

## VIII. REPORTS

[Note: The proposals in the following reports are printed in the form in which the conference adopted them, which is not in every case identical to the form in which they were originally proposed.]

### A. COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The purpose of the Council on Finance and Administration is "to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference" (§ 611.1, 2004 *Discipline*). The council has adopted this theme for its work:

#### ***Empowering Financial and Administrative Leadership.***

Receipts on apportionments for 2004 were \$18,561,269, or 89.22% of the total apportioned. For 2005, the charge conferences accepted 86.35%, or \$19,842,352.

The Council on Finance and Administration is proposing the budget for 2006 based upon the new funding paradigm implemented in 2005. The three-part presentation consists of Direct Costs, Operating Costs, and Ministry FairShare Askings—Conference and General Church. The Operating Costs are proposed at \$6,802,298, an increase of less than 1%. The overall apportioned budget for Pension, Operating Costs, and Askings totals \$24,225,966, a 1.5% decrease from 2005. The budget amounts were set based on the stewardship concepts contained in the new funding paradigm. Those concepts emphasize setting future budgets based on past support indexed for inflation and conference growth. This year, the method has yielded a slight decrease in overall budget requests. In addition, the council is recommending that the "traditional decimal" formula be applied to all Operating and FairShare Askings, beginning with the 2006 budget. In other words, Congregational Development and the Lake Junaluska Restoration Fund will not be apportioned based on membership but rather on the "traditional decimal" formula. The Direct Cost for insurance costs will still be based on a "per-capita cost" formula, and the Pension Fund will be based on the transitional absorption rates through 2008.

The council hopes that the Choice Empowerment Process Survey conducted during the 2004 charge conferences (and published as part of this report) will bring more attention to the value of the ministries being empowered by responsible choices made in every church in the conference.

#### **Proposals: 2006 Conference Funds and Financial Policies**

**(All proposals referred as Petition 1 to Forum Group 23)  
(Adopted by conference on June 10, 2005)**

The Council on Finance and Administration proposes:

1. That each of the funds described in the section of this report headed "Conference Funds for 2006" be approved and that formulas for determining the apportionments and FairShare Askings for 2006 for each chartered church/charge be approved, as follows:

- a. The traditional **decimal** formula for determining the apportionments and FairShare Askings for the following funds:

<i>Apportioned Funds</i>	<i>FairShare Askings</i>
Conference Operating Costs:	Conference Ministry:
Episcopal Fund	Conference Benevolences
District Superintendents' Fund	Higher Education and Campus Ministry
Equitable Compensation Fund	Health and Human Services
Health Benefits	Congregational Development
Conference Support	General Church:
Administrative Staff Support	Africa University Fund
Administrative Office Support Items	Black College Fund
	General Administration Fund
	Interdenominational Cooperation Fund
	Jurisdictional Administration Fund
	Lake Junaluska Dam and Lake Restoration Fund
	Ministerial Education Fund
	World Service Fund

The formula shall be based on the average of the amounts paid by chartered churches during 2002, 2003, and 2004 on the following items:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Lines</b>
Total Conference Apportioned Funds Paid	Line 37B
District/County Mission Society	Line 47
District Administration/Expense Fund	Line 55
Pastor(s) Health Insurance Premiums	Line 62
Salaries, Housing, Utilities, Travel, and Other Cash	
Allowances Paid to Pastor and Associate(s)	Lines 63-67
Compensation of Deacon(s)/Diaconal Minister(s)	Line 68
Compensation of All Other Church Employees	Line 69
Local Church Expenses for Program	Line 70
Other Local Church Operating Expenses	Line 71

(Notes: Line numbers refer to corresponding entries on Table 2 of the year-end reports of the pastors and local churches.) Provided, however, that, upon request by the Cabinet and with the approval of the Council on Finance and Administration, apportionments to a newly merged church and/or relocated church ("Renewal Church") shall be calculated as if the church were a new congregation.

