

CONFERENCE MINISTRIES ADVISORY COUNCIL

The past year has been one of transitions for your Conference Ministries Advisory Council (CMAC). Former Director of Connectional Ministries James T. Trollinger moved to the position of assistant to the bishop, and Arnetta E. Beverly became the new director. In the previous year, working with the Committee on Conference Staff Relations, we had trimmed the connectional ministries staff by 4.5 positions. As a result, we had fewer staff members to resource local churches, leaving our staff organization streamlined, efficient, and functional. Our staff has responded well to these challenges. Our former staff members have been blessed with finding other meaningful work. Our final transition, in the making, will be brought about by the Task Force on Conference Reorganization. The CMAC chair and the director of connectional ministries are task force members and have spent many days in meetings during these nearly two years. The size and shape of CMAC's successor organization will be determined at the 2008 annual conference. We have, therefore, not made long-range plans.

As we persist with this process, we continue to implement the conference vision: "Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, Transform the World." Our connection is strong, and we continue to demonstrate that we can accomplish more together than each congregation can accomplish by itself by pooling our energy and resources and utilizing all the "parts of the body" of the church. Connectional ministry is happening. Some examples from 2007 are:

- About \$1.2 million was given for various mission projects through general and conference Advance ministries, with a 5% increase in the number of supporting churches.
- Project AGAPE funding surpassed all imagination, covering all the projected 2008 budget. Also, the Dairy Cow Fund request (\$36,000) was exceeded by \$14,000.
- Good Samaritan Clinic delivered 3,500 Good Samaritan VBS kits and had on hand two-thirds of the funds to cover basic needs for 2008.
- Volunteers in Mission (VIM) teams, though down in number from the 2006 Gulf disaster, continue to be a highlight of our ministries.
- Five districts were trained to handle disaster response for the conference, and the Mission Response Center (MRC), under the leadership of Michael W. Collins, has a new indoor bathroom.
- Communications staff, under Ministry Team Coordinator Mark L. Barden, report growing *E-News* subscriptions. Our improved website will have a new look and aim to be even more functional for the user by the 2008 annual conference.
- The communications office is now publishing an overhauled version of *The Daily Digest* during annual conference. It also published the study *Living for Giving*, with a video by Kenneth H. Carter, Jr., in cooperation with the United Methodist Foundation and UMCCom.
- Many persons have said that the latest *Connections for Ministry* is the best and most useful stewardship-interpretation piece we have ever done.
- Nurture and Christian education, led by Ministry Team Coordinator Janet M. Hitch, has developed a list of "Point People" (by district) who can provide leadership guidance for congregations and placed it on the website.
- Other Christian education initiatives involved training for over 1,000 child-care workers, teaching stewardship to children, empowering Sunday Schools to make disciples and discover God possibilities, helping congregational leaders to empower older adults in making successful life transitions, and, finally, training church leaders to be spiritual leaders in their congregations.
- Ministries with young people, led by Interim Coordinator Kimberly T. Ingram, reports 1,700 participants in "Spiritus" beach retreats over two weekends; 1,500 participants in the "Summit" winter retreat in Boone; a successful "Choose to Share Christ," "Bishop's Confirmation Celebration," and "Kaleidoscope" events for youth, as well as three youth-worker training workshops.
- Youth leaders received weekly e-mails with resources and encouragement for youth ministry. A Council on Campus Ministry was formed to resource campus ministry with guidelines, accountability, and funding.
- Highlighting ethnic and justice ministries, led by Ministry Team Coordinator Lillie Madison Jones, are such successful events as the Rural Church Institute (55 persons participating), the Symposium for Partnership Churches in Nashville (35 churches represented), the Southeastern Jurisdiction Embracing Conference (30 attending), and the Poverty Summit.
- Also, 10 ethnic local church grants were awarded, and training was given in leadership, grant writing, natural church development, covenant coaching for laity and clergy, stewardship, and other strategic topics.

All this was accomplished with an overall reduced meeting schedule for CMAC. One steering committee meeting and one full membership meeting were convened by conference call to deal with the 2009 budget and to approve benevolence allocations. This was the second year of budgeting by conference call, a popular dollar-saving idea with our membership.

Robert E. Shepherd, *Chairperson*

1. COMMITTEES AND TASK GROUPS OF THE COUNCIL

a. CAMPING AND RETREAT MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

This year has proven to be a time of challenge and opportunity for our camping and outdoor ministries. Like other ministries in our conference, our district camps continue to do vital and important work with ever limited resources and financial support. Yet, our camps continue as vanguard representatives of faithfulness to the call of Christ to make disciples, transform the world, and follow Jesus in creative and life-changing ways. I am very proud of the work and outreach ministry of all our camps and find inspiration in the dedication and hard work of our camp directors, along with their staffs and camp employees. Our seven camps and retreat centers are Mt. Shepherd, Camp McCall, Camp Elk Shoals, Camp Loy White, Camp Carolwood, Camp GuilRock, and Camp Tekoa. Each camp continues to operate under the seven foundations of our United Methodist camps.

Listed below are reports from three of our camps, giving information about their work and achievements for the year. Please continue to pray for and support our conference and district camps, as they reach out to all people and share the Gospel through our outdoor ministries.

James G. Mackey, *Chairperson*

Mt. Shepherd Retreat Center

Mount Shepherd is a 542-acre facility owned and operated by the High Point District of the Western North Carolina Conference. The year 2007 was one of growth for this ministry.

Capital Improvements:

- Renovation of Hedgecock Lodge included an expanded dining hall/meeting room, with seating for up to 125, with ceiling-mounted projector and screen, as well as a public-address system and media equipment with DVD and VHS capability; bathrooms, with nearly three times the space, as well as additional sinks, toilets, and showers; new food serving line; new roof; new air conditioning and heating system; new floor tile; new front entrance; expanded kitchen, with walk-in refrigerator and freezer; new cook's office and a restroom; a new pantry; and a fire and security alarm system. A wireless and high-speed Internet system for guests and staff will be installed soon.
- Construction of the Reception and Office Building, with a reception/registration area, conference room, front office space with a restroom, and a director's office.
- A water line to bring treated water to the bathhouse and swimming pool.

Program/Hospitality:

- Summer camp registrations reached an all-time high of 818 this summer, surpassing the previous high of 721 set in 2005.
- Hosted five Asheboro City schools and two Randolph County schools, each of which has participated in environmental education.
- Numerous groups from across North Carolina and beyond come to Mount Shepherd throughout the year!

Other important developments include:

- Mount Vernon Church, Trinity, has donated a 1999 Dodge 15-passenger van in excellent condition, with 75,000 miles.
- Mr. Jim Plant, of Asheboro, has devoted many, many hours designing new trails and improving existing trails. The longest, at 2.7 miles, circles the base of Mount Shepherd.
- New HVAC and a security system installed in director's house.
- New sofas donated.
- Television and entertainment system donated.

Mount Shepherd's vision for growth continues to include development of facilities and programs for all ages in an outdoor setting suitable for spiritual growth, fellowship, renewal, and recreation. The board of directors and I ask you to keep this ministry in your prayers.

Kent L. Shrader, *Director*

Camp GuilRock: "Discover Creation, Experience God, Grow in Faith"

Greetings from your Camp GuilRock!

As the New Year dawns here in Rockingham County, we are indeed blessed to be engaged in outdoor Christian education. We are anticipating a great year for 2008, and have recently completed an amazing and very busy 2007!

Let me share some exciting news with you. Our camp board of directors has been hard at work on updating and renovating facilities here at GuilRock. The most dramatic changes have occurred at your camp parsonage. Thanks to the diligent work of many people who have a great heart and passion for GuilRock, the camp parsonage now has new siding, new cabinets for the kitchen, floors that have been stripped and refinished, and various rooms that have been painted. The house is indeed a blessing for our family, and it seems like a "brand new" home! Thanks so much to many of you who made this possible.

We have a brand new camp sign as you enter our facility, and this is due to the hard work of Toy Benninga, an Eagle Scout from Troop 316 in Greensboro. There are new signs up all around the camp and a new ceiling at the pool shower house, and we are in the process of restoring the roof on the Adirondack structure. We have two new trails (the Gleiser Trail and the Grist Mill Trail), and we have refurbished the Haw River Trail. All our trails are now GPS-coordinated, and this is due to the hard work of Eagle Scout

Scott Gleiser, from Madison. George Pollock has worked hard on the landscaping around the camp office and the parsonage.

We have been blessed with a \$12,000 grant from the Emily Mills Hiatt Fund in High Point, and this is due to the hard work of Eugene E. (Gene) Dean, Jr., pastor of Moriah Church, in the Greensboro District. This grant money will help us continue our day-camp outreach to our "neighborhood children" directly around the camp and into the inner city of Greensboro. We hope to have this camp, free of charge to the children, during the first week in July 2008. Our hopes are to reach close to 100 children this summer with this day-camp experience.

