

Daily Christian Advocate

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Cleveland, Ohio

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Vol. 4, No. 3

Delegates Get First Look at CPT; Laity Address Highlights Partnership

Paperwork was the order of the day Wednesday as the 2000 United Methodist General Conference moved through its first full day in the Cleveland Convention Center.

Inside the gray stone structure, the 992 delegates to the church's top legislative assembly prepared to begin work on approximately 2,000 petitions for change in church law. Outside, arriving and departing delegates were offered pamphlets by members of various groups.

The call for closer partnership in ministry between clergy and laity came in the Laity Address delivered by James C. Nibbelink of Milford, Ohio, an executive with Procter & Gamble. "Dictates from the pulpit or pew must pass away, and a renewed, cooperative spirit must be encouraged to take root," said Nibbelink.

Too often, he said, "autocratic pastors" have hampered congregations, and "unwilling, contentious" congregations have stifled willing and committed pastors. Partners work together, and with the help of God's spirit, the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts, and barriers seen as insurmountable are reduced or eliminated.

The usual procedures of the General Conference were set aside to allow a panel, known as the Connectional Process Team (CPT), to make the report and recommendations. Created by the 1996 General Conference, the CPT is led by Bishop Sharon A. Brown Christopher, Springfield, Ill.

The team's report, sent to delegates in advance of the conference, listed five "transformational directions" and strategies for implementation.

Recommendations call for creating "covenant councils" at all levels of the church. The current General Council on Ministries would be replaced with a Covenant Council that would continue to direct the "transformational direction."

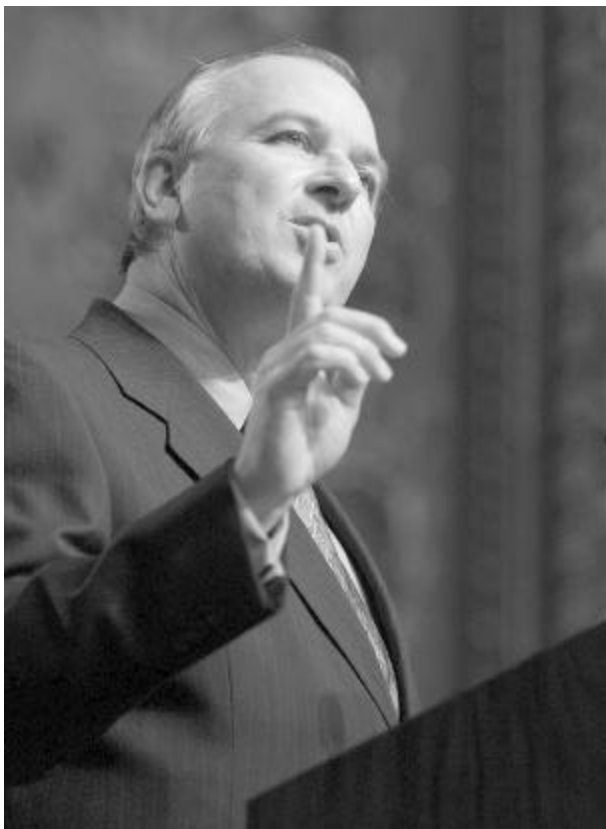
For the first time, a price tag of \$500,000 in new money was put as the cost of a proposed Global Conference that would hold its first meeting in 2008. The Global Conference would replace the General Conference under the CPT proposal.

After hearing the report, delegates met in small groups for an hour of discussion. Later, the discussions will be summarized in written documents to be addressed in a plenary session Thursday evening.

In a poignant moment Wednesday, Anne Marshall, an executive with the United Methodist General Commission on

Agenda for Thursday, May 4

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| 8:00 a.m. | Choral music |
| 8:15 a.m. | Worship service |
| 9:00 a.m. | United Brethren in Christ
and Evangelical Association
200 th Anniversary Celebration |
| 9:15 a.m. | Millard Fuller address |
| 9:45 a.m. | Native American Comprehensive Plan |
| 10:00 a.m. | General Council on Ministries Report #1 |
| 10:30 a.m. | Legislative Committees |
| 12:30 p.m. | Lunch Recess |
| 2:30 p.m. | Legislative Committees |
| 5:00 p.m. | Dinner Recess |
| 7:30 p.m. | Connectional Process Team
(time for discernment) |
| 8:30 p.m. | Act of Repentance for Reconciliation |



Jim Nibbelink presents his laity address to the delegates on Wednesday morning. (A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose)

Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, told of the church’s support for her and her family after her husband died in the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Office Building in Oklahoma. “It’s been a difficult journey,” she said. “But because of my church community, I have not walked alone.”

The first mention in a conference session of one of the most controversial issues expected here, human sexuality, came Wednesday in the morning devotional hour.

Bishop Arthur F. Kulah of Liberia said if The United Methodist Church is to be truly global, it must recognize homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. Current church teachings affirm this position.

Bishop Kulah noted that homosexuals have been subject to ridicule, resentment, and hostility by Christians and non-Christians. “This ought not be the case because the homosexuals too bear the image of God, and . . . the grace of God is available and sufficient for them.”

Thursday morning the Conference will take special recognition of the 200th anniversary of the founding of predecessor bodies in the Evangelical United Brethren Church that was united in 1968 with The Methodist Church

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One of the denomination’s oldest related organizations, the United Methodist Rural Fellowship (UMRF) Bulletin, gave special life memberships to four persons at a meeting May 2. Honored were Bennett D. Poage, executive director of the Appalachian Ministry Educational Resource Center; the Rev. Alec Alvord, Western North Carolina Conference; Wanda Eichler, national UMRF president, 1992–2000; and Ed Eichler, national treasurer, 1992–2000.

—Robert Lear

Officers Elected for Standing Administrative Committees

Agenda

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Laity address focuses on partnership

Partnership is necessary for making disciples of Jesus Christ.

With that as his theme, West Ohio Conference lay leader Jim Nibbelink delivered the laity address to the 2000 General Conference.

Relating the story of a 3-year-old boy attending worship for the first time, Nibbelink painted a picture of a mother frustrated by her son's boisterousness and eagerness to see everything. Like the boy, Nibbelink noted, many congregations and pastors are "sitting down on the outside, but standing up on the inside."

Many lay people want to be active in ministry, while many clergy want to be more innovative in ministry, Nibbelink said. Unfortunately, both are constrained by the same issues, including tradition. Specifically, traditional roles for clergy and laity restrict effective ministry.

"It's imperative that teams of lay and clergy work together to make disciples of Jesus Christ," he continued. A cooperative spirit must be established before a partnership can be effective. "Partnership frees pastors and laity to do what they do best."

Characteristics of successful partnership, the lay leader added, include respect, responsibility, and risk. "Making disciples takes hard work," he said. "Even God cannot steer a parked car."

Nibbelink was selected to deliver the laity address through a quadrennial competition by the National Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders (NAACLL). He has served as secretary of the association and as president of the North Central Jurisdiction Conference Lay Leaders' Team.

—Davie Burgdorf

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Partners with a Purpose

The Laity Address

May 3, 2000

by *Jim Nibbelink*

The little boy jumped up on the pew and looked around with excitement. Just three years old, this was his first time in church, and there were so many new things to see and to hear. He just couldn't contain himself! While he was enjoying his vantage point, the boy's mother wasn't so enthusiastic. "Sit down," she whispered, and motioned the boy to his seat. Now, those of you familiar with the habits of three-year-old boys will recall that a little boy's tolerance for sitting still lasts about ... thirty-seven seconds! So there he was, back on his feet, back up on the pew, back to discovering all sorts of new and wonderful things! There was funny-colored glass and strange music and all kinds of interesting people – what a joy for a little boy! Well, Mom didn't take her little explorer's antics quite as calmly this time. She took hold of his belt and firmly guided him to his seat, saying, "We don't do that in church!" Another thirty-seven seconds ... and another jump up on the pew! There was singing now, and lots of people in flowing robes! Mom acted quickly and decisively. She grabbed the little boy's belt with both hands, jerked him down to his place and hissed, "SIT DOWN!" in a tone violent enough to startle worshipers three pews away! Quiet at last, the little boy sat for a few moments, and then looked up at his mother with a tear in his eye, saying, "I may be sitting down on the outside, ... but I'm standing up on the inside!"