- b. **Direct costs** for pastors' insurance and pension funds:
- (1) The direct cost of each eligible pastor's individual health insurance premiums, whether the pastor is appointed to a chartered church or to a mission or to a new church start, shall be apportioned and paid according to the per-capita cost thereof, determined by dividing the total estimated costs for 2006 by the number of eligible clergy. Each chartered church/charge or the sponsoring group of each mission or new church start shall pay the per-capita cost as thus determined for each eligible clergy person so appointed.
  - (2) The direct cost of each pastor's pension support shall be apportioned according to its actual cost as billed by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The calculation of actual cost per pastor is based on the pastor's Plan Compensation as defined in the Plan Document. During the years 2005-09, an absorption rate will be provided to all churches/charges at 10% for 2005, 30% for 2006, 50% for 2007, 70% for 2008, and 100% for 2009. The difference in the direct cost and the traditional way of calculating the pension apportionment will be absorbed by each church on the same rate.
2. That the following policy be approved and observed:  
At the beginning of the calendar year, the Council on Finance and Administration shall determine which portions of the Conference Ministry FairShare Askings are "fixed costs" (salaries, benefits, etc.) and shall thus be authorized to be paid at 100% of the approved budget. On the basis of prior-year receipts to these funds and the acceptance reports from the charge conferences, the council shall then determine a percentage of the approved budget to be authorized for expenditure in the remaining items of each budget, so that expenditures shall not exceed income.
    - a. The Conference Operating Costs and the Clergy Insurance and Pension Direct Costs are "fixed costs," consisting primarily of salaries, benefits, and direct operating costs. Each church, therefore, is encouraged to support these items at 100% of the apportioned amount.
    - b. The churches are requested to make payments thereon aggregately, with the understanding that the conference treasurer will allocate the payment according to the appropriate percentage due it according to the charge conference acceptance sheet.
  3. That an Unrestricted Fund Balance Account be maintained by the annual conference at a level of 20% of the current total of the Conference Operating Costs and Conference Ministry FairShare Askings and that any undesignated interest income plus unused balances in budget accounts be transferred to the undesignated fund balance at the end of the fiscal year. Reserves are created by earnings, while budget amounts are wholly designated for ministries.
  4. That all apportioned funds and FairShare Askings, both receipts and disbursements, be managed through the office of the conference treasurer and that all boards, agencies, committees, and commissions use the conference treasurer as fiscal agent.
  5. That the group medical insurance plan be continued and that all churches be asked to participate through the payment of premiums through the office of the conference treasurer.
  6. That the following prior claims be paid at the lesser of the budgeted amount or actual cost, using undesignated fund balances as needed:
    - a. Equitable Compensation Fund,
    - b. Pension and Benefits Fund,
    - c. Episcopal Fund,
    - d. District Superintendents' Fund, and
    - e. Conference Support and Administration Fund.
 This, however, does not relieve the churches from their obligation to observe the rule of proportional payment (§¶ 621 and 638.4, 2004 *Discipline*), and § 638.4(c) shall be observed by the statistician in reporting apportionments and payments to the Pension and Benefits Fund.
  7. That, for 2006 and beyond, the salary of district superintendents be set by the following formula: The Conference Average Compensation (CAC), as calculated by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, for the most recent year for which data are available, times 1.47. On the basis of this formula, and with the 2006 CAC at \$59,821, the salary of the district superintendents for 2006 shall be set at \$87,937.
  8. That the salaries of the bishop's administrative assistant, the conference director of connectional ministries, the conference treasurer-director of administrative services, and the conference secretary-ordained ministry registrar be the compensation level of the district superintendents, plus a \$3,000 utilities allowance. All of the conference clergy staff will receive additional compensation in varying amounts not to exceed \$17,000 as a portion of the housing allowance described in proposal 9 of this report.
  9. That the amount of compensation designated as housing allowance for ordained staff members and district superintendents of the conference be set by an annual resolution of the conference Council on Finance and Administration after consideration of a statement of amounts to be used during the year.
  10. That church-related travel expenses of all members of conference boards, agencies, committees, and commissions; conference staff; district superintendents; and local church clergy be paid by voucher on a mileage basis at the amount allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. This will be considered as a church-related business item and will not be factored into any compensation package by the Cabinet.
  11. That the governing boards of Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc. (Epworth Place and Asbury Care Center); Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc.; Givens Estates United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc.; The Children's Home, Inc.; UMAR, Inc.; The United Methodist Foundation of Western North Carolina, Inc.; Camp Tekoa; Bennett College; Brevard College; Greensboro College; High Point University; Pfeiffer University; the Western North Carolina Conference Brotherhood/Sisterhood; the Western North Carolina Conference Historical Society; approved counseling centers of the conference; Disciple Bible Outreach Ministry; Church Extension, Inc.; and the Methodist Board of Publication, Inc., be granted the privilege of soliciting and receiving funds from churches, individuals, and other sources (but not from conference-wide offerings except as indicated in the list which follows) in keeping with *The Book of Discipline*; that one conference-wide capital campaign, the Bishop's Initiative for Africa University, be approved for 2006; and that the following, and only the following, conference-wide offerings be approved for 2006:
 

