

20. REPORTS

CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES

2008-09 Report to Annual Conference

The Conference Council on Ministries has been the structure through which our program boards and agencies coordinate the shared ministry our conference and resource individual local churches. The program board and agencies have continued leading the ministries of our conference while realizing that a new model is needed as we position ourselves to make disciples and be faithful in mission and ministry in this new age. The Conference Council on Ministries embraces the proposed new structure that will support our conference as we equip the local church to making disciples of Jesus Christ and engage in mission and justice work that furthers the reign of God. This proposed new structure will also provide an effective connection for congregations to engage in mission and justice work beyond their local church. We feel confident that the proposed new structure will incorporate all of the areas of mission, ministry and justice work in which our boards and agencies have so passionately engaged, all to the glory of God. Consequently we embrace this coming year as a time of transition and deep change. We foresee the ministry structure of our conference transforming from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly. We anticipate that this new structure will enable our churches and ministries to take wings and fly.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WITNESS

Chairperson, Nancy Flader

The Peace with Justice Contest was done again. Winners were Glory Kathurima and John Beatty.

Interns in the Peace With Justice program have their lives transformed as well as the people they touch. This year we had 2 interns, they were Sabrina Miller and Jeff Richards.

Our Board supports Voices to the Capitol which involved over 450 Nebraska United Methodists in advocacy for legislation around peace and hunger issues.

Mini-grants reached into 5-6 congregations to implement justice programs.

We offered and promoted Fair Trade products at Annual Conference and other events. We also offered T-Shirts guaranteed to be Sweat-Shop free.

We developed and offered a copious amount of worship materials for Advent to local churches and pastors. We focused on peace-making and relationship building among communities. Bishop Sherer wrote a cover letter for us.

We distributed copies of the *Social Principles* and *In Search of Security*, including teachable studies in a variety of venues.

Due to forces beyond our control, particularly the weather, we had no face to face meetings of our Board in 2007. While we were able to get our work done, we regret the loss of fellowship and group building. We successfully funded several mini-grants and rejoice in the expansion of ministries funded by these grants.

We are witnessing to **radical hospitality** by inviting youth and others to learn about justice and our commitment to inclusiveness and diversity. We raise awareness that radical hospitality is not just bringing in new folks who are like us, but by being open to the stranger among us. We help congregations identify and work on obstacles to hospitality.

We work toward **heart warming worship** by reminding congregation's and clergy that we are called to prophetic in our witness, not to just make people comfortable. We also provided the Advent worship materials on these very themes.

We help define justice and call churches to accountability in **risk taking mission and justice** efforts.

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We are deeply involved in **Faith Formation** through studies, especially *The Social Principles* and *In Search of Security* and through the development and education of youth in the Peace With Justice Contest and the Intern program.

We call the Church to **Gracious Generosity** by preaching and teaching a theology of abundance, not scarcity, and by our work and commitment to Economic Justice.

We work toward **Connectional Commitment** by teaching Wesleyan Social Holiness, by working both intra-faith all over the connection, and inter-faith with our brothers and sisters in other denominations and faiths.

We discovered that when the Budget was printed, the categories and therefore dollar amounts had changed. While that may have made things clearer to others, it made things cloudier for us. We had difficulty understanding where our programs were to be funded from which line item. Having a new chair, who got no training other than a short briefing from the previous chair, did not add to clarity.

PEACE WITH JUSTICE MINISTRIES 1983-2008

Carol Windrum, Director of Peace with Justice Ministries

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough. Matthew 13:3

June, 2008 marks the 25th anniversary of Peace with Justice Ministries within the Nebraska Annual Conference! In many regards the activities of PJM are like the yeast working through the dough. Hundreds of Nebraska United Methodists have contributed to making peace and justice rise in their homes, churches, communities and our world!

The dough rises each time a *Voices to the Capitol* person contacts our leaders about peace and justice. Arline in Chappell, Dave in Omaha, Marie in Ord, Caroline in McCook, Scott in Overton, and Earl in Hastings join 470 other Nebraska United Methodists who use their citizenship as a gift to God.

UM *Voices* included support of a U.S. farm bill which would have positive impacts on poor and hungry people around the world; stressed diplomacy with Iran; supported a U.S. commitment to the Global Child Survival Act; and called for a ban on the use of cluster bombs. Because of the faithful work of *Voices to the Capitol* joining many others, we celebrated a \$1.4 Billion increase over FY 2006 for poverty-focused assistance.

God's yeast has gone to work in over 530 Nebraska Peace Advocates. A UM Peace Advocate commits to pray, study and act for God's shalom in their communities and around the world. Jayne in Imperial, Laura in Valparaiso, Jonathan in Hastings, Luella in Trenton, Betty in Hooper, and Lew in Ralston joins hundreds of others in kneading the dough of shalom. Each Peace Advocate receives *The Mustard Seed* ten times a year with concrete ideas for prayer, study and action which can take as little as 5-10 minutes to complete.

PJM worked closely with the Rural Response Committee and Sowing the Seeds to educate and activate local churches to become engaged in the revision of the U.S. farm bill in 2007. Phone calls, written letters, congressional visits, passing out literature at farmer's markets, articles in *The Nebraska Messenger* and UMConnect all were parts of our efforts to inject concern for the poor and the environment into reforming the farm bill.

PJM continues to mentor young adults in their faith formation, risk-taking mission and justice work. Working with campus pastor Fred Richart, we supervised a student at UNO addressing sweatshop issues. PJM expanded the summer internship from one to two interns. Sabrina Miller from Lewellen and Jeff Richards from Geneva explored prayer practices, promoted the power of nonviolence and worked on economic justice. They shared in churches in McCook, Waunita,

Lewellen, Geneva, Palisade, Arnold, Merna, Anselmo, Gothenburg, Aurora, Bradshaw, Grand Island, Blair, Elkhorn Hills, Papillion and churches in Omaha.

We worked with a middle school student from North Omaha to develop a power point that she and the interns then presented to middle school principles and counselors about how to promote nonviolence in schools.

PJM thanks Rev. Scott Shreve for co-supervising summer interns for the last three years.

PJM's first summer intern in 2000 was Kim Lehman. Kim is now the coordinator of the General Board of Global Ministries Primitimers program. In October, '07, the Director of PJM was invited to share in leadership with Kim at a Primitimers event in NYC focusing on the impact of globalization. Kim is a Nebraska United Methodist young adult who continues to knead the dough of God's justice in our connectional family.

Nine Nebraska United Methodists participated in the Living Faith-Seeking Justice global gathering in Fort Worth in November, '07. The director of PJM was part of the planning team for this event. Kyle Kaufman, a student from UNK, attended and is now the Children & Poverty Committee intern.

Education and promotion about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015 continued to be a priority for the Director's energies. Presentations were made at the Swan Lectures at Nebraska Wesleyan, Schools of Christian Mission in Scottsbluff, and mission studies in York, Verdigre, Grant and Lincoln as well as through sermons and classes across the conference.

PJM continues to work with the following groups within our conference: United Methodist Women promoting economic justice through fair trade; Children and Poverty Committee promoting the MDGs and the work of Voices for Children in Nebraska; Hunger Committee promoting the work of UMCOR endorsed Bread for the World; Rural Response Committee promoting the Theology of the Land Farm Tour in September, rural economic empowerment and the efforts of the Center for Rural Affairs; youth groups through the Steppin' Out mercy/justice model; Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership by helping the '07 mission team explore systemic realities which impact Nigerians, PJM Elder Witness group and the Board of Christian Social Witness.

As the director of PJM, I wish to express deep appreciation to the Nebraska Annual Conference for investing in this ministry for 25 years! The yeast is working through Peace Advocates, young adult summer interns, voices for justice in the halls of power, local churches supporting small farmers through Equal Exchange and many more examples! The dough is rising...God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

BOARD OF MISSION OUTREACH

Charles Spence - Chairperson

The Board of Mission Outreach is comprised of chairs of various committees, General Conference representatives, district representatives, and age group representatives. The Board receives reports from the committees and develops budgets to submit to the Conference Council on Ministries. The Board also receives requests for grants from the districts to recommend to the conference. Conference Advance Specials are reviewed yearly and recommended to the conference as appropriate recipients of gifts to be made by local churches and individuals.

