney, R.H.
 Fisher, D.L.
 Fite, R.D.
 Fitzgerald, J.C.
 FitzJefferies, H.D.
 Flack, C.A.
 Fleming, H.D.
 Fletcher, L.W.
 Flynn, D.J.
 Forbes, V.L.
 Forbis, W.T.
 Ford, A.G.
 Foster, A.D.
 Foster, G.B.
 Foster, R.A.
 Foust, W.N.
 Fowler III, J.W.
 Fox, D.B., Jr.
 Franklin, J.K.
 Freeman, G.D.
 Freeman, K.G.
 Freeman III, M.L.
 Freeman, Patrick
 Freshour, A.R.
 Friddle, G.H., Jr.
 Fritts, R.E., Jr.
 Frye, K.H.
 Fulk, J.M., Jr.
 Fulk, J.M., Sr.
 Funderburk, D.K.
 Furr, J.C.

 Gaddy, D.W.
 Galloway, J.W.
 Gibbons, C.F.
 Gibbs, D.W.
 Gibbs, L.C.
 Gibbs, P.H.
 Gibbs, R.L.
 Gibert, A.S.
 Gibson, T.L.
 Gilbert, D.W.
 Giese, K.W.
 Giles, S.L., Jr.
 Gilland, J.C.
 Glahn, P.L.
 Glass, B.D.
 Godfrey, C.B.
 Golden, J.B., Jr.
 Goode, M.H.
 Gordon, A.F., Jr.
 Gordon, G.B.
 Gordon, M.B.
 Gosnell, A.P.
 Gottula, K.W.
 Gould, R.J.
 Graves, E.L.
 Graves, J.H.
 Gray, M.D.
 Greene, D.S.

 Greene, L.W.
 Grice, F.W.
 Griffin, G.T.
 Griffith, T.L.
 Griffiths, G.S.
 Groh, D.G.
 Grose, J.C., Jr.
 Guy, C.R.
 Guy, D.A.
 Gwyn, B.L.

 Hacklander, P.K.
 Hahn, R.J.
 Haines, S.D.
 Haire, E.R.
 Hall, J.T.
 Hall, R.O.
 Hamilton, James R.
 Hamlyn, D.M.
 Hammill, T.L.
 Harbin, M.E.
 Harkey, E.S.
 Harrelson, C.G.
 Harrill, M.B., Jr.
 Harris, B.P.
 Harris, J.D.
 Hartsell, C.J.
 Hatherly, K.L.
 Hatley, M.T.
 Hauser, J.J.
 Hawk, J.H.
 Hawkins, G.L.
 Hawkins, W.T.
 Hawks, W.G.H.
 Haynes, D.W.
 Haynes, J.O.
 Heafner, J.P.
 Heath, E.M.
 Hechler, Y.C.
 Hedgpath, E.H.
 Heermans, E.D.
 Heermans, J.P.
 Helms, M.W.
 Herbin, F.L.
 Herin, T.J.
 Herman, J.F.
 Herold, J.W.
 Herron, R.E.
 Herron, V.C.
 Hershberger, G.A.
 Hiatt, E.E., Jr.
 Hill, F.A.
 Hillyer, D.E., Jr.
 Hilton, R.D., Sr.
 Hinson, H.L.
 Hipps, R.H.
 Hitch, G.C.
 Hobson, B.G.
 Hochmuth, D.E.
 Hockett, D.C.
 Hodnett, M.E., Jr.
 Holcombe, T.D.
 Holland III, A.R.
 Holland, Cornelius
 Holland, J.W.
 Holliday, B.M.
 Hood, R.L.
 Horn, K.A.
 Houser, E.H.
 Howard, J.F.
 Howell, J.C.
 Howell, J.F., Sr.
 Howle, R.A.
 Hubbard, L.E.
 Hubbard, S.D.
 Huffman, L.B.
 Huffman, R.E.
 Huffstetter, B.M.
 Humphries-Bivens, P.
 Hunsucker, L.G.
 Hunter, B.V.
 Hurley, J.B.
 Hutchings, C.R.

 Ingram, B.A.

 Ingram, F.E.
 Ingram, R.M., Sr.
 Ireson, C.H.
 Isenhour, O.B.
 Ison, F.H.
 Ivey, H.D.

 James, S.D.
 Jarrett, R.B.
 Jeffries, W.T.
 Jenkins, P.M.
 Jessup, B.J.
 Johnsen, J.W.
 Johnson, B.E.
 Johnson, J.L.
 Johnson, J.S.
 Johnson, K.M.
 Johnson, LaNell
 Johnson, S.T.
 Jones, B.M.
 Jones, K.R.
 Jones, R.R.
 Jones, S.T.
 Jordan, D.M.
 Jordan, N.F., Jr.
 Joyce, S.D.
 Joyner, M.E.
 Judy, C.W.
 Judy, K.W.
 Justice, H.A.

 Kale, J.W.
 Kalish, S.B.
 Kammerer, C.P.
 Kaser Odor, K.E.
 Kayler, C.J.
 Kayler, R.E.
 Kelley, D.R.
 Kelly, L.M.
 Key, J.T.
 Key, M.J.
 Killian, T.S.
 Kim, Abraham
 Kincaid, E.C.
 King, R.M.
 Kirk, R.H.
 Kirk, T.A.
 Kitley, R.M.
 Knoespel, J.W.
 Koonts, R.A.
 Krall, N.M.
 Kurtz, M.D.

 Lackey, C.L.
 Lain, C.A.
 Lair, R.E., Jr.
 Lambert, A.E.
 Langford, S.O.
 Langford III, T.A.
 Langston, C.A.
 Lanier, R.S.
 Latimer III, C.T.
 Lear, W.J.
 Leatherwood, J.M.
 Lee, D.W.
 Lee, E.D.
 Lee, H.J.
 LeBaube, R.E.
 LeMasters, F.H.
 Lemons, E.M.
 Lemons, J.B.
 Leonard, D.B.
 Lewis, M.W.
 Lewis, P.A.
 Lindquist, C.A., Jr.
 Lindsey, C.R.
 Lindsey, J.A.
 Listenbee, S.O.
 Little, G.H.
 Lookadoo, D.G.
 Lovelace, W.E.
 Lowder, P.D.
 Lowe, V.W.
 Lowman, E.H.
 Lucas, J.C.
 Luther, J.E., Jr.

