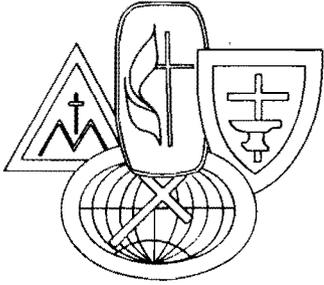


DEC - 4 1995



## Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation

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African Methodist Episcopal Church  
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
United Methodist Church

November 30, 1995

A handwritten signature, possibly 'Jill', is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

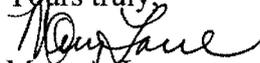
Mrs. Carol Rasco  
Assistant to President Clinton on Domestic Policy  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Rasco:

Greetings! On behalf of the Consultation of Methodist Bishops, I wish to thank you for your willingness to share with the group. Your address touched some issues which are of great importance to the health of America and the life of the Christian Church. It is our hope that the churches will grasp every opportunity to become involved in domestic issues to the point of making a difference.

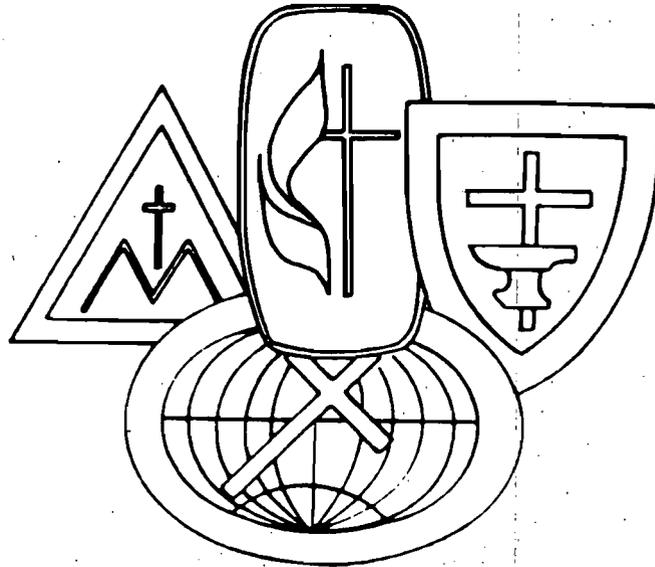
Please find enclosed for your records, a copy of the official proceedings of the Sixth Consultation of Methodist Bishops.

Thank you.

Yours truly,  
  
Mary A. Love

**Administrative Secretary**  
P.O. Box 31005 - Charlotte, NC 28231  
Phone: (704) 332-1034

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE**  
**SIXTH CONSULTATION OF METHODIST BISHOPS**  
**OF THE**  
**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH**  
**CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**



**APRIL 26-28, 1995**

**DOUBLETREE HOTEL**  
**AUSTIN, TEXAS**

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# SIXTH CONSULTATION OF METHODIST BISHOPS

Doubletree Hotel  
Austin, Texas  
April 26-28, 1995

Theme: **VISIONING FROM A HISTORICAL/THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**  
**Radical Implications for Future Ministry**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26 - Phoenix South Ballroom

10:00 a.m. Registration begins for Consultation

2:00 p.m. Opening plenary - Bishop Richard O. Bass, Sr., presiding

Devotions: Bishop Joseph Johnson

Presentations: HISTORY OF A ROAD TOWARD UNITY  
First Five Consultations - Bishop James K. Mathews  
Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation  
- Bishop Felton E. May  
Study Commission - Bishop Richard K. Thompson

Introductions  
Announcements

3:30 p.m. Refreshment Break

4:00 p.m. Regional Groups: Asking THE HARD QUESTIONS

- I - Phoenix South Ballroom (front)  
Bishop Calvin D. McConnell, leader
- II - Phoenix South Ballroom (back)  
Bishop J. Haskell Mayo, leader
- III - Dewitt North  
Bishop William W. Morris, leader
- IV - Dewitt South  
Bishop Judith Craig, leader
- V - Phoenix Central Ballroom (left)  
Bishop William Boyd Grove, leader
- VI - Phoenix Central Ballroom (middle)  
Bishop Richard C. Looney, leader
- VII - Phoenix Central Ballroom (right)  
Bishop Charles L. Helton, leader

5:30 p.m. Dinner Break

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26 - Phoenix South Ballroom

7:00 p.m. Plenary - Bishop H. Hartford Brookins, presiding

Paper: HISTORICAL/THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR UNITY  
FROM A U.M. PERSPECTIVE

- Bishop James S. Thomas

Discussion

THURSDAY, APRIL 27 - Dewitt Room

8:15 a.m. Plenary - Bishop Marshall Gilmore, presiding

Devotions - Bishop Roy I. Sano

Paper: HISTORICAL/THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR UNITY  
FROM AN A.M.E. ZION PERSPECTIVE

- Bishop J. Clinton Hoggard

Discussion

Announcements

10:30 a.m. Group Pictures - Consultation and Commissions  
Refreshments available

11:15 p.m. Plenary - Bishop Enoch B. Rochester, presiding

Paper: HISTORICAL/THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR UNITY  
FROM AN A.M.E. PERSPECTIVE

- Dr. Dennis C. Dickerson

Discussion

Announcements

1:00 p.m. Lunch Break

2:30 a.m. Plenary - Bishop Richard K. Thompson, presiding

Study Commission's MISSION STATEMENT ON UNITY

- Dr. Gloria Moore and Dr. Nathaniel Jarrett

Assignment of persons to coordinate

Consultation's Mission Statement on Unity

3:00 p.m. FACES OF OUR CHILDREN

- Carol H. Rasco, Asst. to President Clinton  
for Domestic Policy

THURSDAY, APRIL 27 - Dewitt Room

3:30 p.m. Refreshment Break

4:00 p.m. Plenary - Bishop F. Herbert Skeete, presiding

Paper: HISTORICAL/THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR UNITY  
FROM A C.M.E. PERSPECTIVE  
- Bishop Othal Hawthorne Lakey  
Discussion

5:45 p.m. Dinner Break

7:00 p.m. Regional Groups: SHAPING A FUTURE TOGETHER

- I - Robertson North  
Bishop Clarence Carr, leader
- II - Robertson South  
Bishop Frederick H. Talbot, leader
- III - Dewitt North  
Bishop Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr., leader
- IV - Dewitt South  
Bishop William H. Graves, leader
- V - Fourth floor Conference Room  
Bishop Oree Broomfield, Sr., leader
- VI - Fifth floor Conference Room  
Bishop Clay Foster Lee, Jr., leader
- VII - Sixth floor Conference Room  
Bishop Zedekiah L. Grady, leader

FRIDAY, APRIL 28 - Dewitt Room

8:15 a.m. Plenary - Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn, presiding

Reports from Regional Groups  
Discussion

10:00 a.m. Refreshments available

10:45 a.m. Plenary - Bishop Melvin G. Talbert, presiding

CONSULTATION'S MISSION STATEMENT ON UNITY

11:30 a.m. CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

**BISHOPS IN ATTENDANCE  
SIXTH CONSULTATION OF METHODIST BISHOPS**

**April 26-28, 1995**

**Doubletree Hotel, Austin Texas**

**African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Bishop Frederick H. Talbot

**African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church**

Bishop Clarence Carr

Bishop J. Clinton Hoggard (retired)

Bishop Richard K. Thompson

Bishop Enoch B. Rochester

Bishop Joseph Johnson

**Christian Methodist Episcopal Church**

Bishop Richard O. Bass

Bishop Marshall Gilmore

Bishop Charles Helton

Bishop Thomas Hoyt

Bishop Nathaniel Linsey

Bishop Othal H. Lakey

Bishop Oree Broomfield

Bishop William H. Graves

**United Methodist Church**

Bishop Edsel A. Ammons (retired)

Bishop Daniel C. Arichea

Bishop George W. Bashore

Bishop Ole E. Borgen (retired)

Bishop Bruce P. Blake

Bishop Sharon B. Christopher

Bishop Judith Craig

Bishop Kenneth Carder

Bishop Peter Debale

Bishop Emilio J. M. DeCarvalho

Bishop Ernest Dixon, Jr. (retired)

Bishop R. Sheldon Duecker

Bishop Robert E. Fannin

Bishop William Boyd Grove

Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn

Bishop H. Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr.

Bishop S. Clifton Ives

Bishop Christopher Jokomo

Bishop Charles Jordan

Bishop Bevel Jones

Bishop Hae-Jong Kim

Bishop David Lawson

Bishop Clay Foster Lee, Jr.

Bishop Richard C. Looney

Bishop James K. Mathews (retired)

Bishop Felton E. May

Bishop Marshall Meadors, Jr.

Bishop Paul W. Milhouse (retired)

Bishop Calvin D. McConnell

Bishop C. P. Minnick, Jr.

Bishop William W. Morris

Bishop Fritz Mutti

Bishop Alfred L. Norris

Bishop William B. Oden

Bishop Donald A. Ott

Bishop Raymond Owen

Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader

Bishop Roy I. Sano

Bishop Ann Sherer

Bishop Herbert F. Skeete

Bishop Dan E. Solomon

Bishop Thomas B. Stockton

Bishop Melvin G. Talbert

Bishop James S. Thomas

Bishop Dale C. White (retired)

Bishop Woodie W. White

Bishop Joe A. Wilson

Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel

**GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE**

**SIXTH CONSULTATION OF METHODIST BISHOPS**

**April 26-28, 1995**

**Doubletree Hotel, Austin Texas**

**African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church**

Dr. Nathaniel Jarrett  
Ms. Mary A. Love  
Dr. Dennis Haggery

Rev. Donnell Williams  
Dr. F. George Shipman

**Christian Methodist Episcopal Church**

Attorney Barbara Bouknight

Mrs. Wylene A. Broomfield

**United Methodist Church**

Mr. William E. Lux  
Rev. Clyde Henry  
Mrs. Etta Mae Mutti  
Mrs. Martha E. Lawson  
Mrs. Mary Morris

Dr. C. Faith Richardson  
Mr. Tom McAnally  
Mrs. Wha-Sei Kim  
Mrs. Shirley Skeete  
Mrs. Eunice Mathews

**PROCEEDINGS**  
**SIXTH CONSULTATION OF METHODIST BISHOPS**  
**OF THE**  
**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH**  
**CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

held at

**The Doubletree Hotel**  
**Austin, Texas**  
**April 26-28, 1995**

**First Session**

The opening session of the Sixth Consultation of Methodist Bishops convened at 2:10 p.m. in the Phoenix Room of the Doubletree Hotel in Austin, Texas. Bishop Richard O. Bass, (C. M. E. Church), presided, and opening worship was led by Bishop Joseph Johnson, (A. M. E. Zion Church). (See Acts of Worship, page 73.) Dr. C. Faith Richardson, (U. M. Church) provided the instrumental accompaniment to the worship service.