(applause)

The little boy certainly had a lively spirit inside him, a spirit that circumstances (and his zealous mother) were seeking to KEEP bottled up! I think of that little boy and his desire to break from the norm when I meet many of the laypersons in our churches. They tell me that they want to be in ministry, that they want to serve, but that so many things are holding them back. I remember the little boy, too, when I talk to pastors who want to try something new, pastors who have an idea for expanding the ministry of their congregations. They also tell me of being restrained, of not being able to engage people with new ideas. I think that both lay and clergy in these situations are being constrained by some of the same issues. There's a lot of vital, active ministry happening in The United Methodist Church around the world, but there's also a lot of frustration and inaction in local congregations, in districts and at the conference level. Making disciples and caring for persons in our congregations and beyond both require hard work. Many lay people and pastors alike seem to feel that they just don't have the means to break free, to take action, to be IN action! These feelings may seem a bit remote to some of us here because we're most often in the middle of the action. As leaders, we must look around

carefully and honestly though, and when we look, we see many individuals and congregations that aren't involved. The joy of belonging to an active outpost of God's love is missing, and much of the activity is directed at survival.

What's going on in our congregations and institutional structure that people feel is keeping them from active ministry? Is it a lack of motivation? Sometimes, perhaps, but not always. The little boy was certainly motivated! Something else was in the way! Our motivation comes right from our roots, right from the Scripture and right from Jesus. There's the Great Commission, "Go ye, into all the world." There's the joy of sharing the good news with others. There's the wonderful sense of God's Spirit at work while we're caring for the needs of hurting people. There are dreams of what things could be like with a little hard work. There might be some insightful folks who remind us what will happen if we sit back and do nothing. Sometimes, even our frustration at a lack of action can be a motivator. Simply being around folks with a positive outlook, those who would be willing to trust God to be with us in a new effort, is often a motivating force. Yet with all these motivators and more, many of us just sit and stew, wishing things could be different. Whether in pulpit or pew, we maintain the status quo despite that little voice inside that's telling us to jump up on the pew, find out what's going on, and get in on the action!

Just what's holding us back, anyway? There might be a slightly different list for pastors and lay folk, but for most of us, the factors are pretty much the same. Remember Tevye, the proud father in "Fiddler on the Roof"? TRADITION! Of course! That great killer of change. It's tradition that says that pastors do one set of tasks and that lay people do another set of tasks. It's tradition that says that the pastor must have all of the ideas and lead all of the major activities. And it's tradition that says that lay people wait to be asked to serve. Lay people are fond of claiming a lack of training or experience, while pastors complain that no one will do the work. We all are risk averse. We try so hard to keep from failing that we sometimes fail to do anything that might move God's work ahead! We must be happy with the status quo because we work extra hard to keep new ideas from creeping into our worship and new methods from altering our approach to service. Comfort for the current attendees and, sometimes, comfort for the current pastor, are the major, and often only, goals of our ministry. A significant inhibitor, found far and wide in the church, is fear. It's usually found in fear of loss of power or loss of control. This characteristic is often attributed to members of our clergy who may be too conscious of status or of position, and that certainly can be true. But it's a circumstance that should be recognized

among laity as well. Congregations can hold a pastor hostage by inaction, distraction or salary action! We're good at stifling ideas, then complaining that things aren't what they used to be! Power and control, wherever found and however expressed, are twin barriers to progressive, alive ministry. Finally, a gigantic inhibitor to vital ministry is a lack of vision. Many congregations are perishing because there's not even one soul among them who dares to dream.

So here we are. There's a spirit inside us that tells us to stand up ... and a set of traditions and fears that tells us we can't do that in church! There are many good and sound ideas afoot that are helping the church out of this dilemma. I want to lift up just one. I think it's imperative that teams of leaders, lay and clergy, learn to work together as partners to advance the cause of Jesus Christ!

(applause)

The time has long passed, if it were truly ever here, when one leader could chart the course, make the decisions, call the tune, and carry the load. Lay and pastor partnerships must be in place to most effectively carry on the work of the gospel, the work of God. Dictates from the pulpit or from the pew must pass away, and a renewed, cooperative spirit must be encouraged to take root. Too long have too many congregations suffered at the hands of autocratic pastors. Too long have willing, committed pastors been held back by unwilling, contentious congregations. Partnerships between lay and clergy, perhaps exemplified by a partnership between a pastor and the congregation's lay leader, offer us a significant opportunity to overcome most of the barriers I've mentioned. Partners work together, and together, with the help of God's Spirit, the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts and barriers seen as insurmountable are reduced or eliminated.

Partnership ... a word that inspires a vision of fear – if you're the one afraid of losing power, or a word that inspires a vision of joint achievement – if you know that the gifts and graces of both lay and clergy are necessary for dynamic ministry in these complex times. A dictionary definition of a partner speaks of one who shares with another in a joint enterprise. The key word is SHARES. In a well-oiled partnership, neither partner is forced to lead all of the time. Neither has all of the ideas, all of the responsibility or is expected to do all of the work. In fact, the best partnerships leverage the special talents of both members of the team, while helping to overcome any gaps that may exist in either member's skill base. Partners take turns coaching, inspiring and supporting each other. Together, they challenge each other to be the best that they can be. Partners gain energy from each other and often are willing to try greater challenges than either may have attempted on their own. The synergy resulting from a thriving partnership makes more room for the Spirit of God to enter the partnership, because each person is committed to find and fulfill the dreams and visions that come from God's Spirit, rather than to chasing personal rainbows.

Partners cover more ground than leaders working separately. Two heads really are better than one, and four hands and feet can travel farther and accomplish more than lone wolf leaders. Pastor and lay leader together can have a broader perspective of the congregation, its needs and strengths, and on the community in which it's planted. The different viewpoints of the pastor and key lay persons are essential in forming a motivating, vital vision for the ministry of the congregation. By himself or herself, no one person has the complete background or training to effectively assess the community or the congregation. Together, leaders of the laity and pastors have access to a significant network of ideas, training, support services, resources and people. Joint visioning and goal-setting virtually eliminate the possibility of the pastor and lay leader working at conflicting goals or of the congregation wasting its energy in endless discussions of diverging ideas, wishful thinking and lost opportunities. A significant aspect of a lay leader – pastor partnership is the fact that their joint efforts serve as a symbol to all in the congregation and community. It's a symbol saying that although we're gifted differently and have different formal roles, we agree on the primary mission of the church and on our local strategy to make disciples. We're working together to make things happen, and we offer you the opportunity to work together as well.

(applause)

The example of partnership and what it symbolizes is necessary in a congregation, and it's absolutely vital at the district and conference levels, where we often seem to have one agenda for clergy and a separate one for laity.

Formation of a partnership, in a local congregation or at the district or conference level, is a deliberate act undertaken by both of the partners. It won't happen by accident, and just declaring a partnership doesn't make it so. There will be prayer, planning, tentative experimentation, perhaps some uncomfortable moments or false starts. There will be visioning and seeking God's direction for the organization and for the partners. There will be commitment to be faithful and a covenant between the partners. There will be agreement on the roles and responsibilities of each partner, building on the unique talents and perspectives that each one brings to the partnership. Traditional and disciplinary roles will be acknowledged and honored, but only to advance the ministry, not to inhibit the full participation of either partner. There will be recognition of what the partnership will mean to the faith community and efforts planned to exhibit the mutual trust and support the partners have for each other.