The Board of Mission Outreach relates to the General Conference Board of Global Ministries. Programs and issues pertinent to doing the work of The United Methodist Church nationally and globally are lifted up to the Nebraska Conference through the use of the Messenger, UMConnect, the One Great Hour of Sharing offering for United Methodist Committee on Relief, the School

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of Christian Mission, and the United Methodist Women which is a division of the General Board of Global Ministries.

The Board of Mission Outreach used and promoted the use of the conference Megameeting service. This videoconferencing program was used extensively to save money and model good stewardship of time, money, and resources.

United Methodist Churches can have free website hosting through the General Board of Global Ministries. Information is available at www.gb-gm-umc.org.

The following reports are an accounting of major accomplishments of the various representatives and committees of the Board of Mission Outreach:

Conference Member of the General Board of Global Ministries: Marilyn Zehring
Marilyn has faithfully attended the General Board meetings and reported to the Board of Mission Outreach her experiences. She has promoted the "Hallelujah Moments" which are posted at www.gb-gm-umc.org and has encouraged local churches, units of UMW, and individuals to use the vast resources of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Mission Secretary for the General Board of Global Ministries: Lyle Schoen
Lyle serves as the liaison to our conference from the General Board of Global Ministries. He has constantly promoted the work of missionaries, the appeals of UMCOR, the educational opportunities offered by the General Board of Global Ministries on the nation and international level, and taught the mission unit of the Christian School of Mission.

Lyle arranges the transportation of the Mission Kits brought to Annual Conference to Sanger Brown Depot and spends many hours encouraging local churches to be generous in their giving of time and money to relief work.

In October of 2007 Lyle helped Janet Lahr-Lewis to itinerate in Nebraska. The Mission Secretary also reviews and gives approval of the work of the Church and Community Workers in Nebraska.

Christian School of Mission: Katherine Lent
The Christian School of Mission receives funding from the Board of Mission Outreach and Katherine works with appointed members of the Board to plan the annual school. The United Methodist Women is an organization of women who do tremendous missionary work in local, national and global communities. The Christian School of Mission educates and trains persons annually to do mission work. Joyce Soul was a keynote speaker as the author of "God's Mission, God's Song."

Children and Poverty: Carol Buckley
Each year the Committee on Children and Poverty provide grants to local churches who are doing ministries with children living in poverty. Our conference has a very high rate of poverty affecting the lives of children. This committee advocates for justice for children. In November the committee gave a scholarship to a young man to attend the Jurisdictional Workshop "Living Faithfully, Seeking Justice."

The committee updates its pages on the conference website at www.umcneb.org with the expert services of an intern.

Disaster: Roger Gillming
The Disaster Committee provided training to the committee chairs who in turn made the information available to the districts and local churches. In the event of a disaster such as an ice storm, flooding, tornado, fire, or human action, this committee becomes the clearing house for coordinated responses. If the bishop of the conference requests funds from UMCOR, then

this committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of a response. A systematic response structure is to be updated by this committee annually. We always hope that there will be no report of a disaster in our conference from this committee.

Native American: Richard Turner

Richard is on the Advisory Board of Grants to American Indians in Nebraska (GAIN) which is an ecumenical ministry with American Indians through Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska (IMN). GAIN's purpose is to give participating denominational judicatories and agencies maximum effectiveness and efficiency of their funding each year to Indian ministries, services, and programs within the state of Nebraska.

The High Plains Initiative on American Indian Ministries of the United Methodist Church in the Dakotas, Nebraska and Yellowstone Conferences was a gathering of ministries with Bishops, Cabinets and Conference Native American Ministries (CONAM) September 27-29, 2007 on the Rosebud Reservation.

The Sunrise Community Services, Inc. Chadron, Nebraska was promoted by the committee in 2007 as a crucial agency to Native American people through emergency services and community support. It is actively involved with the Chadron Native American Center. It is providing support groups for adults and youth, specifically "The Twelve Steps and the Medicine Wheel" for men and women and "Sons and Daughters of Tradition" for youth.

The Nebraska Rural Ministries Project is supported by the conference through a grant. This ministry is crucial in the facilitating and promoting understanding and acceptance between native and non-native persons in this region of the state. It is a place of beauty and also both historically and currently a place that daily tests intercultural relationship boundaries and issues of sovereignty. Robbie Lone Wolf has lived and worked in the Walthill-Winnebago communities for many years so she is a trusted and effective leader. She has found it more effective and less threatening to concentrate on areas that affect everyone – regardless of age, race, culture, or economic status and to always be mindful to keep an emphasis on inclusiveness, multicultural interpretation, intergenerational participation, and finding opportunities for spiritual formation.

The Native American Ministry Committee of the Nebraska Annual Conference sought to build relationships among local churches and Native Americans in Nebraska; to provide a voice and listening place for Native American culture, spirituality, and traditions; and to advocate for justice particularly in Native American issues and ministries so that United Methodists in Nebraska can be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, making a difference by being radically and culturally hospitable and living out our engagement in risk-taking mission and justice ministries.

Rural Response: Tamara Holtz

The Rural Response Committee:

1. provided training for pastors and laity that they might engage the local church through ongoing [local & regional] engagement in rural challenges.
2. provided financial support to the Farm Hotline via the Farm Crisis Response Council of the Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska.
3. provided emergency assistance to people whom "fall through the cracks" of other transition support systems through the Farm Crisis Response Council's Farm Hotline .
4. nurtured the development of young adults with a passion for rural issues and rural life through intern programs.
5. provided training to encourage: a.) urban churches to become sensitive to the transition occurring in rural Nebraska; (ex. Celebrate Rural Response Sunday in May) and, b.) rural churches to celebrate their vitality in rural Nebraska.
6. encouraged congregations to become public policy advocates by providing educational op-

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portunities or resources that will assist individuals and organizations to challenge the public and corporate policies that affect agriculture and rural life. Activities shall be consistent with the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church. (Ex. Sowing the Seeds curriculum; membership in The Center for Rural Affairs Action Network).

7. provided education and encouragement to congregations to support Nebraska farmers, ranchers, and producers by buying local.

8. functioned as the conference liaison between our Nebraska Conference's Church & Community Worker program and the General Board of Global Ministries.

Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership: Marge Ambrosius & Dottie Halvorsen

The Nigeria/Nebraska Partnership Committee had a Volunteer In Mission team of youth led by Bishop Ann Sherer and Communications Director Kathryn Witte and adults go to Nigeria to work at the Nigerian Orphanage and prepare for a dedication ceremony. The committee solicited support from churches to raise \$67,200 in funds, which would provide \$1400 for one year's cost for each child at the orphanage. The committee continued to raise funds through "Nickels for Nigeria." Exchange visits, including educational and work related trips by Nebraskans to Nigeria and visits of Nigerian leaders to Nebraska, was promoted. Several events in districts and local churches helped to educate Nebraska United Methodists about Nigeria and the Nigerian United Methodist Church.

Health Committee: Anne Regier

In 2007 the Health Committee lost its chairwoman. New leadership was recruited and sent to training at the Parish Nurse Workshop in Omaha and the General Board of Global Missions annual Health & Welfare Congregational Health Ministries retreat in Kansas. The committee began planning the Parish Nurse Workshop for September, 2008, to be held in North Platte, Nebraska

Ethnic Local Church Concerns: Idalene Williams

The Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee provided grants to Clair Memorial United Methodist Church, Omaha, for a music and children's ministry and staffing for the Community Center. Funding was provided for Neighborhood community center programs and staffing at Pearl Memorial United Methodist Church, Omaha.

The BIG Garden project in Omaha was given funding for summer interns for health and nutrition education.

The committee informed the Annual Conference of vital Ethnic Local Church ministries by sharing the program mission and witness of ELCC grant recipients

Hispanic Ministries: Jaime Farias

The Hispanic Ministries Committee conducted worship and educational events for the pastors and their families who are leading the Hispanic evangelism and outreach work. The pastors are working to establish more faith communities throughout the Nebraska Conference.

