

INTRODUCTION TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF INCLUSIVENESS 2008-2011

The Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness is a compilation of a year's planning, writing and editing of their mission, vision and program goals of the Racial Ethnic groups for the next four years, 2008-2011. These plans follow along the same lines of previous plans of inclusiveness. Three plans have preceded this current document: The Comprehensive Plan of the NCC Missional Priority Coordinating Committee (1987), and the NCC Plan of Inclusiveness (1995), and the 2003 Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness that invited each one of the Racial Ethnic Groups to write their plan and vision for the next four years. The thread that runs through all these plans are ways that we can ensure that we have healthy churches and effective clergy and laity. As our population continues to grow in diversity, we need to make sure that our under-served constituency is prepared for mission and witness to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

We have a biblical, theological and ecclesial mandate to be faithful to our call of inclusiveness. In Jesus Christ, God has broken down the dividing wall of hostility and calls us from sin and separation to inclusiveness and reconciliation (Ephesians 2:14). Scripture also declares "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto God's very self, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation." (II Corinthians 5:18-19). The book of Revelation speaks of the fullness of the reign of God, where all nations join in unity to the glory of God." (Revelation 22:1-5).

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan summarizes our continued need to keep these visions and goals before us.

"The Church of Jesus Christ is the institution that God has charged with the ministry of reconciliation. There can be no reconciliation until every ethnic group's gifts and talents are valued by the entire community of faith. The church anticipates the reign of God where the community is fully open and made whole. The North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church seeks to make that a daily reality in our common life. We pray, "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." With God's grace, we strive to become the Beloved Community, the City of God, and the Light on a Hill. We live between what we are and what we shall become as we embrace the theme of the church for this new millennium, **Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.**"

Following are the reports from the various representative areas. Authors of the reports are Sadat Mendez, Rosanna Panizo-Valladares, and Cookie Santiago (Hispanic/Latino); Albert Shuler, Regina Henderson, and Para Drake (African-American); Gary Wayne Locklear, Sylvia Collins, Bob Mangum, Shirley Townsend, Roberta Brown, Ray Brooks, Milford Oxendine, Louisa Locklear, and Jim Connelly (Native American); and Lawrence E. Johnson, Director for Multicultural and Social Ministries for the North Carolina Conference.

Council on Native American Ministries (CONAM)

The Council on Native American Ministries' purpose is to serve as a ministry within the life of our North Carolina Annual Conference that gives voice to Native Americans, and meets the mandate as outlined in the *Book of Discipline*, which "serves to remind the Church of the

gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society.” (*Book of Discipline*, page 186)

The CONAM each year promotes across our conference the Native American Ministries Sunday so that the churches across our connection have an opportunity to be more actively engaged in ministry with Native Americans helping to bare one another’s cross so that the kingdom work is inclusive of all God’s children.

The Native American Ministries Sunday offering has been the catalyst used not only to unite the church more fully, but to ensure all of God’s children have a place at His table. This is most prevalent when we hear the Good News being declared from the pulpit by pastors who have been to seminary because of Native American Ministries Sunday Offering, or when the North Carolina Conference embrace the establishment of a Cooperative Ministry for our fourteen Native American UM churches, or when we received the first Native American Church and Community Worker in Methodist history.

We contend that the power ushered in at Pentecost can be best realized when every local church comes together, works together, and embraces with great joy that “**Every Member In Ministry**” brings the body together as one.

The Plan of Inclusiveness, “**Every Member In Ministry**,” will focus on how the CONAM will continue to challenge our understanding of radical discipleship, and our passion for the Lord as indigenous people to be called out into the world as disciples of Christ in communities that minister to those who suffer from being marginalized and disenfranchised. This plan for the next quadrennium will offer for Native American people a vision for the future. The Proverbs writer reminds us “Where there is no vision, the people perish...” (Proverbs 29: 18a).

Our vision for the future is as follows:

Enhance the laity and clergy’s understanding of their gifts and graces by utilizing *Discover God’s Call Ministry*, and enrichment opportunities offered by The United Methodist Church.

Strengthen the ministries in the local church by equipping and deploying the laity.

Develop opportunities in local member churches and communities for local work teams to be involved with transformational ministries that offer hope and allow the light of Christ to be made visible.

Promote missional opportunities beyond the local church that will provide a greater sense of being a disciple that witnesses to the kingdom that has come in Christ Jesus.

Encourage Leadership Development participation in the local church by inviting General Church Agency Staff to present training materials, and recruiting participants for local District and Conference events.

Provide and encourage Spiritual Formation through the ministries of Emmaus, Laity and Minister’s Retreat, Bible Study groups, United Methodist Women and Men, and local events that are developed from within the Cooperative Ministry.

