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Financial Implications: None

Report No. 2

Petition Number:

QUADRENNIAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES FOR THE 2001-2004 QUADRENNIUM

INTRODUCTION

While the term, “facilitation,” is not a strong word, it is the gracious and inspiring demand of The United Methodist Church for the work of its General Council on Ministries. Every General Conference since 1972 has asserted that “the purpose of the council, as a part of the total mission of the Church, is to *facilitate* the Church’s program life as determined by the General Conference.”

This purpose has historic roots in our predecessor denominations and, while at various times “facilitation” has taken on greater or lesser authority over the program life of the Church, the clear intention of the General Conference has always been to ensure that every means of grace is employed to bring about faithful and effective program ministry.

In 1992, the General Conference commissioned the General Council on Ministries “to lead the church in a period of discernment, reflection and study of its mission and structure as it moves into the 21st Century.” In 1996, the General Conference commissioned a special Connectional Process Team to continue this work of discernment.

In yet a third quadrennium, the General Conference directed the General Council on Ministries to bring to the 2004 session a recommendation and enabling legislation for what was discerned to be “the most effective design for the work of the agencies.” All of these initiatives speak to the collective will and wisdom of the Church as it calls for “facilitation” of ministry.

The concepts of holy conferencing and conciliar process for decision making are at the core of United Methodism, indeed, all “Methodist” tradition. This cooperative and collaborative style was and is foundational to United Methodist identity and purpose. It has been the intention of the General Council on Ministries to behave in ways which are consistent with this expectation as it has undertaken its work of facilitation and its work of envisioning how the ministries of the general agencies might be more effectively facilitated in a new configuration.

The General Council on Ministries is pleased to present to the 2004 General Conference this report of its efforts during the 2001-2004 quadrennium and several recommendations for action as it has fulfilled the mandates given to it. We are sincerely grateful for the opportunity to be of service to the Church in facilitating its vital ministries and it is our intention to be accountable to the Church for every task entrusted to us.

ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES

In the 2001-2004 quadrennium, the GCOM was organized with two (2) work areas and eight (8)

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committees. GCOM also created other special committees and task forces for particular purposes as the quadrennium unfolded. Reports of the work of these units are found in this quadrennial report. Between sessions of the full GCOM, its Servant Leadership Team, composed of Council officers and the chairs and other representatives of each work area and committee, functioned on behalf of the Council in important ways.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

The GCOM was composed of 69 members including forty (40) members elected by the five U.S. jurisdictions, seven (7) members from central conferences, six (6) bishops, representatives from Iglesia Metodista de Puerto Rico and a member church of the Commission on Pan Methodist Cooperation and Union, ten (10) additional members, the president of the Association of Directors of Connectional Ministries, and three (3) additional directors of connectional ministries as provided in ¶907.1a(11). These members are complemented by twelve general secretaries.

The General Council on Ministries was led in this quadrennium by the following officers and leaders of Work Areas and Committees:

Officers:

Bishop Edward W. Paup, Portland, OR, President
Ms. Amy Valdez Barker, Sun Prairie, WI, Vice President
Mr. Solomon Chiripasi, Harare, Zimbabwe, Vice President
Rev. Thomas A. Langford III, Concord, NC, Secretary
Ms. Mary Silva, San Marcos, TX, Treasurer

Work Area Leaders:

Ms. Darlene V. Amon, Suffolk, VA, Agency Relationships
Dr. Carolyn E. Johnson, West Lafayette, IN, Conference Relationships

Committee Leaders:

Bishop Alfred Johnson, Ocean, NJ, Advance for Christ and His Church
Rev. Danita R. Anderson, Naperville, IL, Cooperative Parish Ministries
Mr. James C. Shaw, Indianapolis, IN, Elimination of Institutional Racism
Bishop Rhymes H. Moncure, Jr., Lincoln, NE, Ethnic Local Church Concerns
Rev. Ardith Allread, Rocklin, CA, Faith and Order
Mr. Raul Francisco, Ewing, NJ, Faith and Order
Rev. Richard H. Jones, Milwaukee, WI, Faith and Order
Rev. Jonathan E. Baker, Wilmington, DE, Legislation
Rev. Shirley C. Montoya, Tucson, AZ, Native American Concerns
Mr. Larry P. Powell, Sr., Las Vegas, NV, General Secretaries Election

GENERAL COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES STAFF

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The numerous responsibilities and assignments given to the GCOM are supported by a relatively small staff which works on behalf of the Council.