 Luther, J.D.
 Lutz, D.H.
 Lynn, E.R.
 Lyons, D.J.
 Lytle, R.J.D.

 Macdonald, M.A.
 Macon, F.K.
 Maddox, J.E.
 Magnuson, R.A.
 Maness, C.M., Jr.
 Manning, C.C.
 Margarita, D.S.
 Marlowe, A.R.
 Marlowe, J.D.
 Martin, D.B.
 Martin, D.G.
 Martin, S.L.
 Mason, D.M.
 Mason, D.O.
 Mayo, B.B.
 McAbee, K.M.
 McClellan, M.D.
 McCleskey, J.L.
 McClintock, H.E.
 McConnell, J.T.
 McCombs, J.A.
 McGuire, J.W.
 McHale, D.F.
 McIntosh, M.D.
 McKelvey, W.H.
 McKim, D.A.
 McKinney, E.D.
 McLawhorn, R.T.
 McMurry, J.C.
 McWhorter, J.L.
 Medlin, W.T., Jr.
 Medlin III, W.T.
 Melton, J.T.
 Melton, L.M.
 Michael, R.B.
 Michael, S.G.
 Miller, B.R.
 Miller, D.W.
 Miller, J.J.
 Miller, J.K.
 Miller, P.J.
 Milleson, B.W.
 Mills, R.W.
 Montgomery, G.G.
 Moore, J.A.
 Moore, S.H., Jr.
 Moore, T.S.
 Morgan, L.S.
 Morris, S.A.
 Morrison, B.S.
 Morrison, H.L.
 Morton, C.E.
 Moss, A.W.
 Moss, O.R.
 Moss, R.T.
 Murray, J.D.
 Murrow, M.C.
 Myers, G.L., Jr.
 Myers, H.P., Jr.
 Myers, J.L.
 Myrick, C.K.

 Napper, W.L.
 Newell, J.K.
 Newman, B.M.
 Newman, D.A.
 Northcraft, S.B.
 Northington, J.A.
 Northrup, P.B.
 Norton, Z.G.
 Noyes, D.C.

 O'Ferrell, L.R.
 Oakley, J.S.
 Ollis, J.P.
 Outlaw, J.K., Jr.
 Overcash, R.A.
 Owen, P.S., Jr.
 Owenby, L.E.
 Owens, N.B.

Owens, W.N.	Reed, R.L.	Sherrill, H.D., Jr.	Swaim, B.G.	Weiler, M.L.
Padilla, M.B.	Reep, J.D.	Sherrill, H.M.	Swann, M.M.	Weisner, R.D.
Page, C.E.	Reeves, J.R.	Sherrill, K.C.	Sweet, W.A.	Welch, P. P.
Page, C.S.	Reid, J.L.	Sherrill, R.N.	Sweezy, N.N.	Wensil, T.D.
Park, P.W.	Rice, R.A., Jr.	Shives, H.D.	Swofford, M.K.	Westfall, J.M.
Parker, B.J.	Riggs, E.R.	Shoaf, F.C.		Westmoreland, C.M.
Parker, M.J.	Rintz, J.W.	Shuford, M.A.	Talbert, D.D.	Westmoreland, J.R.
Parker-Reece, B.L.	Roach, R.E.	Sides, S.H.	Talbert, T.R.	White, C.D., Jr.
Parris, D.L.	Roberson, G.W.	Sigmon, T.R.	Tarpley, T.J., Jr.	White, D.L.
Parsons, R.T., Jr.	Roberts, J.A.	Sills, J.R.	Tate, J.P.	White, J.K.
Patzfahi, R.L.	Roberts, T.K.	Sills, M.R.	Taylor, J.L., Jr.	White, J.L.
Payne, A.D.	Roberts, W.W.	Sisk, C.W.	Taylor, J.M.	White, W.R.
Peeler, A.O.	Robinson, A.A., Jr.	Sluder, D.K.	Taylor, P.J.	Whiteside, B.M.
Pegues, Walter	Robinson, G.P.	Smisor, H.N.	Taylor, T.K.	Whitley, A.L.
Pendleton, K.S.	Rochester, N.L., Jr.	Smith, D.S.	Thie, R.B.	Whitlock, D.E., Jr.
Penland, D.R.	Rodriguez, C.A.	Smith, D.W.	Thomas III, J.H.	White, J.L.
Penry, C.K.	Rogers, B.E.	Smith, H.D.	Thore, W.C.	White, W.R.
Perkins, P.F., Sr.	Romanat, M.M.	Smith, J.E.	Thumm, M.V.	Wilkinson, H.C.
Peterson, M.L.	Romanello, R.E.	Smith, K.H.	Thurman, J.M.	Wilkinson, H.R.
Petree, J.R.	Rorie, D.M.	Smith, S.L.	Tingle, R.A.	Wilkinson, L.D.
Peurifoy, R.C.	Rose, G.W.	Smotherman, D.P.	Tisdale, J.K.	Williams, E.W.
Peurifoy, V.B.	Roseboro, R.E.	Snider, N.T.	Tolbert, M.R.	Williams, G.E.
Pharr, P.A.	Roseman, M.D.	Snipes, D.A.	Trollinger, J.T.	Williams, H.M.
Pheagin, W.H., Jr.	Rosenquist, V.B.	Snow, O.L.	Troutman, G.D.	Williams, J.B., Jr.
Plowman, E.L.	Routh, D.W.	Spencer, A.Y.	Turman, D.W.	Williams-Gilbert, C.
Plummer, C.M.	Rowell, L.J.	Spencer, R.L.	Turman, T.C.	Wilson, A.A.
Pollock, G.L.	Rowland, C.L.	Spillman, J.P., Jr.	Turner, C.M., Jr.	Wilson II, C.W.
Pollock, H.M.	Royals, G.C.	Spivey, A.C.	Turner, C.M., Jr.	Wilson, L.B.
Porter, T. R.	Rudisill, G.W.	Stadler, L.E., Jr.	Tyson, C.E.	Wimmer, M.F.
Portis, M.S.	Rufty, J.M.	Stamey, R.H.	Van Meter, A.R.	Winstead, M.E.
Powell, C.G.	Russell, R.G., Jr.	Stanton, D.S.	Varner, J.H.	Witherington III, Ben
Powell, D.N.	Rutledge, T.E., Jr.	Staples, L.W., Jr.	Vickers, M.N.	Witherspoon, L.H.
Powell, J.J.		Starnes, T.P.	Vickers, S.N.	Witty, R.L., Jr.
Powell, J.L.	Sailors, R.R.	Steagald, T.R.	Wombough, W.B.	Wood, F.J.
Powell, T.A.	Sain, D.D.	Steck, R.D.	Woodard, L.H.	Woodward, W.W.
Prichard, J.O.	Sanders, J.K.	Steed, R.G., Jr.	Wooten, M.B.	Workman, M.M.
Pryor, W.D.	Sartin, C.W.	Steele, B.T.	Worley, Edwin	Worthy, C.M., Jr.
Pyatt, J.L.	Scandale, N.A., Jr.	Stephens, E.U.	Wyant, D.A.	Wyman, W.C., Jr.
	Scarborough, S.C.	Stevens, W.L.	Warner, J.M.G.	
	Schwantes, H.E.	Stewart, C.A.	Warner, S.B.	
Queen, Harry	Scott, J.A.	Stinson-Wesley, J.T.	Watwood III, H.L.	Yarborough, E.S.
	Scott, L.W.	Stith III, F.A.	Weaver, A.B.	Yarborough, J.B.
Raines, J.A.	Sellers, H.R., Jr.	Stockton, T.B.	Webb, J.S.	Yates, W.G.
Rainey, S.K.	Sellers, Liston, Jr.	Stokes, E.B.	Webb, J.T., Jr.	Young III, C.S.
Ralls, R.J.	Settle, C.E.	Storey, N.B.	Webb, S.F.	Young, H.C., Jr.
Ramsey, G.L.	Setzer, R.D.	Stowe, D.P.	Webb, S.S.	Young, C.A.
Randolph, R.D.	Shepard, J.J.	Strader, R.H.	Weekley, J.M.	Yount, P.W., Jr.
Rankin, N.B.	Shepherd, B.K.	Strange, L.H.	Weeks, T.W.	Yow, J.L.
Ratcliffe, D.W.	Sherfey, J.H.	Strickland, E.L.		
Reece, E.A.	Sherrill, C.G.	Summey, R.C.		