Does all of this mean that the individuals and their formal roles are submerged or forgotten? Not at all! Rather, the partnership frees both pastor and lay person to do the things they do best or have the unique responsibility to perform. It's just that they do these things in a planned, mutually supportive way, not in isolation. Each action is jointly planned to advance the mission of the congregation.

There will be many opportunities to take on nontraditional tasks. Some pastors will find it liberating simply to be a committee member, rather than always being at center stage. Some may even discover that they don't have to attend every meeting that happens in the life of the congregation, trusting that congregational leaders (*applause*) can handle the tasks at hand! Some laypersons may do a fine job of preaching on occasion, and we're already seeing the benefits of laypersons carrying consecrated communion elements to shut-ins or to nursing homes after worship services. We remain individuals, uniquely called, lay and clergy, but we choose to serve together in a planned way that goes beyond our usual experiences in the church.

There are three characteristics that help to define a successful partnership for me. They're building blocks laid on the cornerstone of God's grace that is Jesus Christ, forming the basis for ministry through pairs of committed persons. The first characteristic is respect. It's essential that each partner credit the other for his or her official position, training, abilities, perspective and commitment to service. Respect means that each regularly seeks the other's input and advice. Differences are clarified and common ground is sought. Trust is a key factor in respect. Decisions made have the unflagging support of both pastor and lay leader. Each partner believes that the other will perform as agreed and to the very best of his or her ability. Roles in each ministry effort are chosen with regard to the person best suited for the situation at hand and authority delegated to the people who need it to get the job done. Jesus respected his disciples' capabilities and sent them out into the villages without him to teach and to heal. Respect says that the partners stand up for each other and honor the gifts that the other brings to the ministry. Do partners need to agree on everything? Must they have a common theology? No, ... but partners can live out the principle that we can walk hand in hand in God's service without seeing eye to eye in all matters.

(*applause*)

Respect is foremost in a thriving partnership.

The next characteristic defining partnership success is responsibility. Each partner carries an appropriate share of the load. Sometimes, it's as a leader; sometimes it's as a willing worker. Sometimes, it's as a cheerleader because another person is best suited for the project. Always, it's with the understanding that commitments will be kept. There are status reports and accountability, to be sure, but accountability going both ways, pastor to lay person and lay person to pastor. Responsible leaders don't always need to be in the limelight. They recognize that God can use anyone and are always on the lookout for people who may at first seem unlikely, but who are willing to serve. Empowering new disciples and training new leaders are important aspects of a current leader's role. Each and every one of us got our first opportunity to be a leader because a person with responsibility expected that we could do the job. We cannot

expect people to do a good job without first giving them a good job to do! Responsibility means that partners ask each other for help when the going gets tough. One strength of a partnership is that there's more than one individual to share the burden of leadership. Once committed, partners stand up for the vision, the goals, the ministries and the projects selected. There's a united team at work, not individuals working at cross-purposes, unaware of the other person's dreams, needs, and priorities. The importance of mutual support in a congregation, district or conference cannot be overstated. Partners take the responsibility to seek new skills, new insights, and new methods. Each new tool brought to the partnership makes the team stronger and better able to meet the challenges of ministry. Responsibility means being willing to hold others in the congregation responsible in their own right for some aspect of ministry. Each disciple is called to active service and effective leaders often have the gift of matching people with service opportunities within the congregation. Most of the time, these are not committee assignments with monthly meetings, but caring ministries that weave a fine web of love and concern and support among the people of the faith community.

The third characteristic I'll mention is risk. Successful partnerships require risk-taking. Both pastors and leaders within the laity are willing to rock the boat if the situation calls for it. Making new disciples is not always a simple task. Nurturing the flock inside the church calls for caring creativity as needs change. Reaching and serving the surrounding community is a daunting challenge these days, requiring ingenuity and new methods to tell the old, old story. Leaders must often try new methods, involve new people, seek new ideas. The message of salvation hasn't changed, but the world has changed considerably, and reaching potential disciples takes more than just opening up the doors on Sunday morning and expecting folks to show up!

(*applause*)

Lay leader and pastor must unite to create a vision that stretches the congregation. The vision must be out of easy reach, but not out of sight! Vital partnerships often tug at the status quo ... and often upset some of the folks who the partners would like to involve in the ministry. Determined partners can lead congregations which are more concerned with being comfortable to becoming renewed ambassadors for God if they are willing to risk. Lay leader – pastor partners can share the role of reassuring and seeking input from comfortable people who may be fearful of change. These people, too, are important, and sharing the responsibility to both comfort and challenge them will help to overcome congregational inertia. Faithful partners know that disciple-making requires tending to the lost as well as caring for the flock. Partners always remember that if the shepherd doesn't risk going out to seek the one who's lost, the ninety-nine left in the fold are not really as safe as they believe themselves to be! Risk means being willing to fail. Good risk-takers know that failure is only permanent if we let it be.

Failure is temporary if we view it as a learning opportunity and a chance to grow in our knowledge of the situation before we try again. Recall that Jesus acted twice to heal the blind man at the pool of Bethesda. Edison's light bulb didn't work until after many hundreds of failed attempts. Those who do not risk are those who do not dream! Jesus' parable of the talents tells us bluntly that the gift of grace is not to be buried in the ground. The servant who did not risk is harshly condemned. It is clear that a faithful response to God is an active, risk-taking response. The faithful servants took the initiative, despite a lack of detailed instructions. Partners in God's work do not sit by waiting for answers; they step out in faith! It's not easy to take risks, but think of what's at stake, and be assured that if no one ever took a chance with you, you wouldn't be sitting here right now.

(applause)

You'll recall the old story of a group of children walking down a country road that had an abandoned railroad track running alongside it. The children tried to see who could walk on a rail the farthest without falling off. One by one, they tried to keep balanced long enough to outdistance the others, but each failed to get very far. Suddenly, one of them had an idea and quickly whispered to one of the others. The two offered to bet that they could walk the entire length of the track without falling off. To jeers and teasing, they jumped up on opposite rails and extended a hand across the space between them. Acting as partners, they walked confidently down the tracks. Partnership. You may think you can ... or you may think you can't. Either way, you'll be right! It's up to the leaders of the church to set the example and to see that a successful model of partnership ministry is made available to every congregation, every district and every conference. It's time to get going, to move out and to move on! Inaction is often our biggest problem because even God cannot steer a parked car!

(applause)

And someday, ... someday, is not a day of the week!

And so we have respect, responsibility and risk, these three ... and the greatest of these is respect! Resolve now to create a partnership with your counterpart in ministry. Resolve now to become an example of partnering to others in your sphere of influence. Resolve now to make disciples through partnering; doing God's work, moving out into ministry. God's Spirit will go with you, strengthen you and sustain you, for as you honor your partner, you are honoring God. Stand up on the outside, not just on the inside! Go into the world as lay and clergy partners, carrying the best of both traditions, for God's church needs both of us to prosper! Stand up – together! Reach out – together! Walk forward – together! Make disciples – together! And may God bless us all – together! Amen. *(applause)*

Well, We Almost Made It!

We apologize for the tardy delivery of yesterday's DCA.

We try to get copy to the printer by 1:30 a.m., but last night we didn't make it until 2:45.

By Herculean efforts, the printer was still able to deliver copies for the 9 a.m. business session.

Thanks to all for your understanding.