After the worship, presentations were received regarding the "History of a Road Toward Unity." Bishop James K. Mathews, (U. M. Church) gave the first presentation providing a historical review of the "First Five Consultations." (See papers section, Mathews pages 30-32.) Bishop F. Herbert Skeete, (U. M. Church) then provided a brief "History of the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation."

Attorney Barbara Bouknight, (C. M. E. Church) gave the "History of the Study Commission." She emphasized its birthing at the Fifth Consultation of Methodist Bishops, noting that their work was the basis for the discussions during the Consultation. Special attention was directed to the questions posed for discussion in the Regional Groups. (See Questions for Regional Groups: "Shaping our Future" and "The Hard Questions," Regions - pages 22-23.) The ultimate question is, "What is God calling the people called Methodists to do?"

**INTRODUCTIONS:** The Bishops of the Pan-Methodist denominations introduced themselves. Bishop Bass introduced the attending members of the Study Commission and the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation. Special note was made that this was the first Consultation which had bishops attending from overseas. Guests present also introduced themselves. (See the attendance list for a record of the attendees, pages 4-5.)

After the explanation of the procedure for Regional Groups in the next session, the Consultation recessed at 3:30 p. m.

### **Second Session**

At 4:00 p. m., the Regional Groups met to discuss "The Hard Questions," developed by the Study Commission. (Note the Regional Groupings and the questions discussed.)

### **Third Session**

Following dinner, the third session was held at 7:00 p. m. in the form of a plenary. Bishop Frederick Talbot (A. M. E. Church) presided in the absence of Bishop H. Hartford Brookins. Bishop James S. Thomas, (U. M. Church) presented a paper entitled, "Historical/Theological Basis for Unity from an United Methodist Perspective" (See presentation under Papers section, U. M. C. - pages 33-40.) Discussion ensued among the Pan-Methodist bishops after the presentation of the paper. Then the Consultation recessed for the day at 9:00 p. m.

### **Fourth Session**

The fourth session began at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 27, 1995 with Bishop Marshall Gilmore, (C. M. E. Church) presiding. Bishop Roy I. Sano, (U. M. Church) led the devotional moment and gave a meditation entitled, "Unity With a Mission." Ephesians 4:11-16 served as the Scriptural base. (See Acts of Worship, page 79.) Bishop Sano placed emphasis on bodily growth which addresses evangelism and ecumenism. Will we be voices of despair or conveyors of hope? Will we be gifts of love which enable the body to grow?

After worship, Bishop J. Clinton Hoggard of the A. M. E. Zion Church presented a paper on the "Historical/Theological Basis for Unity from an African Methodist Episcopal Zion Perspective." (See presentation under Papers section, A. M. E. Zion -- pages 41-56.) Discussion ensued among the Pan-Methodist bishops after the presentation of the paper. Bishop Thomas Hoyt of the C. M. E. Church emphasized that the separation which exists did not come as a result of theological issues, therefore, there is the need to address issues related to justice and ethics. Then the members of the Consultation recessed at 10:30 a.m. for the group picture in the courtyard of the hotel.

### **Fifth Session**

The fifth session began at 11:15 a.m in the Austin Room with Bishop F. Herbert Skeete of the United Methodist Church presiding. Bishop Othal L. Lakey, (C. M. E. Church) presented a paper on the "Historical/Theological Basis for Unity from a Christian Methodist Episcopal Perspective." (See the presentation under the Papers section, C. M. E. -- pages 53-56.) Discussion ensued among the Pan-Methodist bishops after the presentation of the paper. After which the Consultation recessed for lunch.

### **Sixth Session**

The sixth session began at 2:30 p.m. with Bishop Richard K. Thompson of the A. M. E. Zion Church presiding. "I Am Thine, O Lord" was used as the opening hymn, and prayer was led by Bishop Oree Broomefield of the C. M. E. Church.

Dr. Nathaniel Jarrett, a member of the Study Commission and a representative from the A. M. E. Zion Church, presented the proposed Mission Statement on Unity. Discussion arose, and it was decided that a committee should look at revisions and bring them back to the Consultation for a vote.

The appointed committee members were as follows:

Bishop Thomas Hoyt - C. M. E. Church, Chairman

Bishop Joseph Johnson - A. M. E. Zion Church

Bishop Frederick Talbot - A. M. E. Church

Bishop Ann Sherer - United Methodist Church

Bishop F. Herbert Skeete, (U. M. Church) then introduced Mrs. Carol Rasco, Assistant to President Clinton for Domestic Policy. Mrs. Rasco gave a presentation on the "Faces of Our Children," stressing the concern for the welfare of children. (See the presentation under the Papers section, Rasco - pages 65-72.) Various aspects of the Clinton domestic policy was shared, especially as these aspects affect children. Mrs. Rasco also encouraged the attendees to be supportive of the confirmation of Dr. Henry Foster as the next Surgeon General of the United States of America.

The bishops discussed the issues surrounding the presentation, making special note to observe the the call of the National Council of Churches for a week of prayer during Holy Week. Individuals were encouraged to pray because of the power they possess to affect the lives of people immediately. Take up the call and be specific in praying! The Consultation then took a thirty-minute refreshment break.

### **Seventh Session**

The seventh session of the Consultation convened at 4:00 p.m in the form of a plenary with Bishop Enoch B. Rochester, (A. M. E. Zion Church), presiding. "I Am Thine, O Lord" was used as the opening hymn. Bishop Frederick H. Talbot, (A. M. E. Church), read the paper, "Historical/Theological Basis for Unity from an African Methodist Episcopal Perspective" prepared by Dr. Dennis Dickerson. ( See presentation under the Papers section, A. M. E., pages 57-64.) Discussion ensued among the Pan-Methodist bishops after the presentation of the paper.

QUESTION: The bishops asked, "What would happen to the papers presented during the Consultation? Response: The papers would be published along the proceedings of the Consultation and be sent to all of the bishops and the Methodist History archives. This will be a task of the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation. It was also suggested that the Commission consider publishing the papers.

After further discussion of next steps and possible visioning, the Consultation recessed for dinner.

### **Eighth Session**

The eighth session was in Regional Groups charged with the task of discussing the questions relating to "Shaping Our Future."

### **Ninth Session**

The ninth session convened on Friday, April 28, 1995 in the Austin Room with Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn, (U. M. Church) presiding. "Blessed Assurance" was used as an opening hymn, and Bishop Hearn offered prayer. Then reports were given from each of the seven Regional Groups sharing highlights from their discussions of "Shaping Our Future." (See Regional Group Reports, pages 24-29.)

Region I report was given by Bishop Roy I. Sano, (U. M. Church).

Region II report was given by Bishop Charles Jordan, (U. M. Church).

After the report of Region II, Bishop C. Dale White of the United Methodist Church shared his work with the Washington Office of the National Council of Churches. He distributed packets to the Bishops on "African Americans for Aid to Africa." He also noted that Congress is considering cutting off aid to Africa.

Region III report was given by Rev. Donnell Williams, (A. M. E. Zion Church).

Region IV report was given by Bishop Judith Craig, (U. M. Church).

Region V report was given Bishop F. Herbert Skeete, (U. M. Church).

Region VI report was given by Bishop Clay F. Lee, Jr., (U. M. Church).

Region VII report was given by Bishop Charles Helton, (C. M. E. Church).

**SEVENTH CONSULTATION DATES:** Bishop F. Herbert Skeete announced the dates for the Seventh Consultation as March 9-11, 1999.

Bishop Ann Sherer, (U. M. Church), shared the following recommendations:

- ◆ That the Pan-Methodist denominations aim for the same quadrennial cycle beginning in the year 2004.
- ◆ That the General Conferences of the Pan-Methodist denominations meet at the same site -- several corporate worship services could be referred to the Commission on Pan-Methodist Operation for processing within the various denominations.

Bishop Thomas recommended that the possibility of meeting geographically to promote annual conference activities be explored. This idea was introduced by Bishop Judith Craig. There must be some joint work at the local level, if we are serious as Pan-Methodists. The Commission could

develop some plan and strategy on levels other than the level of bishops.

Dr. C. Faith Richardson noted the difficulty experienced in activating Regional groups. She also noted that the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation had passed a disciplinary paragraph calling for the establishment of Pan-Methodist Commissions on the annual conference level. Then Consultation the broke for a thirty-minute refreshment break.

### **Tenth Session**

The tenth session was the closing plenary with Bishop Frederick Talbot of the A. M. E. Church presiding.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The committee returned with suggested revisions to the statement given below:

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

As members of the family of Methodism, we are called to redefine and strengthen our relationship by seeking more effective ways to acknowledge the sovereignty of God, to proclaim the reign of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and to be receptive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit:

- ◆ by seeking signs of unity within the Body of Christ, and renewal of the human community;
- ◆ by recognizing the global nature of the connectional church;
- ◆ by witnessing to the Christian faith in a local and global context;
- ◆ by serving as instruments of God's liberating and reconciling grace throughout creation;
- ◆ by developing structures of cooperation among the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, and United Methodist Churches;
- ◆ by fostering an inclusive, just, and caring fellowship among peoples; and
- ◆ by establishing and building up faith communities where persons are invited, formed, and sent as disciples whom God can use for the transformation of the whole world.

Building on our history and heritage, both common and unique; guided by our Wesleyan priorities and our similar polities; and challenged by our pursuit to establish a just society, we thus stand duty bound and reverently committed to this vocation of our shared faith.

**Action:** The Consultation agreed to hear the report and act upon it sera item.

**ACTION:** It was motioned and voted that the Opening Statement be accepted.

Bullet #1 - It was motioned and voted that the first bullet statement be accepted. **Approved**

Bullet # 2 - It was motioned and voted that the second bullet statement be accepted. **Approved**

Bullet # 3 - It was motioned and voted that the third bullet statement be accepted. **Approved**

Bullet # 4 - It was motioned and voted that the fourth bullet statement be accepted. **Approved**

Bullet # 5 - It was motioned and voted that the fifth bullet statement be accepted. **Approved**

Bullet # 6- It was motioned and voted that the phrase, "other religious persuasions" be added. **Approved**

A substitute motion was offered to end the statement after the phrase, "among all peoples." **Approved**

Proposed new Bullet: An additional bullet was proposed by Bishop Othal H. Lakey (C. M. E. Church) to state: "by seeking avenues of communication, understanding, and cooperation with other religions of the world."