EE. THE DUKE ENDOWMENT

Last year, we shared with the annual conference the basic structure of a joint program between the two United Methodist conferences in North Carolina, Duke Divinity School, and The Duke Endowment called Thriving Rural Communities. Thriving Rural Communities is a comprehensive program that includes components for clergy health, lay learning opportunities, and the development of clergy leaders dedicated to ministry in rural churches. Part of that leadership-development component is through a rural ministry fellowship at Duke Divinity School. The Endowment is pleased to announce members of the first two classes of Rural Fellows from the Western North Carolina Conference, Duncan Martin and Julie Bingham, who will be in their second year of seminary training in the fall, and Nicole Jones and Emily Kroger, who will enter their first year of seminary in the fall. Fellows receive full tuition, as well as learning opportunities in congregations selected as Thriving Rural Congregations that will serve as teaching congregations. Today, we are pleased to introduce the Thriving Rural Churches in this conference: Fairview, in Pinnacle; First, in Hayesville; Friendship, in Newton; and Tyro, in Lexington.

Providing wisdom and direction for this program is Jeremy I. Troxler, who will serve as the director of the Thriving Rural Churches program at Duke Divinity School. As so many of you know, Jeremy is a gifted pastor, with both a heart for and understanding of rural ministry. But more than that, he has a vision for what it means to thrive. A few weeks ago, he presented his beautiful and faithful vision in a breathtaking sermon from the John text in which Nathanael asks, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46, NRSV). I encourage you to read the full text, which will be available at the Duke Divinity School website. Until you do, here is a teaser: Philip indicates that this Jesus is the one written of in the law and by the prophets. But Nathanael dismisses the thought, because Jesus comes from Nazareth. As Jeremy taught us, Nazareth was a back-water rural town that, if in North Carolina, would have qualified for funding from The Endowment. Nothing good, it was believed, can come from such a town. But that little town changed the world.

And it is from the nearly 1,300 little towns across North Carolina that thriving rural United Methodist congregations will continue to transform the world. While the churches just announced were selected as Thriving Rural Congregations, we at The Endowment are lucky enough to have worked with many, many congregations in the

Western North Carolina Conference that are thriving, such as those involved in ministries such as construction of safe, affordable, energy-efficient homes in some of the most economically challenged districts of our state. These homes offer hope to families who have known the despair of job loss and plant closure. But guess what? The churches aren't just building homes, they are also offering GED classes, as well as computer training, so that these new homeowners may acquire new skills to carry into an ever changing labor market.

Other rural churches are reaching out to children in thoughtful and faithful ways. For example, Reeds Church, in the Lexington District, submitted a grant for a K-5th grade after-school program several years ago. Later, they made application for funds to convert their parsonage, which wasn't being used, into a youth house for high school-aged teens. The combination of a strong after-school program for elementary-aged children and a popular "hang-out" spot for teens convinced Reeds Church that they needed to explore the possibility of a third Duke Endowment grant for an after-school tutoring program for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. These children are older than the elementary children enrolled in the church's after-school program, but not quite old enough to stay alone; however, because parents work during the day, there is no alternative for them in the community, and many become "latch-key kids" who are left to fend for themselves after school. Reed's middle-school program has a built-in base to draw from, as many of the 5th graders that the church currently serves would graduate to this program upon entering middle school. But that does not mean returning to the same playground they knew in the elementary program. Rather, the pastor envisions using the youth house for the 6th through 8th graders to receive tutoring, and he engaged many of the high-school UMYF members to provide that tutoring. The church now has a comprehensive childcare ministry that utilizes the gifts of the congregation and takes seriously Jesus' teaching in Matthew (19:14) to bring the children to him, for it is to them "that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

Many rural churches have welcomed in the stranger. At several churches across the state, congregants and their clergy have opened up church athletic fields to be used by our Latino brothers and sisters for soccer. Faithful folk have organized leagues and tournaments and, in the time between the matches, these churches offer Spanish-language worship services under tents they have erected at the fields. Through worship and fellowship, congregants report that they get to know their neighbors. And as that trust is built, the faithful learn of particular needs and respond by providing everything from groceries for those that are physically hungry to Bible studies for those who are spiritually hungry.