Jim Scurlock of San Francisco and John Fletcher of Minneapolis read names from the Shower of Stoles project in front of the Cleveland Convention Center as delegates return from a lunch break. The project expresses the anguish of those who desire to be in ministry with and for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons. (A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose)

Church and Society Committee Halts Work

The Church and Society Committee stopped its work Wednesday evening over concerns of voting rights and translation issues for delegates from Africa.

The committee members voted to abandon their legislative agenda until the full General Conference deals with the issues.

Of the 90 voting, 55 voted yes, 32 voted no, with one abstention. Committee officials expect the issue to be taken up by the General Conference today.

—*Paul Widicus and Gretchen Hakola, reporters*

EUB Gift Books Distributed

On Thursday, May 4, complimentary copies of *The Evangelical United Brethren Church: A Historical Sampler* will be placed on the tables of each of the following groups:

- Delegates and Concordats
- Affiliate and Autonomous Delegates
- Bishops
- Judicial Council

First Reserves may pick up their complimentary copy of the book at the customer service desk at the Cokesbury store.

National United Methodist Native American Center Seeks to Expand Ministry

Everything the National United Methodist Native American Center (NUMNAC) does, Executive Director Cynthia Abrams says, is geared toward making a long-lasting impact on the local church.

Designed to nurture and recruit Native American clergypersons, NUMNAC is celebrating eighteen years of ministry. The 1996 General Conference endorsed the work of the center, located at Claremont (California) School of Theology. The Reverend Abrams is a fourth-generation United Methodist who was mentored by NUMNAC people. She intends her work to honor and respect her elders, as well as Jesus Christ.

The center provides leadership training and continuing education for pastors and church professionals and publishes the *NUMNAC Journal*. It offers an annual theological forum for Native American clergy, laity, academicians, community leaders, and traditional religion practitioners. The 2000 forum focuses on healing and the meaning of being a Native American United Methodist Christian. NUMNAC assists local churches, annual conferences, and jurisdictions to envision and empower leadership.

NUMNAC also sponsors and administers the national United Methodist Youth Organization under Christ All Native (UMYOCAN). The center annually co-sponsors a national family camp. The camp location rotates around the country. It will convene at the University of Delaware this year.

NUMNAC has several legislative petitions before General Conference, including a request for funding to implement programs and ministries. The center wants to publish a Native American studies textbook and start a Course of Study / Native American studies duo track at Claremont School of Theology. NUMNAC's hospitality area is in Room 415 at the Marriott Hotel. The center will sponsor a dinner during the second week of General Conference.

—Patty Meyers

COSROW

Announcements

- Bishop Mack Stokes, Dr. Robert Kuyper and Dr. James Heidinger will sign their books today and Saturday at 1 p.m. outside the Superior Room (second floor) of the Marriott at Key Center.
- The Gammon Theological Seminary luncheon is at noon Tuesday in the Grand Ballroom of the Marriott Hotel at Key Center. See Frederick G. Outlaw or Gary Henderson for tickets.
- Delegates and visitors from the California-Pacific Conference are invited to dine together Monday at the University Club, 3813 Euclid at 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$17.50 per person. Contact Rev. Grant Hagiya (seat C37), Rev. Marilyn Huntington at 216-443-1000, ext. 1203, or Arlene Brewster at ext. 302. The reservation deadline is noon Saturday.
- Russellville, Kentucky is the home of the Russellville United Methodist Temple, participants in Wednesday morning's worship service.
- Explore the work of our church in the Philippines and Asian nations through the eyes of Ruth Arichea and other episcopal spouses today from 10:30 a.m.-noon in Salon A of the Marriott Hotel. This event is open to all episcopal spouses and spouses of all delegates and guests.
- Methodist Theological School in Ohio hosts its breakfast for bishops, delegates, alums, trustees, students and friends Friday from 6:45-8 a.m. on the sixth floor of the Sheraton Hotel. Call Ned Dewire at the Sheraton for details.

GBGM / UMDF Ad

Legislative Committee Officers by Jurisdiction—Past and Present

If you come upon one of the presiding officers for the 2000 General Conference legislative committees (chairs, vice chairs, and secretaries), you have a 60 percent chance of meeting someone from the South. This has been true for at least three quadrenniums.

Jurisdiction	1992	1996	2000
(number of officers)	33	30	30
Northeastern	2 (6%)	5 (17%)	5 (17%)
Southeastern	9 (27%)	8 (27%)	9 (30%)
South Central	11 (33%)	10 (33%)	9 (30%)
North Central	6 (18%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)
Western	5 (15%)	1 (3%)	4 (13%)

—John Thornburg

Authority for What?

Sermon by Arthur F. Kulah, bishop of the Liberia Area

May 5, 2000

Text: Matthew 28:16-20

Greetings and peace, perfect peace, from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I also bring you greetings from your brothers and sisters of The United Methodist Church in Liberia in particular and Africa in general.

We, Christians and non-Christians, old and young, rich and poor, home and homeless, adult and children, are guided, controlled, and directed by a system of authority. These systems are represented by symbols. For example, the police badge represents a symbol of authority to protect life and property.

For us Christians, United Methodists in particular, the Bible that is God's Word is a symbol. It is not only a symbol, but it is the source of our authority. And when we open Matthew 28:16-20, we read these words, "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

When the disciples listened to these words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they were inspired and challenged. They were motivated, and in some ways they were sanctified, for they heard our Lord not only speaking with authority, but in fact, he was giving authority to them. Jesus spoke with authority because he was the Source of life, the Author of faith, and the Beginning of all beginnings.

But what is authority? According to Webster's Encyclopedic, Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, authority is, "the power to determine, adjudicate, or otherwise settle issues or disputes; jurisdiction; the right to control, command or determine." Indeed, authority is the right to exercise power. It is the ability to control and influence people and events. In the case of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we read, witnessed, and experienced Him using authority as power to control and influence not only people, but also nature and the elements of the universe. Our tradition witnesses to the fact that the winds and the waves obeyed him. One touch from his hands brought healing and wholeness to those who were brokenhearted, broken in spirit

and in body. His words made the sinner to repent, reconciliation to take place, and forgiveness to be a reality.

It is this authority, church, that our Lord and our Savior has entrusted into our hands. This authority, as recorded in Matthew 28:16-20, has been described by church historians as the "Charter of the Church." Biblical theologians have called it the "Divine Imperative," and evangelists call it the "Great Commission." No matter what name you call it, it is our authority, indeed, our mandate.

Today, we've come as a church, as a people of God, to ask ourselves: What is the purpose of our authority?

We raise this question in light of the fact that The United Methodist Church is standing at the crossroad. As we enter the 21st century, there will be issues, challenges, and problems that will confront this church. There will be pains and agony, as our church becomes global in nature and in reality. There will be a need for cultural pluralism. Are we ready to accept the authority from our Lord and embrace our Lord's mandate to go forth and make disciples?

According to our Lord's mandate, we have the authority from him to do three things:

- To evangelize;
- To make disciples;
- To teach.

For our mediation, I shall reflect on these three aspects of the mandate. There is a difference between evangelism and discipleship; yet they are two sides of the same coin. Evangelism is the conversion of sinners, the winning of souls and bodies for Christ. Discipleship is the process by which the convert grows and matures into the likeness of Christ.

Evangelism marks the beginning of the Christian life. Discipleship is the process towards growth and maturity. The disciple is one who follows and obeys Jesus Christ. The disciple does not only follow Christ; he or she walks with Christ and learns so much from Christ that people cannot tell the difference between Christ and the disciple.