The current GCOM executive staff consists of: Daniel K. Church, General Secretary; Donald L. Hayashi and Benoni Silva-Netto, Associate General Secretaries; William T. Carter, Director of the Advance for Christ and His Church, Lola I. Conrad, Chief Operating Officer; S. Craig This, Director of Research and Planning; and, Cecelia M. Long, Conciliar Officer. The General Secretary, the Associate General Secretaries and the Director of the Advance are elected by the GCOM pursuant to *The Book of Discipline, 2000*. The other positions are named by the General Secretary.

In addition to these persons, the Council has a highly qualified administrative and maintenance staff consisting of the Special Projects Coordinator, three Executive Secretaries, Finance/Office Manager, Operational Services Coordinator, Information Systems Coordinator, and Building Superintendent. The Council operates under carefully planned personnel policies including a strong affirmative action program.

Dr. Daniel K. Church was elected as General Secretary in 2000, filling a vacancy created by the retirement of C. David Lundquist. Dr. Church is a layman from the East Ohio Annual Conference, and previously served as the President and CEO of Edwin Shaw Hospital in Akron, Ohio. In 2001, Dr. Benoni Silva-Netto joined the GCOM staff as an Associate General Secretary. Dr. Silva-Netto is a clergy member in the California-Nevada Conference and previously served on the faculty of Pacific School of Religion and the American Baptist Seminary of the West.

The General Council on Ministries has enjoyed a supportive relationship with a significant churchwide initiative established by the 1996 General Conference and reaffirmed by the 2000 General Conference. The Coordinator of *Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century* and the Executive Secretary working with the Coordinator are members of the GCOM staff.

OFFICE LOCATION

The General Council on Ministries offices are located in the United Methodist Office Building which it owns in Dayton, Ohio. Prior to merger in 1968, this building was the world headquarters for most of the general agencies of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. In addition to the GCOM, other occupants of the building include the headquarters office of National Black Methodists for Church Renewal; the Dayton North and South Districts of the West Ohio Annual Conference; the Miami Valley United Methodist Mission Society; the headquarters offices of the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries; the Greater Dayton Christian Connections (Council of Churches); the Health Ministries Program of Good Samaritan Medical Center; and a non-degree program of United Theological Seminary.

COUNCIL RELATIONSHIPS

In performing its responsibilities, the GCOM has extensive involvement and connection with

constituencies all across the connectional church. Additionally, Council members and staff have related on numerous occasions to the general agencies of the denomination as well as each of the annual conferences in the United States, primarily in the latter instance through annual conference directors of connectional ministries. The GCOM staff is consistently asked to resource and assist jurisdictions and annual conferences. Council members also consulted with episcopal and other leaders in the central conferences

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as it explored implications of the global church.

What follows are individual reports of the work of the work areas and committees of the General Council on Ministries, plus a review of the other assignments carried out during the quadrennium on a council-wide basis.

WORK AREAS

The Council carried out most of its work through two work areas: the Agency Relationships Work Area and Conference Relationships Work Area. Many of the Council's responsibilities from *The Book of Discipline, 2000* and other assignments from the General Conference were assigned to the work areas for design, development and implementation. These work areas were organizational units within the General Council on Ministries, developed to work collaboratively to accomplish the Council's work.

Conference Relationships Work Area

The Conference Relationships Work Area focused on resourcing the annual conferences across the denomination. Central to its work was the question, "What does it mean to be a global church?" and "How does the general church effectively and efficiently resource annual conferences around the globe?" Through collaboration with annual conferences and general agency leaders, the Conference Relationships Work Area began to achieve a better understanding of what it means to be a global church and how to resource a global church.