With nearly 250 grants totaling \$13.2 million in 2006, we could truly spend the rest of annual conference talking about all the ways in which rural churches thrive by engaging in ministries that follow Jesus, make disciples, and *transform* the world. It is an exciting time to be in a rural church and we at The Endowment count it as both a blessing and a privilege to serve with rural churches in the Western North Carolina Conference.

Robert R. (Robb) Webb III, *Assistant Director, Rural Church Division*

FF. NORTH CAROLINA PASTORS' SCHOOL AND DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL CONVOCATION

On October 9-11, 2006, 572 persons gathered for the annual Convocation and Pastors' School at Duke Divinity School. The event focused on the theme, "Called to Follow, Called to Lead," and featured thoughtful lectures, insightful seminars, and inspiring worship services. The James A. Gray Lectures were presented by Eugene Peterson, the acclaimed pastor, scholar, writer, and poet, with the titles, "Pastors: The Call to Exile" and "Pastors: The Call to Beauty." The Hickman Lectures were delivered by Dr. Craig Dykstra, senior vice-president for religion at Lilly Endowment, Inc., on the subject of the pastoral and ecclesial imagination. Convocation preachers Trevor Hudson, a Methodist minister from Northfield Church in Benoni, South Africa; Ann Svennungsen, the president of The Fund for Theological Education; and William Turner, associate professor of the practice of homiletics at Duke Divinity School, brought messages of challenge and hope on the theme of pastoral leadership. The three also served as panelists for a discussion entitled, "Leading Congregations: Lessons I've Learned Along the Way." Fifteen different continuing-education seminars, including "Preaching from John's Gospel," "Wrestling with God: Jacob, Moses, Jonah, Job," "Cultivating Excellence in Pastoral Ministry," and "Beyond Techniques: Developing the Capacity to Lead," enrolled over 400 participants.

The 2007 Convocation and Pastors' School is entitled, "Our Daily Bread," and will be held October 8-10. Primary lecturers will be author Wendell Berry, environmentalist Wes Jackson, and theologian Norman Wirzba. A detailed brochure will be available from Duke Divinity School later this summer. Individuals are encouraged to contact the Center for Continuing Education for more information (www.divinity.duke.edu/learningforlife, email div-conted@duke.edu, phone 888-845-4216).

G. Paul Phillips, *Chairperson*

GG. SCHOOLS OF THEOLOGY

1. CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Candler School of Theology is grounded in the Christian faith and shaped by the Wesleyan tradition of evangelical piety, ecumenical openness, and social concerns. Its mission is *to educate—through scholarship, teaching and service—faithful and creative leaders for the church's ministries in the world*. These purposes define Candler's role as a school of Emory University and of The United Methodist Church and point to the unique chal-

allenges and opportunities we face in leading a national research university in re-discovering what it might mean to relate to a major denomination.

Our school, unique in its placement within a top-20 research university and its commitment to educate pastoral and academic leadership, is poised to play an active role in the positive transformation of the church and the world. Religion has bound and divided communities since the beginning of time, and now is no different. When polled about their research, over 300 Emory professors named "religion" as a theme in their work. Ethically aware, theologically profound voices are desperately needed in our society, and Emory draws on its Methodist heritage and looks to Candler to bring wisdom, clarity, compassion, and tolerance to the conversation. For example, Mary Elizabeth Moore, professor of religion and education, is co-chairing one of our university strategic initiatives, "Understanding Religions and the Human Spirit."

Candler's faculty continues to be among the most distinctive in theological education. Forty-six members hold full-time appointments, and six hold part-time appointments. An additional 15 serve in an adjunct capacity. Woodie W. White and Marshall L. (Jack) Meadors, Jr., serve as the United Methodist bishops in residence. Bishop L. Bevel Jones III remains at Candler, working with the Development Office.

In our commitment to the practice of ministry, we partner with 80 churches to ensure that ministerial preparation takes place, both in the local church and on the campus. Candler's Contextual Education program intentionally pairs a faculty member with supervisors from church and community ministries, so that teaching teams represent the church and the academy. Twenty-nine teaching supervisors support our Contextual Education and Teaching Parish (student pastor) programs. Dr. Alice Rogers has broadened the Teaching Parish program, and it now includes students appointed to churches in the Alabama-West Florida, North Alabama, North Georgia, South Georgia, and South Carolina annual conferences.

This year, enrollment was 510, with 396 in the master of divinity program, 59 in the master of theological studies program, 20 in the master of theology program, 9 in the doctor of theology program, and 26 enrolled as special, non-degree students. Eighty-three percent of students are enrolled full time. The student population is 23% United States ethnic minority, 10% international, and 51% women. More than 50 denominations are represented, with 56% of M.Div. students being United Methodist, from 34 annual conferences. Other denominations of the Methodist family represented at Candler include African Methodist Episcopal, Free Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, and the Methodist Church of Korea.

Good things are happening as we develop and put into action a plan for the life-long learning of church leaders. A group of leaders in life-long learning, including a number of United Methodists, have given advice on enhancing our programs. Our Institute of Preaching and Pastoral Renewal led a group to the Holy Land after they had taken a course in continuing education, and funding for this program has been renewed for 2007. Information on upcoming events is available on the Internet at www.candler.emory.edu.

Groundbreaking on Phase I of our new building is planned for spring 2007. Our full project—two buildings—will provide faculty and administrative offices, state-of-the-art classrooms, new library facilities, a teaching chapel, and space for the university's Ethics Center. The university plans to gather its rich religious resources within and near the Candler facilities to create a "religious complex" centered around Candler.

The faculty has begun to implement an inspiring strategic plan that calls for the facilities noted above, new faculty chairs, program support, and increases to our scholarship endowment. This year, 77% of eligible students received scholarship support from Candler, with an average scholarship covering 78% of tuition. Gifts from the United Methodist Ministerial Education Fund (MEF) have played a large role in this support. So much more, however, still needs to be done. More than 60% of Candler's M.Div. graduates leave school with educational debt. This burden undermines their effectiveness in ministry, such that some seek alternative employment. Your continued support, gifts, and prayers mean a great deal as we work to provide a strong educational program, as well as support for the courageous and committed students who choose to undertake the challenge of theological education.

I am honored to be Candler's dean as of January 2007. I am deeply grateful for the leadership of Russell Richey in the previous six years and for his help in ensuring a smooth transition. I look forward to his continued, powerful presence at Candler as a leading scholar of Methodism, as a teacher, and as one who makes significant contributions to the life of the church. Thank you for your many expressions of welcome and for your support of Candler. I very much look forward to getting to know you all better in the months and years ahead.

