

Missions through the Conference

June 1, 2008

1 Corinthians 12: 12-14, 24-26

Four weeks ago when we voted, people asked about our apportionments. That's the word for our share of the Conference ministry. All the 450 United Methodist Churches in Wisconsin do ministry together as a conference and our share is \$32,688 for 2008. Last year \$33,432 This comes to about \$95 per member of Immanuel Church.

Someone said they didn't know that we do mission work through our conference apportionments. So, it is time to hear about it.

The total conference budget is just over \$7 million. Of that about 35% goes directly to mission projects. Since our share is \$32,688, that means 35%, \$11,440 of our apportionments goes directly to mission projects.

Wisconsin

Hands of Christ ministry for deaf inmates in an Oshkosh prison, United Methodist Children's Services in Milwaukee that provides transitional living, child care and job training for single mothers and family, Northcott neighborhood house in inner city Milwaukee that provides food, youth programs and family stability resources, Harbor House Crisis shelter in Superior, ministry for seaman coming off great lakes ships, 8 nursing homes,

Elderly program for Hmong in Milwaukee
Disaster response training that we had in our circuit last March.
Madison hospital chaplain
Camp Lucerne, Pine Lake, Whispering Pines and Camp Byron.
Wisconsin Hunger programs
New Church Development
Campus ministry at Ripon college and 8 other colleges in the state

National

Methodists and Evangelicals started many colleges and seminaries. Vanderbilt Theological school, where Ben Konecny attends, is one of them.
Today 122 educational institutions are related to the United Methodist Church.

Although there are no United Methodist educational institutions in Wisconsin we have claimed North Central College and Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary (both in the Chicago area) as our own.
Scholarships for seminarians

Organizes work camps,

The Wisconsin Conference has partnerships with the Rio Grande Conference and the Cuba conference.

United Methodists have helped more than 60,000 people rebuild 25,000 homes in the Gulf Coast in the two years since Hurricane Katrina headlined one of the most active hurricane seasons in recorded history.

Global

Support of missionaries around the world, Hospital ships that visit poor countries

Rachel Gabler's translation of Bible Story Books printed in Swahili in Zambia to be used by churches.

Africa University Fund

In addition we support two missionaries:

- Dan and Rachel Gabler in So. Africa \$1900
- Steve and Martha Farina in Eastern Europe \$1400

We are not supporting Jonathon and Rebecca Lopez as we did last year since they are not serving on a mission field this year.

Extra mission causes in 2007 were Northcott Neighborhood House, Steve Quigg and UM missionary pilot who spoke during the EAA last year, Red Bird Mission in KY, Heifer project, orphanage in India where Annagene Priske worked last summer, United Methodist Committee on Relief

Conference paid \$7 million in 2007 plus another \$1.1 million to mission causes beyond the regular budget.

But why do United Methodists do so much mission work together, rather than having local churches choose which projects they will give to. The Baptists, the United Church of Christ and others don't send money for missions to their larger organizations. They send it directly from the local church.

So why do we?

The Bible says the Church is one body. We take it seriously. 8 million United Methodist lay members all part of one body. 43,000 clergy members, one body. Local churches, clusters, camps, schools, conferences, all part of one body of Christ. In order to make disciples and proclaim the gospel, we can do that as a local church, but we can be even more effective when we do it together with the rest of body. We can organize to seek the lost and broken in spirit as well as the body when one group oversees hundreds of mission projects, rather than local churches duplicating their efforts. One church can't recruit and train missionaries and find the most worthy projects to support, but a denomination can. The ministry is more efficient when we do it together.

We are connected to other United Methodists. Some of their money will come in a loan to build our elevator and entry. Our district superintendent was a part of our wall

breaking ceremony and a district committee advised and approved our project. We are connected. Just as the early New Testament churches cared for each other, we United Methodists care for each other. We are responsible to them and they are responsible to us.

Apportionments are not a tax to fund someone else's projects, it is a way to be more efficient in funding the projects we want to do anyway.

Just as pastors are appointed by the bishop of a conference, considering the needs of many churches, apportioned missions money goes where the whole state and national conferences decide. We call this system a connectional system. And it is all based on being members of one body, with Christ as our head.

Some of our mission money goes through our connectional system to missionaries like the Gablers and some goes outside the connectional system to missionaries like the Farinas. There are advantages to both ways so we do some of each.

The body of Christ works together to save the lost, to feed the hungry and to redeem the world back to the God who made it. We are just one member of a great body.