

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. Lait 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

presentations representing Treasury Services; David A. Snipes and P. Glenn Kinken III led from The United Methodist Foundation; and Nancy Burgin Rankin, from the Office of Congregational Development, led the training events.

CHECKING VITAL SIGNS: Assessing Local Church Potential, written by Dr. Rankin and Beverly B. Copley, was used by over 40 churches this year to discern God's calling for their churches and to develop plans for their futures. Facilitators for this curriculum were trained in October to add to the 200 who were trained last January to meet the demand for churches wanting to use the curriculum.

Renewable Downtown First Church Seminar was held in February at First Church, High Point, with over 60 in attendance. Dr. Doug Anderson, director of the Rueben Job Leadership Institute, brought a team of successful downtown church pastors, Rev. Marvin Arnpriester, of Broadway UMC in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Revs. John Flowers and Karen Vannoy, a clergy couple who led the renewal of Travis Park UMC in San Antonio, Texas.

Training events held in local churches and district events by Dr. Rankin included: "Prayerful Strategic Planning," "Starting a New Worship Service," "Functional Structures: Church Council Organization for Ministry," "Natural Church Development Orientation," "Benchmark Covenant Process for New Church Starts," "Using Percept Demographics," "Size Characteristics of Churches," and "Effective Evangelism Strategies."

2. Church Vitality Initiatives:

First priority was given to African American churches and churches in static, declining, or changing situations.

The African American Churches Initiative Task Force was convened by Lillie M. Jones, with Donald Jenkins serving as the chairperson. This task force completed a year-long process and will be bringing a proposal to the bishop and Cabinet members addressing the needs of the African American churches and targeting new church plants. Six of their churches are already participating in a two-year training process through the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church, and areas for future new churches have been identified. They received a \$150,000 grant from congregational development to help with the implementation of the task force's plans.

Churches in Static, Declining, or Changing Situations have been encouraged to use the *CHECKING VITAL SIGNS: Assessing Your Local Church Potential* curriculum, and over 40 have completed or are completing that process. To address the task force recommendations, the Office of Congregational Development has been helping connect them with training and other resources to implement their plans. Small grants have also been made available for rural churches to implement their plans from The Duke Endowment.

3. Launching and Supervision of New Faith Communities:

This area of work continues to be a primary focus of congregational development.

Assessment Workshops for Potential New Church Start Pastors. In addition to having coaches trained to coach our new church start pastors, we had assessors trained to lead these workshops. Jeffrey T. Copley is the assessment coordinator. Five workshops have been completed. Future new church start pastors will be appointed from the "pool" of pastors who assess as potential new church start pastors. Our new church start pastors are now sent to a national "boot camp" for church planters, and they attend the National School of Congregational Development and our conference Church Planter's Network meetings.

"A *Benchmark Covenant*" document is now required of our new church starts that outlines how they will effectively reach new people and disciple them. These covenants are reviewed to be sure the new church start is progressing toward sustainability once the conference funding cycle has ended. An orientation to the benchmark covenant process was presented to every new church start by the director.

Coaching of New Church Start Pastors and their launch teams has been put into place. Pastors in our conference have been trained to coach these new church start pastors and their lay teams. These steps have been put into place to try to give as much support as possible to pastors and congregations in new churches.

New churches begun in 2007: Forest Hill Hispanic Mission, Concord, Frank Ramos, pastor; Maple Springs (new outreach), Winston-Salem, David E. Smith, Jr., pastor; Sanctuary (now full-time), Charlotte, Percival T. Reeves, pastor; First Church, Charlotte (new outreach), Ann E. Self, pastor. We committed \$301,300 in salary grants for these pastors in 2007. New churches continuing on our salary grants for 2008, in addition to these new starts, include Christ-St. Stephen, Hickory, Thomas C. Mabry, pastor, and Crossroads-Kannapolis, Andrew D. Brown, pastor.

4. Financial Development:

This continues to be a challenge for congregational development, as the Vision 20:20 plan identified 40 new church targets and multiple areas for revitalization. With over 40% of our existing churches reporting no adult professions of faith at a time when our conference area is experiencing a population boom, we need many strategies and the funding to implement them, so that our churches can be effective in intentionally relating unchurched people to Christ.

The Vital Partners Fund was introduced three years ago as the successor to the Vision Builders Society. Contributions to Vital Partners totaled \$28,652.32 at the close of 2007. We will continue to need support beyond the conference apportionment asking to fulfill the needs of our churches in our growing population areas.

The Vital Signs newsletter was developed to tell the stories of new church development and revitalization of existing churches and encourage support of the congregational development apportionment asking

and additional gifts.

The Grants Committee of Congregational Development makes recommendations to the conference Council on Congregational Development to award qualified applicants grants for remission projects and purchases of land and buildings and to help them with evangelistic outreach to their communities. Grants totaling \$740,000 were awarded in 2007 to Christ-St. Stephens (ST); First Church, Stanley (GA); Arbor Grove (NW); Crossfire (NW); Mt. Carmel (SA); First Church, Troutman (ST); FaithBridge (NW); Chestnut Grove (LE) African American Initiative; Faith (ST); Vida Nueva (NE); and Centro Cristiano (AL). Grants totaling \$320,000 as of March 2008 were awarded to Greater Vision (CH); College Place (GR); Redeemer's Light (ST); First Landis (SA); and First Street, Albemarle (AL).

It is our hope that many of our churches in changing population areas will be open to receiving training in effective evangelism strategies to reach out to the new people in their parishes. With the remarkable population growth within the bounds of our conference, our churches have many new opportunities to reach people for Christ. Congregational development wants to partner with them.

The Office of Congregational Development and the conference Council on Congregational Development will be reorganized into a conference Board of Congregational Development. The director of con-
nectional ministries will be in charge of training and programs of congregational development.

We thank you for the privilege of serving in this exciting ministry area since 2004, and we look forward to continued service in other ministry arenas of the conference.

Michael G. Carle, *President*
Nancy B. Rankin, *Director*

COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

a. BENNETT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

I. Students (as of fall semester 2006)	
A. Full-time students	591
B. Part-time students	16
C. Full-time equivalent enrollment	598
D. Full-time North Carolina students	153
E. Full-time United Methodist students	51
F. Resident students	435
G. Non-resident (day) students	172
H. Male students	0
I. Female students	607
J. Foreign students	7
K. Number of students receiving financial aid	539
II. Faculty (as of fall semester 2006)	
A. Number of full-time faculty	49
B. Number of part-time faculty	21
C. Full-time equivalent faculty	56
D. Degrees of full-time faculty:	
Doctorates	31
Masters	13
E. Average salary of full-time faculty	\$43,205
F. Average compensation of full-time faculty	8,196
III. Operating Finances (7-1-05 to 6-30-06)	
A. Operating income	\$19,878,314
1. Student fees	7,453,943
2. Endowment income (unrestricted)	528,019
3. Church sources	624,015
4. Auxiliary enterprises	2,487,129
5. Student aid (restricted) (included in student fees)	2,509,010
6. Other	23,880
B. Operating expenses	17,993,596
1. Instructional	6,847,528
2. Administrative and general	7,770,360
3. Library	181,168
4. Physical plant (included throughout other areas)	
5. Student aid	
6. Auxiliary enterprises	1,895,738
7. Other	1,298,802
C. Operating deficit at beginning of 2006-2007	