The initial areas of work assigned to the Conference Relationships Work Area were:

1. Resourcing and communicating with the annual conferences of the central conferences and the jurisdictions (§906.8a-b)
2. Annual conference planning and research (§906.8c-d)
3. National Association of Conference Council Directors (renamed Association of Directors of Connectional Ministries) (§906.25)
4. Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century
5. Orientation and training of new district superintendents and directors of connectional ministries
6. Central conference representation (§906.19)

The Conference Relationships Work Area organized itself into three subcommittees to address the initial areas of work: Central Conferences, Communications and Resources, and Research and Planning. Additionally, subcommittees for the Multi-Language Writers Workshop, the Joint Training Event, and the District Superintendent/Director of Connectional Ministries training were also named.

The Central Conferences Subcommittee considered such issues as Superintendent/Director training for central conference leaders and a Covenant of Understanding Ministries with annual conferences in the central conferences. It received a report from central conference members stating that training for central conferences would be around \$20,000 (US) per annual conference. (see *Report 13.*)

Communications and Resources Subcommittee With the GCOM living under the General Conference mandate to determine the most effective design for the work of the general church, the Communications

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and Resources Subcommittee focused its work on structure and restructuring. The subcommittee sought to document annual conference structures. Further, it commissioned three members to draft a “Theology of Restructuring.

Research and Planning Subcommittee acted as an advisory panel to the Office of Research and Planning throughout the quadrennium. It advised on various research projects, such as the *Faith Communities Today* and *US Congregational Life Survey*, as well as the *Survey of General Conference Delegates* and the Forums on the Future. Additionally, it met twice with members of the United Methodist Research Network to receive updates from the general agencies.

The Conference Relationships Work Area also invited guest speakers to address the work area on topics of interest. The Work Area heard Dr. Cynthia Woolever, Co-director, US Congregational Life Survey project, give a profile of persons who attend United Methodist churches. Also, the work area heard from the Rev. Dr. Becky McMillan, Co-director, Pulpit and Pew Study, on the relationship between denominational centralization and clergy/church effectiveness.

Agency Relationships Work Area

The primary focus of the work of the Agency Relationships Work Area was to focus and guide the work of the GCOM related to assignments and responsibilities involving the church’s general agencies. It worked collaboratively in developing and recommending appropriate responses to the missional and resourcing needs of the whole church as expressed through the general agencies.

The initial areas of work assigned to the Agency Relationships Work Area were:

1. Evaluation of general program agencies, the General Commission on Archives and History and the General Commission on Communications (United Methodist Communications) (§906.14)
2. Recommendations for Special Sundays (§906.7)
3. Administration of the GCOM World Service Contingency Fund (§906.2e)
4. Review of the general agencies’ concurrence with the Social Principles (§906.15)
5. Review of general agency periodicals (§906.9)
6. World Service Program Funding for the general program agencies (§906.2a-d)
7. Administration of the World Service Special Gifts (§906.24)
8. Review the annual budgets of the general program agencies (§906.2f)
9. Consultation with general agencies about publishing and communication policies (§906.10)
10. Resolve overlaps and interagency gaps (§906.11a-d)
11. General agency headquarters and staff location (§906.26)

Evaluation Responsibilities

Evaluation of general program related agencies by the GCOM is a part of the accountability relationship between GCOM and these agencies (§906.14). The evaluation process and its results are reported to each General Conference. The purpose of agency evaluation is to assist the agency in the process of fulfilling and supporting its ministry. (§702.3) The results of this evaluation are presented in *GCOM Report No. 8*.

