

## **Church and Society, Board of**

The North Carolina Board of Church and Society has long been a sounding board for our Annual Conference in matters where issues of faith and issues of society intersect. We have sought to teach and to lead in the making of caring and responsible disciples for the transformation of the world.

Often, we, as Christians, find ourselves at odds with the secular culture that surrounds us. The teachings of Jesus Christ draw us into this intersection where faith meets world in ways that usher in the kingdom of God.

Methodism was founded at the intersection of social activism and the life of faithful discipleship. Our church's founder, John Wesley, set up societies that brought good news to the poor, release to the captives and set the prisoner free. The Board of Church and Society seeks to live within the tension that calls us to examine society through the lens of Christological understanding.

Our goal for this quadrennium continues to be empowering the local church in theological (and practical) ways to respond to the socio-economic turmoil in which we often find ourselves. We have embraced the four-fold path of developing leadership, creating places for new people, eliminating poverty and improving global health. This path, as embraced by the 2008 General Conference, is otherwise known as the four foci.

We continue our primary focus on the concept of *Sabbath Economics*. During last year's Annual Conference session, materials on Sabbath Economics were shared with lay and clergy members. Over three hundred booklets were distributed; which resulted in several local churches requesting and receiving training and leadership in this arena. We continue to welcome and encourage requests from local churches and districts seeking training in Sabbath Economics.

Foundational to Sabbath Economics is the Biblical understanding that we live, surrounded by God's abundant nature. The basic premise of Sabbath Economics is that God's grace, provision and love are all given in abundance. As children of God we are to share abundantly, as well. Therefore it becomes a question not just of the stewardship of our money but of the entirety of our lives! As we embrace Sabbath Economics, we find ourselves working as fellow laborers with the poor to overcome the plight of poverty, not in the future, but now.

Since the 2009 session of the North Carolina Annual Conference, a major emphasis of both the General Board of Church and Society and the North Carolina Board of Church and Society has been on national health care reform. The General Board worked tirelessly to assist in the passage of this important and historical legislation. Our participation included writing to our Senators and House Representatives, informing them of the passage of our Health Care Reform Resolution at the 2009 session of the North Carolina Annual Conference.

At our fall meeting, the board heard from Rev. Jill Wiley, GBCS Consultant for Operation Healing Hope. Rev. Wiley presented a compelling presentation on obstetric fistula. She spoke of the ostracizing that women of the third world endure as a result of this highly correctable condition. The Board hopes that further education in our local churches will heighten awareness so that this condition may be eradicated. For more information on Operation Healing Hope and how you can help, please visit [operationhealinghope.com](http://operationhealinghope.com)

At our spring meeting we were pleased to award the annual *Peace with Justice* grants. Grants were awarded to: Durham Hispanic Ministries, "La Casa de la Mujer"; Patricia Pegram on behalf of Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON), "Peace & Justice Clinic, Inc."; The Interfaith Community Outreach, (of Kitty Hawk, NC) "Community Assistance Program"; and to Jefferson UMC of Goldsboro, NC, "Reformation Celebration Project".

This year's Jack and Kay Crum Prophetic Ministry Award was given to Sanctuary United Methodist Church in Durham, NC for their leadership in achieving diversity in a changing community.

This year, as in years past, we continue the practice of building leadership among our youth by providing scholarship funds for our young people to attend the annual *Global Vision* event. This event is designed to help the youth of our Annual Conference to expand the scope of caring and ministry, beyond the local level, to a world-wide level, by participation in workshops at the United Nations and in Washington, DC.

And finally, we continue our focus on the intersection of Spiritual Development, Social Responsibility and Scriptural Engagement, as they are found in our *United Methodist Social Principles*. As we learn more about our Social Principles, we uncover truths about the inequalities of global health, injustice, poverty and exploitation. And as these truths are revealed, the local church will be empowered to carry on the work of Jesus Christ in the world in which we live.

Please visit: [www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org) for more information of the work of the General Board of Church and Society.

Brian W. Wingo, Chair, Board of Church and Society