Bishop Sano suggested using the phrase, "persons of other religions"  
Bishop Talbot suggested using the phrase, "persons of other faiths."

Bullet # 7 - It was motioned and voted that the seventh bullet statement be accepted. **Defeated**  
**Approved**

It was moved and voted that the Mission Statement on Unity be adopted by the body. **Adopted**

**RESOLUTION TO THE 1996 GENERAL CONFERENCES:** The Study Commission and the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation brought the Resolution given below to be considered by the Consultation of Methodist Bishops for submission to the 1996 General Conferences.

#### **PETITION TO THE 1996 GENERAL CONFERENCES**

WHEREAS, we are followers of the Christ who prayed that all may be one; and

WHEREAS, historically, Methodism has had a commitment to unity and the ecumenical movement; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge and repent that it was racism that separated American Methodism and fragmented ourselves and the world; and

WHEREAS, at the Fifth Consultation of Methodist Bishops in March 1991, it was requested that the episcopal bodies of the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, and United Methodist Churches petition their respective General Conferences to authorize a Study Commission for the purpose of exploring possible merger; and

WHEREAS, in response to approval by the respective General Conferences, a Study Commission was established on March 9, 1994, in Birmingham, Alabama, and subsequently drew up a Mission Statement under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

THEREFORE, this Study Commission now requests the respective General Conferences to commit themselves in principle to a reunion of these denominations; and

FURTHER requests the four General Conferences to continue the Study Commission's work by establishing a Commission on Union with six representatives from each denomination with necessary funding; and

FURTHER, that this Commission on Union prepare a Plan of Union in order that the wounds resulting from our past divisions may be healed, and that together we may have a more effective witness in the global community as well as be good stewards of our God-given resources, and

FURTHER, that this Commission on Union submit the Plan of Union to the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, and United Methodist Churches General Conferences in 2000 and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church General Conference in 2002.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Proposed Quadrennial Budget for the Commission on Union is \$100,000 to be divided among the four denominations.

**Action:** It was moved and voted that the resolution calling for a Commission on Unity be sent to the respective 1996 General Conferences. **Approved**

**RESOLUTION FOR THE PEOPLE OF OKLAHOMA CITY:** Bishop James K. Mathews submitted the following resolution for consideration by the Consultation

**RESOLUTION FOR THE PEOPLE OF OKLAHOMA CITY**

The Sixth Consultation of Methodist Bishops, representing the episcopal leadership of the

African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church, meeting in Austin, Texas, April 26-28, 1995, expresses sorrow at the recent tragic bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

We offer our condolences to all of the families who have suffered loss by death or injury of their members. And urge our people to do all they possibly can in aid to the victims. We join in prayer with all people for the healing of the wounds to our society which this act of terror has visited upon us.

We further encourage our members to unite with others participating in the Day of Prayer called by President Clinton for May 4, 1995. We applaud efforts of law enforcement agencies to bring to the bar of justice those who are responsible for this terror and at the same time commend to all citizens the exercise of restraint in speech or action which may lead toward violence in our social order.

**Action:** It was moved and seconded that the resolution be approved.

**Approved**

**Action:** Bishop Ann Sherer offered a motion that the Study Commission work with the General Conferences to meet in the same location and share joint worship.

**Approved**

Bishop J. Clinton Hoggard recommended that the Consultation go on record in support for the confirmation of the nomination of Dr. Henry Foster as Surgeon General of the United States.

**Action:** It was moved and voted that the respective Councils/Colleges or Boards of Bishops take the appropriate action.

**Approved**

### **Closing Session/Worship**

The closing act of worship of the Sixth Consultation of Methodist Bishops was the Celebration of the Lord's Supper at 11:30 a. m. (See the Acts of Worship section, pages 80 - 83.) The Co-celebrants were Bishop Joseph Johnson, (A. M. E. Zion Church); Bishop Nathaniel Linsey, (C. M. E. Church); Bishop Frederick H. Talbot, (A. M. E. Church), and Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel, (U. M. Church). Bishop Yeakel delivered the homily. (Members of the Memorial United Methodist Church in Austin served as Communion Stewards.)

**Memorial Moment:** A special moment of recognition was given to the bishops who have gone on before us since the Fifth Consultation, March 1991.

They included the following:

Bishop Herman Leroy Anderson - A. M. E. Zion Church  
Bishop Joseph Benjamin Bethea - U. M. Church  
Bishop Richard Laymon Fisher - A. M. E. Zion Church  
Bishop Edwin Ronald Garrison - U. M. Church  
Bishop W. Kenneth Goodson - U. M. Church  
Bishop Nolan Bailey Harmon - U. M. Church  
Bishop Ernest L. Hickman - U. M. Church  
Bishop Frances Emner Kearns - U. M. Church  
Bishop Elisha P. Murchison - C. M. E. Church  
Bishop Kimba M. Wakadilo Ngoy - U. M. Church  
Bishop Frank Lewis Robertson - U. M. Church  
Bishop Roy Hunter Short - U. M. Church  
Bishop P. Randolph Shy - C. M. E. Church  
Bishop William Milton Smith - A. M. E. Zion Church  
Bishop Rembert E. Stokes - A. M. E. Church  
Bishop John B. Warman - U. M. Church  
Bishop Alfred E. White - A. M. E. Zion Church

The Sixth Consultation of Methodist Bishops adjourned at 12:30 p. m.

## RESOLUTION

In the Fifth Consultation of Methodist Bishops at St. Simon's Island, as an outgrowth of presentation of papers dealing with the global and national witness of the Christian faith in our world of the present day and accepting the challenge for the church to begin to set its house in order as it relates to the absence of unity within the Body of Christ, this Consultation of Methodist Bishops responds by supporting the following:

WHEREAS a consensus developed among those bishops attending the Consultation that the mission of the church compels us to reexamine the relationships and cooperative structures of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS these four denominations share a common history and heritage, with similar polity, episcopal form of leadership, itineracy, and Wesleyan priorities; and

WHEREAS new forms of relationships, missional structures, and possible merger, would make a powerful witness to Christ in a world torn by such evils as injustice and racism;

THEREFORE, WE HERE GATHERED DO RESOLVE to request the bishops of each of our four churches to petition their respective General Conferences to authorize a Study Commission for the purpose of exploring possible merger. Each such petition should request that:

1. Each respective General Conference provide for five representatives to this Commission reflecting the wholeness of the Church and provide needed financial support;
2. The Commission be authorized to seek such staff support from existing denominational staff as it shall be deemed needful;
3. Progress reports be made regularly to each body of bishops and that a final report should be prepared for each General Conference no later than 1996;

4. The task of the Commission shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Keeping clear the missional reasons for this exploration and insuring that such a mission focus be written into any proposal or plan;
- B. Insuring that all proposals provide recognition of each denominational heritage and appropriate representation of persons in any future structures;
- C. Developing a plan of merger that includes a proposed Constitution, organizational plan, and continuation of the episcopacy and itineracy;
- D. Recognizing the global nature, polity, and mission of our churches.

5. The chairperson of the Commission shall rotate among the participating denominations in alphabetical order with each denomination choosing its chairperson from among its representatives;

6. We hold open the possibility of other Methodist denomination joining us in this quest for unity and wholeness;

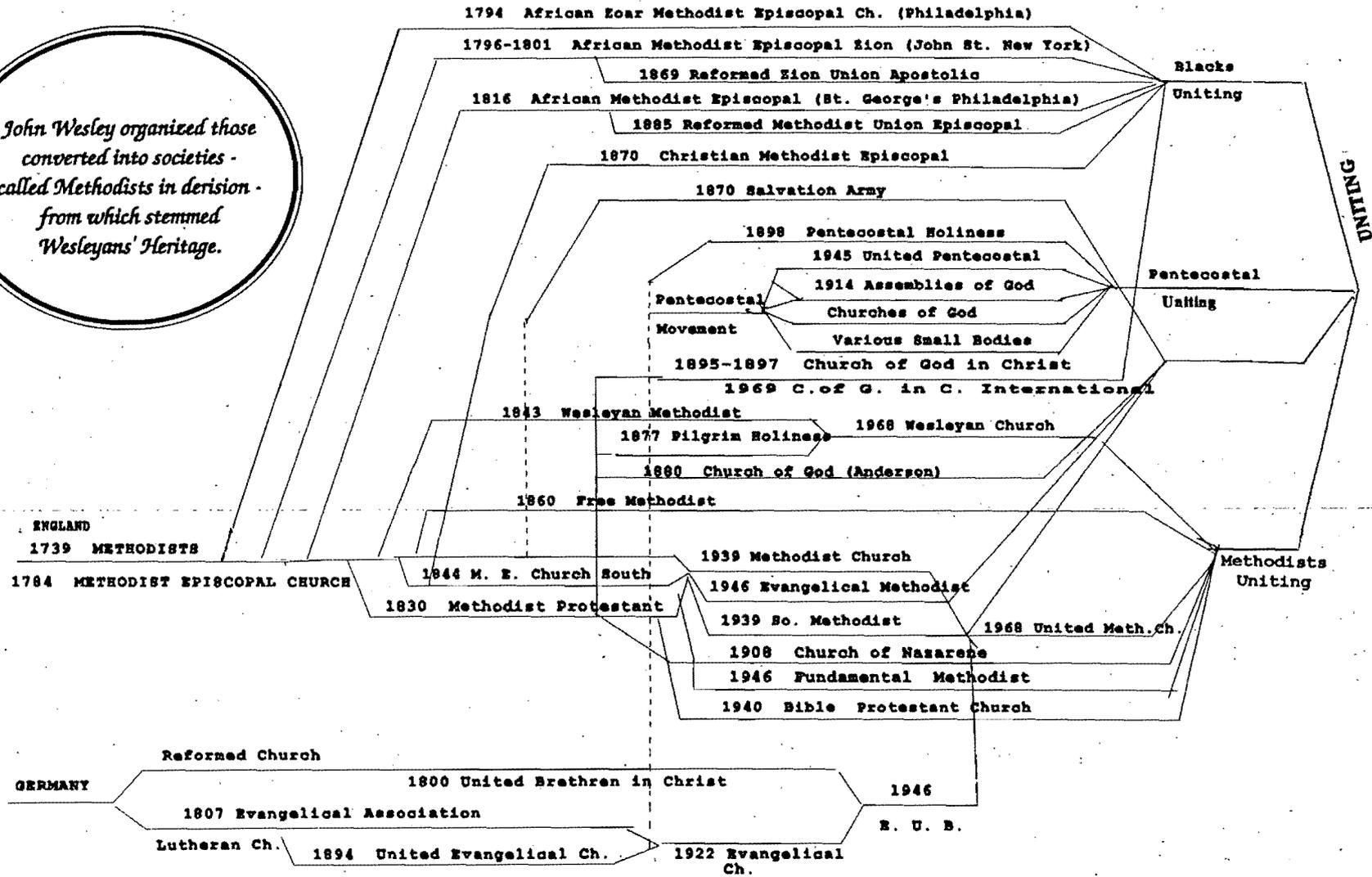
7. This proposal does not discourage the continuation of any existing merger conversations.