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Financial Responsibilities

Specific reports of the financial responsibilities as approved by GCOM are found as follows:

1. Allocation of World Service funds to general program agencies for the 2005-2008 quadrennium in collaboration with the General Council on Finance and Administration. See GCOM *Report No. 23*.
2. Allocations to the general program agencies for additional program funding from the World Service Contingency Fund. See GCOM *Report No. 9*.
3. Recommendation to the General Conference, after consultation with the Council of Bishops, of the number and timing of special days which are to be observed on a churchwide basis. See GCOM *Report No. 6*.
4. Organizing the World Service Special Gifts Committee. See *Report No. 3*.

General Agency Headquarters/Staff Location

The report on the General Agency Headquarters/Staff Location is found in *Report No. 10*.

OFFICE OF RESEARCH & PLANNING

The Office of Research & Planning of the General Council on Ministries continues to evolve as a vital part of the church's life. It provides essential information to church leaders and other constituencies to facilitate informed decision-making. The projects of the Office of Research & Planning are widely distributed and are evaluated highly by leadership groups utilizing the information.

As the church moves into the 21st century, its ability to draw on the best information available and apply it to the opportunities for ministry is essential. GCOM's involvement and leadership during the 2001-2004 quadrennium in helping this to occur through the Office of Research & Planning has been a high priority.

Several projects and activities described below illustrate the scope of activities of the Office of Research & Planning of the General Council on Ministries, and relate to the objectives and responsibilities assigned to GCOM in ¶¶ 905.4, 905.8c, 905.8d and 905.17.

Congregational Studies

The GCOM Office of Research & Planning engaged in two projects to measure the congregational life of United Methodist local churches. The United Methodist results and reports listed below can be found at

www.gcom-umc.org/research.

Faith Communities Today: A Survey of United Methodist Congregations provided data on congregational life in United Methodist local churches in the following areas: building/location, worship, programs, participants, leadership and organizational dynamics, and finances. Data collected from this project were used in the production of a United Methodist report, "How We See Ourselves: A Snapshot of The United Methodist Church," as well as "Do You Know What Growing Churches Do?" and "United Methodist Congregations Doing Good in Their Communities: A Report of Programs and Services."

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As part of this project, the data collected from this project will also be forwarded to the Cooperative Congregational Studies Project (CCSP) at Hartford Seminary (Hartford, CT). The CCSP will compare data from 40 participating faith groups and denominations, which has resulted in two reports, *Faith Communities Today: A Report on Religion in the United States Today* by Carl Dudley and David Roozen and *Meet your Neighbors: Interfaith Facts*.

The Office of Research & Planning also participated in a complementary research project to the FACT study entitled, "National Survey of Leadership in Latino Parishes and Congregations" (NSLLPC). The Program of Analysis of Religion Among Latinos/as (PARAL) conducted the study and the Office of Research & Planning is working with PARAL to facilitate the dissemination of findings.

United States Congregational Life Survey: The GCOM Office of Research & Planning participated in the United States Congregational Life Survey in 2001. The data collected from this project was used in the production of the report, "Do You Know Who Attends United Methodist Churches?" as well as "Who Are The Older Adults Who Attend United Methodist Churches" and "Who are the Youth and Young Adults Who Attend United Methodist Churches?"

As part of this project, the data collected from this project was used by the US Congregations Project to produce the book, *A Field Guide to US Congregations: Who's Going Where and Why?* by Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce.

Findings from this study are also being used in the *Pulpit and Pew: Study of Pastoral Leadership* being conducted by the J.M. Ormond Center, Duke Divinity School. Again, the Office of Research & Planning is working with the Ormond Center to facilitate the dissemination of findings.

The data collected from both of these projects has been used by the various boards and agencies throughout the quadrennium in developing their resources for local congregations and annual conferences.

Providing Resources for the Church

The Office of Research & Planning staff provides extensive consultation with annual conferences, general agencies, and other church leaders through staff consultation and resource development from materials available through the office. Using demographic data from Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., the Office of Research produced economic and demographic profiles and projections for each annual conference, from 1970-2020.

In addition, The Office of Research also made use of the 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 Glenmary Studies on *Churches and Church Membership* (now the *Religious Congregations and Church Membership Study*). These studies provided each annual conference with important planning data for each county within the United States, including the number of churches, church membership, and percent of each county that is unchurched for the years studied.