We have been blessed with a camp bus from Center Church, Greensboro, and this will help us in our transportation needs during the summer and throughout the year. Camp GuilRock continues to be active in the weekly outreach program, every Monday afternoon, for the neighborhood children so wonderfully established through Fairgrove Church.

Our summer is practically full, with a variety of day camps, Bible schools, reunions, swim parties, retreats, UMYF meetings, and other events booked through August. Our summer season will officially start over Memorial Day weekend, when the pool opens. Please continue to pray for our camp and its summer experiences, as last year we had over 3,000 people use our facilities during the three months of summer! In the meantime, the lodges, winterized and air conditioned, are being used each weekend and are already booked through the fall of this year. Also, many camping groups have reserved our Wesley and Lakeside areas for the spring and fall. Camping groups come almost 10 months out of the year!

There is always much to do for God's glory here at GuilRock. We will be sending information to the district churches this year on the many ways we all may support our district camp. This information will speak to our endowment fund and other legacy-giving opportunities. We hope to have an updated website and promotional CD available later this spring.

Many of our United Methodist churches continue to think of creative ways to raise support Camp GuilRock, and I would encourage all of us to pray about how we can help. A recent example of this is the monthly Wednesday evening dinner at Woodmont Church, Reidsville. Just last week, the folks at Woodmont raised over \$600 for GuilRock with this meal, and these monies have been designated to upgrade the bathrooms at the Wesley Pavilion. AWESOME! Thanks so much, Woodmont!

Please know how much we appreciate all that ALL of you do for outdoor Christian education. Your support—prayerfully, monetarily, physically, and spiritually—is vital for God's work in this part of God's Kingdom! Thank you so much for your amazing support last year—both districts gave much more than we ever anticipated—and know that we share your enthusiasm for this outdoor "gem" we call GuilRock!

Mark H. Christy, *Director*

Camp McCall

January	Tree damage; several trees downed from probable wind shear, two to be removed this fall so we can access property behind lakeside side lodge (Old Bolden Gap Road). North Carolina Bridge Crew—youthful offenders—worked several days, with 15 in attendance each day.
February	Display at district leadership conference at First Church, Morganton. These displays always draw a lot of attention. Eight new showers installed at upper bath house by UMMen from Oak Hill Church.
March	Many leaves and lots of debris moved to more desirable areas. Over Mountain Walk, presented by District Superintendent Robert E. Roach, with 40 in attendance for the program and 18 hiking over the mountain.
April	New showers painted by Carolina Cross Connection.
May	Heavy damage at McCall entrance sign repaired. Youth from Salem Church, Bostic, held two work days, with 20 participants each day.
June	McCall Day Camp, with 20 participants per day. First Carolina Cross Connection session for 2008. Insurance inspector from Markel. Discovered leakage in one of our 2,000-gallon water tanks, which for the rest of the summer meant "milking water," which is hard to do, but staff did it until the last CCC session.
July	McCall Retreat, over five nights, with 20 participants per night. Second and third sessions of Carolina Cross Connection. Hands of Christ Mission Team painted outside of upper bath house and block outside Water Falls lodge, outside and inside lower bath house. Repaired tree house in upper playground. Painted gate and entrance sign.
August	Fourth Carolina Cross Connection session, the last for 2008. New smoke alarms installed, and all old ones replaced. Estimates received for new well and well house: \$10,000 or more. Fun Day, with approximately 100 in attendance.
September	General maintenance by McCall summer staff.
October	Mission team from Bethel Church, Dysartsville, consisting of 30 persons for two days, worked on items at Lake Side Lodge and Upper Pavilion that were in need of attention. Arnetta E. Beverly visited McCall, and we received a much needed uplifting from her.
November	Trees from wind shear in January removed.
December	Electric company downed trees near well house that will be replaced.

Review 37 groups; approximately 4,000 campers.
 McCall Staff led numerous hikes, assisted with McCall Adventure course.
 Carolina Cross Connection always has a very inspirational closing at McCall's Chapel In
 the Pines.

Ronnie Walker, *Director*

b. COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND MERCY MINISTRIES (CJAMM)

There continues to be a critical need for ministry to offenders, ex-offenders, and those who have been victims of crime. An article in *The Charlotte Observer* a few months ago shared that, for the first time in American history, more than one in 100 American adults is behind bars. The same article reported that the prison population in the United States grew by 25,000 in 2007 and that there are about 38,000 persons in prison in North Carolina. 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 Committee on Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries (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 encourage you to look for ways to care for persons after their incarceration, to include ex-offenders in the fellowship of your local churches, and to support ministries that provide care for ex-offenders and parolees. We hope that you will also support ministries that seek to be mediation centers in restorative justice between offenders and victims. We ask you to support with your prayers, gifts, and involvement the following ministries, which are all conference Advance mission specials:

1. Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries and Rings of Fellowship, a ministry between the Western North Carolina Conference and the North Carolina Conference, which is now at work in over 70 adult and juvenile penal facilities across North Carolina.
2. Epiphany, an ecumenical Christian ministry to juveniles incarcerated in North Carolina.
3. 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.
4. Yokefellow Prison Ministry, a compassionate, listening ministry to inmates which is now in ministry in over 50 prisons across North Carolina.

We remind people of faith about the long-standing position of The United Methodist Church against the death penalty and encourage you to speak to our state leaders as they grapple with this issue in these days.

Finally, CJAMM has been privileged in the last year to partner with other conference agencies in sponsoring a Summit on Poverty in February 2008, as we seek to be faithful to our quadrennial vision to minister to the poor and the suffering. We look forward with eagerness to seeing the fruit that this event will produce in the churches and lives across the Western North Carolina Conference.

Randy L. Wall, *Chairperson*

c. COMMITTEE ON ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH CONCERNS

The Committee on Ethnic Local Church concerns has attempted to be a good steward of the funds that we received. We have used the gifts God gives us to better equip ethnic local congregations, so that they could offer to God and their communities their best. We have made it our emphasis to provide grants so that congregations could intentionally relate unchurched persons to Jesus Christ. Here are two examples of the grants that we have given: One was so that youth in urban areas would have positive, safe, and productive activities. The second was so that another congregation could better share the good news of Jesus Christ with their community and invite others to join them in their journey with God.

We are thankful for the leadership of Lillie Madison Jones and her work with ethnic and justice ministries. She has provided training so that ethnic pastors and lay persons could be more effective in grant writing. She has also provided the arenas in which ethnic pastors could receive training and coaching in church growth and renewal. We therefore thank God for the gifts Dr. Jones possesses and how she uses those gifts for the glory of God's kingdom in Western North Carolina.

The ethnic churches are stronger, and they are growing by the grace of God, the equipping of leaders, and a recommitment of pastors who wish to be faithful to God and to the church. We are following Jesus, making disciples, and transforming the world.

Samuel H. Moore, Jr., *Chairperson*

d. SPIRITUAL FORMATION TASK FORCE

The conference Spiritual Formation Task Force is composed of passionate people who seek to keep Jesus Christ at the center of all life. Spiritual formation is defined as a life-long journey of being conformed to the image of Christ in community, by the gracious work of God's Spirit (the Holy Spirit), for the sake of others (the world). We seek to plant deep roots into faith and spiritual disciplines so that we can grow into the full image of Jesus Christ. This is primarily an inward journey, an internal movement, versus an external one, but always more effective in community. It is a life-long maturing process.

The members of this group will inform and teach, promote and encourage the regular practice of spiritual disciplines throughout the conference. We exist as a resource for the conference to consult, present, foster, and facilitate aspects of spiritual formation. We share a wide diversity of experience and gifts among our participating members. We also have a wealth of collective wisdom that seeks to bless others.

We continue to host the "Day Apart" on the Wednesday before annual conference begins. This time apart sets a different tone for conferencing each year. On Wednesday evening, we host a worship service which serves as a vehicle to set the tone for the beginning of conference prayerfully, thoughtfully, and spiritually. During this time, we have utilized many forms of worship and prayer (Taize, contemplative, contemporary, Celtic, healing prayer, etc.).

For additional information, you may contact Patience S. Brumley, 704-596-2143(H), 704-596-2356(O), pbrumley@carolina.rr.com; or John F. Blalock, Jr., 704-279-6939(H), 704-279-3235(O), jblalock8@carolina.rr.com.

Patience S. Brumley, *Co-Chairperson*
John F. Blackcock, Jr., *Co-Chairperson*

2. PROGRAM MINISTRIES COMMISSIONS

a. COMMISSION ON NURTURE MINISTRIES

The Commission on Nurture Ministries continues to work closely with both clergy and lay members of the annual conference to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. As we continue through this quadrennium, the commission continues offering "soul tending models" (i.e., class meetings, workshops, personal days apart, exercise, book studies, topical studies, small-group spiritual direction, and individual spiritual direction). Yet, we are first modeling spiritual nurture by choosing and praying for our prayer partners within the commission. We have also spent some time adjusting to new budget issues and new staff members.