22 March 1991

# THE WESLEYAN FAMILY TREE

*John Wesley organized those converted into societies - called Methodists in derision - from which stemmed Wesleyans' Heritage.*

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# PAN-METHODIST BISHOPS AND THEIR REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Note that the contiguous American States are divided into six regions. Region seven comprises all Methodist work overseas. The addresses and phone numbers may be located in Document D pages 1 - 13.

## REGION 1

Alaska	Arizona	California
Colorado	Hawaii	Idaho
Montana	Nevada	New Mexico
Oregon	Utah	Washington
Wyoming		

## UNITED METHODIST

---

Bishop William W. Dew, Jr.  
 Bishop Elias G. Galvan  
 Bishop Calvin D. McConnell  
 Bishop Alfred L. Norris  
 Bishop Roy I. Sano  
 Bishop Mary Ann Swenson  
 Bishop Melvin G. Talbert

## AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL

---

Bishop Vinton R. Anderson  
 Bishop H. Hartford Brookins  
 Bishop C. Garnett Henning

## AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION

---

Bishop Clarence Carr

## CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL

---

Bishop E. Lynn Brown

## REGION II

Illinois	Iowa	Kansas
Minnesota		Missouri
Nebraska		North Dakota
Oklahoma		South Dakota
	Wisconsin	

## AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL

---

Bishop Vinton R. Anderson  
 Bishop J. Haskell Mayo  
 Bishop Frederick H. Talbot

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL ZION**

---

**Bishop Enoch B. Rochester  
Bishop Joseph Johnson**

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL ZION**

---

**Bishop Joseph Johnson  
Bishop Richard K. Thompson**

**CHRISTIAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

**Bishop Dotcy I. Isom, Jr.**

**CHRISTIAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

**Bishop Richard O. Bass, Sr.  
Bishop Thomas Hoyt  
Bishop William H. Graves**

**UNITED METHODIST**

---

**Bishop Sharon Brown-Christopher  
Bishop R. Sheldon Duecker  
Bishop Charles W. Jordan  
Bishop David K. Lawson  
Bishop William B. Lewis  
Bishop Joel N. Martinez  
Bishop Fritz Mutti  
Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader  
Bishop Ann B. Sherer  
Bishop Dan E. Solomon**

**UNITED METHODIST**

---

**Bishop Bruce P. Blake  
Bishop Robert E. Fannin  
Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn  
Bishop Jack Meadors, Jr.  
Bishop William W. Morris  
Bishop William B. Oden  
Bishop Raymond H. Owen  
Bishop Richard B. Wilke  
Bishop Joe A. Wilson**

**REGION III**

**Alabama    Arkansas    Louisiana  
Mississippi    Texas**

**REGION IV**

**Indiana    Kentucky  
Michigan    Ohio    Tennessee  
West Virginia**

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

**Bishop John R. Bryant  
Bishop Frederick H. Talbot  
Bishop Cornelius E. Thomas  
Bishop Robert Thomas, Jr.**

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

**Bishop Henry A. Belin, Jr.  
Bishop Vernon R. Byrd  
Bishop J. Haskell Mayo**

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL ZION**

---

Bishop Cecil Bishop  
Bishop Joseph Johnson  
Bishop Enoch B. Rochester  
Bishop Milton A. Williams

**CHRISTIAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

Bishop William H. Graves  
Bishop Dotcy I. Isom, Jr.  
Bishop Nathaniel L. Linsey

**UNITED METHODIST**

---

Bishop Edwin C. Boulton  
Bishop Kenneth L. Carder  
Bishop Judith Craig  
Bishop S. Clifton Ives  
Bishop Clay Foster Lee, Jr.  
Bishop Robert C. Morgan  
Bishop Donald A. Ott  
Bishop Woodie W. White

**REGION V**

Connecticut	Delaware
Maine	Maryland
Massachusetts	New Hampshire
New Jersey	New York
Pennsylvania	Rhode Island
Vermont	District of Columbia

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

Bishop Henry A. Belin, Jr.  
Bishop Frederick C. James  
Bishop Philip R. Cousin  
Bishop D. Ward Nichols

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL ZION**

---

Bishop George W. Walker  
Bishop Milton A. Williams

**CHRISTIAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

Bishop Oree Broomfield, Sr.

**UNITED METHODIST**

---

Bishop George W. Bashore  
Bishop William Boyd Grove  
Bishop Neil L. Irons  
Bishop Hae-Jong Kim  
Bishop Felton E. May  
Bishop Susan M. Morrison  
Bishop F. Herbert Skeete  
Bishop Forest E. Stith  
Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel

**REGION VI**

Florida	South Carolina
Georgia	Virginia
North Carolina	

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

Bishop John Hurst Adams  
Bishop Frank C. Cummings  
Bishop Frederick C. James  
Bishop Donald G. Ming

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL ZION**

---

Bishop George E. Battle, Jr.  
Bishop Ruben L. Speaks  
Bishop Richard K. Thompson  
Bishop Milton A. Williams

**CHRISTIAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

Bishop Richard O. Bass, Sr.  
Bishop Oree Broomfield, Sr.  
Bishop Othal H. Lakey

**UNITED METHODIST**

---

Bishop H. Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr.  
Bishop L. Bevel Jones, III  
Bishop J. Lloyd Knox  
Bishop Clay Foster Lee, Jr.  
Bishop Richard C. Looney  
Bishop C. P. Minnick, Jr.  
Bishop Thomas B. Stockton

**REGION VII**

Angola	Bahamas	Burundi
Central and Southern Europe		
Germany	Ghana	Jamaica
Liberia	Mozambique	Nigeria
Northern Europe	The Phillippines	
Sierra Leone	South Africa	
Zaire	Zimbabwe	

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

Bishop Richard A. Chappelle  
Bishop Philip R. Cousin  
Bishop Frank C. Cummings  
Bishop Zedekiah L. Grady  
Bishop C. Garnett Henning

Bishop J. Haskell Mayo  
Bishop Robert V. Webster  
Bishop McKinley Young  
Bishop Harold Ben Senatle

**AFRICAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL ZION**

---

Bishop Cecil Bishop  
Bishop S. Chuka Ekemam, Sr.  
Bishop Ruben L. Speaks  
Bishop Marshall H. Strickland  
Bishop George W. Walker  
Bishop Milton A. Williams  
Bishop Enoch B. Rochester

**CHRISTIAN METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL**

---

Bishop Richard O. Bass, Sr.  
Bishop Charles Helton

**UNITED METHODIST**

---

Bishop Daniel C. Arichea  
Bishop Thomas S. Bangura  
Bishop Heinrich Bolleter  
Bishop Emilio De Carvalho  
Bishop Done Peter Dabale  
Bishop Moises Domingos Fernandes  
Bishop Jose C. Gamboa, Jr.  
Bishop Paul L. A. Granadonsin  
Bishop Joseph C. Humper  
Bishop Christopher Jokomo  
Bishop Kainda Katembo  
Bishop Walker Klaiber  
Bishop Arthur F. Kulah  
Bishop Joao Somane Machado  
Bishop Rudiger R. Minor  
Bishop Emerito P. Nacpil  
Bishop J. Alfred Ndoricimpa  
Bishop Kimba M. Wakadilo Ngoy  
Bishop Fama Onema

## QUESTIONS FOR REGIONAL GROUPS

### SHAPING OUR FUTURE

(Random Order)

1. How can we prevent people feeling lost in bigness?
2. Where are situations where we might unite now?
3. How can denominational events become Pan-Methodist?
4. How can we learn to trust one another?
5. What should American Methodism look like in the 21st century?
6. What is God calling us to be?
7. Can we survive meaningfully if we go our separate ways?
8. What might "jump start" our vision for the future?
9. What kind of commitment is needed to shape American Methodism's future?
10. What might be a time line for future goals?
11. What is the global vision of American Methodism?
12. Where is there indigenous leadership to forward American Methodism's goals?

These questions will be the basis for dialogue in Regional Groups. Additional questions are welcomed. Responses will go to the Study Commission.

# THE HARD QUESTIONS FOR REGIONAL GROUPS

(Random Order)

1. What controversies still exist between the Pan-Methodist denominations?
2. How are root causes of diversity now being addressed?
3. What are the roadblocks to our being in mission together?
4. What are the racial impediments we face?
5. What animosities still exist?
6. How should we deal with empowerment issues?
7. What turfs are considered denominationally "sacred"?
8. What are the roadblocks to our being in mission together?
9. What do we have in common?
10. When is diversity not sin?
11. Where are effective cooperative efforts now in existence?
12. Why are we not prepared to minister to all ?

Additional questions are welcomed.

## Region I Report

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana,  
Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

Based on issues in the major presentations at this 6th Consultation, we cannot propose a merger, which the 5th Consultation of Methodist Bishops called the Study Commission to explore. However, because of the stirrings of the Spirit, we have not lost the "heavenly vision" Christ calls us to work toward, remembering this portion of the dismembered Body of Christ.

Building trust in our relationship is the prevailing priority. In trusting relationships and as members of the merging body, we recognize, reaffirm, celebrate, and receive each other's distinct journeys, identities, and contributions. Pursuing joint ventures in God's mission will promote trusting relationships tested in the ministries of Christ. Therefore, Region I named the following specific steps from its perspective in the Western half of the United States:

- 1. We urge a clear statement of commitment to affirmative action in the face of divisive forces which uses wedge issues for political expediency. We urge, as a cause in point, support for the nomination of Dr. Henry Foster as Surgeon General of the United States.
- 2. We will urge continuing interpretation of our existing joint ventures in mission, promoting a recognition of them in our episcopal areas. They include for example: The Interdenominational Theological Seminary (ITC). We will promote exploration of additional joint ventures in institutional ministries e.g., joint theological education in West Africa.
- 3. We will promote the joint sponsorship of all four denominations at ministries training sessions, and hold the mutual strategies in specific metropolitan areas as a high priority.
- 4. Within each of our episcopal areas, we are committed to create a climate of expectation for joint ventures which promote knowledge, appreciation, and trusting relations among us. We are committing ourselves to do the following:
  - ~ We will promote attendance of bishops from the participating denominations at key events, e.g. ordination\consecration.
  - ~ We will urge in our areas, exploration of the use of our facilities to enhance each other's ministries, for example:
    - \*\* United Methodist Churches might unite two congregations and invite a congregation from a Black Methodist denomination to carry out their ministry at one of the facilities.
    - \*\* A Black Methodist local church might be approached to host in one of their facilities a United Methodist ministry in the Korean or Spanish language.
    - \*\* We will promote camping programs with participation of all Pan-Methodists.
    - \*\* We will explore with Boards of Ordained Ministries acquaintance of and joint ministries with persons of Pan-Methodist denominations.

