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Suggested Topic: Report and Recommendation for Themes, Missional Priorities and Special Programs

Sponsoring Agency: GCOM

Financial Implications: Yes

## Report No. 5

Petition Number:

### REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION FOR THEMES, MISSIONAL PRIORITIES AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The General Council on Ministries recommends two Special Programs, as outlined in Para. 703.10 of *The Book of Discipline*, 2000.

*A special program is a quadrennial emphasis initiated by a general program-related agency in accordance with Paras. 906.1, .2, and .4, approved by General Conference and assigned to a general program-related agency. The program shall be designed in response to a distinct opportunity or need in God's world that is evidenced by research or other supporting data and shall propose achievable goals within the quadrennium. Para. 703.10, The Book of Discipline, 2000.*

The two special programs being recommended are:

1. *Holistic Strategy on Africa*, a special program coordinated by the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), in collaboration with several agencies, to be funded at \$35,000,000 with funding provided through the participating agencies through their quadrennial budgets.
2. *Holistic Strategy on Latin America and the Caribbean*, a special program coordinated by the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), in collaboration with several agencies, to be funded at \$8,000,000, with funding provided through the participating agencies through their quadrennial budgets.

Additionally, the General Council on Ministries (GCOM) requests the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) allocate \$1,320,000 for the 2005-2008 quadrennium to the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) for coordination responsibilities of these two special programs. A description of the special programs follows.

#### Exhibit I

##### **Holistic Strategy on Africa Special Program 2005-2008**

The mission of The United Methodist Church, as succinctly stated in *The Book of Discipline*, 2000, is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ.” (Para 120).

Discipleship is the active process of confirming and nurturing the relationship of an individual's life with God in and through Jesus Christ, and becoming a part of the community of discipleship—the Church. It begins with an awareness of the “good news” and the response to Christ begins a life-long spiritual journey of nurture within the Body of Christ.

We find in the New Testament several charges to the church that are foundational to this mission. After Easter, Jesus Christ appears before his bewildered disciples, saying: *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And, remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28: 19-20).*

We know that the power of God filled that charge because a small group of unlettered people began the most powerful movement the world has ever known: the Christian church.

This missional charge was and is entrusted to the whole church, to all disciples, congregations, and regions. As new communities are added in new places and cultures, the new disciples become full mission partners to be celebrated, confirmed, and nurtured, even as they celebrate, confirm, and nurture those who brought the good news. Thus, older and newer parts of the church are connected in mission.

The United Methodist Church can designate one or more special programs for its quadrennial period. This proposal advances the Church in sub-Saharan Africa as a Special Program for the 2005-2008 quadrennium. A description of the Church in that region, its strengths and challenges, and reasons why an emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa is appropriate at this time are outlined.

### **Authority, Discipleship, and Nurture**

The United Methodist Church in sub-Saharan Africa is totally committed to and involved in the ministry of the church as it calls people to confess their faith in Jesus Christ, become disciples, and observe all that Jesus commands. This is done through a variety of ministries that are supported and nurtured through our connection.

The exercise of divine power results in salvation, as exemplified by the ministry of Jesus. He defined his mission as that of seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10). He told his critics that he received and ate with sinners (Luke 15:2) because his mission is like that of a sheep-owner who, having lost one sheep, leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness *to go after the one which is lost until he finds him* (Luke 15:3-4); or that of a woman who having lost one of her ten silver coins, lights a lamp, sweeps the house; and diligently looks for the lost coin until she finds it (Luke 15:8). And when that which was lost is found, the owner not only rejoices herself but calls her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her.

Who are the lost whom Jesus sought? The root sense of the word lost denotes someone or something that is not in its proper place or relationship, as a sheep gone astray, away from the watchful eye of a shepherd, or a coin that is not in its special place of safekeeping. Finding and saving are causes for great rejoicing.