<i>Offering</i>	<i>Authorized by</i>
Human Relations Day	General Conference
UMAR Sunday	Annual Conference
One Great Hour of Sharing	General Conference

Native American Awareness	General Conference
Golden Cross	General/Annual Conferences
Mother's Day (Aldersgate, Arbor Acres, Givens)	Annual Conference
Rural Life Sunday	General/Annual Conferences
Peace with Justice	General Conference
Children's Home Sunday	Annual Conference
World Communion	General Conference
United Methodist Student Day	General Conference

12. That funds appropriated for Aldersgate United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc. (Epworth Place and Asbury Care Center); Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc.; and Givens Estates United Methodist Retirement Community, Inc., be used exclusively for supplementary care for members of United Methodist churches of the Western North Carolina Conference. Any local church wishing to give to any of these agencies funds in excess of the amount apportioned may do so by forwarding such funds to the conference treasurer with proper advisement as to their disbursement, or by direct giving to the appropriate agency.
13. That clergy be reimbursed for moving expenses in the following manner, effective upon adjournment of the 2005 conference session:
  - a. IN-CONFERENCE MOVES: The conference shall pay \$500, plus \$2.50 per mile, on those moves which are required as pastors are moved from one appointment to a new appointment, on a one-way basis.
  - b. MOVES INTO THE CONFERENCE: The conference shall pay on the same basis as in item 13a above. The moving allowance will apply to the number of miles on the most direct route traveled from the conference boundary to the pastoral appointment.
  - c. MOVING AT RETIREMENT: Retiring clergy, surviving spouses of active clergy who died during the year, and clergy who go on incapacity leave during the year shall receive a moving allowance of \$750, plus \$2.50 per mile, from the pastoral appointment to the retirement residence or the conference boundary. A retiree who moves to a parsonage and serves a pastorate in retirement is eligible for an in-conference moving allowance upon approval of the district superintendent.
  - d. MOVES OUT OF THE CONFERENCE (moving to another conference, withdrawing from conference membership, leave of absence, etc.): No allowance will be paid.
  - e. SABBATICAL LEAVE: No allowance is granted when the leave begins; however, an allowance will be given when the leave is completed and the clergy person is again available for appointment by the bishop. The amount will be consistent with items 13a and 13b above.
  - f. In many instances, the moving allowance will not cover the total expense of the move. This reimbursement is given to help with the over-the-road cost of the move. Each church/charge receiving a new pastor is strongly urged to pay any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the new pastor as a result of the move. The district superintendent will negotiate the request with the church/charge well in advance of moving day.
  - g. The district superintendent is asked to make a very special appeal that each church/charge be especially sensitive to both parsonage families during this stressful time. The appeal should include assistance with meals, packing, unpacking, loading, and unloading where helpful and appropriate for the parsonage family.
14. That the total 2005 compensation of clergy in appointments extending the ministry of the church and beyond the local church and the 2006 salaries of all clergy appointed to local churches be published in the 2006 Journal.
15. That the president, vice-president, and secretary of the conference Council on Finance and Administration, the conference treasurer-director of administrative services, and a Cabinet representative constitute the executive committee of the conference Council on Finance and Administration.
16. That the Council on Finance and Administration be authorized to appoint a conference auditor.
17. That each local church make a very special effort to undergird the meal, transportation, and lodging expenses of annual conference members in attending annual conference. The district superintendents are asked to encourage such support at each charge conference. The conference per diem for 2006 shall be set at \$34.00 per day.
18. That conference agencies receiving funds from the Conference Benevolences Fund or the Conference Support and Administration Fund not be permitted to carry over unspent funds from one conference year to another unless specifically authorized by the Council on Finance and Administration. Agencies receiving funds from sources other than apportioned funds may carry over such unspent funds into the next year.
19. That 3:00 P.M., Friday, January 6, 2006, be the cutoff time by which all payments from local churches must be in the office of the conference treasurer in order to be applied to the 2005 year.
20. That each conference board, agency, or institution receiving or disbursing funds not managed by the conference treasurer maintain adequate financial records and prepare and submit annual audit reports to the conference treasurer and the conference Council on Finance and Administration. All treasurers should be properly bonded.
21. That the conference fiscal year begin on January 1, 2006, and end on December 31, 2006.
22. That the conference Council on Finance and Administration be responsible for designating depositories for conference funds.
23. That the ministerial moving expenditures be supplemented by funds from the Unrestricted Fund Balance Account in the event those expenditures exceed the budgeted amount.
24. That the Council on Finance and Administration continue to engage Dr. Donald House, an economist and life-long United Methodist from College Station, Texas, to assist in the exploration of options available for revising the current formula by which funds are apportioned to the local churches and that Dr. House be requested to make his final recommendation to the council regarding a revision to the apportionment formula before the 2006 session of the annual conference.

