

B. CONFERENCE MINISTRIES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Floods in the North Carolina mountains; tsunamis in Asia; prisoners across our state in need of Christ's message of hope; college students facing spiritual and developmental challenges; elderly unable to afford vital medication; churches needing leader training, resources, and consultation—all are real concerns. What is a United Methodist to do? The answer is offered through "The Connection"! The Conference Ministries Advisory Council (CMAC) becomes "your hands in ministry" where you may not be able to reach otherwise. The "power of numbers" of United Methodists across our conference makes your ministry significant. Your CMAC is composed of the ministry and advocacy groups that provide witness and mission opportunities in western North Carolina and, indeed, throughout the world. The list of real recent or current needs has been on our agenda to make our connectional ministries as effective as possible.

The reports that follow this introduction describe the shape, description, and variety of ways that the Lordship of Jesus Christ is offered to a world in need of the gospel. We provide a structure for building teams to respond to victims of floods in western North Carolina, while partnering through UMCOR to aid in the tsunami-ravaged regions of Southeast Asia. Our missions reach to Armenia, Lithuania, and Cambodia, while we also make possible a church and community worker among the poor and disenfranchised of Winston-Salem. We teach Disciple Bible to prison inmates in North Carolina and provide flood buckets for hurricane-ravaged Florida and Alabama. Our medical teams heal the broken in the Dominican Republic, and we teach basic church-leadership skills to more than 4,000 participants in conference-wide district leadership conferences every year.

Our conference staff members consult with local churches and provide key leadership to the many work and ministry groups that need this conference connection. We introduce thousands of youth to the dynamic love of Jesus, and we engage with others in the beginning of new Hispanic missions and churches. While holding enrichment events for older adults, we remain faithful to the ministry of providing a resource center for Christian growth for all ages. Our internet web ministry reaches scores of people with timely information as we constantly seek new ways to employ cutting-edge technology in "connection" with nearly 1,140 local churches and mission congregations, always seeking to be the best that they can be in spreading the gospel. We could list numerous other examples.

Our major challenge of the past year centers in doing effective ministry while available financial resources are shrinking. Charge conferences provided acceptances of 71.17% of total program and ministry budget needs for 2005. Recently, leaders of CMAC, meeting in a discernment session, focused new energy in the belief that one of the chief tasks before our conference is a theological and spiritual task. We believe strongly that faithful Christians must affirm a theology of abundance and challenge fellow believers to eliminate attitudes of scarcity. We challenge the conference to embrace the Great Commission to go into all the world and the Wesleyan dictum that "The world is my parish." We are taught to give our tithes and offerings, but do we embrace and teach this essential discipline in our churches? We seem too focused on paying the utility bills and keeping up the church plant to truly and joyfully implement the Great Commission. We cannot afford the spiritual timidity of any voice that would declare ministry in the name of Christ as optional. To this end, we enthusiastically endorse the action of our bishop to form strong task forces on the stewardship of giving and the stewardship of managing. We also encourage our annual conference to embrace our common mission to center our lives, led by Bishop McCleskey, as we commit to "Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, and Transform the World." We call upon leaders and members of all of our churches to make this our focus.

Robert E. Shepherd, *Chairperson*
Thomas R. Sigmon, *Director of Connectional Ministries*

REPORTS FROM AGENCIES RELATED TO THE CONFERENCE MINISTRIES ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. COMMISSION ON NURTURE MINISTRIES

You shall love the Lord with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,
and with all your strength (Mark 12:30).

The purpose of the Commission on Nurture Ministries, in line with Bishop Lawrence McCleskey's model for Christ-centered transformation in our conference, is to initiate efforts to "shepherd the shepherds" so that they can faithfully live out the call of Christ in Mark 12. To achieve this, we work closely with both clergy and lay members of the annual conference.

As we begin this quadrennium with those continuing their ministry in this area, as well as new participants, we are focusing on our vision and plans for the next four years. Each member of the commission has been asked to choose an area of interest in which to participate or to lead as a nurture ministry for the conference. We have termed these "soul-tending models," and some of those that have been suggested and are being implemented throughout the conference include class meetings, workshops, personal days apart, exercise, book studies, topical studies, small-group spiritual direction, individual spiritual direction, and many more. Yet, we are first modeling spiritual nurture by choosing and praying for our prayer partners within the commission. We hope to expand our prayer partnership to include members of the cabinet and conference staff.

A new ministry for the commission this year will be the development of a devotional booklet for the 2005 session of the conference, the *Conference Soul-Tending Companion*. Amidst the important business of the conference, we would like to help clergy and lay participants reclaim time for prayer and prayerful discernment, so that the space between the participants and God becomes a little more intimate.

We are not letting this year's budget constraints hinder our ministries.

May God add blessings as we live out God's Word!

Sarah E. H. McKinney, *Chairperson*

Children's Ministry:

The following are several active components of children's ministry in our conference:

- The Child Care Network provides help for all types of church child care needs through a group of professional consultants.
- The annual Weekday Workshop provides training for directors and teachers in church child care.
- The Standing Committee on Weekday Child Care advocates for children and workers with children and helps churches with Children's Sabbath.
- A state-wide task force will be working with both North Carolina bishops to march on our state government concerning justice issues for children and families.
- Sandra Honeycutt directs the work of Hand-In-Hand, connecting churches and schools to help children in need, and also the work of Para Los Ninos, helping Hispanic children and their families.
- The Conference Children's Council is working on area training events for children's workers. These events will center children's ministry on the bishop's focus for the quadrennium. The council also helps children in need through The Bishop's Initiative Fund and The Children's Fund.
- Local churches can request children's ministry workshops through the Office of Nurture and Christian Education.

Singles Ministry:

The following are several active components for singles ministry in our conference.

- In cooperation with the South Carolina Conference Singles Council, a spring event is held at Lake Junaluska for spiritual renewal for singles.
- A new fall happening will be cluster events for helping churches with singles ministry. These events will center this ministry on the bishop's focus for the quadrennium.
- Local churches can also ask for help in starting or maintaining singles ministries.