**Region II Report**  
**Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska,**  
**North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin**

**Shaping Our Future**

Response to question # 4, "How can we learn to trust one another?"

- ~ Trust comes by doing things together.
- ~ Trust grows as we work things out.
- ~ The role of the bishops is to initiate gatherings of ministers at local levels around selected issues.

The Study Commission should carry out the mandate and propose steps that will lead to merger. The Study Commission is amiable to the General Conferences and not to the Consultation of Methodist Bishops (by design).

**Ideas**

- ◆ Interdenominational Trustees
- ◆ Seating at each other's General Conferences
- ◆ Common location for Annual Conferences
- ◆ Compile list of Presiding Elders/District Superintendents in each state for Bishops
- ◆ Selection of key facilitators who could make it happen
- ◆ Shared witness in Mozambique

**Other Fundamental Questions**

- \* Do you live yourself into a new state of being or do you declare a new state of being?
- \* Do you think your way into new living or live your way into a new way of thinking?
  
- \* Dual assignment - to explore merger and to develop a plan of merger: united or uniting?  
"There is interest, but not a priority"
  
- \* Exploration of the meaning of "One," "Body," "Merger." (Missional) new expressions
- \* We are already one. Do we raise up expressions of our oneness?
- \* We are also divided--divided by race.
- \* Should we come together to meet the needs of the hurting world?
- \* Should we have a shared witness in places like Mozambique?
- \* When do the bishops meet again? They often meet as new bishops.
- \* The Consultation has a life of its own.

Dual track: Next steps in the hands of the Study Commission per the mandate of General Conferences.

**Region III Report**  
**Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas**

Attendance

Bishop Thomas Hoyt - Leader, First Session - C. M. E. Church  
Bishop Williams Morris - Leader, Second Session - U.M.Church  
Bishop Robert Fannin- U. M. Church                      Bishop Jack Meadors, Jr.- U. M. Church  
Bishop J. W. Hearn- U. M. Church                      Bishop William B. Odens- U. M. Church  
Bishop Raymond H. Owen- U. M. Church              Bishop Williams W. Morris- U. M. Church  
Bishop Joseph Johnson- A. M. E. Zion Church      Bishop Richard O. Bass- C. M. E. Church  
Bishop Ernest Dixon - U. M. Church                  Bishop Bruce Blake - U. M. Church  
Bishop Marshall Gilmore - C. M. E. Church  
Rev. Donnell D. Williams - A. M. E. Zion Church- Recorder

Questions: "Shaping Our Future"

I. What is God Calling us to be ?(#6) Comments:

- 1.) God admonishes us to be one through preaching, teaching, and making disciples.
- 2.) We are called to be an extension of the incarnation of Christ and exhibit reconciliation.
- 3.) We are called to be liberators.
- 4.) We are called to present ourselves as a sign for others seeking unity.
- 5.) We are called to be in community and be a community. We should be models to the world.
- 6.) We are called to build bridges of understanding.

II. How can we prevent people feeling lost in bigness? Comments:

- 1.) Affirmatively involve those persons in the minority. \*Note: Theological and psychological debate was presented to help understand and give relevance to a proactive process to avoid the feeling of bigness.
- 2.) Empowerment of minority groups and compensatory considerations were given to affirm involvement due to historical aspects.
- 3.) Emphasis should be placed on the need for belongingness.

III. How can we learn to trust? Comments:

- 1.) Build upon a paradigm of courtship and the element of building relations.
- 2.) Explore the issue of control.
- 3.) Give theological considerations to forgiveness and repentance in light of the historical pain as it relates to racism.

## "The Hard Questions for Regional Groups"

### I. Where are effective cooperative efforts now in existence? Comments:

- Pan-Methodist Coalition on local levels against drug abuse.
- Cooperation in higher education in the area of technical and personal aspects.
- Common curriculum in social ministry composed by Dr. Luther Smith (C.M.E.)
- Bishops sharing in Consecration and Ordination services.

### II. What do we have in common?

- Theological premises have commonality.
- Emphasis on the support of the ministry (i.e., Pensions, Insurance, et cetera)
- Interest in education (50% of UNCF Colleges and Universities are of Methodist heritage)
- Church polity.
- Wesleyan Heritage and Traditions.
- Common religiosity.
- Emphasis on mission outreach.

### III. Roadblocks to our being in mission together.....

- Territorialism\Turfism
- Inertia (talking with no action)
- Variance in the authority of the Episcopacy
- Lack of knowledge about Methodism
- Differentiation in polity and administrative personalities
- Infusion of other evangelical ideas contrary to Methodist or Wesleyan theology
- Sincerity for unity
- Perception of distrust
- Excessive institutional responsibilities

### IV. Trust in relationship to trustworthiness was considered.

### V. Participatory involvement or lack of participation should be explored as we deal with mistrust.

## Region IV Report

Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, West Virginia

Bishop Judith Craig - Leader

#### Suggestions:

- Formation of "colleges" based on reasonable geography and common areas of oversight
  - a Pan-Methodist College.
- Perhaps include Presiding Elders or representatives and District Superintendents once a year
- Meet once a year

Note: This a new group, why not try again?

### **Region V Report**

**Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey,  
New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, District of Columbia**

Question #7, "Can we survive meaningfully if we go our separate ways?"

Are we surviving "meaningfully" as we are? It may be survival, but "meaningfully" is questionable.

#### **Suggestions**

- Pan-Methodist Commission on Racial Justice
- Volunteerism has its limitations in our method of operations - if its not our structural responsibility, it has a secondary interest.
- There is some commitment for another Consultation.
- Ask new bishops to respond: All appreciated exposure, saw it as a valuable history lesson which has been neglected. Very fruitful experience.
- Support Pan-Methodist Day, and join in celebrating the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church's Bicentennial in 1996.

### **Region VI Report**

**Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina**

As a step towards the goal of unity, Pan-Methodist Commissions will be established at the annual conference level. Included among the purposes of this Annual Conference Pan-Methodist Commissions are the following:

- a.) Foster opportunities for persons within a geographical area to become acquainted with one another.
- b.) Create intentional efforts to share the history and traditions of each denomination with the others.
- c.) Provide meaningful opportunities for shared worship experiences at a local level.
- d.) Consider possibilities for cooperative ministries at both annual conference and local levels.

## Region VII Report

Angola, Bahamas, Burundi, Central and Southern Europe, Germany,  
Ghana, Jamaica, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Northern Europe,  
The Phillipines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zaire, Zimbabwe

Participants: Bishop Charles Helton (C. M. E. Church)

Bishop Ole E. Borgen (U. M. Church)

William Lux (U. M. Church)

- 1.) How can we prevent being lost in bigness?
  - By guaranteed representation and participation in the Pan-Methodist movement.
- 2.) Where are the situations where we might unite now?
  - Educational retreats
  - Pastoral retreats
  - Lay and/or youth retreats
- 3.) How can we trust one another?
  - We need to give the people chances to get together.
  - We need to get together in places other than church such as neighborhood groups.
- 4.) What should Global Methodism do in the 21st Century?
  - Cooperate in Africa
  - Explore cooperation in the mission field.
- 5.) What is God calling us to be?
  - To be Christ committed, faithful, and spirit filled.
  - To be agents of change and reconciliation
  - Being is primary to doing. If we are called to be, we are called to do.
  - We can reconcile when we become reconciled.
- 6.) Can we survive separately, yet meaningfully?

Yes, probably, but as the Body of Christ we must seek to be one body as Methodists.
- 7.) What might "jump start" our vision for the future?
  - We've got to dream the dream of God for God's Church.
  - Seek vision through revelation.
- 8.) What kind of commitment is needed to shape our future?
  - A willingness to grow together on the local level before any decisive steps together.
  - Time line
  - Acknowledge that you cannot force a faith issue.
- 9.) What is the global vision of American Methodism? -This is an oxymoron!

History of a Road Toward Unity  
by Bishop James K. Matthews

My assignment is to present an account of the history of our Pan-Methodist endeavors together. I shall try to be brief.

We possess in common much more that unites us than what divides us. We are gathered here because we belong together.

We are all bishops of the Universal Church. We need not be ashamed our episcopal tradition. Born of necessity, episcopacy in the Wesleyan, tradition, and indeed its ministry in general, rests upon a firm foundation, through the apostolic figure of John Wesley, an ordained pretense or apology, upon Jesus Christ himself.

"Methodism can be said to have several beginnings. Some would see it as a recurrent form of Christianity, a renewal movement that has broken out repeatedly in the history of the church. According to the late Rupert E. Davies, Methodism bears these marks:

'A religion which prefers personal converse with God to institutional forms and authority; a concern to bring the truth to simple people; a stress on holiness; a reaffirmation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; a semi-lay Church Order; and all of this combined with orthodoxy.'

John Wesley would heartily concur.

Such a view may seem pretention, but it does emphasize that what Wesleyanism stands for is no mere eighteenth-century innovation or aberration. It is a part of a tradition of the Church Universal.

Yes, we have a lot in common: not only our episcopacy, but polity in general; an itinerant and appointed ministry, a rare concern for the issues of society; an emphasis on Christian experience; a pragmatic view of religion. All this and more unites us.

We all look back to Aldersgate, to Wesley, to Asbury, to the Christmas Conference in Baltimore in 1784. Yet we treasure our unique traditions and celebrate our own particular heroes of the faith whether they be Richard Allen or Morris Brown of the African Methodist Episcopal Churches: James Varick, of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, elected a bishop at age 24; or William Miles, of the Christian Methodist Episcopal. We would deny none of them, not to mention hosts of others I shall not venture to name.

Methodism on these shores has indeed been fragmented -- and for authentic reasons -- but we have never been antagonists, nor really forgotten our oneness. Hence, a new search for unity began in the 1970's.