The devotional booklet for the annual sessions of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, called, *Conference Soul Tending Companion*, continues to go well. 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. The 2008 theme is on change, as we continue with the addition of a new district and ministries, as well as with the retirement of Bishop McCleskey and our waiting on the news of our new bishop. Another retirement that will greatly impact us is the retirement of Janet M. Hitch, our director of Christian education and nurture ministries. For 17 years, Janet has given her time, passion, and creativity to coordinating conference ministries and empowering local churches. We pray God's blessings for her in her new adventures and hope she knows we will miss her wisdom, experience, and heart.

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

Sarah E. H. McKinney, *Chairperson*

Children's Ministry Offerings

- Equipping local-church children's leaders in all areas of the conference vision.
- Providing a year of Rotation Sunday School for churches with few children, created around the conference vision.
- Consulting with local churches on all areas of child care; connecting to unity in Christ that values diversity and developing ministry with the poor and suffering.
- Ministering to Hispanic children and their families through Hispanic Hand-in-Hand; connecting to unity in Christ that values diversity and developing ministry with the poor and suffering.

Christian Education and Leadership Development

- Equipping Sunday Schools with ways to teach about the conference vision.
- Equipping African American and Hispanic churches in Christian education; connecting to unity in Christ that values diversity.
- Working on a new way to do singles ministry that intentionally relates them to Jesus Christ and giving a model for singles ministry.
- Consulting with local churches on revitalization; connecting to "Shepherd the Shepherds."
- Working on a model for local churches in older adult ministry, connecting to a unity in Christ that values diversity.

- Working with the Spiritual Formation Task Force to help our membership to go deeper and be more yielded to "possibilities with God."
- Providing a web page of "Point People" in all areas of leadership in nurture and Christian education by districts.

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

b. COMMISSION ON OUTREACH MINISTRIES

The Commission on Outreach Ministries begins a new quadrennial season with a strong commitment to continue following Jesus as we strive to transform the world. In 2007, our churches supported The Advance with approximately \$1.1 million and other conference Advance specials with approximately \$200,000, and many churches have adopted individual projects and Special Sunday offerings. In addition, our volunteers-in-mission base has increased from 7,989 to 14,234 in the past year. Our programs and projects have capable leadership that will continue to press towards their goals.

In 2007, the commission placed its emphasis on "Project AGAPE" in Armenia and the Good Samaritan Clinic in the Dominican Republic, with the prospects of keeping both ministries financially secure. Through special Sundays and activities, the two ministries entered 2008 with funding for its first six months of ministry.

Harvest of Blessing events have been set for 2008 in two parts, East (March 15, 2008, in Winston-Salem, with 600 in attendance) and West (October 4, 2008, in Morganton), in the hopes of equipping more persons for the mission ministry. These events allow for hands-on mission work, education, worship, and fellowship. New activities for 2007 through 2008 included the "Nothing But Nets" campaign, inviting every church family in the conference to donate a net (\$10) by 2008's year-end. These re-treated mosquito nets will help prevent the spread of malaria, one of the main killers in African countries. We will celebrate 60 years of The Advance this year at our annual Missions Luncheon.

We continue to emphasize communications through *Missions Alive* and *E-News*, in order to clarify our visions to all United Methodists in the conference, promoting inclusiveness, emphasizing mission education, and striving to strengthen the connections. As we continue to strive to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the annual conference, we ask for your support by your full acceptance of the conference programs and benevolence budget. This is crucial if we are to continue in our ministries both in the United States and around the world.

Mahalia L. McGee, *Chairperson*
Michael W. Collins, *Coordinator of Mission/Outreach*

"Passionate Disciples in Mission"

Objectives:

1. To build up the awareness of missions within the Western North Carolina Conference; and
2. To adequately support these missions connected to the Western North Carolina Conference.

Goals:

1. To have every church in the Western North Carolina Conference to support at least one general Advance special or conference Advance special prior to the end of 2008;
2. To have at least 50% of the churches in the Western North Carolina Conference in a relationship (covenant or otherwise) with a missionary by the end of 2008;
3. To have at least one person from 100% of the churches in the Western North Carolina Conference as a volunteer participant (Christian Servant) in a ministry to the least, the last, and the lost by the end of 2008 (Habitat for Humanity, feeding campaigns, clothing, building team, medical team, etc.);
4. To have at least 25% of the churches in the Western North Carolina Conference involved in a United Methodist ministry to the least, the last, and the lost by the end of 2008 (e.g., building team, WCDC, medical team, etc.);
5. To have 10% of the churches in the Western North Carolina Conference to be participants in "Reach for the Stars" by the end of 2008; and
6. To have every family unit in the conference sponsor a net in the "Nothing but Nets" campaign (\$10 per net).

Proposal: Advance Specials for 2008-2009

(Petition 2)

WNCC Initiative for Africa University

General Advance Specials

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

- Nicholas Gitobu Kithinju, Area Financial Executive for Southeast Asia, Cambodia (13077Z)
- Randy Hilderbrant, Director of Youth Ministries, The Jubilee Project, Sneedville, TN (982961)
- Dwaine Morgan, Mission Response Center, Mooresville, NC (982923)
- Poto Valentine Shutsha, Wings of Sharing Ministry, DR Congo (14163Z)

- Vickie B. Sigmon, Open Arms Ministry, Winston-Salem, NC (982916-8)
- Salary support for mission personnel who have connections with the WNCC:
- Clara Biswas, Cambodia (13952-Z)
 - Richard Bryant (15076)
 - Gordon Granger, Bolivia (010835-Z5)
 - Ardell Granger, Bolivia (010836-6)
 - Esther Gitobu, Cambodia (13959)
 - Fran Lynch, Alaska (982950-1)
 - Charles Maddox (11891)
 - Patti Maddox (11891)
 - Glen Rowley, Senegal (009682-6AZ)
 - Jacques Akasa Umembudi, DR Congo (14020)
 - Herbert Zigbuo, Liberia (1010911-1BZ)
 - Mary Zigbuo, Liberia (010721-4BZ)
- Parish Partners Support:
- Alaska Missionary Conference (931027)
 - Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (583634)
 - Rio Grande Missionary Conference (531733)
- Other Projects:
- Africa Church Growth and Development Fund (008233)
 - Andean Rural Health Care (010158)
 - Appalachian Regional Ministries (982041)
 - Baltic Mission Center, Tallinn, Estonia (010923)
 - Bethlehem Center, Charlotte (982149)
 - Bethlehem Center, Winston-Salem (982149)
 - Cambodia Initiative, General (00230A) (Be specific as to intended use)
 - Cherokee United Methodist Ministries (731144-8)
 - Diengenga Technical School, Lodja, DR Congo, Equipment (14389C)
 - English-Speaking Congregation, Vienna, Austria (12001)
 - Henderson Settlement, Kentucky (773365)
 - Hinton Rural Life Center, Hayesville, NC (Program) (731372)
 - John Wesley Primary School, Pinetown, South Africa (011033)
 - Mission in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (011510)
 - Nothing But Nets
 - Red Bird Mission, Inc., Kentucky (773365)
 - Society of St. Andrew (Potato Project) (801600)
 - Stop Hunger Now (982795)
 - Strengthening Reestablished UMC, Lithuania (012168)
 - Thiu Rancho Project, Bolivia (012309)
- UMCOR Projects:
- Bread for the World (982325)
 - CROP (CWS) (982380)
 - Disaster Response, USA (901670)
 - Disaster Response, International (982450)
 - Heifer Project International (9852532)
 - Sager-Brown Depot (901510)
 - World Hunger/Poverty (982920)
- Annual Conference Mission Specials*
- Carolina Cross Connection
 - Charlotte Communities of Shalom
 - Cherokee United Methodist Church Ministries (through WNCC Outreach Ministries)
 - Conference Disaster Response Fund
 - Disciple Bible Outreach Ministry
 - Faith Action International House
 - Golden Cross–WNCC
 - Kenya Partner Ministries (through WNCC Outreach Ministries)
 - Open Arms Community
 - Prison MATCH Program
 - Project AGAPE, Armenia
 - Salkehatchie Summer Service–WNCC
 - Scandinavian Caravan–WNCC
 - Shalom Community of Charlotte
 - UMAR-WNC, Inc
 - WNCC Building Teams
 - WNCC Deaf Ministry
 - WNCC Good Samaritan Clinic, Dominican Republic
 - WNCC Mission Response Center, Terrell, NC
 - 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
- Permanent Fund: Encounter Christ (025100)
- Special Sundays
 - Human Relations Day
 - Native American Awareness
 - World Communion
 - One Great Hour of Sharing
 - Peace with Justice
 - United Methodist Student Day
- WNCC Special Sundays
 - Project AGAPE Sunday
 - Disciple Bible Outreach
 - Medical Mission Teams
- Mission Congregations
 - Agua de Vida Mission, Charlotte
 - Cambodian Mission, Charlotte
 - First Hmong Mission, Charlotte
 - Ghana Community Mission, Charlotte
 - Morningstar Mission, Charlotte
 - South Tryon Community Mission, Charlotte
 - Adonai Mission, Asheboro
 - Capilla de Cristo Mission, Lexington
 - Central Cristiano Mission, North Wilkesboro
 - Ward Street Mission, High Point

Congo (DRC) Coordinating Committee

Under the auspices of the Central Congo Area of The United Methodist Church, Bishop David Yemba requested help in establishing financial support for the schools in the Central Congo Annual Conference. Working with Bishop Yemba, David and Jack Miner helped coordinate funding requests and funding grants through the GBGM field treasurer in Kinshasa, enabling the following actions to transpire: salaries to be paid to Diengenga Trade School, Lorena Kelly's School, primary and secondary school faculties; and funds made available to purchase equipment and tools for the Diengenga Trade School, Lorena Kelly's School, and the Lodja Pastor's School. We are grateful for all who helped, especially Providence Church, in Marion.