Throughout the quadrennium, The Office of Research & Planning has also worked with seminary students, pastors, local churches, districts, and annual conferences in developing comprehensive approaches to planning, research, evaluation, and coordination to assist them in their mission and ministry.

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United Methodist Research Network

The United Methodist Research Network, formerly the Interagency Research Task Force, met twice throughout the quadrennium to review and coordinate research needs and functions in The United Methodist Church. This Network is comprised of general agency staff, who routinely engage in research and/or data collection, and academics, both at United Methodist seminaries and other institutions, that have a research interest in The United Methodist Church.

Each gathering included a comprehensive sharing of research plans and projects of the agencies and institutions. This sharing led to the cooperation and collaboration on several projects, such as:

Forums on the Future: Two web casts were held entitled, “What in the World Are We Talking About? Strengthening Our Global Connection and Ecumenical Relationships.” Over 1,000 persons logged on to hear the two web casts. Each web cast included a panel of United Methodist leaders and scholars from around the world discussing what it means to be a global church.

On-Line Inventory of Research Project: The general agencies collaborated on the creation of an Internet-based Inventory of Research Projects to serve as a repository for research on The United Methodist Church. This “virtual” repository of research enables a user to access research projects and data 24 hours a day, seven days a week by clicking on www.gcom-umc.org/research. This “on-line” repository will also enable the user to contact the researcher directly for further information. The on-line Inventory of Research Projects replaces the *Inventory of Research Studies*, which catalogued research projects conducted by the general agencies, annual conferences, and United Methodist-related seminaries and divinity schools.

Participation in Professional Organizations

The GCOM Office of Research & Planning has membership in several professional organizations in order to keep abreast of the latest development in the research of religion. The Office of Research & Planning has maintained an active presence in these organizations through participation on committees and presentations at the various meetings. Additionally, the GCOM Office of Research & Planning staff has been elected to serve on the executive committee of Faith Communities Today and the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB).

A Research Plan for The United Methodist Church

The Office of Research & Planning, along with the United Methodist Research Network, began implementing the Research Plan for The United Methodist Church. This research plan continues to evolve and the GCOM recommends the continuance of a revised Research Plan for The United Methodist Church found in *GCOM Report No. 15*.

COMMITTEES

In addition to the work of its work areas, the Council’s work was greatly enhanced by eight committees to which some of GCOM’s Disciplinary responsibilities were also assigned. These committees and their assigned work are as follows:

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The Advance for Christ and His Church Committee

The purpose of The Advance For Christ and His Church Committee was to provide general oversight for the Advance program by approving projects for Advance Special support, receiving reports of gifts and by establishing communications at all levels of the church, as set forth in *The Book of Discipline, 2000*, ¶¶ 906.23 and 907.5. The Committee consists of 20 GCOM members and is resourced and complemented by representatives of the following general agencies: General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), General Commission on Communications (UMCom) and General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA).

In this quadrennium, the Advance Committee has worked faithfully to respond to the increasing needs around the world. The attractiveness of the Advance for Christ and His Church is that 100% of every gift goes to the program that the donor has designated. The World Service Fund makes this “miracle” possible. We congratulate all United Methodist churches for participating in the Advance and keeping it a strong missional outreach for our denomination. Further details of the important work of The Advance for Christ and His Church can be found in *GCOM Report No. 16*.

The Advance Committee, in its process of approving General Advance special projects, receives applications from designated program units of the GBGM. The Committee may approve, disapprove or modify these projects. UMCom’s Division of Program and Benevolence Interpretation promotes the Advance. The GCFA, serving as the General Treasurer of the Advance through its General Secretary, establishes and maintains procedures to acknowledge every gift from every donor. This is truly an example of effective collaboration between many parts of the church working together for mission and ministry.