Jan Love, *Dean and Professor of Christianity and World Politics*

2. THE DIVINITY SCHOOL OF DUKE UNIVERSITY

Duke Divinity School prepares students to become effective, faithful leaders in the church, the academy, and the world through its attention to spiritual formation and transforming ministry, as well as to academic rigor. The school is an integral part of Duke University, and divinity students enjoy and contribute to the university's intellectual, spiritual, and social resources.

Programs

Duke Divinity School welcomed its first class of doctor of theology (Th.D.) students in the fall of 2006. The Th.D. program is designed to match the rigor of the Ph.D. program and focuses explicitly on the ministries and practices of Christian communities. Following university approval in late 2005, the Association of Theological Schools gave preliminary approval to the Th.D. in January 2006. This program will enhance the education and formation of men and women for Christian ministry and leadership, both in church-related positions and in theological schools.

The divinity school continues its major work on grants from Lilly Endowment, Inc., including coordinating the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program and our Advancing Pastoral Excellence initiative. In May of 2005, we

hosted a major "Forum on Excellence in Ministry," in Indianapolis, which brought together 250 leaders from a variety of churches and church-related settings.

In early 2006, we launched a six-year program, "Thriving Rural Communities," in collaboration with the North Carolina and Western North Carolina annual conferences of The United Methodist Church and The Duke Endowment. This multi-pronged initiative is designed to help strengthen rural communities, especially by working with the churches and the leadership in those communities. The program will identify eight thriving United Methodist churches and provide grants to support initiatives in those churches, create full-tuition scholarships for Duke Divinity students who plan to go into rural ministry, and support leadership development for rural clergy.

Events and Activities

When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in Mississippi and Louisiana, Duke Divinity School faculty, staff, and students sought to support our brothers and sisters there in meaningful ways. The school focused a period in the fall as "Autumn's Lent," a time when we had prayer, worship, and fund-raising to support the recovery. In addition, we sent a group of faculty and staff, led by Bishop Kenneth L. Carder, to conduct a Sabbath-renewal continuing-education event for Mississippi Annual Conference pastors in February 2006. We also invited and financially supported pastors from both United Methodist conferences to come to Duke for one- to two-week study leaves for rest and renewal.

During 2005-06, the divinity school developed a strategic plan for the next five years. Entitled "Transformative Leadership," it seeks to sustain and strengthen the momentum we have built over the past five years. At the heart of our planning is the conviction that Duke Divinity School aims to be an agent of transformation for the church, the academy, and the world. Our aspirations can be defined by four complementary measures: (1) academic research and teaching; (2) preparation of men and women for leadership in the church and other institutions, both through our degree programs and through lifelong learning; (3) engagement with major issues in church and society; and (4) our role in strengthening the broader academy, especially in theological education.

The divinity school continued its fundraising efforts related to Duke University's "Financial Aid Initiative," launched during the past year. Duke Divinity is pursuing a goal of \$10 million in endowment gifts for this three-year initiative (2006-08).

Students

In the fall of 2006, Duke Divinity enrolled a diverse body of 575 students from 40 states and seven foreign countries. Approximately 55% of the student body is United Methodist, 20% is Baptist, and the other students come from more than 30 different denominations in the Christian faith. The overall entering class had an ethnic-minority enrollment of 21.8%, a slight increase over the previous year. The median undergraduate G.P.A. of the entering class was 3.55.

Our field education program continues to grow. More than 200 of our students experienced summer field education placements, including many in rural United Methodist congregations (whose stipends were supported by The Duke Endowment), 16 in our Teaching Congregations program, five in the Center for Reconciliation's Teaching Communities program, and international placements in South Africa (7), Guatemala and El Salvador (4), Uganda (2), Sri Lanka (2), and Peru (1).

Faculty

We strengthened the faculty with the addition of two colleagues: Kavin Rowe joined us as assistant professor of New Testament, and Esther Acolatse became assistant professor of pastoral theology.

Professor Rowe's academic research focuses primarily on the historical particularity of the New Testament and its relation to the later Christian theological tradition. Professor Acolatse explores the intersection of psychology and Christian thought, with interests in gender and the experience of Christianity, methodological issues in the practice of theology of the Christian life, and the relevance of these themes in the global expression of Christianity.

Notable books published by our faculty in 2005-06 include the following: *God's Potters*, by emeritus professor Jackson W. Carroll; *Wondrous Depth*, by Ellen Davis; *Left Behind?* by James M. Efird; *The Conversion of the Imagination*, by Richard B. Hays; *Resurrecting Excellence*, by L. Gregory Jones and Kevin Armstrong; *A Future for Africa*, by Emmanuel Katongole; *The End of Words*, by Richard Lischer; *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, co-edited by Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen Westerfield Tucker; *Isaiah*, by Jo Bailey Wells; and *God's Companions*, by Sam Wells.

Honors and Achievements

David Steinmetz, Amos Ragan Kearns Professor of the history of Christianity, was elected to join the 2006 class of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, an international organization of the world's leading scholars, scientists, artists, business people, and political leaders.

Timothy Tyson, visiting professor of American Christianity and Southern culture, won the prestigious Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion for his 2004 book, *Blood Done Sign My Name*. The award is presented annually by the University of Louisville and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

The divinity school's 53,000-square-foot addition and renovation project, dedicated in late 2005, garnered two awards for Hartman-Cox Architects: an award of merit in architecture from the American Institute of Architects and an International Religious Art and Architecture award from Faith and Form/Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art, and Architecture.

We are thankful for the relationships among The United Methodist Church, this annual conference, and Duke Divinity School, and we look forward to another year of working to prepare men and women for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

L. Gregory Jones, *Dean*

3. UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

UTS Mission Statement: *United Theological Seminary is a Christ-centered graduate school of The United Methodist Church that equips leaders for the church in a pluralistic world through the nurture of piety, the love of learning, and the pursuit of justice.*

United Seminary has now completed its first full year at the new Trotwood, Ohio, facility after 80 years on the Harvard Boulevard Campus. The new facility is a state-of-the-art educational center, complete with the latest classroom technology, a media center for students and faculty, and a spacious new library. The EUB Heritage Center celebrates the long history of the seminary, first founded by United Brethren Bishop Milton Wright, father of the Wright Brothers, and other area business leaders in 1871.