Janet M. Hitch, *Director of Nurture and Christian Education*

COMMITTEE ON CAMP AND RETREAT MINISTRIES

The camps of the Western North Carolina Conference made an important contribution to the spiritual life of the people of the conference in 2004.

Camp Tekoa – WNC Conference Camp:

Operated ten weeks of summer camp, with a total of 2,101 campers and 80 staff; this number is down slightly as a result of the public-school schedule.

District Camps:

Mount Shepherd continued to provide a strong resident summer camp program, with 576 campers.

Carolwood, Guilrock, and McCall provided short summer camp programs, with paid and volunteer staff.

Five camps (Carolwood, Elk Shoals, Loy White, McCall, and Patton Springs) partnered with Carolina Cross Connection for their Youth in Mission program. Guilrock plans to include the program in 2005.

Elk Shoals held the third "Interfaith Camp" for Jewish, Muslim, and Christian boys and the first camp for girls.

Camps for mentally handicapped persons were held at Tekoa and Mt. Shepherd.

Loy White held a special football camp.

Special Programs:

Elk Shoals hosted a Boy Scout Camporee, with 350 scouts and leaders attending.

Guilrock was used by the Haw River Festival for environmental education.

Tekoa provided lodging at Patton Springs for mission teams working on flood relief in Macon and Haywood counties.

Ropes courses at McCall, Loy White, Mt. Shepherd, and Tekoa continue to draw much interest.

Hispanic camps were held at Loy White, Elk Shoals, and Tekoa.

Adult and family trail hikes, under the leadership of N. Fred Jordan, Jr., continue.

Mount Shepherd held a very successful middle-school mission camp.

Improvements:

Tekoa purchased a house next to the camp and received a donation of three acres of land near the entrance. A new 550-foot zip-line is being constructed.

Carolwood put a new roof on the Buffalo Lodge and built a storage building.

Elk Shoals has almost completed the chapel/office building.

Loy White put a new roof on the lodge.

McCall continues to work on the septic system.

Mount Shepherd has completed the first of five new cabins and done plantings and trail work.

All of the camps are active in developing new and innovative programs, funding sources, and information materials.

"Safe Sanctuaries" has long been a part of the program of all the camps. Kent L. Schrader, of Mount Shepherd, has received training in the program and will be able to assist the camps in developing their own guidelines and procedures.

The mission of the conference Committee on Camp and Retreat Ministries is to bring Christ's light and love to all people of the conference through experiencing God's creative power in the natural environment in camp and retreat settings.

James G. Mackey, *Chairperson*
Michael W. Collins, *Director of Volunteer Response Ministries*
Jack B. Porter, *Consultant*

Proposal: Board of Trustees of Camp Tekoa

(Referred as Petition 2 to Forum Group 2)
(Adopted by conference on June 10, 2005)

Class of 2005: Shelly F. Webb, Jeff Gilliam, Tom Patton, Candis Walker, Roland T. Barnhardt.
Class of 2006: David O. Mason, Ed Hosack, Donald A. Newman, Daniel J. Lyons, Ellen Gilley.
Class of 2007: Emily New, Ruth Hoyle, Jimmy Dowless, Elizabeth Crenshaw Rosenbaum.
Class of 2008: John Isley, Carrie Isley, A. Maria Edmunds, Shelton D. Davis, David Moore.
Ex-Officio: Karen F. Miller, Katie S. Fralic, James S. Johnson, James G. Mackey.
Honorary: Bill King.

2. COMMISSION ON OUTREACH MINISTRIES

The conference Commission on Outreach Ministries began a new quadrenium with plans to emphasize communication in order to clarify the vision of the church's mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ, to promote inclusiveness, emphasize mission education, and strengthen support of our United Methodist connection.

The committees were just beginning to work when hurricanes slammed into western North Carolina, making disaster response a number-one priority. Thank you for your overwhelming response with gifts of money and flood buckets, volunteers, and other resources that have contributed greatly to the recovery effort.

The commission has highlighted several priorities for local congregations to support. These include both general and conference Advance Specials as approved by the annual conference; the Good Samaritan Clinic, in the Dominican Republic; Project AGAPE, in Armenia; the Central Congo Conference, in rebuilding following the civil war; the Birzai Church, in Lithuania; projects in Cambodia; and a focus on mission education and interpretation.

We ask for your support in full acceptance of the conference program and benevolence budget. This is crucial to our continued support and development of mission both here and abroad.

Below are summaries of our various areas of ministry and our proposals for your consideration.

Mahalia McGee, *Chairperson*
Mark L. Barden, *Director of Mission/Outreach*
Michael W. Collins, *Director of Volunteer Response Ministries*

Proposal: Advance Specials for 2005-2006

(Referred as Petition 3 to Forum Group 14)
(Adopted by conference on June 10, 2005)

General Advance Specials

Salary support for missionaries related to the Western North Carolina Conference:

Anne Kolbe, Cambodia (013148-6)
Dwayne Morgan, MRC, Mooresville (982923)
Vickie B. Sigmon, Winston-Salem District (982916-8)
Donald and Ramona Turman, Indonesia (003848-0AZ)

Salary support for mission personnel who have connections with the WNCC:

Clara Biswas, Cambodia (13592-2)
Gordon and Ardell Graner, Bolivia (010835-5EZ)
Susan Henry, Bolivia (002332-0EZ)
Fran Lynch, Alaska (982950-1)
Djamba Mundeke, Democratic Republic of Congo (014021-8HZ)
Darla and Glen Rowley, Senegal (009682-6AZ)
Herbert and Mary Zigbuo, Liberia (010911-1BZ)

Parish Partners Support:

Alaska Missionary Conference (931027-4)
Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (583634-4)
Rio Grande Conference (531733-1)

Other Projects:

Africa Church Growth and Development Fund (008233-OHT)
Andean Rural Health Care (010158-2RA)
Appalachian Regional Ministries (982041-0)
Baltic Mission Center, Tallinn, Estonia (010923-5)
Bethlehem Center, Charlotte (982149-3)
Bethlehem Center, Winston-Salem (982149-3)
Cambodia Initiative, Building and Capital Funds (014195-3)
Cherokee Indian Mission (731144-8)
Diengenga Technical School, Lodja, Democratic Republic of Congo
Trade School Building (012674-4)
English-Speaking Congregation, Vienna, Austria (12001)
Help Ministries, International Trust, Cape Town; (013157-7RA)
Henderson Settlement, Kentucky (773365-2)
Hinton Rural Life Center, Hayesville, NC (Program) (731372-2)
Hispanic Ministry, Greensboro/Northeast Districts (791500-0)
How Far Can You Go, Indonesia (0132404-6)
John Wesley Primary School, Pinetown, South Africa (011033-6RA)
Mission in the Commonwealth of Independent States) CIS) (011510-1)
Red Bird Mission Inc. Kentucky (773365-2)
Retreats for Sunday School Teachers, Women, Men and Youth, Indonesia (014243-4)
Society of St. Andrew (Potato Project) (801600-0)
Stop Hunger Now (982795-6)
Strengthening Reestablished UMC, Lithuania (012168-2RA)
Thiu Rancho Project, Bolivia (012309-8RA)
Unalaska UMC Mission Congregation, Alaska
Pastor Support (931848-5)
Outreach (931855)
Capital (931852-1)

UMCOR Projects:

Bread for the World (982325-3)
Children's Ministries, Africa (101225-3)
CROP (Church World Service) (982380-1)
Disaster Response, USA (901670-1)
Disaster Response, International (982450-8)
Grace Children's Hospital, Port-au-Prince, Haiti (418520-7)
Heifer Project International (982530-8)
Middle East Refugee Program (601732-2)
Sager-Brown Depot (901515-8)
World Hunger/Poverty (982920-4)

Annual Conference Mission Specials

Building Materials, Scholarships for Building Teams
Carolina Cross Connection
Children of Vietnam
Conference Disaster Response Fund
Diengenga Relief Fund
Disciple Bible Outreach Ministry
Epiphany
Materials, Scholarships, Supplies for Medical Ministries
Prison MATCH Program
Project AGAPE
Salkehatchie Summer Service – WNCC
Scandinavian Caravan – WNCC
Shalom Zones - Charlotte
UMAR-WNC, Inc
WNCC Deaf Ministry
WNCC Good Samaritan Clinic, Dominican Republic
WNCC Mission Response Center Support
Yokefellow Prison Ministry of North Carolina

Other Opportunities in Mission

Children's Fund for Christian Mission
Bishop's Initiative on Children in Poverty
Youth Service Fund
World Service Special: Africa University, Zimbabwe (WSSG #03-01-88)
Permanent Fund: Encounter Christ (025100)

Special Sundays
Human Relations Day
Native American Awareness
World Communion
One Great Hour of Sharing,
Peace With Justice
UM Student Day

Proposal: Volunteers in Mission Awareness Day

**(Referred as Petition 30 to Forum Group 14)
(Adopted by conference on June 10, 2005)**

The Commission on Outreach Ministries proposes that in 2006 every church of the conference be urged to

- a. Designate one Sunday as "Volunteers in Mission Awareness Day";
- b. Provide for UMVIM displays and information resources, to solicit individual or group testimonies, and/or to develop other ways to celebrate the UMVIM movement in whatever fashion that best suits the local congregation; and
- c. Draw upon the available resources of the conference Building Team and Medical Team committees and the Volunteer Response Ministries Office to make the day a memorable one of "Christian Love in Action."

Disaster Response Committee

The Western North Carolina Conference has been the leader in responding to disasters in other conferences and around the world. In the late summer of 2004, the conference Disaster Response Committee began to respond to the damage left behind by the first three hurricanes in the Florida Conference. Our Southeast Charlotte Early Response Team was called to assist and was the first United Methodist team on the scene in Arcadia, Florida. Over 70 church teams responded to the call to assist in the cleanup and recovery efforts.

Before we could travel *en masse* to help in Florida, a storm struck the North Carolina mountains on September 7-8, 2004, after leaving much of Florida in destruction. The mountains were hit by over 17 inches of rain, and the flood waters hit with a ferocity not seen since 1948, washing away crops, flooding fields, and causing millions of dollars of damage to over 31,000 homes in 30 counties of the conference. The conference Disaster Response Committee had flood buckets in Marion and in Clyde before night fell on the flooded towns. Ten days later, on September 17-18, Hurricane Ivan followed Frances' path, with another 13 inches of rain, mudslides, and damage.

Five districts were affected by the storms: Asheville, Marion, North Wilkesboro, Northeast, and Waynesville. Contact was made with the newly appointed district disaster response coordinators and district superintendents. While the other districts needed some financial and team help in their recovery, the conference began working with the Waynesville District to meet the relief needs and recovery efforts for the future. A letter asking for funds and support was sent by Bishop J. Lawrence McCleskey to all western North Carolina United Methodist churches within 24 hours. Within days, the bishop and others from the conference were surveying the damage.

The conference has always "sent" teams and help to other conferences. This was the first major experience since Hurricane Hugo in 1986 of the Western North Carolina Conference's "receiving" assistance from other conferences and UMCOR. We have prepared to stay the course for the next 18-24 months of the recovery.

Many avenues have been traveled since September:

- The Waynesville District Disaster Response Board was established, with Bill Cannon as chairperson.
- A casework supervisor/volunteer coordinator (Jackie Bolden) and construction manager (Tony Oberley) have been hired.
- Disaster-response trucks, equipment, and supplies have been sent to the Waynesville District.
- Over \$336,000 has been received for the conference disaster response.
- Over 100 teams have sent information for participating in Haywood and Macon counties, with over 40 teams arriving to date.
- We have joined forces with Wesley Community Development Corporation (formerly Rural Affordable Housing, Inc.) for construction of new homes in the affected areas of the Waynesville District.
- \$50,000 has been received for hurricane response in Florida, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.
- Many teams have been sent to the Florida Conference's Storm Recovery Center.
- Every district has responded to the call to have a district disaster response coordinator
- The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) met with the bishop and cabinet, district disaster response coordinators, and the conference Committee on Disaster Response.
- Several "Preparing for Disaster" and "Early Response" training seminars have been offered.
- We are leading the way in organizing a Western North Carolina Interfaith with other organizations (United Way, Salvation Army, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Southern Baptists).
- A new *Disaster Response Manual* has been written for the Western North Carolina Conference.