Another authoritative text in the salvation story is Acts 1:1-8, an account of the final days of Jesus' physical sojourn with the first disciples. After spending forty days with them teaching them about the Kingdom of God, Jesus assured them of his presence and the power of the Holy Spirit. He charged them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. This story gives the church a clear sense of the scope of our witness and the content. The scope is everywhere, locally (Jerusalem), nearby (Judea), to strangers and foreigners (Samaria), and into the unknown (the end of the earth). The message is Jesus, and his teaching about the Kingdom of God. This is our charge today, given to the whole church, mission everywhere, witnessing to the ultimate victory of God's Kingdom, challenging all of this world's Kingdom, and clearly grounded on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

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*Financial Implications:* Yes

Matthew 25 adds another important dimension to mission. This is the charge to respond to the needs of the hungry, the poor, the strangers, the naked, the sick and imprisoned. Jesus' ministry includes many examples of feeding, healing, teaching, and comforting the people he encountered. He demonstrated and accepted those around him who seemed to be helpless and abandoned, *like sheep without a Shepherd*. In telling his followers to minister unto others, he revealed the fullness of his continuing presence with us. *Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.* (Matthew 25: 40).

These charges help us understand the holistic nature of the church. The purpose of the Church in sub-Saharan Africa is to bring people to salvation in Christ, and to change lives positively and permanently for the good of the community.

United Methodist disciples in Sub-Saharan Africa are committed to and involved in the evangelistic and humanitarian spectrum we identify with Wesleyan spiritual holiness. Their disciplined life is a product of abundant fruit in faith and deed. Throughout the region, faithful discipleship is a way of life, a holistic ministry concept and response. In caring for the whole person, The United Methodist Church continues to develop and strengthen ministries in evangelism; health; education; economic development for women, children and marginalized people; nutrition, and programs that address issues around HIV/AIDS.

### **The Spirit and Vitality of the Church and Society in Africa**

To speak of Africa is to speak of social, economic, and political diversity. The continent comprises 53 nations diverse in culture, language, and religion. Diversity is also a hallmark of The United Methodist Church on the continent, where it is present in 21 countries south of the Sahara Desert.

To speak of Africa is to speak of vast human and natural resources. The continent has some 625 million people. It provides a large percentage of the world's diamonds, gold, rubber, copper, and oil. The continent is rich in uranium, chromium, and cobalt.

To speak of Africa is to speak of a lack of economic development and political stability, of colonial racism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, economic exploitation, and ethnic conflicts. Many nations during the last decade have experienced catastrophic consequences of regional wars; the price of which has been massive loss of lives and an exodus of people resulting in a refugee and displaced population of over 4 million people.

To speak of Africa is to speak of famine, floods, drought and disease. The continent has the highest infant mortality rate on earth. Many children die of malnutrition, diarrhea-related diseases, and common childhood ailments for which vaccines exist.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic endangers the lives of tens of thousands of people, primarily women, children and young men. One result is an unprecedented orphan population. In a *New York Times* article on December 20, 2002, Dr. Kofi A. Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, cited the following statistics: *2.5 million Africans died from AIDS in 2002 alone, leaving 11 million African children orphaned since the epidemic began.* He further cited a United Nations report of November, 2002 showing that 50% of those infected with HIV worldwide are women, while in Africa that figure is 58%. In Dr. Annan's words, *"Today AIDS has a woman's face."*

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To speak of Africa is to speak of hope, vitality, and determination. It is a continent in trouble but not in despair. Efforts to win freedom from oppression continue and expand. Special government commissions, churches, ecumenical agencies, and non-governmental organizations seek ways to promote peaceful, civil societies. United Methodist bishops in Africa participate in these ecumenical and governmental commissions working on conflict resolution within their countries.

Regrettably, both print and electronic media in the United States and Europe far too often focus on the negative images of Africa. Seldom does media provide positive images: the African people's struggle for a better life, children eagerly seeking an education under adverse conditions, and farmers and business men and women striving to draw economic benefits from the rich land. Few Westerners see African women determined to plant and cultivate crops, despite harsh environmental conditions, or governments trying to improve the health services for people. The United Methodist Church in Africa is struggling to provide adequate salary support for its pastors, teachers, and the medical personnel in United Methodist related institutions. These are the stories we need to hear.

While the African people are faced with enormous challenges that would discourage and demoralize many, its people still see opportunities.

*...We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;....2 Corinthians 4:8-9.*

Africans are a people with notable energy, spirit and resourcefulness, and this is nowhere better seen than in The United Methodist Church on the continent of Africa.