It is true that many of our predecessors have been deeply concerned in this movement. I mention some in alphabetical order: Bishops Bertram W. Doyle, F. Gerald Ensley, Sherman L. Greene, Joseph A. Johnson, Jr., Fredrick D. Jordan, Francis J. McConnell, Elisha P. Murchison, Herbert Bell Shaw, William J. Walls and others. At the Denver meeting of the World Methodist Council in 1971 conversations were initiated looking to conversations among

episcopal Methodists.

A little later a further development emerged. In the early 1970's I shall never forget a ride in a taxi shared by Bishops Fredrick D. Jordan, Herbert Bell Shaw and myself. We were headed from 475 Riverside Drive to LaGuardia Airport. As we were crossing the Triborough Bridge we all in one accord agreed that we must become more serious. We later got in touch with Bishop Doyle and he heartily agreed.

Thus the search began in greater earnest. The a United Methodist Church 1976 General Conference directed its Council of Bishops to pursue the matter. The other partners did likewise.

Dr. C. Faith Richardson has in short compass sketched the ensuing developments. With her permission I draw upon her record:

A meeting was called for Saturday, March 11, 1978, in Atlanta. Seven bishops were present, representing the African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church.

A group was formed to be known as the Steering Committee with three bishops from each of the four denominations (president and secretary of the episcopal body and one other for continuity). Bishop Herbert Bell Shaw was named chairman and Bishop James K. Matthews, secretary.

At that first meeting in 1978 several areas of possible cooperation were discussed and some were immediately implemented. A resolution went to the General Conferences of the several churches concerning the bi-centennial of American Methodism and proposing the formation of a Pan-Methodist Committee. A plan was set in motion to have episcopal representation from each denomination at the Consecration Services for newly elected bishops. Plans were laid for cooperation among publishing interests, in evangelism training, programs and events, and sharing of resources. There was a common concern for clergy: seminary education, appointments, transfer of conference membership, divorce, pensions, etcetera. Many other areas for possible cooperation were also indicated: missionary enterprises, communications, social witness, possible merger of institutions.

The Steering Committee's primary responsibility was the planning of a Consultation of Methodist Bishops. At the first one in March 1979 a Joint Resolution on the Bicentennial of American Methodism: 1984 was adopted as previously approved by the 1978 General Conference of the C.M.E. Church. One of the resolution's three points stated the "willingness to join with sister denominations in appointing a planning commission."

Two years later, at the Second Consultation, a slightly different Joint Resolution was adopted. It called for the formation of a Joint Methodist Commission on Cooperative Missional Thrust, to be composed of twelve commissioners from each denomination, for the purpose of drawing up a Covenant of Unity, of exploring ways in which four denominations could eliminate wasteful overlap, and of discovering ways in which there could be immediate cooperation.

When the Third Consultation of Methodist Bishops met in 1983 it had a request from the Pan-Methodist Bicentennial Committee to substitute the Consultation's earlier resolution with one calling

for a Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation composed of five persons from each denomination; this was approved. Later it was suggested that the recommendations for "new mission cooperation" from the Missional Thrust Convocation be turned over to this proposed Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation.

When the Fourth Consultation of Methodist Bishops convened in March 1987 as a National Conference in conjunction with the spring meeting of each of the four episcopal bodies, it was voted that "the responsibilities of the Steering Committee of the Consultation of Methodist Bishops be transferred to the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation." This led to the next General Conferences' increasing the Commission's membership to twenty-four. Therefore,

when the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation set up its structure, it formed its own Steering Committee composed of the Commission's eight bishops and Administrative Secretary with the responsibility to plan a quadrennial Consultation of Methodist Bishops.

A Fifth Consultation was held in March 1991 at which time a resolution was approved to request the "respective General Conferences to authorize a Study Commission for the purpose of exploring possible merger." A report on this next step of cooperative relationships is expected at the Sixth Consultation of Pan-Methodist Cooperation planned for April 1995. In the meantime the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation also continues to work with the general agencies of its four denominations to "execute activities to foster meaningful cooperation" among the People called the Methodist.

Personally, I have dreamed for a long time that together we could find some agreeable form of organic union. Possibly my late esteemed father-in-law, E. Stanley Jones, points the way with what he called Federal Union. This means like the states formed a "more perfect union" when they fashioned a strong center, with considerable latitude to the constituent parts. Is it possible that we are nearing a time when we might do something analogous to this? Or, as David Livingstone used to say, are we ready to conclude that "the end of the exploration is the beginning of the enterprise?"

## HISTORICAL\THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR UNITY FROM AN UNITED METHODIST PERSPECTIVE

by Bishop James S. Thomas

The major theme which we are called to address could hardly be more aptly chosen: "Visioning From a Historical\Theological Perspective: Radical Implications for Future Ministry". What we are about is visioning. We see a city, either far away in the distance or nearer than any of us dare to think. The bridges to the city are fragile, long, and filled with barriers. But we all know very well that visioning is dangerous. We also know that without visioning, the church and the people perish. And so, when our four General Conferences authorized a Study Commission "for the purpose of explaining possible merger", they set out a task of vision that cannot now be escaped.

The term "radical implications" is also appropriate for this occasion. After two hundred and eleven years of organized Methodism in the United States, it is high time to think about the future--radically. By now, all of us know the popular speakers who warn us that a new future is already here. This is no longer news. When we can look back on a decade that includes the collapse of Communism in Russia, the destruction of the Berlin Wall, a Nobel Peace Prize to long-time enemies in Israel and Palestine, and a communications revolution to name only a few radical events in our world, any lack of vision in the Church is a judgement upon itself.

Responding, then, to the vision of our four General Conferences, this paper is presented with four purposes in mind:

- 1) To revisit history as either a vividly real or forgotten background of the events that have brought us to this place.
- 2) To elaborate on the theological unity which we all share and discuss some of the powerful cultural forces that have produced new themes or variations into our history.
- 3) To outline the formative social forces in our history that resulted in divisions in the past and stand as barriers in Church union in the future.
- 4) To underscore the theological imperative to union in the Church of Jesus Christ and to hold out the hope that our present efforts, begun on March 9, 1994, can respond positively to the new situation that the church will face in the twenty-first century.

With this much before us, the outline of our history must be brief, even episodic; the statement of our common theology must be succinct; and our review of social forces must be sharp and to the point.

## Revisiting History

There are certain dates in our self-image. For example, the Methodist Christmas Conference in Baltimore, at Lovely Lane church, is marked as the beginning of organized American Methodism. The Wesleys had come to Georgia long before then and Asbury held conferences in the South as early as 1780, but formal organization had not taken place; that formal organization occurred in 1784.

The Christmas Conference is its own story, but it is important for us to remember at least two facts: 1) Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, was present, as was Harry Hosier. That was a remarkable fact, given the state of race relation at that time. 2) Harry Hosier, popularly called "Black Harry", was Bishop Asbury's traveling companion and preached powerfully to eager crowds of listeners.

Not long after that, the long shadows of slavery and segregation fell upon what, in the best of worlds, might have become a fellowship in Christ that rose above race. Instead, the segregated worship service at St. George's Church, Philadelphia, ended in a drama of humiliation that resulted in the first racial schism within the Methodist body.

Harry V. Richardson tells the story in some detail: Richard Allen and Absalom Jones were pulled from their knees while at prayer. They left St. George's Church in November 1787 never to return. Even though Allen was licensed to preach in St. George's Church in 1784 and was ordained deacon by Bishop Asbury on July 11, 1799, he was rejected as worshiper and went on to found the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816.<sup>1</sup>

The separation of other black denominations, while less marked by one event, was no less insistent upon two important facts that must be remembered as we, once again, study the possible union of our four denominations. One, segregation and humiliation in the Lord's house are so egregious in nature that they inflict long-lasting wound upon their victims. Two, the denial of self-determination is equally wounding in nature and will, as it did, lead to division in the Church. It is for both of these reasons that the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church sought its fuller life in 1820 and the Colored (now Christian) Methodist Episcopal Church launched out on its own a half a century later.

The next inescapable date to underscore, as we revisit history, is 1844. After valiant efforts to keep the Methodist Episcopal Church together, the General Conference of 1844 was a time of grave decision. Bishop James Osgood Andrew of Georgia was the lightning rod for a tremendous feeling, pro and con, on slavery. It would be hard to overstate the pent-up emotion that vented itself as Bishop Andrew was suspended for holding the slaves that he inherited from his wife.

Bishop Nolan B. Harmon noted that the General Conference "adjourned as it had sat, in an atmosphere of frustration and bitter disappointment".<sup>2</sup> So deep was the frustration that a convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky in 1845 and the first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South was held in 1846.

The Methodist Episcopal Church remained divided for ninety-five years. Then came the union of 1939, with a separate Central Jurisdiction for the black membership. After repeated efforts

and many meetings, the Central Jurisdiction was abolished in 1967. The next order of the day for the Methodist Church was Church union as the Evangelical United Brethren and the Methodist Church were merged in 1968.

This revisiting of history is not always pleasant but it is very necessary as we reflect upon our own powerful denominational self-definitions. Sooner or later, we will have to reflect upon such questions like "Who are we as denominations?" and "What has made us what we have become?" That task is impossible without revisiting our history.

### Once Upon a Time

The task of revisiting our history would be over if it were not for a less well-known but highly important part of our stories. Indeed, our guarded steps toward union may be more important for our present reflection than the separations that the Methodist Episcopal Church suffered in earlier days.

To put it briefly, we have been here before. In 1864 both General Conferences of the then black Methodist denominations were meeting in Philadelphia. The committee from the African Methodist Episcopal General Conference prepared a report to be presented to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion General Conference. Before the report was presented, H. M. Turner, who I took to be the later great Bishop, Henry McNeal Turner, offered a lengthy preamble and resolution on the matter.

The report of the committee to the African Methodist Episcopal General Conference was clear in its emphases and desires. In part, the report said:

We, your committee, to whom was referred the union of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, after giving the subject the most careful attention, beg leave to report as follows:

Your committee find in existence in many parts of the United States two separate and distinct religious organizations, to exist: the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, both professing the same faith and preaching the same gospel, and being separated by only a few points upon which hang no important issues.<sup>3</sup>

We know that these plans and resolutions were not successful at that time.

Because of lack of space and time, the historical record must now be summarized.

1) Earlier attempts have been made toward the union of all the major black Methodist denominations beginning in 1864.

- 2) Later attempts were made to unite these denominations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, but for different reasons.
- 3) Black Methodists did remain with both branches of divided Methodism. Some formed the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in 1870. This was a quarter of a century after the great separation. Others remained after 1870, in separate annual conferences and, later, in an all-black Central Jurisdiction.