After much frustration and prayer, the shipping container arrived in Kinshasa, and many of its contents are traveling up-country. Rev. Miner is also working with the Central Congo Area staff for the distribution, release, and installation of 250 Windows 98 work stations, which were donated by the Central Pennsylvania Conference.

In visits to D.R. Congo, it was discovered that the Wembo Nyama Hospital and the village were in very poor states, with no water or electricity. The team took their data and submitted it to a team of doctors from Johns Hopkins University, who were meeting in Kinshasa at the time and who reviewed the data and added the hospital at Wembo Nyama to their lists of hospitals needed revitalization. The bishop also requested help in fencing an important piece of property in Kinshasa with 75 pillars (\$125 each). Approximately 60% of these funds have been raised.

In late 2007, the decision was made that the D.R Congo Standing Committee and the DTS (Diengenga Trade School) Steering Committee be combined.

Golden Cross

In the spirit of Jesus, who was concerned with the whole person, and who brought physical and emotional healing, as well as spiritual healing, Golden Cross is a ministry of compassion that helps provide health and wholeness. This is done through benevolent grants to families who struggle to pay overwhelming medical bills. In the year 2007, 49 families in our conference were assisted with Golden Cross grants totaling \$35,453.27. These included six clergy families. Additionally, one scholarship grant in the amount of \$500 was given a person training to be a parish nurse.

In addition to a conference benevolences grant of \$24,000.00, Golden Cross was supported by 87 churches and by individuals, giving a total of \$15,386.89 through offerings and special gifts. This extra support continues to be the strength of this ministry. Every extra dollar given goes to assist families of our conference whose health issues are compounded with overwhelming medical bills. All pastors and churches are encouraged to enable this ministry through financial support and by applying for grants when the need is there.

A. Gayle Ford, *Director*

Proposal: Golden Cross

(Petition 3)

That all churches of our conference designate one Sunday each year as "Golden Cross Sunday" and on this Sunday lift up this ministry of compassionate care, not only giving parishioners opportunity to give

a special offering supporting this ministry, but also reminding worshipers that Golden Cross is there for them whenever they find themselves overwhelmed with medical costs. The traditional date for "Golden Cross Sunday" is the first Sunday of the month of May; however, if more appropriate to a church's schedule, another Sunday may be observed as "Golden Cross Sunday."

Mission Response Center

In 2007, the Mission Response Center (MRC) saw over \$302,000 in inventory leave for humanitarian help and disaster response. This is remarkable, in that there had been no significant hurricane activity in 2007. It also saw large gifts given through a garment factory, shoe reseller, and tool-maker. Gifts valued at over \$250,000 in retail merchandise were handled and sent to Dominican Republic, Armenia, D.R. Congo, and Liberia.

The MRC celebrates the addition of bathroom space at the center. Soon, an office/meeting space will be completed. Volunteer groups (confirmation classes on up to senior-citizen groups) are the backbones for keeping the MRC going. Some groups have established once-a-month visits, and others have come "as needed" or on a called basis. Since 2004, over 75 different groups have participated (some on a monthly basis).

The committee is grateful to have a dedicated church and community worker in Dwaine Morgan. His devotion has brought the MRC off the back burner and has given it the needed fire!

Walter Hand, *Chairperson*
Dwaine Morgan, *Director*

Project AGAPE

Our Project AGAPE Sunday was very helpful in maintaining and promoting the AGAPE ministry.

In 2006, AGAPE entered into two partnerships, one with Habitat for Humanity and the other with Heifer Project International. With Habitat, AGAPE will start rebuilding homes in the Lachin area. This partnership hopes to involve local North Carolina Habitat affiliates by finding some who will designate this area of Armenia as their tithing partner. With this flow of money, AGAPE's housing resources, and Habitat's building expertise, we hope to make a real difference in the poor housing situation in Lachin.

The other partnership was with Heifer Project, entailing the placing of 30 cows with families in the Lachin area to improve the prospects of helping families have sustainable livelihoods. However, due to the great stewardship of our staff, 43 cows were placed. In addition, enough money was raised to "pay off" this project one year early and to have over \$10,000 to go towards our own Dairy Cow Project in Armenia.

The largest need in Project AGAPE is for a new pick-up truck to replace the present 10-year-old vehicle. Our goal is \$25,000 (discounted \$15,000). This truck will facilitate getting humanitarian aid to the needy, as well as hauling volunteers and supplies to building sites.

The need still exists to collect canned meats, vegetables, fruits, new and used children's clothing, and new shoes. We are thankful for the Project AGAPE staff, volunteers, and those in the conference who have not forgotten the least, the last, and the lost!

Cecil E. Donahue, *Chairperson*

Scandinavian Caravan

Last summer, a great group of college students and adult leaders from our conference traveled to Scandinavia and the Baltic countries for several weeks of mission and cultural exchange with our fellow United Methodist churches in the Northern European Annual Conference. This summer, students and leaders from Scandinavia will travel to share in ministry, once again, with our churches in the Western North Carolina Conference. Presently, we are receiving applications from local churches willing to host this summer. After all those applications have been received, we will create a schedule and make arrangements with our counterparts in Scandinavia. As always, we are very appreciative of those local congregations in our conference that help support this ministry through their apportioned dollars, their willingness to host our guests from the Scandinavian and the Baltic counties, and offering to participate in and lead the mission.

We look forward to sharing in this ministry with our brothers and sisters from across the Atlantic for many more decades.

Timothy S. Moore, *Chairperson*

Volunteers In Mission

In 2007, Western North Carolina Conference Volunteers in Mission teams and volunteers hit new record highs. According to the office of the conference statistician, the churches of the conference reported 1,120 teams (ranging from one to 20 persons per team) and 14,234 volunteers. This is compared to 2006, with 1,031 teams and 7,989 volunteers (2005 figures were 644 teams and 4,651 volunteers)! The number of teams has almost doubled in two years, and the number of volunteers has grown four times as fast.

Many volunteers travel to Katrina-stricken areas. The Office of Mission/Outreach receives calls daily from churches wishing to hook up to work in Mississippi and Louisiana. The Wesley Foundations and other United Methodist groups at our universities and colleges continue to send groups during their spring and fall breaks. These numbers are in addition to the above figures!

In addition to disaster response teams, volunteers have caught the overseas VIM bug! Medical teams, education teams, and building teams continue to be sent to places including, but not limited to Bulgaria, Armenia, Bolivia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Cambodia, Vietnam, South Africa, and Belize. Youth, young adults, senior adults ... all are finding a place for ministry.

Team members provided a range of services: cooking for other groups, packing survivor kits, building

homes and churches, teaching Vacation Bible School, and performing surgeries and eye-care services. Based on the government's estimated value of volunteer services (\$18.04 per hour), members of the Western North Carolina Conference in 2007 provided over \$10,071,000 in services, in addition to approximately \$2,800,000 towards materials.

Michael W. Collins, *Coordinator of Missions/Outreach*

Building Teams

A total of 36 teams will be sent out in 2008 to 14 foreign countries and the state of Alaska. More than 500 team members will be building relationships with fellow Christians and helping with many projects. Teams will work on the renovation of churches, build a new sanctuary, work on additions to sanctuaries and education buildings, and work on church fellowship buildings. They will also work to improve church-related schools, building classrooms and dormitories. Some team members will have the opportunity to participate in Bible school for children.

The Building Team Committee supports teams from local churches by providing insurance and opportunities for training team leaders. We continue to investigate opportunities to send combined teams with building/medical/educational components.