We begin a new century seeing a phenomenal increase in the numbers of people in Africa accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The United Methodist Church membership from western to southern Africa is growing rapidly, not only within the geographical bounds of defined annual conferences, but also beyond their borders to neighboring countries. This blessing places heavy responsibility on the leadership of the churches, increasing the need for trained leaders, clergy and laity. It also requires increased activity to nurture members and empower them in witness and outreach that now defines their discipleship. We need new church buildings in urban and rural areas, and educational materials that are contextually sensitive and language appropriate. With a growing youth population, the church is challenged to develop programs for youth and young adults. The episcopal leadership, clergy, and laity have faithfully...*made disciples of Jesus Christ by proclaiming the good news of God's grace . . . (The Book of Discipline 2000, Part III, Section I).*

The United Methodist Church has a commendable legacy in Africa. Our witness to the wholeness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ served in establishing primary and secondary schools, seminaries, bible colleges, hospitals, and clinics. Most recently, Africa University became the first United Methodist Church-related institution of higher education on the continent. By estimate, 25 % of the presidents of the various nations in Africa were educated in United Methodist primary and secondary schools. In Angola, The United Methodist Church was the first denomination to establish schools for Angolan young people. The first president of Angola, Agostino Neto, was granted a scholarship from The United Methodist Church to study at the Medical Faculty in Lisbon, Portugal.

Our Church-related schools have led in the education of women. The Hartford School for Girls in Sierra Leone, which has received support from United Methodist Women, graduated thousands of young women. Hartford graduates work with the United Nations, other non-governmental organizations, and

national governments. An example is Ms. Shirley Yema Gbujama, who is Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs in the Sierra Leone cabinet. She delivered the Laity Address at the 1999 Sierra Leone Annual Conference Session. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mulingishi, a United Methodist Seminary, has educated much of the leadership of United Methodist clergy in Francophone Africa.

The Liberia Annual Conference operates thirty-six educational institutions, including a seminary, a junior college, four senior high schools, and six junior high schools and primary schools. The conference has established an institution of higher education, The United Methodist University of Liberia. Ganta Methodist Hospital is the first hospital established in the northern region of Liberia, the third in the country, and the first in the country to have ongoing leprosy treatment and a prostheses program. The Winifred Harley School of Nursing, also at Ganta, is among the best training institutions for nursing in the region. The words of *The Discipline* strike home: *The purpose of the annual conference is to make disciples of Jesus Christ by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church all to the glory of God.* (Section IX, para. 601)

This legacy continues today as the leadership of The United Methodist Church in Africa is burdened by severe economic hardships and civil conflict, yet still cares for the hungry, the poor, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned.

## A New Day

New issues and opportunities face The United Methodist Church in Africa. Acknowledging problems and vitality, the Council of Bishops in 2000 initiated *Hope for the Children of Africa*, with the Executive Committee of the Council of Bishops taking an action calling the denomination to develop a comprehensive and holistic strategy for Africa to address critical human needs on the continent, and in particular the needs of The United Methodist Church.

Responses to *Hope for the Children of Africa* within the United States vary. Some congregations and annual conferences have heeded the invitation, assisting with the establishment of orphanages and providing financial and educational resources for schools and clinics serving children.

On the general church level, consultations involving the Council of Bishops, general agencies and commissions, the European Commission on Mission, representatives—clergy, lay and episcopal—from Africa have identified ways in which cooperative and connectional ministries are underway as well as assessed future priorities.

Cooperative ministries opportunities include:

- work with annual conferences in developing curriculum for education in the areas of evangelism, liturgy, and worship;
- training programs for district leaders of youth, district superintendents, and chaplains serving in the army, military and hospitals with a focus on conflict resolution;
- technical and financial support for institutions of higher education and campus ministries;
- witness and advocacy, with particular emphases on strong United Nations peacekeeping, a ban on so called "conflict diamonds," ratification of the Landmine Ban Treaty, protocol governing child soldiers, reconciliation ministries, debt cancellation, economic development assistance, and funding to attack HIV/AIDS;

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- publication of resource materials such as *The Book of Discipline*, *The Book of Resolution* and *The Upper Room* in French and Hausa, with plans underway to publish a Portuguese edition;
- community-based primary health care;
- education and pastoral training in HIV and AIDS ministries;
- humanitarian assistance and refugee resettlement programs;
- scholarships, especially for women;
- annual conference covenant relationships providing funding to supplement pastors salaries;
- academies for evangelization and church growth in Africa, and
- support of pastors training schools, seminaries and other institutions designed to train clergy.