James C. Windham, Jr., *President*

## Choice Empowerment Process Survey

### Introduction

The adoption of the New Funding Paradigm by the 2004 annual conference led to some dramatic changes in how funding requests and decisions are made and responded to in the Western North Carolina Annual Conference. Nowhere is this more true than in the conference and general church "Ministry FairShare Askings" and the theme of Choice Empowerment.

Choice Empowerment calls for "local churches and charges to choose proactively to participate in ministry at the annual conference and general church levels because they see clear value added by their participation." Choice Empowerment calls for a new way of making funding choices at the local church/charge level.

In its ongoing role to monitor and assess the impact of changes in the budgeting and funding processes of the annual conference, the Council on Finance and Administration asked churches/charges to complete a five-question survey on the process used in making choices regarding Ministry FairShare Askings as part of their charge conference reports. The five questions were:

1. Please describe your FairShare Askings/Choice Empowerment process.
2. Who was involved?
3. What worked well or didn't work well? What would you change about the process you used?
4. What was effective in the interpretation material?
5. Comment on the process.

The following report is a representative summary of hundreds of pages of responses to the Choice Empowerment Process Survey. As we prepare to live into the New Funding Paradigm, these remarks will be informative to all who seek to make the choice process successful for local churches/charges and for the respective ministry areas funded by the annual conference.

### Charge Conference Questions – Fall, 2004

#### 1. Please describe your FairShare Askings/Choice Empowerment process.

##### *Synopsis of replies:*

Most churches had the Committee on Finance do most of the researching by attending the informational meetings that came to their area and studying the printed material provided by the conference center. When they had formulated a plan, they presented it to the Administrative Council for approval or further discussion. Some churches invited the congregation to the presentation to the Administrative Council. Some mentioned that they involved the Committee on Pastor-Parish Relations in their discussions. One church delivered the information about the FairShare Askings from the pulpit two weeks prior to the Finance Committee meeting. One church said that they involved the Missions Committee in their discussions prior to making recommendations. Most decisions about funding all or some of the FairShare Askings seemed to hinge on what they saw in the *Connections for Ministry* publication and the video. Many churches intend on holding special offerings to support the askings that they were not able to provide for through apportionment.

Deciding to support the FairShare Askings was determined by:

- ☐ If a capital campaign was in progress.
- ☐ Overall financial health of the members and community (declining rolls, aging congregants).
- ☐ Whether the church was impacted by the direct-costing method on pension.
- ☐ Some felt they would support their local missions first before conference askings because the congregation is more involved and can see where they are spending their money.