Cooperative Parish Ministries Committee

The Cooperative Parish Ministries Committee was organized in response to the General Conference referral of Calendar Item 1424 to GCOM. The report on this work can be found in *Report No. 17*.

Elimination of Institutional Racism Committee

The purpose of the Committee for the Elimination of Institutional Racism is to develop processes to monitor all the Council’s work and activities, and develop strategies for the elimination of institutional racism, as GCOM seeks to be an inclusive agency in the denomination. This committee also works with the General Secretary and the Council’s Affirmative Action Officer in relation to its responsibilities.

In addition to carrying out the assignments described above, the committee monitored the Council’s sessions for inclusiveness; it also gave leadership to a significant event in the life of the Council. In May 2001, Dr. Joe Agnes led the Council in discussions around living in a multicultural society and White privilege.

Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee

The Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee was recommended for continuation as part of the GCOM internal organization by action of the 2000 General Conference. Specific disciplinary reference to this responsibility is found in ¶906.5.

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The purpose of the ELCC Committee is to continue the emphasis within the denomination for incorporation of the former missional priority (Developing and Strengthening the Ethnic Minority Local Church for Witness and Mission) and its successor with emphasis on ethnic local church issues and concerns. The work of this Committee is described in detail in *Report No. 18*.

Faith and Order Committee

The Faith and Order Committee was organized in response to the General Conference referral of Calendar Item 1545 to GCOM. The report on this work can be found in *Report No. 24*.

General Secretaries Election Committee

The General Secretaries Election Committee functions on behalf of the GCOM under the provision of the *Book of Discipline, 2000* (§906.16), assigning responsibility to GCOM to annually elect the general secretary/secretariat of each general program-related agency with accountability to the Council. The committee reviews the nominating process for general secretaries/secretariat of the program-related agencies, reports to the Council concerning newly nominated general secretaries/secretariat, and initiates and responds to requests for consultation between GCOM and such program related agencies with respect to their general secretaries/secretariat.

During the quadrennium, the Committee interviewed and recommended for election six new general secretaries: James Winkler, General Board of Church and Society; Karen Greenwaldt, General Board of Discipleship; Randy Day, General Board of Global Ministries; Jerome King Del Pino, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; and, Raponzil Drake and Soomee Kim, General Commission on Status and Role of Women. The committee worked closely with the general agencies in bringing their nominations to the Council.

Legislation Committee

The Legislation Committee has the responsibility of assisting the GCOM in reviewing, preparing, and writing proposals related to the Council's legislation to be submitted to the 2004 General Conference. In addition, it was responsible for reviewing and recommending deletion of time-dated resolutions in the *Book of Resolutions* (§906.21). This report and recommendations can be found in *Report No. 4*.

Much of the legislation was written to implement the "Living into the Future" proposal as developed by the GCOM members. The specific legislative proposals related to "Living Into the Future" will be considered in various committees at the 2004 General Conference.

The Legislation Committee sponsored and planned the Legislative Gathering, an interagency gathering that provided opportunity for networking and coordination on legislation of mutual concern to the various agencies of the Church. A report on this gathering can be found in *Report No. 19*.

Native American Forum Committee

In the internal working design of the GCOM the Native American ministries of the church have had a forum to collaborate and interface with one another. The Native American Forum offers a common setting

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for sharing ministry needs, identifying resources, and finding ways to focus shared ministries. It has been a central nexus for all Native American ministries to share, mutually learn, voice unified awareness to others, and find creative ways to impact the needs of native communities and the world. Ongoing participants have been the Native American International Caucus, the National United Methodist Native American Center, the Native American Comprehensive Plan, the Southeastern Jurisdiction Native American Center, the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, and other Native American tribal and church leaders.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES AND INVOLVEMENTS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES

Living into the Future

The 2000 General Conference commended to The United Methodist Church at all levels the five transformational directions. These valuable principles and ideas need to be brought to life at every level of The United Methodist Church over the 2001-2004 quadrennium. Each organizational level of the church from the local congregation through all levels of the general church should begin to live out these transformational directions.