Nature did not end its year without one additional punch. On December 26, 2004, a tsunami struck 12 countries in South/Southeast Asia, killing over 160,000 persons and leaving much of the area devastated. As of March 1, 2005, members and churches of the conference had donated over \$672,899 for the tsunami recovery through UMCOR (according to the conference Department of Treasury Services). Other funds have been donated on-line or straight to UMCOR.

The Western North Carolina Annual Conference is a very generous and giving conference. While the storms of 2004 are behind us, the reconstruction effort will continue for the next several years.

David M. Hamlyn, *Chairperson*
Michael W. Collins, *Director, Volunteer Response Ministries*

Mission Personnel Committee

New chairperson Veranita G. Alvord attended training sponsored by the General Board of Global Ministries in January. In early March, the committee interviewed candidates for missionary service and is currently developing an interview/question format for candidates for mission service. Plans are also under way to broaden participation in the missionary covenant program.

Golden Cross

Golden Cross, a mission that gives assistance to families of our conference struggling with overwhelming medical costs, assisted 61 families in 2004. Available to any individual or family of our conference, lay or clergy, the assistance depends upon need and availability of funds. Applications are made by pastors (for laity) and district superintendents (for clergy families). Golden Cross depends heavily upon special offerings from local churches, church groups, and individuals.

A. Gayle Ford, *Director*

Proposal: Golden Cross

(Referred as Petition 4 to Forum Group 14)
(Adopted by conference on June 10, 2005)

The Commission on Outreach Ministries proposes that the annual conference approve the first Sunday of May, 2006, as "Golden Cross Sunday" and that on this Sunday every church of our conference be urged to recognize this ministry and give the people of each church an opportunity to make a special gift/offering, which will be used by Golden Cross to assist individuals and families struggling with medical costs. (If another Sunday is better for a church's calendar, the church may designate its own "Golden Cross Sunday.")

Scandinavian Caravan Committee

The Scandinavian Caravan Committee was reorganized at the beginning of a new quadrennium, gaining some new members while retaining several previous participants. Additionally, for the summer of 2005, our conference will again send several young adults and their leadership across the Atlantic to perpetuate the "connexional" bond between ourselves and our United Methodist brothers and sisters in the Scandinavian and Baltic churches. Notably, 2005 marks the 50th anniversary of the Scandinavian Caravan ministry of our two annual conferences.

Timothy S. Moore, *Chairperson*

Project AGAPE Committee

In our 11th year, we continue to support the Armenian people and the Armenian Apostolic Church with humanitarian relief; support of two children's homes, two Christian education centers, and the hospital in Lachin; moral and Christian education; supplies for students in school; medical supplies; sewing supplies; and building renovations. In 2005, two teams from this conference will refurbish the Lachin Children's Home and rebuild the kitchen in the Stepanakert Children's Home. Our presence gives hope for thousands of Armenians who live from day to day, waiting for the political and economic winds to improve to the point that they can become self sufficient.

Cecil E. Donahue, *Vice-Chairperson*

Health Care Ministries Committee

The Health Care Ministries Committee has served as a resource to the conference regarding questions on how to begin a health or parish-nurse ministry. The 2004 Wellness Fair held at annual conference was the largest thus far in both screening stations and participants, with more than 500 persons involved.

Judy Durham, *Chairperson*

Building Teams Committee

In 2005, the conference Building Teams Committee sent 534 volunteers on construction, medical, and Christian-education projects in 14 countries. Cumulatively, this amounts to about 20 years of missionary service. It raised more than \$650,000 to accomplish this mission. The committee continued the restructuring of the its executive committee to accommodate the ongoing expansion of this program and began the evaluation of an invitation from the Jakarahand Annual Conference, in India, to begin reconstruction work on a deaconess complex.

Dana A. McKim, *Chairperson*

Diengenga Trade School Steering Committee

The Diengenga Trade School Steering Committee is looking forward to working with Bishop David Yemba and the Western North Carolina Conference Congo Coordinating Committee to rebuild the central Congo from the damage inflicted by the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The committee will send a container to the DRC, containing items needed by the Trade School, Lorena Kelly's Girl's School, and the hospital at Wembo Nyama.

David L. Miner, *Chairperson*

Medical Missions

The conference has continued to support medical teams to Batey Seven's Good Samaritan Clinic, in the Dominican Republic, with more than 50 persons on a team performing operations and building toilets in January 2005. We continue to support the clinic with \$24,000 a year for physician, nurse, pharmacist, and staff support, as well as medicines. We have two teams scheduled for Latannerie Clinic, in Haiti, for 2005.

Gail Rogers, *Chairperson*

Mission Response Center

The debt on the Mission Response Center is paid off. The value of this facility was realized this fall, given the hurricane and flood damage experienced in the western part of the conference. It is a vital part of our disaster-response ministry. Plans are being made to improve the facility and its logistical support of our conference mission program. In August, the General Board of Global Ministries placed Dwaine Morgan, a church and community worker, to manage the ministry there.

P. Glenn Kinken III, *Chairperson*

Refugee Ministries

Ariel Collins, new coordinator for refugee ministries, has attended training and is working to establish a pilot committee for refugee sponsorship. She has networked and dialogued with LFS and CWS, United Methodist Church Refugee Service affiliates, on the objective, process, adoption, and action plan for refugee family church sponsorship; initiated communications with local churches and district leadership on Refugee and Asylee sponsorship; and explored effective communication tools that convey refugees' plight and persecution in war-torn countries.

Shalom Zones

Beverly Hammond Smith, new coordinator for Shalom, is working with Charlotte communities by coordinating with residents to provide ongoing technical assistance to the organizational development of the neighborhood associations in fragile communities; convening outreach-ministry meetings with other faith-based groups to organize and share efforts in order to avoid duplication; providing ongoing support to a coalition addressing the issues of crime and substance abuse in Shalom Zone and surrounding neighborhoods; developing youth violence prevention and intervention training for 25 youth in Thomasboro Shalom site; and coordinating the council that oversees Thomasboro Youth Research Project (needs assessment and skills inventory).