We are grateful for the financial support of our annual conference and for the many gifts received from local churches and individuals which enable us to supply building materials for our teams and scholarships for special needs.

Our volunteers pay their own way and give of their valuable time to be the hands and feet of our Lord to build relationships and structures for the glory of God.

Alec M. Alvord, *Chairperson*

Disaster Response

Paul says to the church in Corinth, "He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness" (2 Corinthians 9:10). In that spirit, our annual conference has supplied seed, bread, water, nails, lumber, hammers, and labor for those suffering from disaster. In turn, our Lord has blessed us with a wonderful ministry that has touched the lives of victims and volunteers.

According to end-of-year reports submitted by local churches for 2007, the Western North Carolina Conference sent 1,120 teams to do mission, a majority of which was disaster response. A total 14,234 volunteers hung drywall, painted houses, tiled floors, cooked meals, and just listened. The dollar value of their efforts was \$10,071,000, but the impact was priceless. Many churches and districts partnered and went to Mississippi, including members of First and Union churches in the North Wilkesboro District. While a team was out for dinner, a total stranger who noticed their lime green Disaster Response T-shirts paid for their meal in appreciation of their hard work. Penny Miller, a member of Union Church in Wilkesboro, said, "When Friday came, I didn't want to go home. But, I'll be back, and I'm going to bring others with me." The Katrina/Rita relief effort continues, and we encourage you to continue the good work you are doing.

On August 15-17, 2008, our conference Disaster Response Committee will hold its second Disaster Response Academy at Elk Shoals, in beautiful Ashe County. Students will come to learn about the theology of disaster response, hone their skills with chainsaws and rain tarps, and practice their pastoral presence to serve the victims of disaster. This event has been comprehensive in its scope and provided essential training for volunteers who want to help victims of disasters. Other training events, such as early response team training, chainsaw operation, and tarping classes, will continue to be held.

Disaster response continues to bring hope to so many who are experiencing the most difficult time of their lives. Our conference has been a major force in assisting and rebuilding in many different areas. Our efforts in western North Carolina have resulted in families' being able to resume their lives in rebuilt or new housing. Thanks to hundreds of volunteer work teams, our work in the mountain area of North Carolina is almost complete. Response to Katrina victims has been tremendous, with thousands of volunteers from our conference giving of their time and talents to rebuild fractured lives and homes. The program to match districts to specific locations in the Katrina area has worked beautifully, building relationships that will last for years.

We have been blessed with a break in hurricane activity for a period of time. This has enabled the early response program to develop as we had hoped. Currently, over 2,000 people have been trained and certified in early response in the Western North Carolina Conference. A fleet of early-response vehicles is ready for immediate dispatch. Some vehicles are owned by the conference, and some are owned by individual churches. We can now provide shower facilities, laundry facilities, tool trailers, and self-sufficient trailers practically anywhere in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. All this has evolved since 2004, when our first team was being formed.

It is with both pride and humility that the volunteers of the Western North Carolina Conference can say that we have provided a Christian presence to people devastated by disasters in North Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and other parts of the world. With such efforts, the conference will continue to be a leader in providing disaster response in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. The conference should applaud the work of its paid staff and volunteers who work very hard in responding and preparing to disasters.

Edward D. McKinney, *Chairperson, 2006-07*
Larry J. Pryor, *Chairperson, 2008-09*

Medical Volunteers in Mission

The Good Samaritan Clinic, in Batey 7, near Barahona, Dominican Republic, continues to be the number-one outreach of the Medical Volunteers in Mission Committee of the annual conference. Built with conference funding, the medical clinic has established yearly budgets, met through donations of interested parties, grants, and visiting doctors, nurses, and construction personnel. The committee hopes the persons exposed to the ministry will tithe to the effort, as well as encourage their congregations to become committed, long-term sponsors of the program (see conference Advance Specials, above). There are three medical teams headed to the Dominican Republic in 2007.

The Good Samaritan Clinic officially opened in 2003 and originally was expected to serve one batey. It is presently the only medical clinic serving three bateys. Without this ministry, there would be no medical help in the area. In 2006, Dr. Jorge shared that 170 surgeries, 4,000 consultations, and 141 emergencies were treated. In addition, teams have gone to the bateys to build toilets and to help with the water supply. Through these hygiene efforts, it is hoped to better control germs and bacteria in the bateys, as well as to cut down on the violence in the area (women no longer needing to venture into the forest to relieve themselves, resulting in fewer rapes).

The newest project is the VBS Good Samaritan Kits presently being prepared by churches and VBS groups. Through these kits and the funds associated, the ministries will continue. Mark November 2, 2008, on your church calendar, as it has been designated as Medical VIM Sunday by CMAC action.

Mike Barringer, M.D., *Chairperson*

Waynesville District Disaster Response Board

Since the flooding and storms caused by hurricanes Frances and Ivan in September 2004, much has been accomplished in the Waynesville District (seven westernmost North Carolina counties), and many have served in myriad tasks to show God's love. From counseling to flood buckets and supplies given out, with early response teams immediately taking care of needs such as mucking out homes to providing financial assistance and hammering nails for repairs to build new homes, United Methodists have been there.

A local board was established that not only set guidelines and policies, but also enables members to assist with a number of items from bookkeeping to getting supplies to meeting and greeting volunteers and helping to do the work. Two people were hired: a licensed general contractor, and a volunteer coordinator/case-work manager, who would attend any essential meetings and/or training, handling each client from entry to completion, talk with volunteers willing to work and help them select dates, understand the work, and then travel here and do the work, pull all permits and handle the projects from inception to completion.

- Cleanout (from mucking out to taking down sheetrock, insulation, and more).
- Minor home repairs (repairing one specific area damaged by water).
- Major repair (replacing everything except the studs, including sheetrock, bathrooms, appliances, roofing and more.) Damage could not exceed 50% of the value of the home.
- Replacing homes with new homes (including assistance in finding credit at a reasonable rate so that the homeowner could secure a loan for materials, coordinating and overseeing volunteers' work from preparing the foundation to landscaping and sidewalks on the finished home).
- Spiritual and restorative care (this began with the first of the two floods, and continues after work is completed as security, hope, and faith were shaken and specialized pastor assistance was/is needed.)

More than 300 families have been assisted with a variety of services, from counseling to financial assistance to total rebuilds or new homes. Some assistance was as simple as leveraging monies from the Unmet Needs Committee for a new heating system, or as complex as finding land available and building a new home. More than \$1 million has been spent from the Waynesville District Disaster Response account to do the work to rebuild lives and communities. Several million additional dollars have gone toward the effort through volunteer labor and leveraged funds paid directly to vendors.

Leveraged monies have made United Methodist dollars go further and have allowed much more to be accomplished as homes have been repaired and rebuilt, but it has also created community and given much needed hope to a despairing group of people. United Way funds—local, state, and national—have assisted. Catholic Charities, Red Cross, the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, state funds—Governors Phase I and Phase II—as administered through the Unmet Needs Committee, the Salvation Army, and others have paid for materials and services for clients directly to the vendors for work done by United Methodist volunteers. And, in addition to United Methodist and UMCOR funds, Lutheran, Church World Service and other funding has been deposited into the United Methodist account and used for home repair and rebuilding.

No other faith-based organization has been directly involved since June 11, 2005, and in a public meeting in August, officials for the town of Clyde stated, "...the town could not have been rebuilt without the Methodists." In 2007, 700 volunteers contributed more than \$375,000 worth of labor to help rebuild homes. As of July 1, 2008, all flood recovery work is expected to be completed. *First in and last out.* It was a fact here. You have truly been the hands and feet of Christ as you fed his sheep. Many people have reaped from what you sowed. THANK YOU!

William Cannon, *President*
Jackie Bolden, *Case Worker and Volunteer Coordinator*

Wesley Community Development Corporation

Wesley Community Development Corporation opened its doors in Statesville in early 2002, funded by a grant from The Duke Endowment to the Western North Carolina Conference. The mission of this non-profit organization is to build "communities of grace and hope" by constructing high quality, energy-efficient, affordable homes across the conference for all who qualify, regardless of religion, race, creed, handicap, gender, age, or national origin. "Affordable" housing is obtained through layers of financing through grants, subsidies, and low-cost loans, so that a quality home may be built for low- and very low-income families, with house payments they can afford.

Volunteers are very important to our program. Volunteer labor is used in order to reduce construction cost, and this saving is passed on to the homeowner. Particular care is taken in construction techniques to minimize normal homeowner costs, such as heating and cooling expenses. All of our homeowners must contribute their own volunteer labor to the construction of their homes.

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 income, and special financial considerations may apply. Following client identification and qualification, support 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. To date, we have completed over 50 homes in western North Carolina and have never lost a homeowner to foreclosure.