The disciple is a mature Christian who walks and talks the Christian faith; one whose entire existence is controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit. The convert is the milk-drinking Christian (Heb. 5:11-13). The disciple is the Christian who eats solid spiritual food (5:14). The convert may have a weak faith but the disciple has a faith rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

The challenge before our United Methodist Church is to cultivate and maintain Christian maturity so that we will truly be disciples, for we cannot make disciples when we ourselves are not disciples. We cannot call others to obey the Holy Spirit when we ourselves do not have the patience. In the words of the Council of Bishops, we must become mature enough "to be quiet, to be united, to listen for God's guiding voice, and to learn from one another." We cannot make disciples when we allow problems, even little problems, to distract the church from its focus.

Church, the question we need to raise is: When the early church was confronted by problems, what did they do? According to my own reading of the Bible, when Christ resurrected and ascended to your Father and my Father, it created a crisis among the disciples. But my Bible tells me that when that happened, the disciples got together, went in the upper room and closed the door, and together, they prayed persistently until the Holy Spirit came upon them. When the apostles were faced with the problem of choosing a successor to Judas, they prayed, prayed and prayed until Matthias was chosen. The coming of the Holy Spirit was seemingly a crisis. Dr. Luke described it as the rushing of a violent wind; tongues of fire appeared; the people spoke in different languages (Acts 2:1-4). In other words, the coming of the Holy Spirit was like a hurricane, but the disciples did not panic or run. Instead, they stayed put and prayed until they could hear the Lord speaking to them.

In Chapter 15 of Acts, the early church was almost split over the issue of the Jewish custom of circumcision as a prerequisite for becoming a Christian. But the early church did not allow it, for they discussed the issue, listened to each other, listened to God and were led by the Holy Spirit to an amicable solution that glorified God, not man nor individual groups, and kept the church united.

Challenges to the Exercise of Christian Authority

As mentioned in the introduction of this sermon, in our effort to exercise Christian authority, The United Methodist Church has over the years been bombarded by numerous challenges. Many of those challenges have attempted to destroy us, for that is Satan's intent. But by the sovereign will of God, they will only serve to strengthen the church as we face greater challenges of the future.

Let me point out that these threatening challenges have always surfaced when the authority given to the church by Christ is abused. And this authority is abused when we fail to

realize that its source is Jesus Christ and that its effective exercise must glorify Christ and bring peace, reconciliation, healing and freedom to all of God's people. I shall appeal to Scripture as I lift up one of these threatening challenges to our church for your humble and prayerful consideration. And that is the issue of homosexuality.

Since 1976, the homosexual issue in our church has taken toll on us. Bishops, district superintendents, pastors and laity have all been affected one way or other. A homosexually oriented person is one whose sexual preference is for one of the same sex. Because nature itself abhors homosexuality, people of this indecent practice have often been subjected to resentment, hostility and ridicule by people within and outside the church. But this ought not to be the case, because the homosexuals too bear the image of God, and that the grace of God is available to and sufficient for them.

On this issue, our *Book of Discipline* defines the church's position:

Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggle for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and considered this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all (§65G).

On the other hand, the gay advocacy movement within the ecclesiastical circles continues to press the view that "homosexuality... to be affirmed and rejoiced in, and that its expression in fully loving physical sexual embrace is well within the purpose and will of God" (David Atkinson, *Pastoral Ethics in Practice*, p. 73). Although this argument has no scriptural basis, yet our brother and sisters seem determined to press their case to the admiration of their counterpart outside the Christian church.

But the Scripture, our primary authority for belief and practice, is highly unequivocal on this subject of homosexuality. And if the global United Methodist Church must persist as the church of Jesus Christ, then we must pay heed.

In the Old Testament law, the practice of homosexuality was abhorred and condemned (Lev. 18:22; 20:3). In fact, it was one of the consequences for the destruction of Sodom (Gen.19:1-11). May we not suffer the wrath of God because of the quest to satisfy unpleasant desires that contravene the loving purpose of God for his church.

The New Testament also condemns the practice of homosexuality (Rom.1:26-27). The Apostle is very categorical in his teaching against this indecent practice: “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God... Neither the sexually immoral nor idolater nor adulterers nor male prostitute nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God” (I Cor.6:9-10).

It is against the background of such biblical imperatives that we (the global United Methodist Church) “do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider it incompatible with Christian teaching” (*Book of Discipline*, ¶65G).

Therefore, as regards the ordained ministry, in obedience to God and his Word, “self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church” (*Book of Discipline*, ¶304.3). For to do so is to contravene the very faith we claim to live. For we cannot afford to ruin the hearts and lives of the church, and hence the world, by engaging into practices not even easily mentioned among unbelievers (Eph.5:3-5).

Beloved, the church has always had crises. As we enter the new millennium, we will have more crises. We may have diverse and complex crises. But we should never allow God’s church to be weakened or even divided over those crises. For if we do, we will be like a house our Master described as being built on sand, and when the wind came, it broke down. But instead, we should listen, watch, pray, pray, pray until we accept and use the crisis as a means to strengthen, to unite, and indeed give us a sense of Christian maturity in Jesus Christ.

My dearly beloved, I urge you to let us focus on Christ and move this church forward by a Christian witness exemplary of true believers.

But there is more. We must continue to win souls and bodies for Christ. We must continue to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We the church must continue to be involved in social services that bring healing and reconciliation among and to those who are marginalized. However, our primary responsibility, our primary mission, our primary focus must be and ought to be the proclamation of the gospel. We have no choice. We have no options.

In 1968, I came to this country as a Crusade Scholar and enrolled at the St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City. One evening, some friends of mine took me out for dinner. There, I was given the menu to choose among the several dishes. I just sat and looked at my friends. Finally, one of them said to me, “Aren’t you going to choose?” And I said to him, “You Americans are people of choices. In my country, whatever is available in the restaurant is what we eat. You go ahead and choose for me.”

Today, we, whether in America or Africa, have many choices as to what we eat, what we read and what we see. Our denominational system does not have the key as to what we read in our Sunday schools, in our meetings and other places. We have choices everywhere. But when it comes to evangelism, we have no choice but to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and him crucified and resurrected.

In his autobiography, entitled *A Magnificent Obsession*, the late Bishop William B. Cannon had this to say about evangelism:

Indeed, in the New Testament Christian proclamation is emphasized, not discussion and dialogue. The apostles were not interested in what people thought. Their sole concern was divine truth as revealed in Jesus Christ. When the church loses this realization, it ceases to be the church. It is no longer the body of Christ, the continuance in time of his incarnation”.

He continues:

Evangelization is not just one among many functions of the church. It is not on a parity, for example, with charity, political and social programs, human rights, and even justice itself. Many, if not all, of these the church shares with other institutions of society. Evangelization is uniquely its own. Therefore, it is the very essence of Christianity, for Christian faith is not something given us to keep. It is given only to be given away.

Indeed, we have the authority to proclaim Christ and lift him up high. In the words of a little song in Liberia:

*Lift Him up higher, Lift Him up higher.
My Lord is good. I will lift Him up higher.
Everywhere I go I will lift Him up higher.*

During the civil crisis in Liberia, I met a lady in one of the refugee camps in Danane, the Ivory Coast: a woman who was rich by our standard but had lost everything during the war. I went there to comfort her and pray with her. But before I could open my mouth, she said to me, “Bishop Kulah, don’t feel sorry for me. I brought two things with me; I brought my body and I brought Jesus Christ.” From this we can clearly see that Jesus is the hope of the world.

Indeed, we have the authority to proclaim Jesus Christ as the hope of the world. We have the authority to proclaim Christ as the uniting force, as the bridge. In him, there is no east or west, no south or north, but one great fellowship divine throughout the whole wide world. Evangelism is the lifeline, the blood and the heart of the word. We have the authority from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to proclaim him on the mountaintop, to proclaim him in the air, to proclaim him

under the water, and, I dare say, to proclaim him in outer space.