Wesley Community Development Corporation (formerly Rural Affordable Housing, Inc.)

Rural Affordable Housing, Inc. (RAH), now Wesley Community Development Corporation, opened its doors in Statesville, North Carolina, in early 2002, funded by a grant from The Duke Endowment to the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. The mission of this incorporated, non-profit organization is to build affordable homes in rural areas of the conference for all who qualify, regardless of religion, race, or creed. By definition, "rural" is either (1) within a community of less than 1,500 or (2) beyond a mile from any community with a population of 1,500 or greater. "Affordable housing" is defined as a layer of financing through grants, low-cost loans, and government subsidies, so that quality homes may be built for low- and very low-income families, with house payments they can afford. Volunteer labor is used in order to reduce building costs, and particular care is taken in construction techniques to minimize normal homeowner costs, such as heating and cooling expenses.

In order to qualify, a client must have a household income below 80% of the median income for the county of residence. A client with a household income below 50% of the median income is considered to be "very low," and special financial considerations may apply. Following client identification and qualification, support from WCDC includes a close working relationship with the client and related agencies to obtain the best possible financing. Other services include financial counseling, debt-reduction training, support for credit-improvement efforts, and homeowner training.

In order to help provide relief for residents in Haywood and Macon counties who were impacted by devastating floods from hurricanes Frances and Ivan, we partnered with the Waynesville District Disaster Relief Board in 2004 to provide immediate assistance to residents in need, as well as long-term support through construction of new homes. With the assistance of volunteers, we plan to build several homes in these two counties in the coming months.

Currently, we are building homes based on four separate plans, ranging from 1,100 to 1,300 square feet, including both three- and four-bedroom homes. Twelve homes were completed in 2004, and our Westglow community, near Union Grove in Iredell County, will be completed in the first half of 2005. We plan to build at least 12 more homes in 2005, including sites in Davie, Ashe, Iredell, Haywood, and Macon counties. Since our plan is to build communities of grace and hope throughout the Western North Carolina Conference, our Site Selection Committee is actively seeking new building sites.

Lawrence E. Carella, *Managing Director*

Proposal: Directors of Wesley Community Development Corporation

(Referred as Petition 5 to Forum Group 14)
(Adopted by conference on June 10, 2005)

The Board of Directors of Wesley Community Development Corporation (formerly Rural Affordable Housing, Inc.) proposes that the following persons be confirmed by the annual conference as members of that board:

J. Richard Alsop, Jr.
William Cannon
Janet H. Collins
James H. Graves
Walter M. Hand

Randolph H. Harry
Roy H. Helm, Jr.
James Herndon
Coley Hooker, Jr.

Olin B. Isenhour
Helen Rogers
David Smith
Sam H. Smith, Jr.

3. COMMISSION ON WITNESS MINISTRIES

The Commission on Witness Ministries provides resources and training events to the congregations of our annual conference to equip them for effective ministries of evangelism. In an attempt to be faithful to Christ's Great Commission to "make disciples of all nations," we are pleased to report that 5,267 professions of faith were made in our churches in 2004. This was an increase over 2003 of 307 people; however, we continue to be challenged by the reality that many of our churches report having no professions of faith. It is our prayer that all of our churches will become vital churches making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Resources that the commission sponsored this year for local churches and pastors included:

- **Natural Church Development:** This process helps a local church to assess their health in eight basic areas and assigns a trained coach to work with the pastor and a team of laity to improve their overall health. A new group of coaches were trained this year, so that more of our churches can be assured of having a coach available for this very helpful process. Over 100 of our churches have now participated in Natural Church Development.
- **Evangelism Toolbox:** This booklet explains ten different evangelism programs for use in local churches. It is available through the Congregational Development Office at the Conference Center.
- **New Members Curriculum:** A leader's guide and a participant's manual is available in a four-session format and is downloadable from the conference website.
- **Church Facilities Conference:** Expanding on our previous church-building conferences we have held in the past, this Church Facilities Conference will offer workshops on buildings and workshops on remodeling existing facilities, relocating, leasing, and multi-site campuses. It will be held at Christ Church, Hickory, in October.
- **Multi-Staff Conference:** For churches with multiple staffs, this event will equip the participants to better understand one another and work as a team in ministry. The "Multi-Staff Team Building Conference" will be offered August 15-17, 2005, at the Terrace Hotel at Lake Junaluska. Ron and Karen Ballard will be our facilitators.
- **Churches of Excellence Awards:** To encourage ministries of evangelism and congregational development, the commission recognizes churches each year that have increased their worship attendance by 5%, received a percentage of their new members on profession of faith, started a new small group or class, and paid their apportionment askings in full. Over 60 churches qualified last year.
- **Denman Evangelism Awards:** Each year, a clergy person, a layperson, and a group that have shown excellence in evangelism efforts are recognized with this award. Clergy and laity may submit nominations for these awards. The deadline is the end of March.

Dynamic conference programs of witness ministries include:

- **Methodist Motorsports Evangelism:** Begun as a way to reach new people for Jesus Christ, local church volunteers give out fan guides and interact with race fans during ten weeks of summer races at Lowe's Motor Speedway, in Concord. Four cars and a tractor raced this year with the United Methodist cross-and-flame logo. The commission sponsored the drivers. Other volunteers worked with the pit crews and race teams to offer them the good news of Jesus Christ. This evangelism ministry has attracted the attention of other conferences which now want to start similar outreach evangelism ministries at racetracks in their areas.
- **Mission to Ministers:** The commission works with the board of directors of the Finch-Hunt Institute to offer this annual event, which features excellent preachers and evangelism speakers. This year, we were proud to sponsor Dr. Dale Galloway as the presenter on evangelism. A very effective new-church planter, pioneer in the development of small-group ministries, widely published author, and recent leader in the Beeson Institute of Asbury Seminary, Galloway presented an inspiring testimony on evangelism for our participants at St. Luke's Church, Hickory, in February.

We thank you for your support of the ministries of the Commission on Witness Ministries.