The GCOM was charged to work with the church in discerning God's will for its work and living as biblical people in the Wesleyan tradition through a style of leadership that is collegial, cooperative, inclusive, and actively practices hospitality. GCOM was also charged to model the articulation of a clear and compelling ministry vision through a holistic process that focuses the work of all parts. It was to determine the most effective design for the work of the general agencies to integrate their work for greater collaboration and elimination of duplications, determine how general agencies can better provide resources for annual conferences and local churches, recommend to the 2004 General Conference the best way to staff the work beyond annual conferences and determine where the responsibility of personnel should be vested, and develop ways of evaluating the results of the work of the agencies. A

description of the steps taken by the Council are included in *Report No. 1*.

Each GCOM meeting focused on one of the five transformational directions. Bible Study leaders provided guidance for discussions and discernment of God's call on the church. Additionally, the GCOM members were encouraged to participate in site visits of ministries taking place in the communities and surrounding areas where the Council meetings were being held. The Council took time on Sunday mornings to worship with local congregations and to interact with the congregation. This greatly broadened the experience of the members to see the church in ministry in a variety of contexts.

Global Experiences in the Central Conferences

Consistent with its mandate to assure full participation of central conference members in the life of the church (§906.19), the GCOM has taken seriously the global nature of United Methodism. In 2002, the Council's Servant Leadership Team (SLT) met in Harare, Zimbabwe. Prior to the meeting, teams of SLT members visited Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe to see first-hand the important ministries in these areas. Bishop Christopher Jokomo, of the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area, welcomed and addressed the GCOM members. He thanked the SLT for choosing to come to Zimbabwe. He spoke of how wars had left many homeless, and AIDS kills thousands each week. He asked the GCOM members to go tell what they have seen. The members also met with several conference leaders and visited the conference offices. During

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their meeting in Zimbabwe, the members visited Africa University and United Methodist ministries in Mutare.

In Spring 2003, the Council was scheduled to meet in Manila, The Philippines. However, just prior to going several council members raised concerns about the wisdom of traveling given health and safety concerns due to an outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Asia and the impending U.S. war in Iraq. Although the meeting was cancelled, some members made site visits to Hong Kong, Japan, and The Philippines.

Approval of National/Global Conferences and Maintaining Calendar of Meetings

In ¶¶906.6a and 906.6b, GCOM is to coordinate the scheduling and timing of National/Global conferences, convocations and/or major consultations of general program agencies and maintain a calendar of meetings on behalf of all agencies of The United Methodist Church. This coordination aids the agencies in regulating the number and the timing of such meetings. In fulfillment of this assignment, GCOM follows a process of requiring requests in advance from the agencies for the scheduling of meetings and publishes a quarterly calendar of meetings which is circulated to appropriate groups across the church as well as being made available on the GCOM website (www.gcom-umc.org). .

CONCLUSION

The material presented to the 2004 General Conference by the General Council on Ministries in these pages describes the active and comprehensive work of this Council during the 2001-2004 quadrennium. As evidenced here, the General Council on Ministries plays an important and integral role in the life and work of The United Methodist Church as it fulfills its disciplinary mandates and responds to numerous special assignments given it by the General Conference.

The delegates to the 2004 General Conference are asked to carefully read and consider each of the reports and recommendations of the General Council on Ministries in this section of the *Advance DCA*. They not only describe the past work of this Council in several important areas, but they also set forth significant challenges and new directions for the Church in the future.

The role and responsibilities of the General Council on Ministries are crucial in the total life of the denomination. The strength and vitality of our connectional system is clearly seen through a partnership existing in the holistic ministry coordinated by this Council. GCOM members have faithfully carried out these tasks in this quadrennium and, in so doing, have demonstrated their commitment to God and the gospel revealed in Jesus Christ. May the faithful response by the delegates to the 2004 General Conference give meaning and life to God's call for mission and ministry through The United Methodist Church.

Signed _____
Edward W. Paup, President

Signed _____
Daniel K. Church, General Secretary

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