UTS is developing partnerships that reflect a lasting commitment to collaboration in urban ministries, wellness education, leadership formation, pastoral supervision, children's and youth programs, advocacy for women and children, and peace with justice. The seminary has an effective program of medical ethics with Wright State University and has begun internship programs in urban work with area municipalities. The area YMCA, the City of Trotwood, and United are cooperating in the development of health care and related work for students, faculty, and staff. Utilizing the recreational and educational facilities on campus, United has become, in effect, a gathering place for church, business, and civic groups.

The planning process that first led to the relocation of the seminary has also paved the way for the most relevant and effective academic plan, including a dynamic master of divinity degree. The M.Div. focuses attention upon vital faith in Christ, scholarship, and a profound commitment to justice ministry and outreach. The school has a longstanding reputation as one of the top contextual education programs in the country, and also offers intercultural studies and cutting-edge degree and certificate programs in pastoral care, liturgical studies, and media in ministry.

The seminary's doctoral studies program has long been committed to educating leaders in context through a strong mentor-based program supported by the school's tenured faculty. Degree candidates spend at least five intensives on campus, along with numerous peer sessions in context with others. Research and projects document the depth of experience and scholarship associated with the degree.

Over the past several years, UTS has engaged in consultation with The United Methodist Church and other judicatory partners in order to determine the most effective way to prepare pastors and laity for ministry, locally and globally. The school is clearly dedicated to excellence in scholarship, faithfulness to Christ, and fruitfulness in service. At UTS, we participate with others in equipping leaders, changing lives, and transforming communities.

G. Edwin Zeiders, *President*

4. WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A Mission-Shaped Seminary

Wesley is a place of mission-hearted people and mission-minded scholarship for a mission-centered church. Located in Washington, D.C., we are one of the largest and the most diverse seminaries in the world. Members of just one graduating class will minister to more than half a million people. The combination of our size, theological position, international reach, and location puts Wesley in a unique place to affect the church for the next generation.

A Church-Based Seminary

Wesley's reach and pull are worldwide. Our graduates are in ministry in all 50 states and in 20 countries as leaders of the church and other service organizations. Wesley has come to have such an impact because of the seminary's commitment to being where God is working in the world—centered in the church. We have built many lasting partnerships with congregations that have strengthened the individual churches and the seminary.

A Resource for the Church and the People of the Church

At Wesley, we nurture wisdom and creativity. Our faculty members teach from the deep center of thoughtful Christianity. We help students navigate the path to mature faith that comes from in-depth study of the texts and tradition. At the same time, we are the research and development arm of the church, looking for the new ways the Holy Spirit is moving in the world.

We have designed day, night, and weekend courses to accommodate all who seek to explore, learn and deepen their faith. Wesley offers master of divinity, master of arts, master of theological studies, and doctor of ministry degrees. Additionally, we provide a diverse range of programs for clergy and lay members. One such program is the Wece and religion.

One such program is the Wesley Ministry Network. WMN produces video-based, Christian education courses designed for laypersons. These courses are a vehicle for connecting the church's best teachers with the people of the church. Last year alone, WMN reached an estimated 20,000-40,000 participants, with courses such as *Serious Answers to Hard Questions*, *Journey through the Psalms*, and *Women Speak of God*. *Simply Christian* was released earlier this year, and a new course, currently in the works, will delve into the most controversial issues found at the intersection of science and religion.

A North Carolina-specific resource Wesley offers is based upon the seminary's partnership with Pfeiffer University. Together we have established the Center for Deacon Education to provide deacon education and ordination for people of The United Methodist Church. The center is housed on Pfeiffer's Charlotte campus.

An Invitation

At Wesley, our graduates hold the promise of hundreds of ministries that stretch far into the future. We welcome all who would join us in our work. To learn more about or reconnect with Wesley, visit www.wesleyseminary.edu.

David McAllister-Wilson, President

HH. SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTION CONNECTIONAL TABLE

It is an honor to report to the Western North Carolina Annual Conference on behalf of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Connectional Table and our president, Bishop J. Lawrence McCleskey. We have worked diligently this past year to evaluate and make more effective the many offerings in the jurisdiction.

The Connectional Table has led in the study of our preferred future. Through the work of the Organizational Task Group, we have studied the entire ministry of the Southeastern Jurisdiction. A report made at the annual meeting of the Connectional Table was passed. It called for a Transition Team that is presently working in preparation for our report and recommendations to the 2008 Jurisdictional Conference.

As we considered our organization for the future, there was an extensive study done by the Southeastern Jurisdiction Agency Task Group. Through meetings with the seven agencies (Commission on Archives and History, Gulfside Assembly, Hinton Rural Life Center, Intentional Growth Center, Southeastern Jurisdictional Agency for Native American Ministries, Southeastern Methodist Agency for Rehabilitation, and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission), we evaluated their effectiveness and considered the relationship of the agencies to the jurisdiction as we move into the future. All of these groups are commended for their service to the members and leaders within the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

At Lake Junaluska, we are planning for a great year as we welcome over 100,000 guests. We anticipate the Bishop Joseph and Mrs. Shirley Bethea Welcome Center being completed in the summer. A special word of thanks to your annual conference for committing resources to make this building a reality. As people come to Lake Junaluska, they will be greeted in a hospitable manner in this building that has been built as a symbol of reconciliation.

The Southeastern Jurisdiction continues to offer opportunities for leader development as we do our part in making disciples of Jesus Christ. Our Southeastern Jurisdiction ministry staff has given leadership in 13 of the Southeastern Jurisdiction annual conferences this past year. The Ministries with Young People have had record numbers of events this winter and are preparing for a great summer of retreats for youth and adults at Lake Junaluska. We plan to serve over 5,000 young people of the Southeastern Jurisdiction this year. The summer children's program is planned for daily study and activity, serving families that come to Lake Junaluska in the summer and children from the community.

This past year in Hispanic ministries, we have held events for small churches, a Module I training program for lay missionaries and pastor mentoring, and a Course of Study consultation. The Korean-Asian ministry has provided consultation in nine of the annual conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction and events: (1) Clergy Family Retreat; (2) Korean-American Pastors Continuing Education Program; (3) Lay Leadership Academy; and (4) Korean-Asian-American Youth Event.