The committee sought more lay missionaries for training. Two Module I and II training events were held in Gering.

The Hispanic Summit was held in Kearney with leadership from the National Plan division of the General Board of Global Ministries. It was decided to use the National Plan and invite a consultant to come in 2008 to develop a strategy for the conference.

The committee received the ministry funding requests from the districts and recommended a budget for programs and salaries for Hispanic ministries throughout the conference.

The immigration clinics supported by the district grants were held in several of the Hispanic churches and several of the pastors used the clinics' services for themselves and their

families.

Hunger: Tom and Rogene Silletto

The Hunger Committee sponsored the NUMBike ride with ¼ of the receipts going to each of the following projects:

- a. A Nebraska Emergency Food Program
- b. Heifer Project International
- c. UMCOR hunger projects
- d. Bread for the World

The committee provided education relating to the root causes of hunger with direct services, and encouraged involvement in Voices to the Capital and Bread for the World.

Regular hunger-related articles were sent to the Messenger and the UMconnect which suggested projects local churches could use to respond to hunger needs.

Volunteers In Mission: Nan Kaye-Skinner

During 2007, the number of Nebraska United Methodists giving their hands and hearts in Christ's service through Volunteers in Mission grew 23%.

1267 youth & adults gave 3,496,560 volunteer service hours. Teams and individuals from every Nebraska district worked along the Gulf Coast, where rebuilding efforts will continue for years to come.

The United Methodist Ministries for Mission & Justice in Omaha were certified as a receiving site for VIM teams from other parts of the country. 250 youth and adults made Omaha United Methodist missions their destination for VIM.

College campus mission work continues to grow in strength. UNL, UNO and Nebraska Wesleyan are all connecting with the desire among students to put their faith into action through mission work.

The General Board of Global Ministries is stressing the importance of making sure all local church mission team leaders are trained through VIM. Most mission leaders are unaware of the legal responsibility they carry along with their local church. That, along with our conferences Safe Sanctuary guidelines requiring all adults on trips including youth to be Safe Sanctuary trained, mean that more emphasis will need to be placed on training for all leaders, even those who have led teams in the past in order that our VIM ministry can grow.

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Karen McCreary, Chairperson

The Board of Higher Education was very busy in 2007. We met in September to evaluate each of the Campus Ministries using the 6 signs of disciple making as part of our criteria for evaluation plus the category of Accountability.

We had sent a reporting form to each of our campus ministries in August and asked them for information on programming, involvement of student ratio to number of students on campus, board policy, fund-raising, worship opportunities, and mission projects. We received reports back from Chadron State College, University of NE at Kearney, UNL Cornerstone, and Crosspoint at Wayne State College. A late report was received from UNO Campus Ministry, which was then evaluated at our November meeting. The only ministry we did not hear from was Peru State College. These schools all receive funds from Nebraska United Ministries in Higher Education. Since NE Wesleyan does not receive funds from NUMHE, they were not included in our survey. The purpose of the survey was to see if the money we invest in NUMHE is being used effectively. Attendance at both the September and November meetings of the Board of Higher Education was outstanding with probably the most members we've ever had at any of our meetings in the

past few years.

We identified the participation/ratio of students involved in campus ministry related to total student population under the category of Radical Hospitality.

Under Systematic Faith Development we asked if the ministry offered bible Student and opportunities for leadership development through worship, inviting other students to worship, and youth being involved in planning worship.

Gracious Generosity looked at such things as fund raising -- how much was raised the past year and who raised the money? Also, were they able to effectively raise funds?

Relationship to area churches/outreach was identified as Connectional Joy. Such questions as how does this ministry relate to area churches? Do they tell the story of campus ministry? Heartwarming Worship was directed at questions dealing with intentional worship services being offered on campus and the involvement of students in the worship services.

We asked them if they had been involved in mission projects in their own community and beyond and identified this category as Passionate Risk Taking Mission.

What we found is that the one outstanding ministry we have is at the University of Nebraska at Kearney which is under funded by NUMHE while UNL Cornerstone has probably been over funded by NUMHE.

Our recommendation to Bishop Sherer was that she would meet with the heads of the other judicatories that participate in NUMHE and let them know what we found out. We think we are at a crossroads with NUMHE and will either have to make a new formula for funding through NUMHE or go it alone as Wesley Foundations. Since our report was submitted Steve Griffith, pastor at St. Paul UMC, has been appointed as the new Chair of NUMHE and is already actively in the process of developing a new evaluation and funding plan with NUMHE members which will be completed by 2010. Our hope is that by working together to make campus ministry accountable, we will be better stewards of the limited funds we have.

Pauletta Lehn, Chaplain at Nebraska Wesleyan University met with us at our November meeting along with 2 students who are active in that campus ministry to give us an overview of what has happened and is happening on the NWU campus. It was a very positive report and we are very hopeful that only the Bd. of Higher Education but also Nebraska Wesleyan can fund this ministry at a much higher figure than we now are able to do.

Peer Ministry Grants were awarded at our November meeting in the total amount of \$16,000, as well as the evaluation of UNO Campus Ministry.

COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND RACE

Mel Luetchens, Chairperson

The Commission has continued to make available our "Racism 101: A 101 Minute Introductory Workshop on Understanding Racism and Possible Solutions." At the 2007 UMW State Assembly we presented it as a training module to the district chairwomen of the UMW Social Concerns Committees. They are conducting the training for the local church committees on social concerns. The course outline and use is one very direct way UMW groups can work to meet the vision and goals of the historic Charter for Racial Justice which the UMW wrote and adopted in 1978 and became the statement and guidelines for the General Church at the 1980 General Conference.

A member of our commission was present at a meeting convened by North Omaha churches to discuss the February 2007 fire at Bob's Grocery, a store owned by Kassahun Goshime, an Ethiopian immigrant, that was viewed as a hate crime. We prepared a public statement based on our United Methodist position on racism for use with the media.

One of our goals is to assure that VIM groups participate in a healthy, sensitive way with people in other cultures—outside the US and people who experience life in the US in a very

different way from our Midwest assumptions and experience. We are grateful that our Nebraska Conference VIM leaders and trainers are and have been conducting VIM experiences in this way with no special admonitions from our Commission.

Ethnic pastors who are members of our Commission indicate that they have been well received by the Nebraska Conference, that they have experienced much more openness to their local church leadership than has been their experience in some other conferences. We celebrate this openness on the part of our people. At the same time, we note that while we have five ethnic pastors active on our Commission, many of our boards, commissions, and committees have no people of non-northern European descent as members. We have committed ourselves to more intentional monitoring of the inclusiveness in our conference sessions as well as in membership and involvement at the conference level. Of course we encourage such monitoring at the local level, also. The purpose is to give us feedback—a picture of how well our reality matches our intentions.

We celebrate, too, that our conference's ethnic diversity has been very visibly represented in these (and many other, more local) ways:

--Charles and Lydia Murithi's daughter, Glory Kathurima, took first place honors in the conference's '07 Peace with Justice speech contest with her presentation: *Migrant Farm Workers* ('07 Journal, p. 259).

At this year's General Conference:

--Sam and Ella Rathod's son, Jason, gave the conference report on behalf of UM Young Adults.

--K. F. Kaleuati was one of the trained monitors on inclusiveness at the various group meetings and general sessions of the conference.

--Charles Murithi and Harun Gatobu served as language interpreters at the conference.

COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Liz Bady - Chairperson

The Commission on Archives and History is an interested vital group of United Methodists working to support our Historical Center move into the new technological age. Terri Raburn, our Director/Archivist of the Historical Center has accomplished a lot in her first year.

One of Terri's focuses has been to help local churches and the Conference to retain and manage records properly. This is a huge task. Terri is a wonderful resource for local church secretaries and historians. She has, also, done several workshops for local churches helping them learn how to preserve their history. She has also been doing a great deal of digitizing for local churches, putting church records into a CD format. This makes the records easy to save, access and use.