Lastly, to make disciples implies that we watch, pray, and open our souls to the power, influence, and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

A few months ago, we had an opportunity, a privilege, of nominating several persons, one of whom will be elected as our bishop in December. To prepare us for this task, the United Methodists in Liberia debated, had seminars, fasted, tarried, and prayed.

At the close of this devotional emphasis, a layman stood up and said to me, "Bishop Kulah, we should continue to pray so that God will give us a spiritual, holy, and God-fearing person." And I said, "Yes, that is true. But in order to get a spiritual, holy, and God-fearing person, we ourselves should be spiritual, holy, and God-fearing people. For it is only holy and spiritual people who will be inspired to nominate spiritual and holy persons."

Church, to make disciples for Jesus Christ in this day and age, we must and should be spiritual. For it is only the disciples of Jesus Christ who can make disciples. It is only those who allow the church to be, in the words of Bishop Cannon, "a magnificent obsession" that can cause others to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ. It is only those who are willing to let the church be the center of their lives, that can cause others to commit their lives to Jesus Christ. It is only those who are willing to deny themselves and follow Jesus Christ, that can cause others to follow Christ. In short, only disciples make disciples.

Thirdly, we have the authority to teach. Teaching our parishioners to obey Christ seems to be one authority we are not utilizing fully. The church does not seek to destroy; rather, it seeks to restore and renew. We do not condemn; we counsel. But many times, when we see our church going astray, the tendency is to tear it apart instead of teaching people to observe all that Christ has taught the church.

If we were constantly teaching our people to trust and obey, there would be fewer problems. We teach them to obey the state, but they are not taught obey God on the same level.

Many Christians think they can replace obedience through good deeds. As Saul learned from Samuel in 2 Kings, "obedience is better than sacrifice." If the church insisted on obedience to God's Word, there would be more love and greater justice in the world.

When you obey God, you would love the unlovable. When you obey God, you would forgive the unforgivable. When you obey God, as King put it, you will not judge people on the color of their skin but by the content of their character. Obedience is a sign of faithfulness. It is a sign of love for God.

We have the authority to transform the lives of those around us by our teaching. We must teach the church of God's love. The greatest commandment is that we love one another. We must teach the church about honesty, about friendship, and about the thirst for righteousness that brings fullness in one's life. We must teach mercy and peacemaking. We must teach forgiveness and kindness.

Conclusion

In giving us this authority, Christ promised that we would not go alone. His presence would be with us to the end of the age. This is the blessed assurance we have. The source of our authority is always present.

Authority for what? We claim the authority to make disciples, to act in God's name and to teach.

Let us use this authority wisely. May God bless us forever. Amen.

COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

GENERAL COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES

BISHOPS: (Elected by COB)

NC - New Bishop	SE - Ray Chamberlain
NE - Alfred Johnson	W - Edward Paup
SC - New Bishop	CC - New Philippine Bishop

CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Clergy: (Elected by GCOM)

Kasango Lenge	Congo
Alternate: Frank Davies	West Africa
Oystein Olsen	Europe
Alternate: Daniel Mhone	Africa Central

Laywomen:

Marilina de Carvalho	Africa Central
Alternate: Ruth Mufute	Africa Central
Emma Cantor-Orate	Philippines
Alternate: Benedita Penicela	Africa Central

Layman:

Solomon Chiripasi	Africa Central
Alternate: Peter Marubitoba Dongo	West Africa

GENERAL BOARD OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

BISHOPS: (Named by COB)

CC - Kainda Katembo
 NC - New Bishop
 NE - S. Clifton Ives
 SE - Cornelius Henderson
 SC - New Bishop
 W - New Bishop

CENTRAL CONFERENCE (Elected by GBCS)

Edward Puslecki	Central & Southern Europe
Helen Byholt Lovelace	Northern Europe
Napoleon Adamu	West Africa
Argentina B. Pinto	Africa Central

GENERAL BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

BISHOPS: (Named by COB)

NC - Michael Coyner
 NE - Susan Hassinger
 SE - Kenneth Carder
 CC - Christopher Jokomo

SC - Ann Sherer
 W - New Bishop

GENERAL BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP (Continued)

CENTRAL CONFERENCE (Elected by GBOD)

Christian Alsted	North Europe
Alternate: Bernarda da Cruz Mannel	Africa Central
Arthur Razon	Philippines
Alternate: Djamba Numba	Congo
Kajoba Kilimbo	Congo
Alternate: Vumile Tobie	Africa Central
Zefanias Chihulume	Africa Central
Alternate: Rell Publeo	Philippines
Eunice Atuma	Africa Central
Alternate: Edward Jimmy	West Africa

GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

BISHOPS (Elected by General Conference)

NC - Jonathan Keaton
 NE - Hae-Jong Kim
 SC - Joel Martinez
 SE - G. Lindsey Davis
 W - **William Dew**
 CC - New Philippine Bishop
 Joseph Humper
 Ruediger Minor

GENERAL COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

BISHOPS (Elected by General Conference)

SC - Alfred Norris
 SE - Robert Fannin
 W - Mary Ann Swenson

MEMBERS AT LARGE

(Elected by General Conference)

SE - Matthew Pinson	North Georgia
NE - Shawn Hartman	Central Pennsylvania
SC - Andy Hernandez	Texas
SE - LaVeda M. Battle	North Alabama
W - Sue Sherbrook	Pacific Northwest
SC - Don Avery	Louisiana
CC - Cyprien Ntungwanayo	Africa Central

NORTH CENTRAL (Elected by General Conference)

David Aubuchon	East Ohio
Patricia Hinker	Minnesota
Samuel Odle	South Indiana
Stanley Sutton	West Ohio
Barbara Ulman	Detroit
John Woodruff	Illinois Great Rivers

NORTHEASTERN (Elected by General Conference)

Noah Reid	Eastern Pennsylvania
Philip Wogaman	Baltimore/Washington
Lucille W. Dockery	New York
Gail F. Scott	Wyoming
Clarence Hoover	Northern New Jersey
	[308 Park St., Montclair, NJ 07043]
Ray Moseley	Baltimore /Washington
	[10004 Village Green Dr.,
	Woodstock, MD, 21163]

SOUTH CENTRAL (Elected by General Conference)

Jay Brim	South West Texas
Mona Mae Waymire	Oklahoma
Donald House	Texas
Marilyn Moore	Nebraska
Ruben Wilbur	Missouri West
Donald Underwood	North Texas

SOUTHEASTERN (Elected by General Conference)

J. Taylor Phillips	South Georgia
Al Guinn	Kentucky
F. Douglas Dillard, Jr	Virginia
Jonathan Holston	North Georgia
Martha A. Scarborough	Mississippi
John Bullard	Alabama - West Florida

WESTERN (Elected by General Conference)

Peggy Sewell	Rocky Mountain
Diane Knudsen	Cal-Nevada
Robert Smith	Cal-Pac
Craig Parrish	Pacific Northwest
Jeff Bulkeley	Desert Southwest
Robert Meyers	Oregon-Idaho

**GENERAL BOARD OF HIGHER
EDUCATION AND MINISTRY****BISHOPS (Named by the COB)**

NE - Felton May
SE - Marion Edwards
CC - Ntanda Nkulu Ntambo
SC - Janice Riggle Huie

W- New Bishop
NC- John Hopkins

CENTRAL CONFERENCE (Elected by the GBHEM)

Kasap Owan	Congo
Alternate: Kalamba Ka Banze Ronga	Congo
Rhodi Lucero	Philippines
	[UMC, 2nd East Road, Rosario Heights,
	Iligan City, Mindanao, Philippines]

Alternate: Almeida Lemba	Africa Central
Heinrich Meinhardt	Germany
Alternate: Mary J. Yusuf	West Africa
Elena Stepanova	Russia
Alternate: Eleanor Navo	Sierra Leone