### **Challenging The Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In September 2002, bishops and lay representatives from Africa, the general secretaries of general agencies, and representatives from the Council of Bishops made the following declaration:

*We...share a deep and abiding interest in expanding and deepening the effectiveness of the Church's ministry on the continent of Africa. Our desire is to work collaboratively at all levels of The United Methodist Church connection to share an ambitious aspiration for the growth of United Methodist work and witness, while at the same time finding effective, efficient and accountable methods to gain the most benefit from cooperative and coordinated efforts...*

In keeping with this affirmation, a Special Program on a Holistic Strategy on Africa is proposed for the 2005-2008 quadrennium, the special program to be a collaboration among the Council of Bishops, general secretaries, and general agencies of the church, the European Commission on Mission, and representatives from the Africa Central Conferences.

### **Quadrennial Goals and Evaluation**

The primary goals for the Special Program on Africa are: 1) to assist The United Methodist Church in Africa in strengthening and expanding its witness and ministry on the continent, and 2) to strengthen the connections between with annual conferences of Africa, Europe and the United States in the areas of witness and service, especially in the development of effective models.

In this Special Program, the general agencies of The United Methodist Church are committed, as stated in the September 2002 meeting of the Holistic Africa Strategy Meeting,... "to work collaboratively at all levels of The United Methodist Church connection..."

### **Agency Emphasis**

The following programs are illustrative of the types of programs to be expanded and/or initiated under the Special Program:

1., *Leadership Development and Training and Resources*

1.1 The General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) plan to support three African, language-specific staff (English, French and Portuguese) who will be responsible for creating and coordinating leadership training events for the formation and development of national leaders, and to provide adjunct staff persons who will plan, prepare, lead and coordinate leadership formation events. These three specialists will be located in west Africa, southern Africa, and the Democratic Republic of Congo providing strategic accessibility to United Methodist Church training in language-specific regions.

1.2 Creation of affordable printed resources.

1.3 Develop lay and clergy leaders as trainers who will offer relevant training events to offer further assistance and information for mutual benefit and learnings.

1.4 Develop user-friendly audio, print and other resources for utilization in local church ministries and programs by working with local church leaders and writers in the creation, translation and cross-cultural adaptation of official denominational materials.

1.5 Explore and implement the use of distance training and mentoring through electronic means and Internet.

1.6 The General Commission on United Methodist Men (GCUMM) plan to provide electronic daily devotions for United Methodist Men in Africa..

## *2. Advocacy*

2.1 The General Board of Church and Society (GBCS, the Shared Mission Focus on Young People (SMFYF), the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC), and the Council of Bishops (COB) will develop a consolidated educational plan on HIV/AIDS. This will involve the general agencies, annual conferences, districts, and local churches. It may also involve ecumenical organizations, such as the World Council of Churches, and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance.

2.2 This initiative will mobilize United Methodists to advocate with United States Congress and the United Nations for adequate policies and funding to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic particularly related to the African continent.

2.3 Use resources (current and newly developed) that provide information on the HIV/AIDS pandemic and suggest ways to become involved.

2.4 Design and implement, in consultation with central conferences in Africa, workshops on HIV/AIDS and how to address the problems. The Democratic Republic of Congo may serve as the initial setting for these workshops.

2.5 In collaboration with the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, The United Methodist Church will continue to work with the World Council of Churches on the Decade to Overcome Violence.

## *3. Evangelism and Church Growth*

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- 3.1 The General Commission on United Methodist Men will develop electronic daily devotionals for Annual Conferences in Africa, working cooperatively with Radio Africa, a program of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).
- 3.2 The GBGM will continue its support for landmine removals in Mozambique and Angola.
- 3.3 GBGM will continue its support for emerging churches in Africa (in Cameroon and Senegal) and will support new church development by annual conferences in Africa.

#### 4. Direct Services

- 4.1 At the urging of annual conferences in Africa, GBGM will work toward the revitalization of United Methodist hospitals on the continent.

### **Administration**

The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) will have administrative responsibility for the Special Program. Evaluation will take place under an inter-agency task force composed of representatives of general agencies, the European Commission on Mission, the Council of Bishops, and bishops and lay persons representing the Africa central conferences.