### **Theological Reasons for Union**

The theological rationale for Methodist Union can be briefly stated. There is a very good reason for that. When Christ prayed that "they may all be one", His prayer became the theological charter for one Lord and one Church. It is hardly an over-simplification to say that almost everything else is an elaboration upon this major theme.

Keeping this charter before us, it is important to our present study to examine certain extensions of Wesleyan Theology upon which we all agree. For our present purposes, I will mention only five.

1. The desire for holiness of life.
2. The powerful belief in and proclamation of grace.
3. The emphasis upon social holiness.
4. The belief in free will.
5. The emphasis upon education.

Added to these and, perhaps, also underlying them, is the emphasis upon discipline. All of us spell it with a capital "D" because that is how we got our name. We do not have a biblical name, or a person's name, nor even a polity name. We are Method-ists by name. We believe in organization and order. Our ethos, our practices, and the book of Church law that guides us is called the **Discipline**, or Book of Discipline.

It is not by theological discourse so much as by polity that we are Episcopal Methodists. In short, we have bishops. This name "bishop", that caused Wesley so much grief, has persisted over two hundred years and will probably continue for many to more.

For many people, the name became a reproach and the practice unbearable. In 1830, a group of Methodists separated from the large body and became the Methodist Protestant Church.

The separation came about because of two major issues: 1) the lack of representation of lay people in the Church; and 2) the presumed power of bishops, especially those who sought no consultation in directing the affairs of the Annual Conferences.

It is interesting to note that both of these causes for separation were overcome, one fairly early, the other fairly late. After separation, the Methodist Protestant Church had presidents, not

bishops.

Then, gradually, the power of the laity in the Methodist Church increased until now, in the United Methodist Church, every Annual Conference membership is equally divided between clergy and lay. Now, since 1976, every United Methodist bishop is accountable to an episcopacy committee that reviews and evaluates his or her work.

We have crossed the line between theology and polity but, for Wesley, the line was never as sharp as it was in some other denominations. The theological reasons for Methodist union may not be a long list but it is a fundamental one. Holiness of life is combined with the centrality of the Scripture, the theology of grace, and Christian experience. When one adds to these the Catholic Spirit and a marked emphasis upon social holiness, one has the heart of Methodist theology. They are emphases which we all share.

Any critical study aimed at church union must face a strange paradox. Even though there are powerful voices that speak for separateness on the basis of deep belief, we can easily overlook the fact that these deep beliefs are very often social and political, not theological or liturgical, we must, therefore, face up to social forces before we go on to the high ideas of the One Church of Jesus Christ, united by Scripture, love and practice.

The powerful force that we share in common is our history. But we have been divided much longer that we were once united. We share a common theology, but that theology has been tested, expanded, and even revised by long-standing social practices both within and without the Church. A major task, therefore, is in the area of social practices both within and without the Church. A major task, therefore, is in the area of social and political history. It is from that source that the hard questions will come.

In his classic work on "the Social Sources of Denominationalism," H. Richard Niebuhr reminded us of a fundamental fact:

"The division of the churches closely follow the division of men into the castes of national, racial, and economic groups. It draws the color line in the chosen of God; it fosters the misunderstanding, the self-exaltation, the hatred of jingoistic nationalism by continuing in the body of Christ the spurious differences or provincial legal ties; It sets the rich and poor apart at the table of the Lord, where the fortunate may enjoy the courses they have provided while the others feed upon the crusts their poverty affords." <sup>4</sup>

The words of Niebuhr, quoted above, were first written in 1929. That was sixty-five years ago. They are hard words to hear in 1994 and 1995 but they were true to our history then and still true to some of our history now. In short, there are powerful social sources of denominationalism that are more a part of our history than any doctrinal differences that might exist within the Methodist family.

## What of Our Present Situation?

On March 9, 1994, a Study Commission was officially organized, after the votes of our General Conferences, to explore the possibility of merger. We all understand that the Study Commission has a tremendous task before it.

The purposes of the final two sections of this statement are 1) to point out some of the major barriers that the Study Commission will face; and 2) to underscore the urgency of looking toward a new Church, nearer to Christ's vision for his people in the twenty-first century.

An earlier recital of the history that produced a division of a nineteenth-century Methodism into our four (and many more) denominations, almost requires a brief analysis of the process of merger.

It is palpably true that schism can come from doctrinal differences or opposing liturgical practices in the Church. However, since the mid-nineteenth century, there have been many more church divisions over social forces than over doctrine. In addition, there have been more "churches within churches" that stop short of outright schism. In this connection, it should be remembered that John Wesley remained an Anglican until his death. We all live with the embarrassing paradox that the founder of Methodist himself. If Wesley lived today he would probably be called the highly educated leader of an evangelical caucus within the Anglican Church.

Now, with this perspective of history, we can reflect again upon the process of merger. What will it take to bring about the union of these four denominations of Methodism? Nobody really knows at this point but there are some clues, both from the distant and recent past.

Using the great divide of Methodism as an example, four stages of movement toward union are now apparent. First, there was a guarded fraternal exchange aimed at expressing good will while still in separation. Through our meetings as a group of Pan-Methodist bishops, we have made some progress in our acquaintance and fellowship. This first stage is a time of acquaintance, fellowship, mutual respect, and sharing. One of the fruits of such meetings was the resolution adopted by our four General Conferences.

Second, there is that long stage of conferences, meetings, negotiations, resolutions, and communication with our respective lay and clergy members. They must know our intent to take each other seriously and move toward a mutually agreed upon goal.

In the case of the Methodist Episcopal, the Methodist Church, South, and the Methodist Church, this stage of negotiation continued for ninety-five years.

Third, there is a stage, shorter, but more intense, when the resolution to merge faces the issues of power in the church and the politics by which that power is used. This may be a relatively short or long period, depending upon a number of factors, some of them quite unpredictable.

Fourth, there is a stage of consensus-building, vote-gathering, and strong support of leaders, both episcopal, clerical, and lay, for the resolutions presented in support of union. The complexities of each stage of this process militate against any neat outline of logical steps. Sometimes there are

reverses, discouragement, defections, inspired supporters, and divine inspiration. And all these need to be kept in perspective.

What then are some barriers to union? There might be many but for the purpose of this essay I will choose only three.

1) There is the barrier of history. The serious intent expressed in the action of our four General Conferences has not been expressed formally since 1864. Depending upon one's point of view, at least two questions can be raised about our history. First, since we have gotten along so well as separate denominations for 130 years; is there really any need to even study merger now? But a second voice might ask: "Hasn't it been long enough to stay apart when the world cries out for a united witness?"

2) There is the barrier of a changed racial climate. The older ones of us struggled so long and so hard for unlimited access and freedom of movement that we laid a high value on integration. But a younger black generation, proud of its history and heritage, rarely uses the word "integration" and finds some value in emphasizing self-expression both in separate and inclusive settings.

3) The barrier of busy-ness is a very legitimate one. All of us are so busy in the work of our own denominations that the addition of one more thing is hardly welcome.

But there has never been a church union without many meetings, voluminous records, hundreds of phone calls, long negotiations, and a number of brainstorming sessions. In short, church union requires work, hard work. Always there had to be coordinators, enablers, supporting staff, and "worriers" who will not let the vision die.

### **Keeping the Vision Alive**

If we did not need absolute honesty so much in the beginning, it may have been better to omit the section on "barriers to the union". But these are better faced in the beginning than halfway along the road. Besides, they may be very helpful as the Study Commission defines the task that is before it.

Now, however, the time has come to march off the limited map of our social and political concerns and raise the question "What does Christ expect of His Church in the twenty-first century?" When we do this, we will find several forces that will push us or pull us toward union.

The first is the already-proclaimed unity of many of our members. Except for our giant churches, of which each of us has only a few, most of our churches are small and many of them are struggling. As I sit in my local church, Sunday after Sunday, I listen to the names of denominations from which our members come; and the names are many and varied.

If the members have not discerned what it means to belong to one denomination, they have certainly learned how to associate with one another. On that level, we are undeniably united. This may be called traveling ecumenism.

Christ expects faithfulness to Him in the twenty-first century, but the loyalty of lay members to any one denomination is not the same as faithfulness to Christ. Almost all of the mainline

churches have suffered great losses of membership and the end is not in sight.

Second, the sociological fact of a mobile and decreasing membership, while significant, should not be the major motive for studying the possibility of union. Rather, there is a powerful theological fact, on the one hand and many urgent needs on the other. Whatever the outcome of our present study, two things stand out before us: 1) The needs of a confused and violent world can be met much better by a united church than by one that seeks to do its own thing in its own way. And 2) Whatever the shape of the church in the twenty-first century, the vision for the Church of Jesus Christ is that we would all be one.

It is for all of us and the Study Commission to determine whether or not that oneness will be one in which this Spirit of Christ will remain at the center of all that we do.

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<sup>1</sup> Richardson, Harry V. **Dark Salvation**. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Burke, Emory Stevens (editor). **The History of American Methodism Vol. II.**, essay by Nolan B. Harmon, "The Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church South" p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> **Ibid**, Volume II, Essay by Dow Kirkpatrick, "The Question of Union in the Negro Churches." p. 671.

<sup>4</sup> Niebuhr, H. Richard. **The Social Sources of Denominationalism**. New York: Meridian Books, 1958, p. 6.

**"A Historical/Theological Basis for Unity  
from an African Methodist Episcopal Zion Perspective"**

**by Bishop J. Clinton Hoggard**

My letter of invitation, which was graciously and appreciatively received in October 1994, stated, "It is hoped that each of the four denominational presentations will openly reveal the societal and other causes that brought about the breakup of American Methodism in its infancy as well as the historical and theological reasons why American Methodism should be united." On behalf of the Study Commission, the letter of invitation further stated, "Over the last quarter of a century attempts have been made to administer the mission and ministry of American Methodism in a more cooperative fashion." A real journey began on March 11, 1978, when seven bishops representing the African Methodist Episcopal, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church met in Atlanta, Georgia to form a Steering Committee to lead such cooperative efforts. Then the Bicentennial of American Methodism led to the establishment of a Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation that was formally organized in May 1985 and [such agency] continues to give effective guidance.

The first periodic gathering of the episcopal leadership of the four denominations was held in March 1979. At the Fifth Consultation of Methodist Bishops in March 1991, a resolution was adopted to request the "respective General Conferences to authorize a Study Commission for the purpose of exploring possible merger." The four-General Conferences did so authorize, and the Study Commission was officially organized on March 9, 1994 in Birmingham, Alabama.