Louise Jones, *Chairperson*
Nancy B. Rankin, *Director*

4. COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

The conference Commission on Religion and Race (CORR) began this quadrennium with training facilitated by Cheryl Walker, Southeastern Jurisdiction director of outreach, advocacy, and racial/ethnic concerns. This training focused on the mission, role, and function of the commission. The members of the commission reaffirmed their commitment to follow the mandate outlined for the General Commission on Religion and Race in ¶ 2002 of *The Book of Discipline* (2000):

to challenge the general agencies, institutions, and connectional structures of The United Methodist Church to a full and equal participation of the racial and ethnic constituency in the total life and mission of the Church through advocacy and by reviewing and monitoring the practices of the entire Church so as to further ensure racial inclusiveness.

In order to fulfill this mandate, the commission pledged to: 1) Give voice to the issues and concerns of racial ethnic people; 2) counsel church leaders and members on different facets of racially inclusive church and society; 3) facilitate workshops (such as Bridge Builders) and develop resource materials related to issues of racism, diversity, and inclusiveness; 4) empower racial ethnic groups; 5) sensitize the church about racism; and 6) monitor and evaluate racial and cultural inclusiveness on all levels of the church.

This year, CORR has worked to prepare itself for the task of monitoring and evaluating conference- and district-level boards, agencies, commissions, and committees. We are working closely with the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, along with the Committee on Church and Society, to coordinate the process of monitoring these various organizations. Prior to annual conference, Erin Hawkins, who is employed by the General Commission on Religion and Race as associate general secretary for the Southeastern Jurisdiction, provided training on the process of monitoring at annual conference.

On October 16, 2004, CORR sponsored a multicultural event hosted by the Lexington District. *One Word! One Table! Christ's Church: Our True Connection!* was a successful event and a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the diversity of God's Kingdom. We are grateful for all those who shared their cultural heritage through dance, food, and conversation.

January 14-15, 2005, CORR sponsored the Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration, which was hosted in the Charlotte District. This year's theme was *Making His Dream Our Dream*. This program was designed to encourage our youth to join the adults in this celebration. Many of our children and teens participated in the MLK Youth Essay, Poetry, and Art Contest. The contest finalists were awarded scholarships for their insightful, creative work. Many of our teens participated in an MLK Youth Night, which included a Charlotte Bobcats game, youth activities, and a youth sleepover. The next day, the youth and adults took part in the MLK Celebration program and worship service. The keynote speakers included Burmit Delaine, the son of one of the plaintiffs in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, and Taj Brown, of the Children's Defense Fund. These speakers reminded us of the journey from segregation to desegregation and challenged us to address the ongoing struggles of racism. The day concluded with an inspiring message from Bishop J. Lawrence McCleskey and a communion celebration. CORR gives thanks to all those who made this celebration possible, especially our youth liturgical dance groups and youth district choir!

CORR also followed up on the work that evolved from the 2003 summit on inclusiveness, *Christian Love: One Body...One Family?* strategy groups. As a result of the dedicated work of these strategy groups, CORR will present a racial-harassment policy for our annual conference. In addition, a petition was drafted to encourage the development and inclusion of ethnic leaders on district and conference boards, commissions, agencies, and committees. Lastly, CORR designed a plan to work with each district to ensure that there are active religion and race committees in each of our local churches.

Kathy FitzJefferies, *Chairperson*

Proposal: Inclusiveness in Leadership Positions

(Referred as Petition 6 to Forum Group 15)
(Adopted by conference on June 10, 2005)

The Commission on Religion and Race proposes that the following resolution be adopted:
Whereas, One of the main objectives of the *Igniting Ministries* campaign is to develop a truly connectional church through open hearts, open minds, and open doors; and

Whereas, The Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 12:5 that "we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another"; and

Whereas, There is a disproportionate number of district and conference representation according to the membership demographics of The United Methodist Church where people of color are concerned; and

Whereas, No pool of qualified people exists for people of color from which to choose district and conference committee members; and

Whereas, The only way to be a truly connectional church is to get as many people involved as possible on every level of church administration; therefore, be it

Resolved, That district representatives to the Commission on Religion and Race be charged with working with district superintendents, pastors, and local-church lay leaders to submit lists of available ethnic leaders.

Resolved, That each church representing people of color be charged to create an initial pool of qualified people to serve on district and conference commissions, agencies, and committees.

Resolved, That district and conference nominating committees be provided with this list to support the inclusion of ethnic leaders in the process of nominating members of commissions, agencies, and committees.

COMMITTEE ON ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH CONCERNS

I am pleased to report that the ethnic local churches in the Western North Carolina Annual Conference are making disciples for Jesus Christ. We have a total number of 1,133 chartered churches in the conference. Of these churches, 114 are made up of predominantly ethnic persons: 95 are African American, three are Native American, two are Korean, one is Asian, and one is Hispanic. These churches are grouped into 70 pastoral charges: 38 station charges, 30 two-church charges, and two three-church charges. We have 110 active ethnic pastors in the conference and 38 inactive ones.

We have had only one new ethnic church start in the last three years. Yet, this number does not include several missions that have been started. They have not reached church status at this time. These missions are not included in the above listing of ethnic congregations.

Seven of the 14 districts of our annual conference have future plans for new ethnic church starts:

- *Charlotte District:* Greater Vision Church meets at University City Church and is composed of 150 persons. The pastor is African-American. St. Francis Church hosts a group of Koreans in worship conducted in English, but offers Disciple Bible Study in their native language.
- *Greensboro District:* Relocation of an ethnic congregation will lead to remission and growth.
- *High Point District:* Ward Street Mission, in High Point, serves 16 nationalities and is in its second year. Adonai Mission, in Asheboro, serves 12 nationalities and is in its fourth year. They are partnering with the Winston-Salem District to launch a new multi-cultural congregation in Kernersville.
- *Northeast District:* There is an Hispanic missionary on the western side of the district.
- *North Wilkesboro District:* Plans are being made to merge and to relocate one charge of two churches and to begin a new Hispanic congregation in 2006.
- *Salisbury District:* A new Hispanic congregation is being begun at Forest Hill Church, in Concord, as well as another at Coburn Memorial Church, in Salisbury.
- *Winston Salem District:* New Creation began forming in July 2004. An Hispanic congregation is to be included in this church.