##### *Notable remarks:*

- ☐ The church needed more information.
- ☐ We feel empowered by having choices, rather than not.
- ☐ Our committee felt that there should be better financial responsibility as it relates to the salaries of conference leaders in conference office and district superintendents' offices; many feel they are paid too much.
- ☐ We are paying what is requested but don't understand as the smaller church on the charge, why we are always apportioned more than the larger church.
- ☐ The church is currently struggling in present economic conditions to meet its budget but is taking steps to try and be faithful. There was a great deal of confusion due to the number of possible apportionment schemes sent out over the past several months, and then after the July mailing the actual askings shown on the Web site still differed somewhat when I went to verify them. This made for some great difficulty in understanding what we were actually being asked to give and in trying to work with the committee. This type of situation breeds distrust, of pastors and of the conference, among the laity. It would help if the figures could be accurately developed in the mail-out.
- ☐ The Finance chair met with him and he was very frustrated at how this new item came out. He attended the district meeting where the FairShare Askings were discussed but said that the answers were not helpful. He called the conference headquarters and still did not receive an adequate answer. The Finance Committee met and discussed the conference askings. They simply passed to accept all conference and district askings, even though the church budget is behind by \$17,000.
- ☐ We feel it is important to accept 100% of the apportionments.
- ☐ With all the hoopla over the change in pensions and the flood of paper all along the way, it was more stressful this year than most.
- ☐ Was nice to have a say in where the money went.
- ☐ We accepted what we thought was reasonable in relation to our total budget. We feel that we need to keep monies in order to improve our programming for the church members, so that we can grow and better support the district and conference.
- ☐ This was a tremendous struggle. Caught between financial constraints and local ministries, our finance committee spent five hours in order to come to a decision. Finance chair commented that this was the only way that the denomination will hear the struggles of the local church and understand that they have to cut back the way that we do at this church and in our own families.

- ☐ We attended all the area meetings and they very helpful.
- ☐ The finance committee, as well as the administrative council, decided through the choice empowerment process to devote more mission and charity support for the local community.
- ☐ We have accepted 100% of the Direct Cost, Conference Operating Costs and District Costs. The FairShare Askings we have accepted at 50% because we were unable to pay our apportionment in full this year. We would rather overpay our obligation than to significantly underpay. Since the Congregational Development asking is not based on the decimal formula, we chose to pay based on our 2003 average worship attendance rather than membership total.
- ☐ This has been a good process for us as a church in that it makes the congregation more aware of where the money goes. The process did in fact give our people a feeling of empowerment.
- ☐ Each of these funds, especially the World Service Fund, needs to fully explain what causes are funded. Our church decided not to fund World Service Fund, but rather funds were redirected to a local ministry to feed the hungry.
- ☐ We discussed the changes inasmuch as we could understand. The big concern was the percentage increase. It was felt to be exorbitant. We have had nothing like that on the local church level and felt that the askings were out of line with the economy and in comparison with what we are doing at the local level.
- ☐ We discussed each area and considered alternatives for keeping money in our local church to help our members and the community.
- ☐ We are not clear on the FairShare/Empowerment process and would like to set up a meeting with someone from the conference office that can help us understand the process better.
- ☐ This past year we gave to missions beyond conference askings in the amount of \$12,286.38. These missional givings were done in the face of plant closings and hardships of the members. For this reason, the Finance Committee and the Administrative Council felt strongly that the church is in no way avoiding its responsibility to missions but making a choice to support missions where the church body feels that the needs are greatest.
- ☐ The meeting turned very hot when they discussed the inter-cooperation fund (sic) of the WCC and NCC. Pastor mentioned that they might have had bad feelings of funds in 1970s that found its way into rebel hands. They said yes, but he mentioned that Billy Graham and Ann G. Lotz were both supporting this. One man tried to argue about the line items again and we had to just move on. More details in the survey.