### **Proposed Accountability**

Reports on the Special Program will be made by the Board of Directors of the General Board of Global Ministries to the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church.

### **Exhibit II**

#### **Holistic Strategy on Latin America and the Caribbean Special Program 2005-2008**

*Come, you that are blessed ... inherit the kingdom ... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. (Matthew 25:34-36)*

#### **Statement on Latin America and the Caribbean**

MARCHA (Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans) calls upon The United Methodist Church to pay close attention to the critical needs in the Latin America/ Caribbean region and to respond to the missional opportunities that are present there. The United Methodist Church should include in its top priorities missional programs which respond to the growing number of impoverished persons in the Caribbean and Latin America, with women and children being the most affected. The situation in many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean has become extremely critical in recent months. Media headlines attest to the need for urgent attention to these areas.

#### **Missional Opportunities**



**Evangelization:** Methodist churches in 19 countries, knit together in mission through the Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean (CIEMAL), are reaching out through new initiatives in evangelization, with significant church growth being experienced in many communities, and with renewed commitment to their Wesleyan heritage of witness with and on behalf of the poor and the oppressed. Twelve new UM congregations have been established in Honduras in the last four years by the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM). New Methodist congregations have been developed in Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Venezuela in work under the auspices of CIEMAL with support of GBGM. Church growth could be enhanced if additional resources are provided.

**Prophetic Voice and Accompaniment:** The different crises in Latin America and the Caribbean require the prophetic presence of the church helping the people to keep the faith and to seek solutions that would be fair to all. The churches in the region, within their limited resources, are responding to the more immediate needs. They also continue to advocate for justice and the preservation of human rights. The deep and complex relationships between the United States and the different countries in the Latin America/ Caribbean region demand a closer working relationship between the churches in the United States with the churches in the Caribbean and Latin America to amplify our effectiveness in our prophetic witness.

**Health Care:** In partnership with United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the Methodist churches in collaboration with CIEMAL are engaged in innovative initiatives in comprehensive community-based health care. A recent study revealed that this holistic approach to the total well-being of persons and their environment has impacted the lives of more than 200,000 persons in the last nine years. Ministries with poor and marginalized women are major dimensions of these health programs, involving the well-being of countless thousands of children. These ministries should be strengthened due to their importance.

**Education/Leadership Development:** Leadership development is a must within the churches if they are to respond in the name of Christ to the aforementioned needs. There are many persons and church leaders with a good theological education; but, unfortunately, most of the pastors in the emerging churches or those serving rural areas have no formal theological education. The United Methodist Church should assist in the formation of persons in Latin America to enable them to serve their churches and countries in different fields.

### **Social Concerns in the Latin American and Caribbean Region:**

**Poverty:** According to UNICEF statistics, 53 % of the 502 million people of Latin America and the Caribbean live in extreme poverty, subsisting on less than \$1 dollar per day per person. Millions of children live on the streets with no place to sleep. They survive by begging or subjecting themselves to inhumane treatment for scraps of food.

**Children and Child Labor:** 42 million children between the ages of five and thirteen work long hours each day to assist in the survival of their families if they have one, or just to feed themselves; therefore, they are not able to go to school. Children are being exploited in many other ways including prostitution. A majority are suffering from malnutrition and have no access or very limited access to health care facilities.

**Political and Economic Turmoil:** The deteriorating financial situation is creating instability in many of the countries. For example, the banking system in Argentina has collapsed leaving the people without access to their savings, while Uruguay and Brazil are suffering similar problems. Recently, the

government of Venezuela was brought down by a coup d'état, but the people managed to reinstate their elected president. However, tension remains high in Venezuela and rumors of conspiracies against the duly elected government are rampant. Haiti is once more suffering political insecurity that does not help in responding to the chronic ills of the poorest country in the western hemisphere. The financial havoc, the failure of political systems to respond to the needs of the people and the growing violence are producing a significant rise in migration. Border issues are becoming more frequent.

***Afro-Latin, Afro-Caribbean, and Indigenous Peoples:*** According to the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank statistics, of the 502 million people who live in Latin America and the Caribbean, 120 million are of African descent and 40 million are indigenous people. These two groups constitute the majority of the poor in the region. They have less access to formal education, health care and other social services, while encountering greater discrimination based on race/color in accessing basic institutions, including the justice system.