Finally, it is the goal of the committee to provide funds for leadership development and information to the ethnic congregations, so they can receive the resources to make, train, and send out disciples for Jesus Christ.

Dewey W. Smith, *Director of Ethnic and Justice Ministries*

5. COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW) began this term by introducing its new members to our Christian Women 101 Curriculum, Victims and Survivors Guide, and Clergywomen's Survey Summary. We distributed these packets to each district in the conference. COSROW shared its packet of work with Cheryl Walker, director of outreach, advocacy, and racial/ethnic concerns of the Southeastern Jurisdiction, and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. We will also continue to network closely with the Commission on Religion and Race. COSROW will participate in the training for monitoring our annual conference sessions for gender inclusiveness. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women sponsors this training.

COSROW began work on building a support network among clergywomen, with special emphasis on support for African-American clergywomen.

Mary Catherine Willis, *Chairperson*

6. COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS

It so often seems in today's times, that society is leading the church, when as Christians, the call of God upon our lives means that the opposite of this statement should be true. We are reminded that faith without works is dead, so we must actively participate in the public square, shaping our society for the common good. The Constitution grants people of faith the right to speak out on public issues in a nonpartisan way.

The Reverend Mr. Wesley believed that Christians could not have authentic personal holiness without social holiness. He taught that people must be Christians in both word and deed, expressive of the love of God. God's everlasting love strengthens us to also share that love through helping other people, especially poor and vulnerable people. Providing charity without changing the system, however, does not create much lasting good. People of faith know that we live in a world of abundance. It is, therefore, of us, to whom much is given, that much is required.

The Committee on Social Concerns is a dedicated group of lay and clergy persons who have made the commitment for this quadrennium to address issues of violence in its many forms—domestic, war, suicide, the death penalty, poverty, racism, the media—and the effects of violence on the natural resources of the earth. In an effort to accomplish this goal, we hope to serve as a link between the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) and our districts and local churches in this conference. GBGS has designated six principal areas of kingdom work: The Natural World, The Nurturing Community, The Social Community, The Economic Community, The Political Community, and The World Community. We will be keeping the conference updated in these different areas via various forms of media.

At the close of the previous quadrennium and as we began this quadrennium, United Methodist locally and across the nation celebrated the end of boycotts against the Mt. Olive Pickle Company and Taco Bell, which brought about some closure to the oppression of migrant farm workers in our state and beyond. At the beginning of the previous quadrennium and as we begin again, we still are not at rest with two issues: (1) the moratorium on the death penalty and (2) the lottery. We encourage you to write or call your representatives concerning these issues. The defeat of the lottery remains the hope of this committee, as well as of those of you who have committed much time and energy to this significant social issue, which exploits the poor. We are fortunate to have the previous chair of this committee, Stephen F. Lee, serving as the peace-with-justice coordinator on the committee and as the web master for our site within the conference. He has done extensive work on keeping the conference updated concerning the lottery and has much information on the web page that will be helpful to you and your congregations. Please check out this page by visiting the conference home page, then clicking on the left-hand menu bar "Program Ministries" and then on "Ethnic and Justice Ministries," or you may type in the complete address, <http://www.gbqm-umc.org/albemarle/soccon.html>. You may also find the names of our committee members at this site.

We invite and encourage all members of the conference to visit the GBCS website at www.umc-gbcs.org and click on "UMPower" as a way of easily staying informed and taking action on issues of concern. We are continuing to emphasize that districts and local churches have studies on the Social Principles of our denomination. Please contact Dewey W. Smith, our conference staff person, at the conference office if you need assistance with this study. Our North Carolina Council of Churches continues to provide invaluable resources to us, and we will be working with Executive Director George Reed to provide leadership on legislative briefings and peace-with-justice training events throughout our conference this quadrennium. We continue to encourage all congregations to lift up and observe the Peace with Justice Sunday with a special offering for this work.

This report is offered on behalf of our entire committee, for whose support I am grateful as we begin this quadrennium together, leading our conference in God's Kingdom-building work through faithful advocacy and action. We solicit your prayers and thank you in advance for the work that you do on behalf of social justice within our annual conference and its effects beyond our borders as we *Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, and Transform the World*.

Pamela Shoffner, *Chairperson*

7. COMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES

The Committee on African American Ministries is working closely with the conference director of ethnic and justice ministries. During the past year, we have identified the area of congregational training for the focus of our attention. The committee will work in conjunction with the bishop and cabinet to host the first African American clergy retreat and convocation, which will be held in Charlotte in August 2005. Bishop Woodie W. White will be the keynote speaker at our convocation, along with other facilitators to help break molds of the past and affirm our ministry for the future.

In fulfilling our purpose, the committee will work with the conference to provide resources for:

- a. Celebration of faith and culture, to educate all churches within the conference through seeking justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God to recognize, accept, and celebrate the unique expressions of faith among all God's children.
- b. Leadership development, to identify, nurture, equip, and release individuals within African American churches to assume leadership within the local church, district, conference, and local community, as well as in full-time Christian ministry.

Our theme for this year's retreat and convocation is "Rekindle the gift of God that is within you" (2 Timothy 1:6). We are grateful for the participation of each member on the committee who represents each district.

Albert Mills, *Chairperson*

8. COMMITTEE ON ASIAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES

The Committee on Asian American Ministries started with 16 members on May 30, 2004, and after several meetings, was officially constituted as an agency of the Conference Ministries Advisory Council in March 2005. Abraham Kim initiated and served the committee as chairperson, and, after his resignation, the vice chairperson, Cher Lue Vang, is serving in his stead. The following is the mission statement of the committee:

The Asian American Ministry is established for the glory of God, by strengthening God's children of Asian origin for God's mission. By supporting each other for evangelizing Asian Americans in the boundaries of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, collectively educating and training for both clergy and laity for Asian American United Methodists.