The Commission is dedicated to support our director and the Historical Center. We, as a Commission, are planning to have two work days a year. Our intent is to share in some hands-on help to get a better idea of the work done at our Historical Center. Marie Krohn, one of our members, has written an article for the Messenger, *Riding the Circuit: The Ministry of Jacob Adriance*. The Commission is hoping to do more sharing the history of Methodism in Nebraska. Our hope is to encourage the members of the Nebraska United Methodist Conference to help us in our endeavor to maintain, preserve and get excited about our history.

NEBRASKA UNITED METHODIST HISTORICAL CENTER

Terri Raburn, Director/Curator

2007 was a year of settling in for the Nebraska United Methodist Historical Center. The emphasis has been on extending services offered to churches across the state. Historical Center now offers digital copying of church records to congregations in Nebraska as well as providing photo reproduction services to all patrons.

The director has developed an outreach program to help local churches set up their own historical archives. Focus has also turned to establishing retention and disposition schedules for Conference, District, and local church records. The Historical Center wishes to extend an invitation to discuss these records with all United Methodists in Nebraska. Processing the backlog of Conference records was also a priority in 2007. Thanks to volunteer Barb Schmidt for working so diligently on organizing many boxes of records and drastically reducing backlog.

The Historical Center continues to offer research support for all persons interested in the history of the Nebraska United Methodist Church. We offer resource services to clergy and lay people, and offer a place to remember where we have been and to focus on where we are going. The Nebraska United Methodist Historical Center strives to connect with local churches to provide assistance, encourage research, and to enable groups to understand the rich heritage of the Nebraska United Methodist Conference.

None of this work would be possible without the tireless efforts and dedicated commitment of our volunteers: Bernice Bolesen, Liz Bady, and Barb Schmidt. Thank you to all who have made the Historical Center the wonderful resource it is today and most especially to the Commission on Archives & History for its continued support and leadership.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Charlene C. Adden, Chairperson

Bishop Sherer, Clergy Members and Laity Members

1. It is my honor and privilege as Chair of the Conference Personnel Committee to introduce our Conference staff.

Members of the Cabinet are:

Rev. Chad Anglemeyer	Director of Connectional Ministries
Robin Kilgore	Conference Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services
Rev. Nita Hinds-Park	Assoc. Director of Connectional Ministries/Dir of Congregational Development
Kathryn Witte	Director of Communications

Directors Staff

John Jones	Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries
Bill Hasemeyer	Director of Stewardship
Terri Raburn	Director of Historical Center
Carol Windrum	Director of Peace With Justice Ministry
Holly Woldt	Director of Information Technology (new position in 2008)
Diane Dunkerson	Director of Resource Center

Support Staff

Roxie Delisi	Services Support/Messenger Circulation
Barb Grenemeier	Office Manager/Administrative Assistant

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Lorie Lindenmuth	Comptroller
Tina Watteyne	Accounting Clerk
Carole Otto	Benefits Administrator
Sara Brockhoff	Communications Coordinator (new hire in 2008)
Beth Cooper	Administrative Assistant in North Platte Office
Diane Dunkerson	Receptionist (part-time hours added in 2008)

District Staff

Joyce Rivera	Administrative Assistant-Blue River District
Sue Jensen	Administrative Assistant-Elkhorn Valley District
Denise Wagner	Administrative Assistant-Gateway District
Christy Baltzell	Administrative Assistant-Great West District
Catherine McGowan	Administrative Assistant-Missouri River District
Linda Wenzl	Administrative Assistant-Prairie Rivers District

Bishop's (Episcopal) Staff

Elaine Michaud	Administrative Assistant to Bishop Sherer
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We are truly blessed with a dedicated and hardworking staff. Thank you for everything you do. I present these persons to you to be affirmed in these positions.

2. This past year the Personnel Committee approved the creation of the Director of Information Technology position. A current employee, Holly Woldt was promoted into this position. Sara Brockhoff was hired as Communications Coordinator and Diane Dunkerson increased her hours to include part-time hours as Receptionist.
3. The Committee finalized the Employee Handbook and it has been distributed to the staff.
4. All of the job descriptions were revised and the positions were categorized according to exemption status.
5. The Committee developed a Pay Plan with pay ranges for each pay grade. A Job Evaluation system was developed; each position was evaluated according to this system and placed on the applicable pay grade.
6. Thanks to Bishop Sherer for her support and help.
7. Thanks to members of the Personnel Committee for their time and expertise.

COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Pat Duncan, Chairperson

A couple of months ago, I had a conversation with Robin Kilgore, the conference treasurer about the 2009 funding plan. She was concerned that this would be the first time that Conference Council on Finance & Administration (CCFA) would be going before the annual conference with an incomplete funding plan. I did not think of it at the time, but this funding plan is complete and is, as nearly as possible in accord with our understanding of the goals of the Transition Team.

The funding plan calls for a total of \$7,286,141.00 in funding from mission shares. It is an increase of 2.5% over the 2008 funding plan.

If you have had an opportunity to review the 2009 funding plan, you will note that many functions have been folded into part IV. If you refer to page 51 of your resource book, you will see that these items amount to about \$1.7 million dollars.

One of the goals of the Transition Team is the dissolution of the Council on Ministries, the sunset of non disciplinary boards, commissions and committees and the development of three strategic ministry teams. These teams consist of a leadership development team, a congregational

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transformation team, and a risk taking ministry and justice team.

It will be the job of this Common Table to allocate the \$1.7 million dollars to the functions which they believe will best serve the goals of these teams. By doing so, it is the intent that they best serve the purposes of developing leadership, revitalizing congregations, and reaching out to those to whom we are called to reach out to.

About three weeks ago, I went to a pre-conference briefing at Kearney. A video was shown at this meeting in which it was stated that the reason for the early success of the United Methodist Church was it's "nimbleness" in recognizing opportunities and challenges and quickly and effectively dealing with them.

The proposed approach to the appropriation and allocation of funds by the Common Table is an endeavor to bring about an ability to make quicker decisions and to more quickly implement these decisions.

This is no doubt the cause of some anxiety, not only for some members and to those who have dedicated time and energy to various functions within the Conference, but also to the members of the Common Table.

It is necessary that the Common Table make many decisions between now and the beginning of the 2009 funding year on January 1st, 2009. This is a huge responsibility. It requires the setting aside of any personal agendas and differences. It requires honesty. It will require that the holy conferencing ideal be followed. It will require the Common Table to act in the best interests of the people, to reach out, to take risks, and spread the spirit of Christ as well as his message.

We, as people of the Nebraska conference of the United Methodist Church have an obligation to provide input, so that good decisions can be made. If this concept of a Common Table is to succeed, we must support it to the greatest extent possible.

If we do this, there is every reason to believe in positive change for our conference.

If you have ever reflected on the flame on the United Methodist Cross, you will have noticed that it is not a nightlight to comfort us in our slumber. It is not a destructive flame used to harm others. My personal belief is that it represents the fire in our hearts which would motivate each of us to not only claim to be disciples, but to act as disciples of Christ.

Hopefully, this funding plan can be used to feed this flame.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Alan Davis, Chairperson

The Board of Trustees met more than the required number of times to satisfy the disciplinary requirements and once again dealt with several important issues.

At this time, we have three new church closings. Churches being closed are Comstock, Memphis, and Ravenna Zion. We have sold these churches since the last annual conference: Inman, Hull, Ulysses, Royal, York East Avenue church and parsonage. The church that is currently owned and insured by the Board of Trustees is the former Nora United Methodist Church. The building and contents of the Ravenna Zion church will be auctioned by the local church in May/June.

We have sold parsonages in the former Northwest, Southwest, and Southeast Districts located in Scottsbluff, McCook, and Beatrice since last year. We have purchased a home in Ogallala (Great West District) and the board has set aside funds to purchase a home in Norfolk (Elkhorn Valley District) when it becomes necessary. We are also updating the Lincoln parsonage (Blue River District) at the present time. The Board of Trustees currently owns five district parsonages, the Episcopal residence and the Cornerstone building on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. We have also purchased a small piece of property adjoining the

current conference office.