Provide a “Youth in Ministry”, and young adult program that are focused on helping our youth and young adult stay connected to the local church, find their place at the table and develop their understanding of ministry from the perspective of lay and clergy.

Evaluate our current Evangelism records, and develop a training model that will increase awareness of evangelism opportunities, understanding of our call to “go out,” and how to distinguish the difference between church growth and kingdom building.

Develop covenant groups, lay and clergy to engage in dialogue around doctrine and polity of our church, and how that relates to Scripture, *The Book of Discipline*, and our Social Principles.

Promote Native American Ministries Sunday, train interpreters, and continue to work with our North Carolina Conference on selecting a Native American Representative in each local church.

Promote, encourage, and support efforts by laity who are discerning the call to ministry, either lay or ordained.

Promote, recruit and train local laity and clergy regarding the Connectional church, the ministries of the church, and the importance of our representation on boards and agencies across the entire connection.

Practice effective stewardship as a basic norm of the church and to support the ministry of holistic view of stewardship, money, time and service.

A Summary of the Comprehensive Plan for the Renewal of Black Churches

Luke 4:14-22

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.

Galatians 3:27-29

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

The Black Church has a distinct history and presence within United Methodism that is struggling for expression within the connectional Church and out in the community where God calls us to minister. A Comprehensive Plan for Strengthening the Black Church finds its theological expression in God's claim upon all of our lives through Jesus Christ, allowing God to use us as instruments of God's grace, that the Kingdom of God would be recognized through acts of justice, mercy, compassion, and worship. As Jesus rolled the scroll to return it to the attendant, he declared Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled. Fulfilled in him – yet not fully present in the world. Paul, following Jesus, declared a new reality: those of us who wear Christ lose our identity of status, race, and even gender: we share in the inheritance of Abraham! We are adopted into the Covenant and we wear Christ – yet not fully – for we are souls in progress – in connection. God has entrusted us with a distinct expression of the Kingdom of God through United Methodism. The Black Church, within our Connectional Church, holds a particular witness and ministry that God seeks to be fulfilled. The fullness of our humanity cannot be lived

without the fullness of our commitment to service, to mutuality, and to God's vision for our unity in Christ.

Strengthening the Black Church within the NC Annual Conference bears witness to the efforts of Methodism to rectify the history of racism that inspired the creation of separate African Methodist Episcopal Churches and the Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The 1968 disbanding the Central Jurisdiction and locating our Black churches within the boundaries of the Jurisdictions in the same way that white churches are located presents challenges to our connectionalism as a denomination. The culture of United Methodism as a majority, mainline denomination structures itself geographically in terms of individual churches gathered into districts, districts into conferences, and conferences into Jurisdictions. The challenge for a historically white United Methodist Church has been to understand its ministry in terms of Paul's observations in Galatians, "no slave or free, no male or female." The challenge of the Black Church is to identify itself and share its unique, purposeful gifts around the table. As mutual relationships develop within the larger Church, the Black Church of United Methodism will lose the self-limiting vision of its vitality and grow in communities of those who seek purpose in their lives. The challenge of the two – black and white – together is to create a vision that revives existing churches while planting new churches with the same intentionality that comes with other revitalization ministries and new church starts.

Justice is a spiritual issue that is manifested through material means. Our Black churches are in need of attention to their buildings and clergy compensation. Appearances matter: while a white church raises money to tweak the design of the new sanctuary, a black church within the same city seeks ways to stop the leaks when it rains. While a white clergy has many opportunities for salary increase and experiences that will equip him/her for more responsibility, a black clergy who serves black churches has little or no opportunity for increase in salary or responsibility if serving a Black congregation, except to move into extension or cabinet ministry or, in some cases, to serve a white congregations. "The best and brightest" of our black clergy do not have the opportunity to remain in local church ministry in Black churches without great personal cost. That such great personal cost (to remain in ministry in the local Black church) is born by some in our conference, and not others, points to a system that is broken. It is commendable that the question of a pastor's race and gender will no longer be tolerated, but this is more likely a change for the white churches which have received more cross-cultural appointments than black churches.

Several questions for reflection arise out of our experiences: What effect have cross-racial appointments of (mostly young) black clergy had upon our African-American churches? What effect would more white clergy cross-racial appointments have upon our black churches? What effect would come out of pairing "wealthy" churches with those struggling for resources, regardless of race, so that both wealthy and poor might learn from each other what it means to be in the United Methodist Connection? What can the conference system learn from the conundrum presented by the lack of opportunity for advancement in local black church ministry? How willing are we, in the NC Conference, to look at other options for salary and ministry pairings for our clergy? If we ask the questions, we may find the authentic journey toward a more realistic and holistic understanding of our connection.