## 2. Who was involved?

### Synopsis of replies:

Almost every church that answered said that they involved the Finance Committee and the Administrative Council, as well as the pastor. Most mentioned that discussions were open to the congregation. Various others were mentioned to be involved:

- ☐ Congregational Care Committee.
- ☐ Missions Committee.
- ☐ Committee on Pastor(Staff)-Parish Relations.
- ☐ Chairperson of Committee on Pastor(Staff)-Parish Relations.
- ☐ District Superintendent.
- ☐ Trustee chairperson.
- ☐ Staff.
- ☐ Cemetery Committee.
- ☐ President of UMMen and UMWomen.
- ☐ Witness work area representative.
- ☐ Christian Education Committee.
- ☐ Children's ministry representative.
- ☐ Outreach chairperson.
- ☐ Visioning Committee chairperson.
- ☐ Stewardship Committee.

## 3. What worked well or didn't work well? What would you change about the process you used?

### Synopsis of replies:

Most commented that the process worked well for them and that the church benefited greatly by learning about the process, enabling them to make informed decisions. Many of the pastors commented that starting the process with a prayerful attitude streamlined the decision-making that could get tedious and agonizing at times. Most commented that they were glad that they started earlier than most years, so there was adequate time for study of the issues before charge conference. Along this line, many commented that they would start earlier in future years on the process. Most considered the upfront effort of the pastor and finance chair as essential to digesting the information and then communicating it to the Administrative Council and other interested parties. As far as involving the congregation, it was noted that an invitation to any interested parties to hear the facts was a good idea, but in some churches, this seemed to confuse members rather than clarify. Overall, disseminating information to the congregation was good, but it needed to be in more of a summarized format. Many said that deciding on the apportionments came too soon, before their charge conferences. The bi-district meetings around the area were very beneficial, and Finance Committee members learned much from that venue. The materials that were provided were helpful but did not have enough detail as far as the purpose and usage of the money in any particular fund. Also, the pamphlet *Connections for Ministry* should have been handed out either at conference time or sent out shortly thereafter for it to be timely. Noted was that there were not enough of the pamphlets available to them. The mistake on the Congregational Development description of the rate per member was unfortunate and caused confusion when they were making comparisons to years prior. The video that was available was very helpful, and anything with more examples of where their money is going (in video) would be most helpful in bringing the financial numbers to life. It was suggested that a conference video of the work of the various conference ministries would be very helpful.

### Worked well:

- ☐ Educating the committee members.
- ☐ Good healthy discussions, leading to informed decision making.
- ☐ Materials provided.
- ☐ The presentation, discussion, and history worked very well and was appreciated by the people of the church for sharing this information.
- ☐ Having the written materials in front of us and taking the time to hear the various opinions and passions of the group.
- ☐ As the pastor, I tried to challenge them to be able to accept all of them by next year.
- ☐ We prayed before the meeting, and when we discussed the askings, there was total agreement.
- ☐ Understanding that so much of the Lord's work happens beyond one's local church is very important for them to know.
- ☐ The video on giving, prayer, and spiritual attitudes of the committee.
- ☐ Though the process was tedious and arduous, this provided our church with an invitation to really take a look at the budget and set a faithful course for the future.
- ☐ Broad discussion between program and financial areas worked well.
- ☐ We are glad that we sent information out early and fielded questions.
- ☐ The process of putting to a vote resulted in a positive response from those involved.
- ☐ Lucky for us that we have a finance chair who is informed and has great leadership skills.

- ☐ The presentations were clear and frank.
- ☐ The verbatim explanation given during the presentation worked well and made for meaningful Q&A.
- ☐ Most helpful was a document made in-house that showed each line item, with a description of how that money was used (taken from materials provided). Also on this form were the amounts paid last year, adjusted to compare apples with apples, amount requested, and a blank for recommendations. This was updated every step of the way.
- ☐ Conference treasurer's presentation was most helpful, and he did a great job at explaining.
- ☐ Involving people of varying ages worked well.