We are working with leadership in the jurisdiction to sponsor a multi-cultural event in December at Lake Junaluska. Our African-American office is giving support to the design team, along with all Southeastern Jurisdiction ethnic ministries. We were thrilled to co-sponsor the event, "Our Call to Hospitality, A Biblical Response to Immigration," conference with the General Board of Church and Society in February.

Our guests continue to enjoy the recently renovated Terrace Hotel and the beautiful grounds. Work is being done to Stuart Auditorium, anticipating renovations in the future. We have done \$2.7 million worth of renovations to the dam at Lake Junaluska. The work has allowed us to bring up to code the 93-year-old dam, assuring a beautiful lake, as well as a safe structure. A special thanks goes to the annual conferences and local churches of the Southeastern Jurisdiction that are contributing to the special asking for dam reconstruction. Presently, we have received \$395,960 from the special asking.

We provided leadership, staff support, and hospitality to SoulFeast, The Older Adult Event, Soul at Work, Choir Music Weekend, The Ministers' Conference, Pastors of Large Churches, and District Superintendents and Directors of Connectional Ministries.

The jurisdiction has been represented on the United Methodist Council of Bishops Committee on Katrina Church Development. All local churches and annual conferences are challenged to remember the local churches that are in desperate need of support. Along with the annual Katrina offering in the fall, partnerships with local churches are being sought throughout the church.

It is a pleasure to serve The United Methodist Church in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Jimmy L. Carr, *Executive Director*

II. TREASURER-DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

I am thankful today that I have had the opportunity to serve another year in the ministry of administration.

Financial Support

During 2006, we extended the focus of our faith through \$24,668,618, or 84.97% of the apportioned budget. Shortfalls are not a good thing, but this year was a 2% improvement over 2005. And that is a good thing. Amen?

Financial Responsibility

Another piece of good news: In the Conference Support and Conference Benevolence funds, we didn't spend more than we took in, thanks to the good work of Jim Trollinger and the ministry staff. Amen?

Another piece of good news, about the direct Invoicing of pastors pension and health benefits: First, a great big Thank You. Thank you, because of your positive contributions to direct invoicing. Change is difficult, and we are working every day to get this new method in place. In the month of January 2007, our pension costs were about \$525,000, and our health claims paid were about \$490,000. Basically, we spent about a million dollars that month. In a typical year, we receive about \$150,000 in January. This year, we received about five times the usual amount. And, as a side note, each month this year, we have received more contributions to all other funds than in any past years. In other words, not only have you contributed almost all the pension and health benefit costs, you also have contributed more to all the benevolences. Thank yourselves very much. Amen?

Another piece of good news is that the auditing firm of McGladrey and Pullen has completed our audit with "No Qualifications" again this year.

Financial Reflection: Teamwork – Listen for It

Two years ago at this time, we reflected together on the "real currency of our work being changed lives." We can be thankful today for the 4,969 persons who made first-time confessions of faith in 2006, responding to the call of Christ in their lives. In that same vein, I especially appreciated the report of Mike Carle for the Council on Congregational Development last night, as the results of the all the money invested in congregations was expressed in professions of faith and changed lives. Amen?

A mountain songbird has a call that, for the life of me, I believe says, "We're a team, We're a team, We're a team." Listen for it.

Back in the winter, I had an occasion to have lunch with my mother and a friend of hers named Mrs. Francis. At lunch that day, Mrs. Francis, a life-long United Methodist, commented to me that she thought the itinerancy of our pastors was the strength of our church. Each one brings new or different strengths, not all the same, but each unique. The pastoral itinerancy keeps the focus on the lay leadership in the local church. The strength clergy add is the teamwork they foster, bringing special gifts each one: the calm voice behind the pastoral prayer, in Bible study, or at the moment of great joy or sorrow. Strong lay leadership and strong pastoral leadership are an unbeatable team.

Education in Africa is a big emphasis in our conference. Bishop McCleskey has lifted up Africa University and higher education for African youth. This major emphasis has increase support for the Africa University Fund to the highest levels ever, plus raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for scholarship endowments. Jack Miner, a committed layperson, has long supported the Diengenga School in the Congo. The war in the area held up a shipment of supplies for almost eight years. Thankfully, it was shipped this year. But that is not the real story. The real story is that young children have missed eight years of basic education during the war period. Our mission will try to restart basic education this summer. Amen? African education benefits because committed lay leadership and committed episcopal leadership are an unbeatable team.

Aldersgate reports in this year's *Program and Reports* booklet the touching story of Bob and his "Tweety" bird. It seems that Bob cared for his bird from his room in the assisted-living center for several years. When Tweety passed away, the staff in ministry at Aldersgate—from the nurses to the grounds keepers—made a touching tribute to Tweety. It was concluded that Bob didn't just live at Aldersgate, but, rather, that Bob was home at Aldersgate. Senior citizens benefit when committed, caring laypersons from all professions form an unbeatable team. Givens Estates and the Southeastern Jurisdiction have teamed up this year to create a senior living center right here on the grounds of Lake Junaluska.

The Waynesville District, the conference, and the Southeastern Jurisdiction have teamed up to create an Hispanic ministry.

Rural ministries are a big emphasis in our conference. Under the lay leadership of Roy Helm, as president, and Larry Carrella, as director, Wesley Community Development Corporation organized work teams to build 10 rural affordable houses and for Waynesville District disaster response. This year, Alan Rice is dedicating his future ministry to rural church ministries through a new CDC named RFD. Rural ministries benefit from the teamwork of committed lay leadership and committed clergy leadership. Amen?

Evangelism is a big emphasis in our conference. Our United Methodist Foundation makes grants for evangelism through the Royce and Jane Reynolds Foundation Fund. Royce and Jane have shown great lay leadership, stewardship, and follow-through by creating their foundation. Motorsports Evangelism Outreach was begun at Lowes Motor Speedway. Buddy Compton and Otis Snow have given it life. One year, we decided to apply for an evangelism grant from the Reynolds Foundation, sort of a seed-money grant to expand the ministry with more youth concert events and the like. Well, the request sort of fell on deaf ears. You know, who thinks much evangelism takes place at a car race? Anyway we made our presentation but were turned down. About two or three presenters later was a young woman from a church in Statesville, under the committed pastoral leadership of the late Abe Cox. She wanted to start a program to reach unchurched youth in her area. She was approved. And when she got up and headed for the door, one of the members asked her, "Why did you become so interested in this?" She quietly replied, "About a year ago, I attended a youth event at Lowes Motor Speedway in conjunction with Methodist Motorsports." They called us back and approved our grant. This young woman and many, many

youth thereafter benefited from the committed lay leadership of the Reynolds family and the committed clergy leadership of Abe Cox.