Working in close cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA), and the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB), we completed 12 homes in 2007, including: five in Yadkinville; four in the community of Olin, near Harmony, north of Statesville; two in Troutman; and one in Lenoir, using our new "Faith Based" program, where we worked in partnership with First United Methodist Church of Lenoir and Habitat for Humanity. Our rental housing initiative was started in 2007 with the establishment of Wesley Rental Housing Corporation as a wholly owned subsidiary of Wesley CDC.

In 2008, we intend to complete construction of a minimum of 14 single-family homes. Most of these homes will be in our developments in Yadkinville, Olin, and Troutman; however, we also see the opportunity to increase participation of churches throughout the conference in our "Faith Based" program. We will also continue planning and site acquisition for our first rental housing project. Our vision is that each rental housing community will provide us with an opportunity to lead credit counseling and homebuyer education classes at the rental community center, and our renters will eventually become qualified to be homeowners in one of our single-family communities.

Roy J. Helm, Jr., *President*

Randolph H. Harry, *Chairperson, Board of Directors*

Proposal: Directors of Wesley Community Development Corporation

(Petition 4)

The Board of Directors of Wesley Community Development Corporation proposes that the following persons be confirmed by the annual conference as members of that board:

J. Richard Alsop, Jr.	Oliver W. Helsabeck	Valerie B. Rosenquist
Janet H. Collins	Stephen H. Kirby	David E. Smith, Jr.
Walter Hand	Dennis B. Marshall	Leigh Ann Smith
Randolph H. Harry	Helen Rogers	Samuel H. Smith, Jr.

Conference Director of Volunteer Ministries
Conference Director of Connectional Ministries

c. 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." It is our prayer that all of our churches will become vital churches making disciples of Jesus Christ.

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

Faith Sharing Workshop: This was held in August as a partnership with the Gastonia District and was led by Dr. George Morris, of the Evangelism Institute at Emory University. This was open to the conference and had over 235 in attendance from seven districts.

Art of the Start: This program is offered each year for all pastors starting their first appointments in our conference. They may be new graduates of seminary or the School for the Licensing of Local Pastors, and some are transferring into our conference from other conferences. Three sessions are given: one on the day before annual conference, a retreat in August, and a third in the fall. The United Methodist Foundation partnered with us this year to expand the third session into a training event on stewardship, which was held in October in Charlotte.

Churches of Excellence Awards: To encourage ministries of evangelism and congregational devel-

opment, the commission recognizes churches each year that have reached benchmarks that included increasing their worship attendance by 5%, receiving a percentage of their new members on profession of faith, starting a new small group or class, and paying their apportionment askings in full. Twenty-six churches applied for this award and were recognized last year at annual conference. The Church of Excellence booklets were redesigned to be used by local churches as a resource book for ideas for evangelism and outreach ministries.

For the 2007 statistical year, we will be combining our Churches of Excellence Award requirements with those of the outreach ministry award, Reach for the Stars, forming the **new Five Star Churches of Excellence Award**.

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. Last year, our Denman Award recipients were announced by Bishop Richard C. Looney, director of the Foundation for Evangelism. Katie S. Fralic, of First Church, Conover, received the Laity Award, and Robert E. Fuquay, Jr., senior pastor of Long's Chapel Church, Lake Junaluska, received the Clergy Award.

Methodist Motorsports Evangelism: Begun as a way to reach new people for Jesus Christ, MME has local church volunteers giving out fan guides and interacting with race fans during ten weeks of summer races at Lowes Motor Speedway in Concord. Three cars raced this year with the United Methodist Church cross-and-flame logo. The commission paid for the fan guides. C. Darrin Everhart, pastor of Royal Oaks Church, Kannapolis, is the coordinator for MME. In addition to participating in the races, Rev. Everhart and the MME team members take the race cars and make presentations at local churches about evangelism. The race cars are privately owned, insured, and maintained by Mike and Aletha Morgan. Jeff and Deneen Sellers, Charles and Sybil Long, and Charles and Kelly Long, Jr. The race car drivers have been Chris Morgan, Kendall Sellers, and Charles Long, Jr. We are indebted to them for making this ministry possible.

Emerging Ministries Task Force: A sub-committee of the commission was formed this year to make connections with college students through our United Methodist Wesley Foundations. The purpose of this is to learn from these young adults how the church can best meet their needs in worship, service opportunities, and spiritual development.

Hospitality Evangelism Task Force: A sub-committee of the commission was formed this year to utilize the resources provided by Igniting Ministries, "Beyond 30 Seconds," to help local churches improve their ministries of hospitality. It is the goal of this task force to develop training in districts for "Mystery Guest Teams," to visit local churches at their invitation to observe how they are greeted; the appeal of the church's parking, grounds; nursery facilities; and the worship experience. Feedback is given from the "mystery guest" to the pastor and lay leaders about the visit for them to use to improve their hospitality ministry.

Effective Evangelism Strategies for Reaching Unchurched Persons for Jesus Christ: This is a resource developed by our director, Nancy B. Rankin, and has been presented in local churches and district leadership conferences.

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 Memorial Center and on our website.

New Members Curriculum: A leader's guide and a participant's manual are available in a four-session format and are downloadable from the conference website.

With 40% of our churches reporting no adult professions of faith in 2007, we are truly challenged to reclaim Christ's Great Commission and Great Commandment. We are committed to helping local churches to "intentionally reach unchurched persons for Jesus Christ." We thank you for your support of the ministries of the Commission on Witness Ministries.

Louise Jones, *Chairperson*
Robert L. Kerr, *Vice-Chairperson*
Nancy B. Rankin, *Director*

3. ADVOCACY AGENCIES

a. COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS CONCERNS

Because the participating denominations in Churches Uniting in Christ have not yet agreed on a proposal for full communion to submit to the ten member denominations, the matter will not come before the United Methodist General Conference this year. Nevertheless, our commission will continue to present the most recent proposal to district leadership conferences in those district of our conference that have not yet conducted the study.

In the meantime, the commission is making plans for meetings of individual United Methodist churches with individual churches of the five denominations with which The United Methodist Church is presently engaged in a nationwide ecumenical dialogue looking toward full communion: The Episcopal Church (USA), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

The annual LARCUM meeting of the bishops of the United Methodist, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, and Roman Catholic churches was held on May 19 and 20. The featured speaker was Bill J. Leonard, dean of Wake Forest University Divinity School. His subject was, "Emerging Spiritualities."
Sydnor Thompson, *Chairperson and Bishop's Ecumenical Liaison*

b. COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

The members of the conference Commission on Religion and Race (CORR) continue our commitment to follow the mandate outlined for the General Commission on Religion and Race in ¶ 2002 of *The Book of Discipline*:

...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, it is the responsibility of the commission to: 1) Give voice to the issues and concerns of racial ethnic people. 2) Counsel church leaders and members on different facets of a racially inclusive church and society. 3) Facilitate workshops 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.

The commission continues our responsibility to monitor and evaluate conference and district boards, agencies, commissions, and committees. During the 2007 annual conference, CORR advocated for the election of a diverse delegation to Jurisdictional and General conferences with the *Inclusiveness Counts!* campaign. Particular attention is being given to monitoring the impact the new conference reorganization will have on racial ethnic ministries. Additionally, the commission has made a commitment to explore how best to advocate for the inclusion of racial ethnic constituents on the various conference boards, agencies, commissions, and committees.

The commission continues to work on the development of an inclusiveness/affirmative action policy for our annual conference. We had hoped to bring forth this policy during the 2008 annual conference; however, additional time is needed in the formulation of such a policy.

CORR did not sponsor a multicultural event during the fall of 2007 (although plans are under way for this event in 2008). Instead, it was decided to support the Southeastern Jurisdictional Multicultural Celebration scheduled for December 2007. Our conference was well represented at the Southeastern Jurisdictional *Transforming Lives by Embracing God's Diversity: Listening-Learning-Celebrating-Empowering*. Those who attended indicated that it was a spiritually transformative experience. Those who participated in this program were charged to share their experience and knowledge throughout the annual conference.

The commission was excited at the prospect of introducing some of the tools and skills learned at the jurisdictional multicultural event during our 2008 Martin L. King celebration. Great care went into planning the event for January 2008. There was great disappointment when this event had to be canceled due to inclement weather. Please mark your calendars for the 2009 MLK celebration on January 17.

Over the past several years, our commission has been a partner with the various ethnic and justice ministries organizations of the conference to work collaboratively in the development of a Summit on Poverty and Suffering. This powerful summit, which took place in February, is only the first step in providing the tools and skills that churches need to empower individuals and families who have been profoundly impacted by socio-economic disparities in our society.

During the initial two years of this quadrennium, our commission met on a consistent basis, which equipped our group to effectively accomplish its prescribed tasks. The budget cuts and cost controls of the past two years, particularly in the area of meetings and travel, have impeded the work of the commission. It was identified that conference calls are not an effective means to complete the work of the Commission on Religion and Race. The group reinstated their commitment to meet on a more regular basis to ensure that the commission is serving the ministries and missions of the conference.