*Didn't work well:*

- ☐ Found that the people were not aware of all the conference and general church responsibilities.
- ☐ Explaining the FairShare Askings process only served to encourage non-acceptance of this or cooperation with the conference ministries; this is disappointing.
- ☐ It was confusing, the change in formula in mid-stream to a staggered implementation.
- ☐ We should have planned better (our church), and next year we will have a charge-wide financial meeting to stress the importance of giving in your denomination.
- ☐ We need to get the Administrative Council chair and the lay leader to the meetings, and also there will be a change in officers next year that will help get one negative person off the board who is poisoning the rest.
- ☐ We would allow ourselves more time.
- ☐ Next time we will involve the Administrative Council.
- ☐ I found out about the video after the fact, and this would have helped.
- ☐ Some of the descriptions of the funds were too vague, limited.
- ☐ We felt pressured by our district superintendent, though we were exercising our choice empowerment.
- ☐ Deciding what apportionments to accept comes too early, before we can have a stewardship campaign and establish a budget.
- ☐ *Connections for Ministry* pamphlet printed that Congregational Development askings were \$3.42 per member, when in fact they were asking \$5.37 per member, and this caused much confusion when comparing what was done in the past five years versus plans for 2005.
- ☐ The "new" focus on stewardship and faithful giving set for study and implementation this quadrennium really should have been addressed first and then the rest taken place. It feels like the cart went before the horse, and in the long run this may be more detrimental to general church than if nothing were done at all.
- ☐ Fund 516 should have been included in the reports that we worked from.
- ☐ The *Connections for Ministry* pamphlet came to us after we had our charge conference.

*What you would change:*

- ☐ It would have been better not to tackle the pastor's pension and the FairShare Askings in the same year; it was too much for them.
- ☐ There needs to be a total box at the bottom of the page if all askings are accepted.
- ☐ Several members received figures from the conference, and the data contained different information as far as 2004 and 2005 amounts were concerned.
- ☐ The timing in receiving "firm" figures was a bit too close to charge conference and our own time to set the budget, though everyone understood why this happened.
- ☐ We wondered why the district was not a FairShare prior claim.
- ☐ It would be helpful if the annual conference would send a pamphlet regarding the work of each line item in the FairShare section.
- ☐ People did not seem to want to tangle with this.
- ☐ Would have more copies of the *Connections for Ministry* available.
- ☐ In the future, I would like to have small-group sessions that discuss the church direction and examine how our decisions about FairShare askings have an impact on that.
- ☐ The missing piece is how to inspire people to connect with the mission of the conference. We have been given (dry) factual summaries of what the funds do, but as a pastor, I need more personal stories to tell.
- ☐ Next year will involve our Outreach and Witnessing committees more in the process.
- ☐ We would like to see the overhead at the conference/national level reduced. An example might be to have less (sic) district superintendents. The conference needs to be "mean and lean," since churches are being asked to bear the pension costs.
- ☐ We may have more district consults next year.
- ☐ We wanted more breakout on the conference benevolences, as there are some ministries that we did not want to fund.
- ☐ The electronic entry forms were a little user "unfriendly."
- ☐ Educational pamphlet should come to them much earlier, at conference or just after.
- ☐ Cluster meetings were too large.
- ☐ At annual conference, the discussion was suspended too quickly. The Quad Committee made every effort to make this available to every church.
- ☐ I would change only the resource material. I think the churches need to be made aware what happens if they continue to decrease their giving, such as building teams, missionary support, cutting youth events, cutting back on Project Agape, etc. Nothing has been given to us to help show what that money goes for in detail.

**4. What was effective in the interpretation material?**

*Synopsis of replies:*

The material received was clear and effective, especially when there was an explanation of the ministry's work. Treasurer's office staff at the conference center were very helpful in providing additional knowledge. The *Connections for Ministry* pamphlet was very effective, but the consensus was that there needed to be more details about the ministries in the pamphlet and less glitz. The video also was very effective in explaining the general church work. The conference treasurer's presentations at the Asheville District clergy meeting and other district meetings were very effective. Some requested smaller meetings with the conference treasurer. The workshop that the district superintendent held in early August was most helpful. A detailed budget that provided for all funds was appreciated. District and conference personnel were excellent resources for answering questions, either at meetings or on the phone. The handout material was good for the laity to have in hand so they did not have to rely on the pastor's interpretation. One desired to have a PowerPoint presentation rather than the printed *Connections for Ministry* to use in the general session. One church said that the 800 number to the conference center was a blessing, as well as the information posted on the website. The conference's having the numbers printed out on paper was very helpful. Lack of inclusion of Fund 516 in the materials did not help that cause. Some churches took the conference materials and prepared their own spreadsheets, and this seemed very effective.