### **Implications**

There is a long list of indicators of the need for attention and assistance. These named above, without mentioning the violence in Colombia and to lesser scale in other countries, are sufficient to show that the Caribbean and Latin American region needs urgent attention. The deteriorating economic and political contexts increase the demand for social assistance from the churches in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Regretfully, most churches are suffering financial crises similar to those that their countries are experiencing. For example, in Argentina, pastors' salaries are not paid in full, even if they serve large

congregations. This is because the church members are not receiving their salaries, even when they are working; therefore, they have no money to put in the offering plate. Argentina is the Latin American country with the highest human development index (HDI of 0.842 in 1999). The economic crisis in Argentina is causing a progressive decline of governmental social programs due to lack of funds while poverty, hunger, and unemployment rise. The same situation will soon be experienced by many other countries in the region. If churches and Non-Government Organizations (NGO) do not pay attention to the critical situation now, the future appears grim for Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **The Call**

There is an urgent need for a coordinated strategy within The United Methodist Church in collaboration with CIEMAL, the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA) and other Methodist churches and ecumenical organizations in the Latin America/ Caribbean region. We are encouraged by the invitation of the United Methodist Council of Bishops to the Methodist bishops and church presidents of the autonomous churches in the Caribbean and Latin America who met in Puerto Rico in November 2002. We hope that this will be the beginning of a fruitful dialogue that will address in a significant manner the increased needs of the region. We call upon the program agencies of The United Methodist Church to increase their support of ministries responding to the deteriorating social conditions of the growing number of the population who live in severe poverty.

We call upon the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) to study the relationship between the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the financial turmoil being experienced in different Latin America countries. The church needs the study to be able to advocate intelligently for systemic reforms that affirm life over financial considerations. We call upon GBCS to also advocate in the US

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Congress to obtain a financial aid package for the Latin American countries in financial crisis without compromising their sovereignty or undermining their responsibility to provide for the needy. Measures of structural adjustment imposed by international creditors increased the suffering of the poor. Countries are not able to pay their external debt and provide services urgently needed by the population. GBCS should continue its advocacy for debt relief, including education of the UMC constituency regarding these issues.

We call upon the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), the General Board of Discipleship and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministries to seek ways to undergird effectively the ministries of the emerging Methodist churches in Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela. The relatively new churches are in great need of opportunities for leadership development. We ask these agencies in collaboration with General Council on Ministries and the Council of Bishops to call for an event where representatives of the annual conferences doing work in different parts of the Caribbean and Latin America and other interested persons could share experiences and strategies to increase our level of support and enable local churches in the US to grow by being directly involved in mission.

We call upon United Methodist Communications (UMCom) to provide more coverage to the news coming out of church sources in the Caribbean and Latin America. Also, United Methodist Communications is asked to help in the mission education of United Methodists by informing them of the mission realities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We affirm the Native American International Caucus (NAIC) for establishing linkages with Methodist indigenous communities in Latin America. We encourage them to continue to do so. We encourage Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) to also establish linkages in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We call upon all annual conferences and every United Methodist to pray for and support the development of church programs in the Latin America/ Caribbean region. We are grateful for all the persons who have sent their contributions to the permanent fund Encounter with Christ in Latin America and the Caribbean (GBGM Fund 025100), contributed to the Advance, or participated in VIM teams or other mission teams to be in ministry in the Latin American/Caribbean region. All these forms of collaboration need to be increased and new ones established in response to the needs of the region.

MARCHA proposes the 2004 UMC General Conference address the needs of the poor around the world and build bridges among the poor in different regions of the world. Jesus is among the poor inviting us to respond in Christian love to their needs.

**Budget  
Special Programs  
2005-2008**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount to be contributed by general agencies from their proposed 2005-2008 budgets</b>	<b>Amount that represents new funding for 2005-2008 quadrennium</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>
<i>Holistic Strategy on Africa</i>	\$35,000,000	\$0	\$35,000,000
<i>Holistic Strategy on Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	\$8,000,000	\$0	\$8,000,000
<i>Funding Request for Coordination</i>	\$0	\$1,320,000	\$1,320,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$43,000,000</b>	<b>\$1,320,000</b>	<b>\$44,320,000</b>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bishop Edward W. Paup, President

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel K. Church, General Secretary