**GENERAL BOARD OF PENSION
AND HEALTH BENEFITS****BISHOPS (Elected by the Council of Bishops)**

SC - Bruce Blake
SE - William Morris

**COUNCIL NOMINATIONS
(Elected by the General Conference)**

E. Keith Ewing	Florida
Joel Huffman	Desert Southwest
John English	Northern New Jersey
Diane Reistroffer	Wisconsin
Idalene Richmond Williams	Nebraska
Rukudzo Murapa	Africa Central

**GENERAL COMMISSION
ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY****BISHOPS (Elected by COB)**

SE - J. Lawrence McCleskey
CC - New Philippine Bishop

**COUNCIL NOMINATIONS
(Elected by the General Conference)**

Jean Traster	Central Texas
Thomas Pendell	California-Pacific
Emilie Sims	Illinois Great Rivers
Annie Koonae Lee	New York
Deborah McIntosh	Mississippi
Paul Barton	Rio Grande

Daniel Swinson
Robert Williams
William King
Ulrike Schuler

Northern Illinois
Southern New Jersey
North Carolina
Germany

**GENERAL COMMISSION
ON UNITED METHODIST MEN**

NE - Ernest J. Lyght
SE - New Bishop

**GENERAL COMMISSION
ON COMMUNICATION**

BISHOPS (Elected by COB)

NE - New Bishop
SC - William Oden

CENTRAL CONFERENCE (Elected by COB)

Lody Pungumbu Congo

**GENERAL COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY &
INTERRELIGIOUS CONCERNS**

BISHOPS (Appointed by COB)

SC - Albert Mutti
NE - Peter Weaver
CC - Walter Klaiber
Ecumenical Officer - Melvin Talbert

CENTRAL CONFERENCE (Elected by COB)

Lars Erik Nordby Northern Europe

NATIONAL YOUTH MINISTRY ORGANIZATION

BISHOP (Chosen by COB)

SE - New Bishop

UNITED METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

BISHOPS (Selected by COB)

SE - Joseph Pennel ¶1602.1d CC: Vilma Fuentes
Philippines

NC - Sharon Brown Christopher

**GENERAL COMMISSION
ON RELIGION AND RACE**

W - Elias Galvan
SE - Charlene Kammerer

**GENERAL COMMISSION
ON STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN**

NC - New Bishop
CC - Done Peter Dabale

UNIVERSITY SENATE

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Chief Executive Officer:

SE - Henry Tisdale
NE - William Haden

Other position relevant to academic or financial affairs or
church relationships

SC - Justo Gonzalez
SCJ - Bishop Janice Riggle Huie

COUNCIL NOMINATION

(Elected by General Conference)

Chief Executive Officer

SC - Trudie Kibbe Reed
NE - James Evans Douthat
SE - Thomas W. Cole, Jr
NC - Kevin LaGree
SE - Wanda Bigham
NC - Mark Collier

Other position relevant to academic or financial affairs or
church relationships

SE - Willa Bing-Harris
NC - Leslie Wessman
NE - Bruce Birch
W - Marjorie Suchocki
SE - Sheila Flemming
SC - Robin Lovin

JUDICIAL COUNCIL

LAYPERSONS (Elected by General Conference)

NC - William White
NE - Evelyn Caterson
NE - Mark Loud
SE - Wesley Bailey
SE - W. Clark Williams, Jr.
NC - Daniel Evans
SC - Jon Gray
CC - Theophilous Gambe
W - Sally Geis

CLERGY (Elected by General Conference)

SE - Susan Henry-Crowe
W - Jane Tews
NC - Larry Pickens
SE - Theodore Walter
NE - Robert K. Sweet, Jr.

NE - Linda Thomas
 SE - Ralph Laurence Dill, III
 CC - Frank B. Davies
 SC - Philip Fenn

STANDING ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Committee on Agenda and Calendar

NC - Hee Soo Jung
 NE - Suella Barto
 SC - Theodore Collier
 SE - Mary Alice Massey
 W - Phyllis Ferguson
 CC - Africa: Anthony Danburam
 Asia: Corazon Factora
 Europe: Rosemarie Wenner

Committee on Correlation and Editorial Revision

SE - Clelia Hendrix
 SC - Eradio Valverde
 NC - Naomi Bartle
 NE - Richard Evans
 Alternates:
 NC - Leroy Moore
 W - Richard Plain

Committee on Courtesies and Privileges

NC - James Shaw
 NE - Deborah Pritts
 SC - Barbara Galloway-Edgar
 SE - Ricky James
 W - Betty Suzuki
 CC Africa: Daniel Gburidema
 CC Asia: Chita Millan
 CC Europe: Elena Tischenko

Committee on Credentials

NC - Adam Webb
 NE - Thomas Bickerton
 SC - Charles Crutchfield
 SE - Steve Rumford
 W - Patricia Farris
 CC - Africa: John Russell
 Asia: Gerardo R. Samson
 Europe: Eva Csernak

Committee on Journal

W - Lin Doyle
 SC - D. Max Whitfield
 SE - Frances Moore

Committee on Presiding Officers

NC Clergy - Linda Lee
 Lay - Harriet McCabe
 NE - Clergy - Richard Wright
 Lay - Shirley Readdean
 SC - Clergy - Frank Dorsey
 Lay - Anita Crump
 SE - Clergy - Richard Wills
 Lay - Robby Lowry
 W - Clergy - Deborah Pitney
 Lay - Paul Extrum-Fernandez
 CC African: Clergy - John Wesley Yohanna
 Lay - Eke Halloway
 Asian: Clergy - Bener Agtarap
 Lay - Nimfa Pastores
 Europe: Clergy - Mohr Karsten
 Lay - Roland Siegrist

Committee on Reference

NC - Clergy - Beverly Wilkes
 Lay - Odell Thompson
 NE - Clergy - Lewis Parks
 Lay - Lenora Thompson

 SC - Clergy - Earl Bledsoe
 Lay - Mary Brooke Casad
 SE - Clergy - William Morgan
 Lay - Mel R. Bowdan, Jr.
 W - Clergy - Youngsook Kang
 Lay - Gaunnie Dixon
 CC - Africa: Clergy - Lumuna Kumbula
 Lay - Maria DeCarvalho
 Asia: Clergy - Melanio Castilo
 Lay - Gemma Saranilla
 Europe: Clergy - Helmuth Nausner
 Lay - Hans-Wilhelm Herrmann

COMMITTEE ON PLAN OF ORGANIZATION AND RULES OF ORDER

(Elected by General Conference)

NC - Janet Stephenson
 NE - Jerome del Pino
 SC - David Severe
 SE - Joseph Whitmore
 W - Grant Hagiya
 CC - Momo Kpaan
 Additional:
 CC - Ruben de Guzman
 SE - Darlene Amon
 SC - Barbara Means
 W - Elaine Stanovsky

COMMISSION ON THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

(Elected by General Conference)

NE Clergy - Glenn Kohlhepp

SC Clergy - David Wilson

SE Lay - Mollie Stewart

W Clergy - Gail Murphy-Geiss

W Lay - Paul Extrum-Fernandez

CC Clergy - Marie-Sol Villanon

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OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

(Elected by General Conference)

Carolyn M. Marshall

**COMMISSION ON CENTRAL
CONFERENCE AFFAIRS**Africa

Bishop: Joao Somane Machado

Ordained: Zumo Afonso

Lay: Marie Nahimana

Central and Southern Europe

Bishop: Heinrich Bolleter

Ordained: Helmut Nausner

Lay: Claudia Bloem

Congo

Bishop: Fama Onema

Ordained: Nday Katungu

Lay: Kasongo Mutamba

Germany

Bishop: Walter Klaiber

Ordained: Reiner Stahl

Lay: Christian Schaarschmidt

North Central

Bishop: Joseph Sprague

Ordained: Frank Beard

Lay: Jeff Sitts

Northeastern

Bishop: Alfred Johnson

Ordained: Charles Johns

Lay: Christine Keels

Northern Europe

Bishop: Hans Växby

Ordained: Olav Parnamets

Lay: Per-Endre Bjernevik

Philippines

Bishop: Daniel Arichea

Ordained: Wilson Sagadraca

Lay: Blas Isip

South Central

Bishop: Albert Mutti

Ordained: Melvin Luetchens

Lay: Jerry Williams

Southeastern

Bishop: G. Lindsey Davis

Ordained: Roger Hopson

Lay: Betty Alexander

West Africa

Bishop: Done Peter Dabale

Ordained: Julius Nelson Jr.