Over the past four years, many people have been a vital part of the CORR. Words of gratitude must be expressed for all the committed members of the commission, as well for as all who have supported our work throughout this quadrennium.

I pray for the continued strengthening of our individual and collective spirits as we nurture throughout our conference unity in Christ that values diversity.

Kathy FitzJefferies, *Chairperson*

c. COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women began this past year in transition, needing to replace some officers. Amelia Stinson-Wesley was elected to fill out the quadrennium as chairperson, and Jill Alventosa-Brown was elected vice-chairperson. We held a retreat in October to work on data collection for the quadrennial survey on clergywomen, as well as to set realistic goals for the remainder of the quadrennium. We remain committed to providing education about the gifts and talents of lay- and clergywomen across our annual conference, as well as to the idea of addressing the inequity of compensation

between clergywomen and clergymen. We are also committed to the advocate program whereby trained lay and clergy persons are assigned by the bishop to stand with a person bringing charges of misconduct against a clergyperson. We support the Board of Ordained Ministry's continued training of all clergy in the area of clergy sexual ethics, but we would like to see an office of clergy sexual ethics established within the annual conference to oversee both the training and continuing education of clergy in this area, as well as to provide resources and support to those adjudicating complaints of misconduct. We are deeply concerned about the health and wellbeing of congregations where a breach of trust has occurred, and we would like to see more resources address the long-term issues facing congregations who have experienced such a breach. We are trusting that the COSROW constituted for the next quadrennium will be able to complete the data collection and statistical surveys of the status of clergywomen in our annual conference.

S. Amelia Stinson-Wesley, Chairperson
Jill D. Alventosa-Brown, Vice-Chairperson

d. COMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES

The Committee on African American Ministries continues to be an advocate for strengthening the black church for the 21st century. The annual convocation was held in September 2007. Additionally, more of the predominantly African American churches have partnered with SBC21 of the general church. The goals include:

- Value clergy and lay leadership;
- Foster partnership between clergy and laity;
- Demonstrate a clear mission;
- Enable and nurture all persons to grow spiritually;
- Provide for education, Bible study, and other faith-formation development;
- Engage in vibrant and varied worship;
- Engage in a cycle of planning, doing, evaluating, and refocusing their ministry;
- Value Christian hospitality and their Wesleyan and cultural heritages;
- Engage their residential communities creatively and faithfully; and
- Act on needs, problems, and issues arising from social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of life.

God has equipped each church with the resources to do ministry. Praise God that many churches are beginning to learn from each other. It is our hope that the Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century initiative can leave a legacy of spiritual vitality and evangelistic growth and transformation.

Albert O. Perkins, *Chairperson*

e. COMMITTEE ON ASIAN AMERICAN MINISTRIES

Our committee is working hard to earn the trust of our Asian United Methodist churches. It is hard to gain the trust of our brothers and sisters when most of them have basically been on their own since the beginning of their church. The cooperative ministry, or the connectional system, is something new to our Asian United Methodist churches. We are trying to gain their trust, one inch at a time. It will be hard for us to move forward without the support of our churches and their members.

We had our first Asian American Heritage Celebration in 2007, to which we received a good response from our Asian American churches. We will try to continue the celebration for the second year in 2008. We hope and pray that this will open the eyes and hearts of our brothers and sisters to see the cooperative ministry of the Committee on Asian American Ministries and feel better in connecting to the connectional system.

As for our clergy, this summer will see our fourth annual Asian Clergy Convocation with our brothers and sisters from the North Carolina Annual Conference. This is one of the training and fellowship events we have for our Asian clergy members. Once we have our clergy members and the members of our Asian American United Methodist churches on board, we will be able to do greater things for the Lord.

Cher Lue Vang, *Chairperson*

f. COMMITTEE ON CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The very nature of the ministry of the Committee on Church and Society is to *Follow Jesus* wherever His footsteps may lead us, to help the church to **be** faithful Christians, even if it means being challenged to grow beyond our comfort zones. Just as the ministry of Jesus challenged the unjust systems of His society, which oppressed women, lepers, Samaritans, the poor, and the ill, so the challenge remains for us today. To actually *Follow Jesus* means that we will have to lead congregations beyond the walls to the city squares, roads, villages, hillsides, lakes, and plains, or, in other words, into the "public squares" of our communities, states, nation, and world, and there to *Make Disciples* (**whole** disciplines) who care about

the world and its brokenness as much as God cares, compassionate disciples who respond, not with ministries of mercy alone, for this is not social justice and is therefore not good enough if we are to *Transform the World* and its systems of justice which are not just.

During the past year, some of our areas of focus have been the conference Summit on Poverty and Suffering, the centennial celebration of the Social Creed of The United Methodist Church, environmental sustainability, offering scholarships to peace conferences and the United Methodist Women's School of Christian Mission, instituting a social justice award, and promoting Middle East peace.

Phase I of the Summit on Poverty and Suffering, with the theme, "Reconnecting our Village and Spiritually Transforming our World," was held February 23, 2008, at Rocky Mount Church, Mooresville. With over 300 persons registering for this conference, and more than half of those attending making covenants "to develop ministries with the poor and suffering in local communities," we already thank God for the success of this work, which is a collaborative effort with other conference committees and commissions which make up the Poverty Summit Design Team. A very special thanks to our episcopal leader, Bishop J. Lawrence McCleskey, who, through his sermon, offered a challenge to United Methodists regarding ways to use their 2008 rebate stimulus checks. We also thank Mark R. Sills, keynote speaker at this event, who reminded us to speak truth to power in love and offered a consistent challenge to rediscover ways to call sinners to repentance. We owe a debt of gratitude to the pastors and laity who presented workshops for this first phase and are offering follow-up training for Phase II; to Lillie M. Jones and the staff of the Office of Ethnic and Justice Ministries; and to Mark L. Barden and Marty Folsom, of the Office of Communications, for working along with us. Enough cannot be said about the people of Rocky Mount Church for their hospitality and support. We thank also The Duke Endowment for support in funding this initiative. We look forward to the ministries that are developed this fall throughout our conference during Phase II and the praise reports coming forth in the spring of 2009 with Phase III.

The year 2008 marks the 100th anniversary of the Social Creed of The United Methodist Church. We have throughout the quadrennium been encouraging all churches to have studies on the Social Principles. As part of this celebration, the committee has instituted a social justice award to recognize a church, group, or individual within the conference that is involved in *Transforming the World* through significant ministries of justice (social, environmental, restorative, etc.). As we acknowledge that all of creation is in the image of God and should be valued and revered, and that we are called to live in relationship with creation, we recommend the website www.nccouncilofchurches.org, where churches may click on the areas of work to find many suggestions and tools for leading congregations in environmental justice work, as well as sharing faith statements on climate change. In partnership with Eco-Palms, we encourage churches to promote social justice, environmental stewardship, and fair trade by purchasing fair trade palm fronds for various types of floral arrangements and encouraging local florists to use them in their arrangements. For more information on how to use this program, go to the website www.cinram.umn.edu or contact Dennis Testerman at 704-920-3303. We offered scholarships for the Living Faith, Seeking Justice (Resourcing Local Churches for Justice Ministry) Conference sponsored by the General Board of Church and Society and to the 2008 Peace Conference at Lake Junaluska. We also offered scholarships in each district for laity and clergy to attend the UMWomen's School of Christian Mission to become engaged in the study of Israel/Palestine to further our understanding and promotion of peace.

The committee expresses gratitude to our conference staff and ministry coordinator, Mark L. Barden, for his leadership, creativity, and guidance in our work. I thank, also, the committee members for their diligent efforts in all of our meetings and ministry efforts to this great conference. We continue to be prayerful for all of the work of our conference, the leaders in the decision-making, and, most of all, that we may lean, not to our own understanding, but in all of our ways acknowledge Christ Jesus, that He may direct our paths.

Pamela Shoffner, *Chairperson*

g. COMMITTEE ON HISPANIC MINISTRIES

The conference Committee on Hispanic Ministries has seen positive and promising opportunities for ministry among Hispanics/Latinos.

During this past year, we have seen some significant changes in leadership: We have received a new coordinator of Hispanic/Latino ministries (reduced from a full-time position to only 1/3 time); we have, as a group of pastors and lay missionaries, met together monthly to share, envision, and plan. We have prayed together. We have learned to support each other and our ministries in a new and greater way. There is an exciting, dynamic energy: Alongside the committee, we have formed a new, extended group of leaders from around the conference, Hispanic and non-Hispanic, clergy and laity, who join together with a heart and vision to embrace, revitalize, and create new Hispanic/Latino ministries.