The Board of Trustees continues to support three United Methodist camps. We are servicing two outstanding loans and funds were also loaned to Camp Fontanelle for the purchase of nine acres with housing for the new assistant camp director. We have also committed funds for the remodeling of the manager's house at Camp Comeca along with funds for a van at Camp Norwesca.

The Board of Trustees along with other conference leaders, met unofficially with Bishop Sherer last fall to discuss our camps. Reports were received from all three camps. Camp personnel prepared informative presentations and provided financial summaries. I would like to thank Bishop Sherer for facilitating this meeting and those individuals for their timely response to the Board of Trustees. We learned at this time that Chic Garner, long time director of Camp Comeca, was planning to retire on December 31, 2007.

You might recall that for several years, we have discussed the sewer saga at the Cornerstone Ministries building in Lincoln. I am pleased to announce that the project is completed and everything is now flowing properly.

The Board of Trustees has requested a proposal from Property and Casualty Trust (PACT) to determine if there is any cost savings or added risk protection provided in comparison with our current insurance coverage and policies. PACT insurance company is a subsidiary of the Global United Methodist Church and the board will continue to discuss and evaluate this opportunity.

In 2007, the Board of Trustees benefited from strong receipts from local church mission shares. Revenue inclusive of interest earned was \$513,000.00 and expenses were \$236,000.00.

For the past two years, a task force approved by the Board of Trustees, has been evaluating the condition of our conference headquarters building. We have discussed several different options and evaluated each of them thoroughly. At this time, we will have a power point presentation to illustrate our findings and to inform you of our hopes and dreams.

Camping Ad Hoc Committee Update- In conjunction with our conference legal counsel, auditors, and the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, the Conference Council on Ministries, the trustees determined that a re-organization of the structure of camping would be in our best interests. The organizational chart is currently cumbersome and decision-making, accountability, programming, and administrative functions need refinement. In keeping with "Making Disciples that Make a Difference" we have worked to develop a structure which will streamline and help us to maintain and strengthen our United Methodist heritage. This new structure which functions under the direction of the Board of Trustees has been seeking to develop a common vision, including but not limited to, camp development, fund development, and fiduciary responsibility.

At this time I would like to introduce Steve Voigt the Chair of the Camping Ad Hoc committee to report on their recommendations.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Robin, Chad, Barb, John, and all those involved in the building task force and the camping Ad Hoc committee for all their hard work this past year. Everyone has worked diligently and many decisions were made, not all of them easy ones. Once again, thank you.

UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION

Jim Heller, Executive Director

It is a pleasure for the Foundation to be in ministry with the Conference.

The Foundation's reach throughout the Conference extended to significantly higher levels in 2007 as we continued our work of encouraging sound stewardship of church assets, gift planning, permanent endowment development, the investment and administration of church-owned

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funds, and the distribution of earnings to strengthen and support the work of the Church.

The gifts of Nebraska United Methodists, and the management of these gifts at the Foundation, touch every age group in our Conference, every size church, every district, every new church start, and seminary students, wherever they study. As a result every dollar that comes to the Foundation ultimately makes a positive and lasting difference in people's lives, whether they are the "givers" or the ones who benefit from those gifts.

As we gather today for this Annual Conference, we know that this is a threshold time for ministry; a "Re-visioning" of our Church. As we enter a new era for the Church, an era mandated by a rapidly changing culture, we must be absolutely certain, and resolute in our beliefs, and our actions, that the resources entrusted to our care are being used in ways that will empower our Church in ways that matter and make a difference.

During 2007, the Foundation reached a record level in the amount of funds distributed for ministry in our Conference. Total distributions in support of ministry in local churches, for seminary students, for new church starts, for other grants and purposes, amounted to more than \$1.2 million; a 3,000% increase over the \$40,000 distributed just ten years ago. An additional \$153,000 was expended through the Foundation's annual operating budget for Services and Educational Programs provided to Conference churches and individuals.

Overall, total assets under management at the Foundation grew by 18%, to a little over \$22 million. And while asset growth and funds distributed for ministry totaled \$37 per Conference member, the Foundation's operating expenses, which are funded completely by the Foundation, amounted to just \$3.54 per member.

As the Foundation continues to adapt to a rapidly-changing environment, it is important for all to recognize that the Foundation is not a bank. Nor does it exist for the purpose of accumulating assets. Quite simply, the Foundation is a ministry whose purpose is to empower the Church, and our individual churches, in their God-appointed mission.

While the Foundation exists to serve its purpose, we are guided always by our core values of "Servanthood" - Always looking for what we can "give" to any relationship, not "get"; "Competency" - Being the absolute best we can be in all that we do; and "Integrity" - Doing the right things, even when no one is looking.

As we enter this new era, the Foundation looks forward to continuing its partnership with the Conference relative to resourcing ministries and providing services in ways that matter and truly do make a difference.

It is an honor and a privilege to do the work today that will enable our great Church to accomplish God's dreams in the future.

CONFERENCE TREASURER REPORT

Robin Kilgore, Treasurer

As I reflect on the 2007 year, I am thankful to serve with you in ministry and I am happy to be involved in our connectional work together. The Conference Office and district staff members have worked with diligence since we last met. Please take time this week to thank them for their outstanding dedication to ministry. The Administrative Services staff members, Barb, Carole, Lorie and Tina continue to perform at a high level to keep our financial operations orderly and they assist me to ensure that dollars are spent according to your wishes.

The apportioned funding plan in 2007 totaled \$6,866,192. Our churches in the Nebraska Conference supported the mission goals and shared in contributing toward them at over 94% of this total. Every congregation was able to contribute some amount toward the conference mission share goal and total collections were \$6,450,730. Additionally, \$563,070 was provided to assist in other missions and ministry above and beyond the conference budget, such as

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general advance specials, conference advance specials, other askings, and special Sunday offering campaigns. You are all to be commended for this faithful commitment and hard work representing total receipts of over \$7 million dollars from local United Methodist churches in Nebraska!

In 2008, we have seen a rise in consumer prices, economic hardship, global uneasiness, and general uncertainty of the future, as well as other unknown situations that may result before yearend. Even so, as of 5/31/08, mission shares are paid at 29% of the 2008 approved Funding Plan. Eight churches have reached the 100% goal at this time. Please help me in recognizing the following congregations for reaching this goal in 2008: (Any clergy or lay member representing these churches, please stand and remain standing until all names are read) Lincoln St. James, Crawford Valley, Clinton, Falls City Bethel, Fremont Calvary, Inland, North Bend First, and Trumbull.

The future is unknown but the path to enhance effective ministry in our conference is becoming more clear. I trust that you will work toward achieving your local church discipleship plans as we continue to work together in meeting the conference goals and objectives. Because of my position, I have attended many meetings with various groups, boards, and committees throughout this past year and though too numerous to mention, I appreciate the many people who have spent countless hours and given their gifts of leadership in making our Conference vibrant and strong.

I wish to thank you for your prayers, your generosity, your commitment, and your faithful, financial support. Your expression of connectional stewardship is very evident when studying the numbers! I look forward to the opportunity of continuing my service and our work together in making a difference in today's troubled world. May our gifts multiply to serve people throughout God's Kingdom.

REPORT OF AD HOC CAMPING COMMITTEE

Steven R. Voigt, Chairperson

I would like to thank the members of this committee who have been working since 2005. Mickey Solomn, Janice Farrell, Claude Harder, Seth Leyoldt, Rich Savage, Tess Hufford, Paixao Baptista, Alan Davis, Robin Kilgore, Chad Anglemyer, John Jones, Mollie Ronge, Trent Meyer and our newest Camp Director, Mike Mook the Director of Camp Comeca.

In December of 2005 Bishop Sherer called on this committee to create a Covenant to develop a structure with a single governing body that would establish and oversee (1) policies (2) priorities and (3) standards for the Outdoor and Retreat Ministries. The objective of this single governing body would be to establish a line of authority and responsibility from the Board of Directors to each of the camp's management boards and coordinate administration, personal policies, health and safety of campers and employees, fiscal responsibility and ultimately financial independence from the Annual Conference.