So:

Listen for it.

Whether it be the sound of a mountain songbird,

Or the quiet voice behind the pastoral prayer,

Or the rattle of volunteers' hammers and nails,

Or the voice of a young woman answering the call of Christ in her life.

Listen for it.

It is the sound of teamwork, because "We're a Team, We're a Team, We're a Team."

William C. Wyman, Jr., *Treasurer-Director of Administrative Services*

JJ. STATISTICIAN

On behalf of the annual conference, and from me as statistician, I extend sincere gratitude to the 14 district statisticians; to my assistant, Sandra Hargett; to our computer programmer, Kenneth Perry; to Yvonne Gritt and Dot McDaniels in our Treasury Services Department; and to all pastors, membership secretaries, financial secretaries, and treasurers in the local churches. We could not have done the job of statistical reporting for last year without all of these.

The complete report of the statistician has been posted on the conference website since April and will appear in the 2007 journal in September. A copy of the condensed report is printed in your supplement. You may wish to have that before you as I continue.

Unlike a year ago, as I began to see the 2006 year-end reports come in, it seemed quite likely early on that we had once again returned to the membership-gain path we had been on for 15 consecutive years prior to 2005. When the final reports were in, we showed a net increase of 683 professing members, as compared to a net loss of 646 in 2005. The gain was only 23 hundredths of one percent, in a time when North Carolina's population is increasing rapidly; nevertheless, we celebrate that we can report positive numbers in an era of negative membership trends in all the mainline denominations, including ours.

We saw increases in professions of faith, restorations, and transfers from other United Methodist churches (Lines 2A-3). A net loss of 34 in transfers from other denominations (Line 4) kept us from having increases in all the ways that persons become professing members with us. Even better was the news from the "membership-removal" department: We had decreases in every way that persons may be removed from our rolls (Lines 5A-8), with 976 fewer persons removed than in 2005.

Also significant were increases in worship attendance of 1,358 (Line 10), baptisms (Line 11), and number of groups for Christian formation (Line 23). And someone is doing something right in those groups, as 387 more persons (Line 24) joined our churches on profession of faith from those groups than did so in 2005. While attendance and membership in Sunday church school continues to decline (see especially Line 19A), the number of persons participating in other kinds of formation experiences (Line 19B) went up by 19,563, an increase of nearly 31.5%. And our people are responding to the hurting world around us: Look, for example, at Lines 25A and B: 297 more volunteers in mission groups, up 40%, and 3,338 more people involved in them than in 2005, up an astounding 72%.

Our church finances continue to be strong. Line 76 reflects an increase of 3.14% in grand total spending by all our churches, which is generally consistent with the increase experienced in the cost of living for the same period.

I now call your attention to what follows Line 76 in your supplement, the "Comparison of 1969 and 2006 Local-Church Expenditures." A couple of years ago, I did an analysis for you of our "people figures" for 2004 and 1969, the first full year of the "merged" Western North Carolina Conference. This year, I invite you to look at the "money figures" from 1969 and 2006.

Comparison of 1969 and 2006 Local-Church Expenditures

Category	1969 Amount	1969 % of Total	2006 Amount	2006 % of Total	% Increase 1969-2006
All Benevolences (Annual Conference, General Church, Jurisdiction, Mission Specials, Special Sundays)	\$ 5,080,782	21.83%	\$ 28,876,705	12.33%	468.35%
Pastors' Pension Cost	974,925	4.19%	6,972,897	2.98%	615.22%
Pastoral Support (Salary, Insurance, Utilities, Expenses)	4,517,693	19.41%	53,126,076	22.68%	1075.96%
Operation (Staff Salaries, Program, Current Operating Expense)	6,151,061	26.43%	95,914,282	40.95%	1459.31%

Category	1969 Amount	1969 % of Total	2006 Amount	2006 % of Total	% Increase 1969-2006
Buildings and Improvements	3,346,469	14.38%	21,219,762	9.06%	534.09%
Payments on Indebtedness	3,201,697	13.76%	28,102,093	12.00%	777.72%
Grand Total Paid	\$ 23,272,627	100.00%	\$ 234,211,815	100.00%	906.38%

Several things are striking about this table, not the least of which is the tenfold (906%) increase in total spending by our churches. This is, very nearly unbelievably, **almost double** the rate of inflation for this same period. Even as we acknowledge that our stewardship level as a conference is not what it should be, we gratefully acknowledge this amazing fact: That our people have been giving to their churches at a rate that is almost double the rate of inflation since 1969.

But equally interesting is a comparison of the 3rd and the 5th columns, the “% of total” columns, which show an intriguing shift in where our local-church dollars are going:

- I know that, for many of us, it feels like benevolences, especially apportionments and askings, are skyrocketing. That is, in fact, not true. The percentage of our money going to apportioned and benevolent causes has dropped from 22% to 12% in the time frame 1969-2006.
- Clergy pension costs are something with which many churches seem to be having a struggle. But the truth is that they, too, have dropped, from 4% of our total spending to 3%.
- We fairly well knew that clergy compensation had improved across the years, and the portion of our local-church expenditures for the support of our pastors has, indeed, moved from 26% to 41% in these three and a half decades.
- The last two categories, buildings and debt retirement, also show increases, but not great enough to require much elaboration.
- But what jumps out like a blinking neon sign is the “Operation” category, which in 1969 made up 26% of our spending and now, in 2006, takes up 41% of it. It is here, in this category, and in clergy compensation, more than any other places, that benevolent causes—apportionments, Advance specials, other mission giving—have to compete for attention. It is not comforting to me, and I trust that it is not for you, either, to see that benevolence giving has actually decreased as a percentage of our total spending in this time frame. What we have done, consciously or unconsciously, is to spend more on the operation of our own congregational life than we have on the ministry of the church at other levels. How we go about turning this trend around—or whether we even ought to try—is a serious discussion we all need to be having as we contemplate our future.

It has been a great pleasure to be one of those involved in gathering the data from our churches, and I commend the 2006 statistical report to you for your careful examination.

Charles D. White, Jr., *Secretary-Statistician*