As we move forward, we can seek fresh vision and opportunity. We recognize George Barna's observation in *High Impact African-American Churches*, "The mark of a great church is not its seating capacity but its sending capacity." Our theological task is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, regardless of our (and others) color. However, with the decline of resources for our

African American congregations comes the decline of physical and spiritual health which in turn encourages a decline in influence in the communities served. Our local congregations are struggling to find their place in a largely white system that promotes their gifted clergy beyond their reach, allows other gifted clergy to seek appointments outside North Carolina, and fills the calendars of their local pastors and effective laity to diversify conference commissions and boards. If our capacity for seating is limited, our capacity for sending is eroded by the climate around minority ministry in our Conference. Until we recognize that our distinct African American heritage and history is worth saving, we will continue to see a decline in our churches and African American presence. Even more than the “numbers” we Methodists love so well, we will continue to pass up the opportunity to create an authentic witness to inter-racial healing that would point to the real presence of the kingdom of God among us.

The sin of racism is subtle and captivating. In light of our understanding of Luke 4 and Galatians 3, we are called by God to seek ways of enabling what has been made real through Jesus Christ become real through our United Methodist Church. We are one of the few denominations which have the opportunity of facilitating the healing of our history of slavery, racism, and oppression while also witnessing the living hope through Jesus Christ.

The 20th century prophet Martin Luther King asked, “If not now, then when?” He also asked, “If not us, then who?” God continues to ask, “If you who claim to be my disciples do not follow me faithfully, then who will?”

A Renewal Strategy

The needs of the Black Church are consistent with the needs of churches in general. However, our unique history, culture, and tradition bring forth economic challenges not shared by others. Leadership, education and growth are continual challenges to our moving forward in service to God’s Kingdom both within The United Methodist Church and the local communities in which we are called to serve.

Stewardship as our responsibility to Holy Scripture demands our vigilant care of our relationships among United Methodists. While many African Americans left Methodism early on, we are a “divine remnant” within our connection. We may be tempted to add African-American ministry to other “minority” ministries, but we believe the freedom from racial oppression that began with the first stirrings opposed to slavery in John Wesley’s 18th century writing demands otherwise:

“But waving, for the present, all other consideration, I strike at the root of this complicated villainy [slavery]; I absolutely deny all slave-holding to be consistent with any degree of natural justice.” -----*Wesley Works*, Vol. XI, p. 70.

With God, there is always hope. African-American churches have developed an extensive, intentional comprehensive plan to **LEAD, LEARN, and GROW** over the course of the next five (5) to seven (7) years. The plan promotes leadership with the goals to develop, equip and encourage servant leaders, both lay and clergy, in every black local church. The goals of learning and education will help to establish in every local African-American church Bishop Gwinn’s vision for healthy churches and effective leaders equipped to make disciples of Jesus Christ, for the transformation of lives and communities. Finally, the goal of growing will faithfully challenge African-American churches to empower the people of God in every local

African-American church onto “perfecting grace” as the body of Christ through prayers, presences, gifts, and service.

The expected outcomes of this comprehensive plan include a greater pool of African-Americans actively participating in the life of The United Methodist Church and its connectionalism on the local, district, and conference levels; a 20% increase in exploratory candidates for ordained ministry; a 25% age-level increase in conference ministries; African-American churches actively participating in passionate worship, risk-taking mission, radical hospitality, and intimate spiritual formation; 20% increase in tithes and offerings and more. Churches will grow in their programming, community activities, giving units, and worship attendance. The churches will be healthier spiritually, financially, and relationally.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF HISPANIC LATINO MINISTRIES 2008 ~ 2011

“We are called to be the great light of the world. Light travels...it migrates. Migration is movement. God is always moving, and I would suggest, is a God of migration.”

Bishop Al Gwinn

A Statement, North Carolina Latino Coalition

August 14, 2005 on Theological Perspective on Immigrant Rights

North Carolina has registered the highest rate of increase in the Latino population (394%) between 1990 to 2000, according to the Census Bureau. We estimate that the population figures for Latinos are actually substantially more than what is reflected in the census. The recent research from the Pew Hispanic Center, “The New Latino South: The Context and Consequences of Rapid Population Growth” (July 2005) indicates that the growth “has come primarily in form of young males from Mexico with comparatively low levels of education” (p 7)

The majority of new immigrants to the District area are foreign born Hispanic/Latinos who are of working age and particularly young (25). Native born Hispanic/Latinos are younger than foreign born ones, reflecting the large numbers of children born in the last years to immigrant parents.