The result of the last three years efforts are found on page 87 of your 2008 Resource Book. The Annual Conference Board of Trustees approved these operating policies on March 31, 2008.

Most of the campgrounds are titled in the name of the Nebraska United Methodist Camps, Inc., in trust, for the benefit of the United Methodist Church. This corporation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose membership is made up of the members of the Nebraska Annual Conference. In the next year the campgrounds that are not titled in the Nebraska United Methodist Camps, Inc., will be transferred and held in trust as according to the Book of Discipline.

The Board of Directors of NUMC, Inc. are the trustees of the Annual Conference and three members of the now defunct Camping Commission. The operating policies have re-comprised the make up of the board and the new board membership is on page 88 of the Resource Book.

Our committee has met four times since the last Annual Conference and we believe we have a structure that will meet the Bishops Covenant. The committee's proposal is a result of countless hours of thought and discussion that ended with a mutual consensus. NUMC, Inc. is the unifying conference wide structure that will promote the development and growth of our three unique camp sites. The new mission statement, "A Place to Grow in God in all Seasons" will be the guiding light in the continued development of each of our three camps.

For this unifying structure and policies to be successful, our camps must be successful. For our camps to be successful, they must have campers. Campers come from YOU, so please send everyone in your church to camp. We have programs for all ages and interests.

OPERATING POLICIES OF THE NEBRASKA UNITED METHODIST CAMPS, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VISION FOR GOVERNANCE

The Board of Directors of Nebraska United Methodist Camps, Incorporated (hereafter referred to as NUMC) is vested with the responsibility for the governance and direction of the ministry. The vision for the accomplishment of this task is the simultaneous empowerment of the NUMC board, Site Management Boards, and the staff of NUMC, allowing optimum response to the needs of our ministries.

PURPOSES

The purposes of this corporation are:

1. To promote vital Christian living and churchmanship among persons of all ages in harmony with the Discipline, Doctrines, Principles and Regulations of the Nebraska Conference of the United Methodist Church.
2. To acquire, preserve, maintain, and dispose of real and personal property used or useful for educational and religious purposes connected with the work of the Nebraska Conference of the United Methodist Church; to improve, repair, and extend such property, and any appurtenances thereto.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The following principles are espoused and adopted by the board to enable this vision:

1. The Board of Directors represents the owner – The Nebraska Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.
2. The Board of Directors shall be the smallest possible size consistent with good and full representation of the ownership.
3. The Board of Directors accepts these primary functions:
 - A. Formulation and approval of long range goals and objectives
 - B. Formulation and adoption of policies which enable the effective legal and ethical operation of the ministry
 - C. Selection and assessment of the Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries
 - D. Development of financial resources for the achievement of goals
 - E. Adoption and monitoring of the camps operating budgets, financial development plan, and insurance program
 - F. Monitoring the achievement of goals and objectives
 - G. Performance and monitoring of legal responsibilities
 - H. Protection of camp assets
 - I. Formulation of linkages with other appropriate partners

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- J. Interpretation of the ministry to the church body and community
 - K. Maintenance of the affiliation and participation of the church-at-large
 - L. Provision of leadership and support to each Site Management Board
 - M. Evaluation, hiring, and termination of the Site Directors with extensive dialogue and consultation with the Site Management Boards.
4. The Board of Directors will very clearly state and maintain the lines of responsibility for the NUMC board and Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries.
 5. The Board of Directors is committed to speak with one voice or not at all.
 6. The Board of Directors is not predisposed to a traditional committee structure; the Board of Directors has the wherefore all to form Ad Hoc committees as needed.
 7. The Board of Directors shall be committed to ensuring that all full time employees, including the Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries, shall be employees of NUMC, and shall abide by the Employee Benefit and Policy Compensation of the Nebraska Annual Conference. Financial compensation for site employees shall be the responsibility of each Site Management Board. Financial compensation for the Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries shall be the responsibility of the Nebraska Annual Conference.

MAKE-UP OF THE BOARD**MEMBERSHIP**

The Board of Directors is comprised of 13 voting and 5 non-voting members including:

- Three members of the Board of Trustees
- One member of CCFA
- One member of CCOM (faith formation/nurture)
- One member of Board of Ordained Ministry
- The Camp Comeca Site Management Board Chair or designated representative
- The Camp Fontanelle Site Management Board Chair or designated representative
- The Camp Norwesca Site Management Board Chair or designated representative
- Four at-large members
- *One Cabinet member as designated by the Bishop
- *The Camp Comeca Director
- *The Camp Fontanelle Director
- *The Camp Norwesca Director
- *The Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries.

*non-voting members

QUALIFICATION

Members of the NUMC Board of Directors are chosen for these personal qualities and/or demonstrated potential for leadership:

- Integrity—the ability to know and press for “what is right”
- Conviction about the mission of NUMC
- Enthusiasm for the ministry of NUMC
- Interest in furthering the development of the ministry of NUMC; orientation to the future
- Willingness to commit time and energy to support the work of NUMC
- Ability to represent a particular geographical constituency and/or to bring special skills, knowledge and expertise needed by the ministry
 - o The Site Management Board Chairs and Site Directors are geographical representatives; Trustees, CCFA representative, and others are persons with knowledge and expertise
- Ability to assess information and make important decisions

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- Courage to state personal perspective on important issues
- Understanding of the role and function of the Board of Directors of a not-for-profit agency/ministry of the church
- Willingness to accept and support decisions made by the board.

NOMINATION

The board will provide a recommendation to the nominating committee for the four at-large members:

- Four year rotation for at-large members with option for second four year term
- An at-large member shall serve as chairperson
- Terms will be in compliance with Book of Discipline and/or Conference Rules of Order subject to quadrennial appointments.

APPOINTMENT

All other board members are the designated representatives of their particular board/entity.

ORIENTATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

The Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries is charged with the responsibility for orientation of members of the board, accomplished as follows:

- An *Orientation Manual* for members of the board is developed, maintained, and provided to board members
- Individual contact with new board members (within two months following the member's appointment to the board) to provide information and orientation.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the NUMC Board of Directors accept these responsibilities:

- Attend all board meetings, training sessions and special meetings as appropriate
- Understand the board—its mission, goals, objectives, programs and function; believe in the ministry
- Make decisions on issues, policies, goals, and objectives based on careful consideration of facts and all relevant data
- Participate fully and openly in meetings—share insights, ideas and suggestions
- Keep informed and know what is going on; never hesitate to ask questions or request information
- Provide counsel, advice and encouragement to Site Management Boards
- Give fully and enthusiastically of time and expertise
- Solicit funds, participate in campaigns, and open doors for others to raise funds
- Recruit other volunteers for both policy formation and programming
- Accept special assignments as requested and as possible
- Interpret to the church-at-large and represent the ministries in and to the community
- Seek ways to experience the primary programs of the ministry (summer camp/retreat ministries)
- Invite other contact persons and groups to use the programs and facilities of NUMC.

REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBERS

The bylaws of NUMC allows the board to remove a member following two consecutive unexcused absences from scheduled board meetings. This maintenance task is delegated to the board.

ORGANIZATION

FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of NUMC will be January 1 through December 31.

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

The NUMC Board of Directors has eight regularly scheduled meetings during each year as follows:

- Set date monthly (third Wednesday) January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November
- Board will have communications in months there isn't a full board meetings
- To meet at least once per year at each camp site
 - o To meet with Site Management Boards during local site visits
 - o Attempt once a year to meet on site when camp is in session.

OFFICERS

Officers are elected annually for a term of one year. The NUMC Board of Directors has four designated officers:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer.

COMMITTEES

The Executive Committee is the only standing committee of the board. Given the large size of the board, the expansive geographical territory represented, and the strong resources provided by ministry staff, the NUMC Board of Directors chooses not to espouse a traditional committee structure within the board itself, but rather deploys significant responsibilities to its Executive Committee. Special task groups are created and assigned as deemed necessary.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee functions on behalf of the board and provides written record of its decisions and activities to the board within two weeks of all meetings of the committee. The minutes of all Executive Committee meetings are placed on the agenda of the Board of Directors following the meeting for acceptance and ratification. When the Board of Directors adopts the minutes of any Executive Committee meeting, the actions of the committee become formal actions of the board.