Almost all of our Hispanic/Latino churches, missions, and outreach ministries continue to grow in outreach and ministry among Hispanics. We discovered and contracted with the Intercultural Institute for Contextual Ministry to receive "Hispanic/Latino-only data" demographic studies of the 15 counties in western North Carolina with the highest population of Hispanics/Latinos and training in interpretation of the statistics and assistance in strategic planning for outreach. Through a strategic plan, we presented our hopes and dreams for continued growth for Hispanic/Latino ministries in western North Carolina to our conference Council on Congregational Development. We received a positive and instructional response from Nancy B. Rankin and a subcommittee of the council.

We were inspired by dialogue with Edgardo Colon, director of the House of Hispanic Studies at Duke Divinity School, and Philip Wingeier-Rayo, of Pfeiffer University, on various training programs for Hispanic/Latino pastors and lay leaders. We have made an investment in the spiritual and leadership formation of our Hispanic/Latino pastors and lay missionaries. We continued our partnership with the Farmworker Ministry Committee of the North Carolina Council of Churches to do educational outreach concerning Hispanic/Latinos, immigration, farmworker concerns, and related issues. We met with Director of Connectional Ministries Arnetta E. Beverly to discuss the immediate future of Hispanic/Latino ministries in the conference.

We also faced together the difficulty of the current anti-immigrant attitude in our society; the pain and struggle of the possible closure of our only chartered Hispanic/Latino United Methodist church, Vida Nueva, in the Northeast District; the trouble of legal issues relating to our pastors and lay leaders; and the difficulty of sharing information and correcting misinformation with our non-Hispanic brothers and sisters.

We have experienced many roadblocks recently to the conference's rising to the occasion and ministering to "the least of these," perhaps the best description for Hispanics in our midst. We, as a committee of the annual conference and as your brothers and sisters in Christ, beg of you to hear the stories of the Hispanic/Latino community in your area and to reach out in the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. May our conference slogan—"Follow Jesus, Make Disciples, Transform the World"—become more than hollow words for each of us, as we open our eyes and see many people who are like sheep without a shepherd, drawn to our nation by the promise of work and freedom, but harassed and helpless in so many ways. We hope to challenge many United Methodist congregations to be truly United Methodist and open to Hispanic/Latino ministry in their communities. We pray for our Hispanic/Latino pastors and lay leaders. Join us in the adventure of reaching out to the Hispanic/Latino population!

Leonard O. Fair, *Chairperson*
David R. Ortigoza, *Director of Hispanic Ministries*

h. COMMITTEE ON NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES

The Conference Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) has assisted two persons who are attending the local-pastors' licensing school this year. For the first time in the history of this committee, we sent a youth representative to a writing workshop in Oklahoma. Phillip Bullard, youth representative to the committee, is 16 years of age. He enjoyed his first plane ride to Oklahoma City. Once the writing conference was over, he toured the site of the Murrah Building bombing there. The CONAM is planning a retreat for youth, because our youth are our future. In 2007-08, we have sent 20 youth to special youth workshops, and we are pleased to say we had eight persons attend the Southeastern Jurisdiction multicultural event, "Transforming Lives by Embracing God's Diversity," at Lake Junaluska. We realized at this conference that our CONAM is persevering. Our CONAM has grown many new leaders and is looking forward to doing an even better job this next quadrennium.

Currently, we are doing long-range planning for the CONAM. We thank God for the churches which celebrate Native American Ministries Sunday so that we will have funds to assist Native pastors in furthering their education and assist Native churches in building Native American leadership in the annual conference and jurisdiction.

Neffie Connie Locklear, *Chairperson*

4. CONFERENCE RESOURCE CENTER

This conference year, we celebrate 40 years of media ministry in the Western North Carolina Conference! We celebrate where we have come from—the times of 16mm films and filmstrips—and where we are now—the age of videos, DVDs, and CD-ROMs. We have been the Audio-Visual Library, the Media Center, the Resource Center, and now are affectionately known as "The Fishin' Hole" (with its mascot, a goldfish named "Aguppe"). We have had great leaders: Carol York, Carolyn Mitchell, Barbara Cox, and Mary Robinson. Now we are led by the Resource Center Ministry Team, composed of clergy and laity, and staffed by a Christian educator, Sonja Clough.

Through the listening sessions and feedback from member churches, the Resource Center Ministry Team has found several common themes:

- The resource center is a tangible outreach of the conference that is easily available to both clergy and laity in the local church.
- The resource center makes cost-prohibitive resources available to all. Smaller churches do not usually have the funds to purchase costly program materials, such as books, videos, and DVD kits.
- Churches practice good stewardship by borrowing rather than purchasing resources they plan only to use once.
- It is helpful to have a Christian educator as the coordinator of the resource center, to make recommendations to pastors, teachers, and leaders in the local churches.
- The resource center offers the local church books, videos, and DVDs that help the church to meet the seven-point vision of the conference. Not only does the center "teach and learn Biblically-

based discipleship and leadership" through Bible studies and numerous small-group studies, but it also offers resources on each of the other points: diversity, evangelism, stewardship, shepherding, poverty, and Africa University.

We celebrate the churches that are our "new members," as we have enjoyed a more than 30% increase this year, and we are grateful for those churches which regularly use our books, videos, and DVDs. We look with eagerness to the future of this growing ministry, and to new ideas and new venues.

As we celebrate 40 years of ministry, we invite you, the members, both lay and clergy, of the annual conference, to continue to support the work of the resource center by encouraging your own local church to participate as a full member of the Western North Carolina Conference Resource Center.

Visit "The Fishin' Hole" online at www.wnccumc.org/rsc/resourcecenter.htm or call 1-800-562-7929, extension 141, to find resources to strengthen your church and bless your ministry.

The members of the Resource Center Ministry Team are Barbara J. Barden, chairperson; Dana M. Bunn; Brandon K. Dirks; Katherine K. (Kitty) Crain; Tiajuana F. (Tina) Mosby; Deyanira T. Ramos; Yvonne L. (Vonnie) Vredenburg; and Sonja S. Clough, coordinator/conference staff.

Barbara J. Barden, *Chairperson*
Sonja S. Clough, *Coordinator*

REPORTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

COUNCIL ON CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vision 20:20, the strategic plan for congregational development, was approved by the bishop and Cabinet members in May of 2006. It was created to "flesh out" the first objective of the Conference Vision Plan, to "Intentionally relate unchurched persons to Jesus Christ." **Vision 20:20 provides strategies and initiatives to help existing and new churches reach people for Christ and make them his disciples.** It is the vision of congregational development that all of our churches will be vital churches making disciples of Jesus Christ. We believe our mission is to "empower, equip, and encourage all of our churches to be vital churches making disciples of Jesus Christ."

Vision 20:20 was presented by the CONRAD (Committee on Research and Development) Team and the council director in all 14 districts in 2006. Laities and pastors in each district were invited from specific churches and categories to consider sponsoring new churches, doing an assessment of their own potential, adopting mission churches, becoming resource centers for area churches, cooperating with other churches to provide community ministries, and to consider the growth in their communities and ways to respond to that growth.

Vision 20:20 Building Blocks to Implement the Plan

- 1. Training for Clergy and Lay Effectiveness**
- 2. Church Vitality Initiatives**
- 3. Launching and Supervision of New Faith Communities**
- 4. Financial Development**

Updates

1. Training for Clergy and Lay Effectiveness:

Evangelism Conference for the Small Membership Church was held in March at Christ Church in Hickory, with over 150 clergy and laity in attendance. It was planned in partnership with the United Methodist Rural Fellowship group and Town and Country Ministries. Dr. Ron Crandall, of Asbury Seminary, was the keynote speaker and one of the workshop leaders. Other workshops were led by our own clergy and laity to help equip our rural and small-membership churches to more effectively reach new people and share their faith.

Faith Sharing Workshop was held in August through our partnership with the Gastonia District. Dr. George Morris, of the Evangelism Institute at Emory University, was the workshop leader. This was open to the conference and had over 235 in attendance from seven districts.

Both the Evangelism Conference and the Faith Sharing Workshop were coordinated through the Commission on Witness Ministries as a part of its ministry outreach in the conference and for which the director of congregational development is the conference liaison. This is just one of many examples of how witness and congregational development are dovetailed.

Natural Church Development Training for Coaches was held in October, with 20 pastors trained. The Reverend Dave Wetzler, of Church Smart Resources, led the training. Brett R. Cogan and Robert L. Kerr have agreed to be our conference coordinators through the Office of Congregational Development for the Natural Church Development process. We are encouraging all of our districts to have NCD orientation workshops to introduce this resource to their churches.

District Boards of Church Location and Building were trained at the request of the Cabinet. Two Saturday training events were offered, one in October and the other in December. A new manual was created and given to the participants as a joint effort by the Office of Treasury Services, The United Methodist Foundation, and the Office of Congregational Development. Joseph P. McGuire and Bill H. Osborne gave