**5. Comment on the process.**

*Synopsis of replies:*

There were just various comments such as:

- ☐ The whole picture for the small struggling church is frightening, with small membership and rising Insurance costs for the pastor.
- ☐ It is encouraging to be able to choose.
- ☐ Glad that all these decisions are mostly over for this year.
- ☐ I think the whole process is upside down. That the "above-the-line" items should be the ministries, and the "below-the-line" items should represent compensation to clergy, at all levels
- ☐ I still have misgivings about what this process will do to the smaller churches, in that they may have to combine multiple churches in a charge. Ultimately, this will lead to a reduction in the active ministers.
- ☐ We would like to be able to get more information about Congregational Development and what it offers a small, established church, so we could see the value of such a fund.
- ☐ One member commented that it was about time. Enough said.
- ☐ The process was fine. On behalf of smaller churches, we regret the outcome.
- ☐ Thanks for the time and energy spent to producing the printed material.
- ☐ Videos on more of the missions would help.
- ☐ We need to cut down on conference overhead. The church has cut to the bone.
- ☐ If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
- ☐ I am still looking for the stewardship component.
- ☐ We started right after annual conference in educating on the New Paradigm. By the time we got to the budgeting process, there were no surprises, because the members understood the new system.
- ☐ There was an awful lot of information, and I think that confused people.
- ☐ Putting the institutional and maintenance needs ahead of missional and ministry needs is opposite to the *Discipline* and to the call of Christ.
- ☐ Please tell me that there will only be small changes to next year's process.
- ☐ Thankful and prayerful to do our part as United Methodists.
- ☐ I liked the old way better but loved the electronic aspect of it.
- ☐ If churches were tithing at a rate better than 13-17%, we would not be facing this problem. We need to continue to address this with stewardship education, Sunday school, sermons, and lessons.
- ☐ There is room for improvement.
- ☐ Both myself (*sic*) and my treasurer did not feel that enough information was provided.
- ☐ Include the % of the total beside each of the askings.
- ☐ Some still fear repercussions from district and conference level if they do not choose to pay all the askings.
- ☐ Please continue to provide clear educational resources for congregations to use.
- ☐ We need conference people to come and make a pitch.

#### Churches that Answered the Survey Questions vs Accepted 100% Apportionment for 2005

Average Church Attendance	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Average % of churches in survey category at 100% acceptance	Total No. of Churches in Category	% of Churches (overall) in Category at 100% Acceptance	
0-59	220	213	174	164	168	25.1%	513	35.5%	
60-99	140	144	109	110	98	27.4%	259	33.2%	
100-149	70	71	62	57	58	33.4%	137	32.8%	
150-199	41	35	34	30	31.3%	34.7%			150-199 39
200-399	68	67	52	49	44	22.2%	114	22.8%	
400-599	8	8	7	5	4	23.8%	18	38.9%	
600+	12	12	12	10	9	14.5%	24	20.8%	

#### 2005 Page 1 Survey Results Per Church Attendance Category

Average Church Attendance	Number and Percentage of Churches Answering										Total Number of Churches in Category
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5						
0-59	220	42.9%	213	41.5%	174	33.9%	164	32.0%	168	32.7%	513
60-99	140	54.1%	144	55.6%	109	42.1%	110	42.5%	98	37.8%	259
100-149	70	51.1%	71	51.8%	62	45.3%	57	41.6%	58	42.3%	137
150-199	39	54.2%	41	56.9%	35	48.6%	34	47.2%	30	41.7%	72
200-399	68	59.6%	67	58.8%	52	45.6%	49	43.0%	44	38.6%	114
400-599	8	44.4%	8	44.4%	7	38.9%	5	27.8%	4	22.2%	18
600+	12	50.0%	12	50.0%	12	50.0%	10	41.7%	9	37.5%	24