- o The Executive Committee is comprised of the four stated officers plus two additional members, all of whom are elected by the Board of Directors.
- o The Executive Committee meets monthly; all meetings are open to any and all board members.
- o The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Board of Directors between meetings of the board. Key responsibilities include:
 - * Administrative matters
 - * Personnel matters
 - Review & maintenance of the personnel policies
 - Supervision and evaluation of the Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries
 - * Nominating committee functions
 - * Adoption of a temporary operating budget for the new fiscal year

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- * Signing of contracts on behalf of the Board of Directors for projects previously approved by the board
- * Site and facilities matters
- Monitoring care and upkeep of buildings and grounds
- Monitoring capital project management.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

The NUMC Board of Directors is committed to a continued understanding of its role, powers and responsibilities; therefore, the board commits itself to a program for board education. This program is to be developed by the Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries, presented to the board for acceptance, and placed in operation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD**PLANNING**

The Board of Directors develops and maintains a strategic plan, which lays out long-range goals and objectives.

- Determine the process and develop the plan.
- Consider, modify and adopt the plan, then review and forward to the Site Management Boards.
- Monitor the plan.
- Annually review, modify, and alter the plan and/or its components.

POLICIES

The Board of Directors formulates, adopts, and establishes policies, practices, and standards as defined below:

- A board policy is:
 - o A governing principle
 - o A framework for carrying out work
 - o A way for the board to delegate authority and still maintain control
 - o A way to develop plans, solve problems, and attain objectives
 - o A way to ensure uniformity and consistency of action throughout the organization
 - o A way to specify service priorities
 - o A way to speed up decisions
 - o A written record
 - o Never a final and absolute product
 - o A matter which affects the entire organization
 - o A response to a request of the Conference Board of Trustees, Director of Outdoor and Retreat Ministries, a Site Management Board, or a Site Director.
- A board practice is a general tendency relating to a specific ministry operation.
- A board standard is an expected level of operation, established by the board, indicating the level at which NUMC will consistently attempt to operate for the purposes of quality and excellence in ministry.

SITE MANAGEMENT BOARDS/MINISTRY PARTNERS

The Site Management Boards are committed to collaborative efforts with the NUMC Board of Directors to be in ministry. The Site Management Boards adopt standards to choose and establish parameters for ministry together.

CARE OF ASSETS

Protection and care of/for the assets, held by The Nebraska Annual Conference and NUMC, for outdoor and retreat ministries are a primary concern and responsibility of each site board.

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SITE AND FACILITIES

The Site Management Board focuses on planning, setting annual goals and priorities for the care and upkeep of present facilities and minor capital improvements. Specifically the board accomplishes this task by:

- Provision of sufficient funds in the general operating budget for the care, upkeep, and minor capital improvements of current facilities
- An Annual spring walk-through of buildings to evaluate condition and identify needed repairs or replacement (this includes all staff housing)
- Creation and maintenance of an inventory of camp assets, to be submitted annually to the NUMC Board of Directors
- An Annual spring assessment of program areas and written plan of action for risk control and safety concerns
- Approving bids for non-budgeted major expenses and projects. All expenditures or projects in excess of \$ 2,000 must be approved by the NUMC Board of Directors
- Organizing spring and fall clean-up and opening and closing of summer housing and programming areas
- Developing environmental strategy for moving toward green practices and better stewardship (ex. recycling and sorting of camp waste and share with Midway Lake residence at Comeca)
- Assessment and implementation of best practices for weed control and erosion
- Assessment and implementation of best practices for site fire prevention and control
- Developing relationships with volunteers and VIM groups as resources to assist the Site Director and staff in maintaining the property in good repair
- Assuring that the site fulfill all grant obligations (ex. Prairie restoration at Comeca)
- Assuring that all assessment, evaluation, and inventories will be approved by site boards with copies of assessment and action plan forwarded to NUMC.

FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Site Management Boards are established, have formed long-term relationships, and have passionate individuals serving as volunteers. It is critical to develop and nurture these relationships to continue the legacy of the conference camps. This may be one of the most important goals and perceived as the most difficult function of a site board. It is crucial that financial support is developed at a grass roots level, to sustain conference camping for future generations of Nebraska United Methodists. Responsibilities for financial development include:

- Development of new donors and care of current donors
- Development and initiation of an annual campaign
- Development and implementation of major gift campaigns
- Development and implementation of an endowment; target a funding strategy
- Development of a prospect list of potential donors; work with local pastors and congregations to identify prospective donors/individuals
- Development of a local internal and external case statement, so that each site has a documented history to share
- Development of a donor base of a minimum of 2,000 donors to consider a capital campaign
- Planning and promoting an annual fund raising event
- Establishment of an ongoing needs list for donation requests.

MARKETING

The Site Management Board will assist the staff and develop the overall marketing of the local site to our churches, other denominations, secular groups, retreat groups, and families. Responsibilities for marketing include:

- Development of a camp newsletter

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- Assisting the Site Director and staff in church and community promotions; development of a script for board members to share; inviting board members to speech at local church and district levels
- Being ambassadors for the camp at conference, district and local church functions
- Assuring that the camp captures photos and video footage for promotional materials within the United Methodist Church
- Developing a script for creation of promotional DVD to share the specialties of each local site
- Inviting feedback and communicating information to programming staff and the Site Director
- Assessing and maintaining a web presence locally and on the conference website.

PROGRAMMING

The Site Management Board will work closely with the Site Director and staff to define and redefine programming that meets the continuing needs of the Nebraska Annual Conference.

Responsibilities for programming include:

- Ensuring that programs are consistent with United Methodist core values and theology
- Assisting the Site Director to develop and evaluate the United Methodist Camping Program
- Assisting the Site Director to develop second season programs and retreat opportunities
- Assisting the Site Director to develop and create leadership skills
- Development and assist the Site Director in development of new program ideas that will reflect our communities needs, enabling greater numbers of children and youth to attend our sites
- Assisting the Site Director in re-evaluation of program activities
- Assisting the Site Director in programming that will reflect our communities needs.

ADMINISTRATION

The Site Management Board will be responsible to review and assess the *American Camp Association Foundational Practices*. The policies may be formed at the NUMC Board of Directors' level, but the assurance that they are followed will be the responsibility of each Site Management Board. Specifically, the site board will:

- Review and report monthly camp usage by the following categories: total user days, United Methodist user days, day use groups, and monthly financial reports
- Prepare the budget for the upcoming year by November 1 of each year
- Prepare and communicate evaluations of the Site Director
- Participate in performance evaluation of camp operations at the request the Site Director
- Participate in the evaluation, hiring, and termination of the Site Director
- Participate in board development.

Adopted and approved by Camping Ad Hoc Committee, March 26, 2008.

**REPORT OF 2007 NEBRASKA UNITED METHODIST MEN ACTIVITIES
to the General Commission on United Methodist Men
on February 27 2008, by Doug Kallesen, Secretary
for Bill Stambaugh, President, and the Nebraska UMMen Executive Committee**

The Missouri River District UMMen organization is chartered and has continued to prosper under the leadership of Ron DeBord, the District President. They hold regular board meetings and provide

leadership for mission projects, especially supporting Camp Fontanelle. They held a day-long district UMMen rally for dads at the Nebraska City church in the fall. They have an excellent website www.ummenmoriver.com.

The Prairie Rivers District UMMen held an Annual Meeting in March 2007, voted to charter and provided its offering to the Nigerian partnership with Nebraska and the Upper Room Prayer Line. The District also held a golfathon, the proceeds going to the Upper Room Prayer Line. Their President is Joe Clarke of Marquette, Ne.

The Elkhorn Valley District had eight men pick up potatoes from a field near Inman for their home communities on September 29.