The Hispanic/Latino condition in our Conference is diverse. There are economic, educational, communicational and spiritual needs, among others. The lack of access of this population to the diversity of services provided by the towns is alarming because language barriers and the lack of knowledge of “how to” live in this new environment. We have a working force in the service, manufacturing, agricultural and construction industries. The income that proceeds from these jobs is considered under the Federal poverty line.

Another significant factor is the issue of documented/undocumented immigration. North Carolina now ranks among eight states with the largest undocumented population (300,000) (Pew Hispanic Center).

OUR MISSION:

Empowering ministry to bridge, reach out, and affirm cultural esteem. (*Empoderando nuestros ministerios, extendiendo, alcanzando, a afirmando la herencia cultural.*)

There will be more than 140 million Hispanic/Latinos in the USA by the year 2080. As

Hispanic/Latinos continue to migrate to North Carolina at a rate that is higher than any other state in the country, our conference is challenged with an opportunity to refine our calling to be effective in ministry, reaching out and inviting neighbors and outsiders into our presence, genuinely embracing the “stranger” and making him part of the family of God. Never before have we seen such an opportunity to “include” Hispanic/Latinos into our churches.

OUR VISION:

We believe that our vision is one in which diversity can and should bring unity to the church body. It does not alienate. While we are excited about these new opportunities, we are also realistic about the challenges brought about by language, socio-economic, and cultural differences.

It is the intention of this committee to encourage and support the efforts of any church that is committed to advancing the ministries that reach out to the Hispanic/Latino population for the purpose of bringing the good news of Jesus Christ and guiding them into a transformational experience, ultimately granting them eternal life. This is God’s will and purpose for the church.

RESPONDING TO THE VISION:

- The National Plan for Hispanic/Latino ministry is a *whole church plan*.
- The North Carolina Annual Conference now has staff/leadership for Hispanic/Latino ministry.
- When adequate support is not provided, effectiveness and productivity are hindered, and programs collapse.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

-As of July 2005 there is now a half-time Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministries in our conference, giving us an office in the United Methodist Building and visibility as a part of the organizational structure of the Annual Conference.

-There are currently thirteen congregations throughout the conference and three outreach ministries, with a total of sixteen Hispanic/Latino ministries.

-In early 2005, consultants from the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries came to the North Carolina Conference and conducted a complete analysis and report of the current condition of our ministries. We continue to act upon their recommendations and feel that we are making reasonable progress at the task of getting our “house in order.” This would include increasing the availability of our Director from half-time status, to full-time status, or order to have the leadership that is truly required.

GOALS:

-A catalytic event that will emphasize and affirm our cultural diversity within the Hispanic/Latino body. The event will direct itself primarily to the Hispanic/Latino constituency, while inviting all who would participate in the grand FIESTA with us, celebrating the harmony of culture and diversity that we enjoy in our conference.

-A convocation for Hispanic/Latino youth must be organized as soon as possible. We are losing valuable time with our young people. The millennial generation is the future of our church and

our society. We must make them a priority and find ways to attract them to the life of the church. We must create realistic spaces that communicate opportunities and spiritual rewards in ministry for our Hispanic/Latino youth.

Finally, I would like to include some data so we can see our challenges and opportunities in ministry and some of our gaps between our vision and our reality.

Total Population of Eastern North Carolina	4,147,750
Population Change Since 1990	+869,056 persons
Population by Race/Ethnicity 2004	
Anglo.....	62.8%
African-American	27.3%
Hispanic/Latino	5.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.5%
Native Americans	1.2%

Number of Congregations

Anglo.....	792
African-American	31
Hispanic/Latino (faith communities)	15
Native Americans.....	15
Asian/Pacific Islander	2

Membership in this Annual Conference

Anglo.....	226,115
African American.....	61,035
Hispanic/Latino.....	302
Native Americans.....	2,464
Asian/ Pacific Islander	481

Between 2004 and 2009, the White population is projected to increase by 150,943 persons and to decrease from 62.4 to 61.9% of the total population. The Black population is projected to increase by 53,219 persons and to decrease from 27.3 to 26.8% of the total. The Hispanic/Latino population is projected to increase by 49,034 persons and to increase from 5.6 to 6.3% of the total. The Asian/Other population is projected to increase by 21,550 persons and to increase from 4.7 to 4.9% of the total population.*

Funding will go from the Multicultural Ministries Team to the Missions Circle to the Conference Connectional Table, and to the Council on Finance and Administration before being presented to Annual Conference for the years 2009, 2010, and 2011.

Funding for 2008 has been referred to the Supplemental Appropriations Committee of the Council on Finance and Administration and a report will be presented to the Annual Conference.

*The Asian/Other category includes Native Americans. Information is from Percept Group, Inc.

-----*Dr. Lawrence E. Johnson, Director for Multicultural and Social Ministries*