Lay: Solomon Fonnies

Western

Bishop: Elias Galván

Ordained: Donald Messer

Lay: Marilyn Outslay

General Board of Global Ministries

Bishop: Dan E. Solomon

Ordained: William Reasner

Lay: Jenni M. Yeoh

Corrections

In the GCFA Report (*Advance Daily Christian Advocate*, p. 328, col. 1, "Special Unfunded Pension Aid"): Line 1 (beginning \$75,000) of the financial chart is General Church Retirement Allowance; Line 2 (beginning \$41,000) is European Service; Line 3 (beginning \$18,000) is ¶1506.15 Payments; Line 4 (beginning \$107,000) is Cuba Service I; Line 5 (beginning \$53,000) is Cuba Service II.

In the GCFA Report, p. 1575: General Board of Discipleship total dollar figures should read: column 1, \$9,025; column 2, \$8,525; column 3, \$11,600; column 4, \$11,500.

Petitions corrections:

Discipleship Legislative Committee: 31238 (p. 285)—Correct the first sentence to read: In each annual conference there may **shall** be a conference . . .

Financial Administration Legislative Committee: 30398 (p.1638)—delete entire paragraph.

Legislative Subcommittee Chairs

Church and Society

Natural World
 William D. Scott, Mississippi
 Nurturing Community
 Jana M. Bennett, Rocky Mountains
 Social Community
Richard Parker, New York
 Economic Community
Beverly L. Wilkes, Illinois Great Rivers
 Political Community
Gail F. Smith, Texas
 World Community
 Mousa A. Dassama Sr., Liberia

Conferences

Bishops–Episcopacy
James W. Foster, Texas
 Annual Conference Administration
David L. Severe, Oklahoma
 Constitutional Committee
 Flo S. Martin, South Georgia
 Representation
Joe P. Peabody (North Georgia)

Discipleship

Baptism
Charles D. Yoost, East Ohio
 Ordination Services
McCallister Hollins, North Georgia
 Ministry of the Laity
 Martha Etter, Southwest Texas
 General Board of Discipleship
 Betsy Ingram, New York
 NYMO (Children, Youth and Young Adults)
 Sarah Warman, Western Pennsylvania

Faith and Order

The results of the subcommittee chair elections were not known at press time.
 Natural World/Nurturing Community
 Social Community
 Economic Community
 Political Community/World Community
 Resolutions dealing with Para. 103:
 “Ministry in Jesus Christ”
 Public Education/Health Care (including tissue donation resolutions)
 Roles of Clergy Care: clergy/candidates (Para. 116 and Para. 303)

Adoption/Parental Responsibility
 Baptism/Meaning of Ordination
 Alcohol/Drugs/Pornography

Financial Administration

Pension
Kermit L. Braswell, North Carolina
 Budget
 Cashar Evans, North Carolina
 Miscellaneous
 Ewing Werlein, Texas

General/Judicial Administration

Trial Procedures
Mary Council-Austin, Wisconsin
 Judicial Council
 Willard Douglas, Virginia
 Initiatives, Special Sundays and Offerings
 Daniel Soliz, Rio Grande
 General Administration and Constitutional Issues
Kathi Austin Mahle, Minnesota

Global Ministries

Community and Ecumenical Relations
 Paul Ervin, North Georgia
 Peace and Justice-A
Arnold A. Rhodes, Western Pennsylvania
 Peace and Justice-B
 Phyllis S. Ferguson, Pacific Northwest
 Mission Initiatives and Context
Cheol H. Kwak, California-Pacific
 Health and Relief
 Charlene R. Black, South Georgia
 Women and Children Issues
 Marilyn J. Outslay, Oregon-Idaho
 General (Volunteers and Board Structure)
Guy C. Ames III, Oklahoma

Higher Education and Ministry

Candidacy
Martha Orphe, Western Pennsylvania
 Deacons, Elders, Local Pastors
Robert Schnase, Southwest Texas
 Appointments and Superintendency
David Penalva, South Indiana
 Higher Education
 J. Allen Norris Jr., North Carolina

Independent Commissions

Gilbert Hanke, Texas
 Thomasina Stewart, West Virginia
 Dean Yamamoto, Oregon-Idaho
 Jaime Potter-Miller, Western Pennsylvania

Local Church

Dennis Blackwell, Southern New Jersey
Richard H. Jones, Wisconsin
Edward A. Kail, Iowa
Bernard (Skip) Keels, Baltimore-Washington
Terry L. Clark, Illinois Great Rivers
 Matthew Pinson, North Georgia

Author Book Signings at the Cokesbury Exhibit

Thursday, May 4

11 a.m. to noon

Jeannie Trevino-Teddle, *Pentecost Journey*
Michael Slaughter, *Real Followers*
William H. Willimon, *The Truth about God*
Bishop Rueben P. Job, *A Wesleyan Spiritual Reader*

Noon to 1 p.m.

George McClain, *Claiming All Things for God*
James Rutland Wood, *Where the Spirit Leads*
James C. Logan, *A Charge to Keep*

1 to 2 p.m.

Jane Ives, *Transforming Ventures (UR)*
Delia Halverson, *32 Ways to Become a Great Sunday School Teacher*
Bruce Hilton, *Can Homophobia Be Cured?*

1:15 to 2:15 p.m.

Cynthia Wilson, General Conference music

Friday, May 5

11 a.m. to noon

Bishop James K. Mathews, *A Global Odyssey*

Noon to 1 p.m.

Tom Frank, *Soul of the Congregation*
Marjorie Kimbrough, *Stories Between the Testaments*
Keith Beasley-Topliffe, *The Upper Room Spiritual Classics*

What Delegates Think . . .

"When I talk about the United Methodist Church, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they.'" (95%)

"Its connectional mission makes the United Methodist Church unique from any other church." (85%)

"When I think of the United Methodist Church, I think of a church that is currently broad enough to include multiple views in its decision-making." (83%)

"One of the strengths of the United Methodist Church is its ethnic diversity." (85%)

Source: General Council on Ministries

Distribution of Delegates to the 2000 General Conference

Conference	Number of Delegates	Percent of Total Delegates
Central Conferences	152	15.3
Concordat Churches	10	1.0
North Central Jurisdiction	182	18.3
Northeastern Jurisdiction	162	16.3
South Central Jurisdiction	160	16.1
Southeastern Jurisdiction	270	27.2
Western Jurisdiction	56	5.6
TOTAL	992	100%

(Column may not total 100% due to rounding.)

Source: General Council on Ministries

Seating Assignments

Voting Delegates

<u>Conference/Concordat</u>	<u># Delegates</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Row</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Conference/Concordat</u>	<u># Delegates</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Row</u>	<u>Seats</u>
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<u>Conference/Concordat</u>	<u># Delegates</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Row</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Conference/Concordat</u>	<u># Delegates</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Row</u>	<u>Seats</u>
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Church # Delegates Sec Row Seats

List of petitions by Source?