The other three districts of Nebraska UMMen are not very active. Supporting these districts is a conference UMMen goal for 2008. **The districts in the Nebraska conference were reduced from eight to six in mid 2007.**

A sixth annual fund-raising bike ride / walk sponsored by the Nebraska UMMen was held at Norfolk going west 22 miles on the Cowboy Trail and back (or whatever distance the biker/walker desired). Twenty-five riders, walkers, and helpers raised \$6,623 for support of mission work on Saturday, May 26, the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. Rocky Plettner of Norfolk was the event organizer.

The Bike/Walk proceeds together with other mission donations amounting to a total of \$7,436 were disbursed by the Nebraska UMMen in late summer 2007 to Nigeria-Nebraska Partnership, Society of St Andrew, Nebraska disaster response, Heifer International, camping, scholarships to seminarians and youth, Hispanic ministry, emergency relief including to reservations, Wesley House youth community center, rural response, prison ministries, Hope of Hearing-Haiti, Strength for Service military devotionals, Epworth Village for kids, Upper Room prayer line, and miscellaneous Nebraska UMMen ministries.

Nebraska UMMen have an important project called 100/1000 Club that is described at its website of www.gbgm-umc.org/hummclub100, This unit raises donations to endow scholarships for men and women to enter full-time Christian ministry. This project is over eighteen years in the making and awarded \$4,500 in scholarships in 2007. Randy Fleming of Springfield and Merv Schliefert of Kearney are the key organizers of this effort.

Nebraska UMMen hosted conference-wide rallies in February at Camp Fontanelle in the east and in August at Camp NORWESCA in the west. Both rallies were very inspirational with attendance being approximately 40 at each rally. Many thanks to the Omaha men and the Chadron men for doing the bulk of the organization of the rallies.

Our 2008 summer rally will be held at Camp Cameca this August the 15th thru the 17th.

Jack Sorensen of Grand Island continues to be active in the archives and historical areas.

Ken Walker of Omaha has kept the important information up to date on the Nebraska UMMen website www.umcneb.org, click on "Ministries in Action" then click on "United Methodist Men", You can also go to www.gcum.org which is the national UMMen web site and click on our link.

A fund was initiated by Randy Fleming of Springfield to collect donations to build a \$10,000 endowment fund to which the annual interest can help reimburse our officers that are traveling to meetings. At the end of the 2007 year, the balance was approximately 1/3 of the way to the goal.

In closing, I want to inform all of you that in the year 2008 is the 100th anniversary celebrating the formatino fo the United Methodist Men in the United Methodist Church throughout the U.S.A. Also in July of 2009 the Queadrennial gathering of UMMen throughout the world will be meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. This meeing was always held at Purdue University in years past now we will be utilizing the University faciliateis and be in the city where the General Commission on United Methodsit Men is located.

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The Nebraska Conference United Methodist Men will be gathering at Camp Comeca just south of Cozd, Ne for their summer meeting August 15 thru 17. The theme of this meeting is **No Man Left Behind.**

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Dixie Allbery, UMW Conference President

United Methodist Women have been called by Name as Resurrection Women this past year. We have had a transition period going from old districts to new districts. In preparation we held a spiritual retreat at Camp Comeca to discover what it meant to be Resurrection Women. Nature at the camp revealed to us some awesome awareness. All in all the camp revealed to us what God is expecting of us.

A wonderful educational opportunity, the cooperative School of Christian Mission & Event was offered in July, 2007. This gave to us information what God is expecting of us. District Meetings in the fall recognized past district presidents and reports of the year. We heard from our National Missions, Epworth Village and United Methodist Community Center/Wesley House.

The Fall Conference Meeting was held in Kearney, October 5th & 6th. A wonderful speaker, Janet Kahr Lewis, gave us her witness. Butterflies depicting new life and a wonderful beginning were very much a part of the program. Participants who attended National Seminar gave their reports and the goals for the Conference. The Dedicated Light burned for 6 hours and twenty-two minutes in honor of Damaris Martinez and \$15,260 was given to Mission.

The next year was begun with a Conference Executive Meeting in Gibbon on January 11th & 12th. Reports of the past year and goals for the new year were presented.

The Spring meetings of the Districts were held with spiritual retreats in March and April. The women went home with renewal as Resurrection Women.

We are looking forward to being Resurrection Women and to be open to spiritual growth and burst forth like a butterfly to new possibilities.

**STATE OF THE CHURCH REPORT
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2008**

Lavina Schwaninger, Conference Lay Leader

My term of being Conference Lay Leader ends with this meeting, so this will be my last State of the Church Report. I would like to thank everyone of you who has been helpful in any way. Thank you for your prayers, your support, and your friendship. I really appreciate you. I have told people that the only reason we do these jobs is because of the people we work with.

You are all aware that there have been a lot of things going on in our conference the past couple of years to help us to "Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World." The Transition Team has worked tirelessly again this past year to make recommendations for a new way to do ministry in the Nebraska Conference.

The Extended Cabinet went through the L3 Incubator program where leaders are formed in community with other leaders. They hold each other to a higher level of accountability. They create an environment of trust, innovation, and action. They develop a process that transforms their congregations into disciple-making faith communities. Does this remind you of Jesus' strategy of developing leaders? For 3 years he invested his time and energy in the lives of

12 disciples. Yes, he preached to the crowds and he taught the seventy, but his main purpose was to transplant God's vision of a new kingdom on earth into the hearts and minds of 12 people whom the world saw as simpleminded fishermen, scandalous tax collectors, thieves, and terrorists.

Or what about the so-called "Holy Club," the initial "Incubator" of the Methodist movement in England? Almost on a dare, Charles Wesley, and his buddies at Oxford started praying together, took communion daily, and served the poor. When his brother, John Wesley, joined them, they took it up a notch and became known as Methodists. Out of that group, a spiritual movement was born that transformed the face of England, and gave birth to a Christian movement that encircles the world.

The L3 principle is the template for every Incubator experience. L1 symbolizes loving God and neighbor. L2 is learning. Leadership is directly related to continual learning and sharing. No one person knows it all. L3 is leading.

Since last year the District Superintendents have started Incubator groups with clergy on their districts. Those clergy will then start groups in their churches. When that opportunity presents itself to you, it is your responsibility to get on board and be a part of an Incubator L3 group.

Then last November, there was A Convocation of Extended Cabinets, at Lake Junaluska, to study together, The United Methodist Way--Living the Christian Life in Covenant with Christ and One Another. We had Spirit-filled worship, presentations, and conversations, and Bishop Schnase also talked to us about the Practices of a Fruitful Congregation.

Then there are the simple rules that have the power to change the world. The Wesleyan movement is a prime example of this new creation that is formed when these 3 simple rules are adopted as a way of living. Retired Bishop, Rueben Job, wrote a book about them and he writes in terms that we can all understand.

The first simple rule is "Do No Harm." And when it is practiced, it works wonders in transforming the world around us.

The second rule is "Do Good." Doing good is not limited to those like me or those who like me. It is a universal command.

The third rule, "Stay in Love With God" will be different for each of us because each of us is unique. But some common essentials for all of us, such as a daily time of prayer; reflection upon and study of Scripture; regular participation in the life of a Christian community, including weekly worship and regular participation in the Lord's Supper; doing some act of goodness or mercy.

As the Church, we have an overwhelming task to minister to the needs of hurting people and to win souls to Christ. We are still called to "Make disciples of all men," a job that would literally be impossible without the proper tools. Those tools we need to carry out His work are known as the "gifts of the Holy Spirit." They are as essential to our lives as the combine is to the farmer.

Romans 12:6 tells us that we are all given "different gifts, according to the grace given us." Some day, we will all stand before Jesus to answer his question, "What did you do with what I gave you?" As Christians, how many of us are just sitting on our tool box, watching passively while others are working to make disciples?

Does God grieve when we keep the gifts he has given us locked up, instead of using them for the work they were intended to do? Get off your tool box, and find out what is in there. The Holy Spirit has inspired in all of us the abilities of Jesus to equip us for the most exciting task on earth. What are we doing with what he gave us?

Help us today to be an answer to another's prayer so that we may be one of your signs of hope in the world you love.