The Asian American Ministry is to live the life of "One People Under God," which love and respect is equally expressed and given to all members regardless of his/her race, and nationality for the Kingdom of God is for such a community".

Cher Lue Vang, *Chairperson*

9. COMMITTEE ON HISPANIC MINISTRIES

From a prison ministry in the Charlotte District, to Spanish-language UMWomen and lay-speaker training in the Winston-Salem District, to dancing in authentic costumes in the Waynesville District, to radio ministries in the North Wilkesboro and High Point districts, to a soccer field (and ministry!) in the Lexington District, to Latino centers, to building new congregations, to ESL and GED classes, and to winning precious souls to Jesus Christ, our Hispanic United Methodist brothers and sisters are working hard to “Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, and Transform the World.”

The conference Committee on Hispanic Ministries has chosen a motto in conjunction with our conference vision: “Sharing the love of Jesus by bringing our cultures together, so that our churches may transform the world.” This will guide the committee as we attempt to provide support, guidance, and vision for Hispanic ministries throughout the annual conference. We hope to better connect and communicate with each district committee on Hispanic ministries, and we hope to better support our pastors, lay pastors, and lay missionaries.

Presently, there are Hispanic congregations, mission churches, and faith communities (small groups that in the future will be formed into churches) in ten of our districts, and many more outreaches to Hispanics through parish nurses, ESL classes being offered at United Methodist Church sites, food banks, clothes-closet ministries, and Latino centers with helping ministries in nearly every district of the conference. During the 2004-2005 conference year, the National Plan for Hispanic Ministries Modules 1 and 2 training events have been held at The Children’s Home, in Winston Salem, in conjunction with the North Carolina Conference. We have also been awarded generous grants from The Duke Endowment and “Ministries First” askings to aid in training our Hispanic pastors and lay missionaries.

As the Hispanic population in western North Carolina grows rapidly, we need your prayers and support as we intentionally reach out in ministry to Hispanics to serve and share in the name of Jesus Christ. May we be found faithful by our Lord and our Hispanic sisters and brothers!

Leo O. Fair, *Chairperson*

10. COMMITTEE ON NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES

The goal of the conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) remains one of visibility within our conference and throughout United Methodism. There are several ways in which this is happening. First, Native American folks are being asked to participate on general church committees. This has not always been the case. Another way this has happened in our conference came through the multi-cultural service that was held at Tyro Church this past October. The Native American culture gave a presentation that included the musical talents of Mattheue and Louisa Locklear. Daphne L. Strickland presented a time for telling a story, a common trait among Native Americans.

We continue to be participants in United Methodism in every way possible. This year, we want to include an emphasis on people discovering their Native American roots and heritage. There are many people in our conference who have a Native American heritage. Coming to terms with that heritage is a part of knowing who we are as people and who we are as God’s people. My own journey into my Native American heritage has proven to be monumental in my life. I am sure there are many others in the same boat. I would like to extend a special thanks to the people that make up CONAM. The efforts of folks all across the conference and jurisdiction have helped to educate many within our denomination. But— plenty of work remains.

Chris J. Bennett, *Chairperson*

11. CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND MERCY MINISTRIES

The number of youth and adults incarcerated in the state of North Carolina has grown greatly in recent decades. This reality gives the people called Methodists in western North Carolina greater opportunities than ever to go into the prisons in the footsteps of our fathers and mothers in faith like John Wesley and to fulfill the words of Jesus who said, “I was in prison, and you came to visit me” (Matthew 25:36). The Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries Committee (CJAMM), therefore, encourages clergy and laity in churches across our region to look for opportunities for ministry with offenders, ex-offenders, and victims of crime. We especially commend to you the following ministries:

- a. Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, a ministry between the Western North Carolina Conference and the North Carolina Conference, which now is at work in 70 prisons across North Carolina.
- c. Epiphany, an ecumenical Christian ministry to juveniles incarcerated in North Carolina.
- e. Prison MATCH (“Mothers And Their Children”), an ecumenical effort at Women’s Prison, in Raleigh, to nurture the relationship between children and their incarcerated mothers to break the cycle of imprisonment.
- e. Yokefellow Prison Ministry, a compassionate, listening ministry to inmates.
- f. Rings of Fellowship, a ministry to juveniles incarcerated in North Carolina.
- g. Restorative Justice-meditation centers in restorative justice between offenders and victims.

We also encourage laity and clergy to support the efforts of the Advisory Committee on Religious Ministry in Prisons, North Carolina Department of Corrections, an interfaith group of religious leaders across North Carolina to support the work and expansion of state-funded prison chaplains across our good state and to communicate the same to their state legislators. Finally, we remind people of faith of the long-standing position of The United Methodist Church against the death penalty.

Randy L. Wall, *Chairperson*

12. FAMILY MINISTRY

The ministry area of Older Adults has now been added to Family Ministry. This combined ministry focuses on both areas as we look for ways to resource families and older adults in the local church. A list of people, places, and resources, both print and audiovisual, which can help the local church minister to and support its families and older adults is continually being updated. An Older Adult Committee has plans for a "Day Apart for the Young at Heart" on May 24, 2005 at Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte. The theme for this event is "Living a Life of Love and Laughter," with keynote speaker, Anthony E. (Andy) Lambert, and communion celebrant, Bishop J. Lawrence McCleskey.

Mary S. Robinson, *Director of Resource Center and Family/Older Adult Ministries*

13. CONFERENCE RESOURCE CENTER

The Conference Resource Center continues to provide a wide variety of resources for use in the local churches and in district and conference areas of ministry. All types of resources, both print and video, are available for use in Sunday School classes for all ages, youth programs, children's church and after-school programs, family nights, UMWomen and UMMmen programs, and short- or long-term study groups. In addition to specific requested resources, we also offer consultation on topics and resources that we have available. The Resource Center has also offered consultation and resourcing for local churches that are developing new libraries or revamping existing ones. The catalog for the Resource Center is now on-line through the conference website, www.wnccumc.org. Visitors to the catalog website can e-mail requests directly from the website or contact the Resource Center by telephone for questions and additional information.

Mary S. Robinson, *Director of Resource Center and Family/Older Adult Ministries*