As members of the Study Commission began their tremendous task of discerning stumbling blocks in the road of any merger and possible strategies for hurdling them, they became very aware that they, and all American Methodists, needed to be reminded of why the denominations had separated and the basic reasons why they should be united. Therefore, the Study Commission requested the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation for a major block of time in the agenda of the Sixth Consultation of Methodist Bishops for such a discussion. The request was granted. That is why we are here and why the program is designed as we now see it.

Before going further in this discussion, let me establish the root for this presentation in the Holy Scriptures. Reading the first two verses of Chapter 1 of the First Letter of Peter, let us hear the Salutation: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappodocia, Asia, and Bethany who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance," and verses 13-16: "Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when He is revealed. Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct for it is written, "You shall be holy for I am holy." (N.R.S.V.) The Wesleyan principle of **Holiness** is in

response to this mandate.

The theological motivation for unifying the Methodist family is established in the 17th chapter of the Gospel of St. John verses 20-23: "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The Glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

Having established the scriptural basis for our preachment about "Unity of Methodists," in fact for all believers in Jesus Christ as Lord of Life and in Life, let me hasten on to relate some of the historical experiences which brought about the earlier disunity within the American Methodist family. In fact, the very reason for separation was based on **societal** not **theological** issues. When we have taught our generation and succeeding generations that the way we have survived in the midst of tribulations and trials created and sustained and perpetuated in our civil experience by some who are/were members of our Methodist heritage, then the question is asked--in whom do we believe? The trust issue is paramount in dealing with the proposition of organic union or reunion. For two hundred years our ancestors, in accordance with our heritage, have taught all that is explicit and implicit in the 48th Psalm, verses 12-14:

Walk about Zion, go all around it, count its towers, consider well its ramparts; go through its citadels, that you may tell the next generation that this is God, our God forever and ever, He will be our guide forever (even unto death). (N.R.S.V.)

In **The Reality of a Black Church** (pp. 460-67), W. J. Walls closely examines the issue of organic union in some detail. Hear some of what we have been taught:

The African churches in America, born out of oppressive circumstances, have always felt the providential and environmental need to furnish leadership to its people in America, Africa, and other parts of the world. When almost two centuries ago, the Negro began to unite his members and give form to a church organization of which he was to be the arbiter, there was much misgiving concerning the wisdom and durability of the project. Stormy and tedious days have marked the painful progress of these years. While we confess to many faults and failures, the wonder is that they are not more, and that we have made the progress we have. It is interesting to imagine what would have been the black man's condition without his church.

In American Christianity a very large proportion of the black race is registered in the membership of black oriented churches. Scores of schools dotting the country have been built under the direction and by the foresight of these churches, attesting to faith in the power of Christian education to aid in the solving of all the ills of humanity. The finest buildings in this neighborhood, like the temple of Solomon among the chosen people, is the Negro's church, and this sacred property can be found in every corner of the world.

The Negro established his church in reaction against segregation of the most rabid sort in the mother churches of Protestantism. It is sufficient to say that the Baptist Church grew faster in multiplying congregations because of its unlimited congregational nature. The A.M.E., A.M.E. Zion, and later the C.M.E. Churches took from Asbury's church the limited episcopal form of organization which, indeed, has been the primary teacher of connectional cohesion and country-wide cooperation of the Negro.

The A.M.E. Zion denomination and the A.M.E. (Bethel) denomination, although many times classified together by outside groups in their earliest history, have been separate and independent of each other since their severance from [the] white Methodist denomination. There remained some confusion about these separate denominations operating under the same name until 1848, when the A.M.E. Zion Church attached Zion to its denominational title. "Compare the autonomy of the various Orthodox Byzantine churches, the Greek, the Russian, etc.," stated H.B. Hoffman of New York City. "Both the A.M.E. Zion and A.M.E. denominations originated at the end of the eighteenth century, the Zion Church in this city (New York), and the A.M.E. (Bethel) Church in Philadelphia."<sup>1</sup>

From the beginning, competition between these two organizations demonstrated feeling from which they never became wholly healed. In their work of stabilizing their organizations against prejudicial forces, the decisiveness of a few leading men in both denominations intensified the situation. George White and Thomas Miller, two original trustees of Zion Church who had become licensed preachers in Zion Church, went over to the Bethel connection, and White became forceful in turning over to the Bethel group Zion's proposed societies at Brooklyn and Flushing, Long Island. William Lambert, also an original trustee of the Asbury Church in New York, went over to the Bethel movement and assisted them in establishing their first society in New York.<sup>2</sup> Jacob Matthews, who had become a trustee and later preacher in Zion Church, afterward Asbury Church, New York, withdrew from Zion and Asbury, for reasons unknown, went over to Bethel, and became a powerful force in structuring its connection. He was even elected general superintendent in the A.M.E. Church. Matthews returned to Zion Connection, August 15, 1827, and became equally potent in establishing new societies up the Hudson river, serving devotedly until his death.<sup>3</sup>

Reverends Jacob Richardson and David Smith, founders of the A.M.E. Bethel Connection at Baltimore, later came over to Zion Connection and proved to be unusually effective in promoting the work of Zion in Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. Another early A.M.E. minister, Rev. Henry Drayton, also joined Zion Connection.<sup>4</sup> The loss of these strong leaders and development of societies by their skill against opposite forces caused deeper estrangement between these churches, and the competition grew throughout the country.

The struggle for freedom, which had united both groups in bonds of affliction, was culminating, and the sentiment on behalf of the people of these two movements began to

change. The initial effort was made soon after Emancipation.

On May 24, 1864, the Twelfth Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church convened at Wesley Church, Philadelphia.

Preceding the sitting of the General Conference the subject of union between Zion and Bethel had been much talked of. The union of the two factions of Zion four years previous had made the impression with many that it might be an easy matter to unite the African Methodist Episcopal (Bethel) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches, and make them one. Ministers in both churches had preached on the subject, and it was thought that the people were pretty well prepared for it, and, in fact, many were, but there were also those who were bitterly opposed to union. . .

The first formal proposition for union came from the African Methodist Episcopal (Bethel) Church, and was presented to this General Conference. The following was taken from the Minutes of the second day's session, May 26, 1864:

A special committee from the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, consisting of Revs. A. McIntosh, M. Sluby, and Dr. Watts, were introduced to the Conference and were cordially received. Business was suspended to give them audience. Rev. McIntosh, the chairman of the committee, after some congratulatory remarks, presented and read a document emanating from that body as to its action and provision made for consolidation of the two connections, namely, African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: That in order to duly consider the matter a committee of nine had been appointed, with two bishops, to meet a similar number from this General Conference as a joint committee, in the event they deem such consummation possible, shall call a convention consisting of such number of delegates as may be determined by said joint committee. When the convention shall have assembled[,] they shall determine the conditions upon which the union shall be consummated; and said conditions shall be submitted to all the Annual Conferences of each connection. If the terms agreed upon by the convention be ratified by a majority of all the Annual Conferences above mentioned, that the two connections from that date shall be one.

After a brief interchange of sentiment with the committee touching the subject[,] the following prevailed:

**Resolved,** That we cordially receive the representation made to this Conference by the subcommittee from the Committee on Church Union appointed by the African Methodist Episcopal General Conference, and that we promise to give the subject presented a Christian and fraternal consideration which its importance so justly demands at the earliest opportunity.

The committee withdrew. the subject was further deliberated upon which resulted in the

following resolution:

**Resolved**, That a committee of three be appointed to present the Christian greetings and resolutions of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion General Conference to the African Methodist Episcopal General Conference.

The following were appointed: Revs. S.T. Jones, J.B. Trusty, S.M. Giles. This committee, having filled its mission, returned and reported through the chairman, Rev. S.T. Jones, the cordial reception they met with and the feeling evinced upon the subject of consolidation; that they were upon the point of adjourning that evening, but upon hearing of our approval of their proposition suspended the adjournment until our Conference could get a sufficient quorum to consider the matter properly. He corrected an error in the report of the committee from that body, namely: Instead of two bishops as was reported, it is the Bench of Bishops to be united with nine from that body, and the same from us or an equivalent in members.

On the following day, May 27, the following preamble and resolutions, offered by S.T. Jones, were adopted:

**Whereas**, By the working and control of an all-wise and gracious Providence, circumstances and events have so conspired during the present great struggle as clearly to indicate that the set time to favor Zion was fully come; and,

**Whereas**, This is specially manifested as relates to that portion of the Church composed of colored Methodists in America; and,

**Whereas**, We should prove ourselves false alike to the principles of our holy religion, our obligations as the representatives of Christ, and our duty and responsibilities as the leaders of a weak because divided people, should we fail, from any minor consideration, to improve the present favorable opportunity with a view to the future peace and prosperity of the Church, and the moral, social and political interest of the race with which we are immediately identified; therefore,

**Resolved**, That in the great principle of Christian union and brotherhood we fully indorse all proper measures employed in furtherance of that principle, and that our warm sympathies are with those who are heartily engaged in the effort to unite in one body the African Methodist Episcopal Zion and African Methodist Episcopal Churches.

**Resolved**, That as an evidence of our sincerity, and with a view of facilitating the consummation so ardently desired, this Conference appoint a committee of nine with the Bench of Superintendents forthwith, who shall be authorized and empowered to confer with a similar committee in connection with the Bench of Bishops chosen by the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church on all matters touching a consolidation of the bodies represented.<sup>5</sup>

A committee of three appointed by the A.M.E. Zion General Conference informed the General Conference of the A.M.E. Church that "in compliance with their wish a committee had been appointed to confer with them on consolidation of the connections. Six o'clock that evening was agreed upon for the joint committee meeting." Bishops W.H. Bishop and J.J. Clinton and Rev. S.T. Jones, J.W. Loguen, P.G. Laws, Samson D. Talbot, G.H. Washington, J. Coleman, J.W. Hood, J.D. Brooks, J.P. Hamer, S.M. Giles, and W.F. Butler constituted the committee on our part. <sup>6</sup>

On the third day of the A.M.E. Zion Church General Conference, the joint committees met accordingly at 6 P.M., in Bethel Church, Sixth Street. The meeting was organized by Bishop J.J. Clinton, and Revs. J.M. Brown (A.M.E.) and J.P. Hamer (A.M.E. Zion) were chosen secretaries. "After deliberation it was decided that this should be a formal meeting."<sup>7</sup> Subcommittees were appointed from both the churches. they reported to the conference on Saturday, May 28, that it had been agreed to submit the subject of consolidation to a convention composed of 25 on each side, and their action to be submitted to all the annual conferences for confirmation.

The convention met in Philadelphia, June 14 and 16, 1874, and formulated a platform for consolidation.

Zion carried out her part of the agreement. To make the final consolidation the more convenient she agreed to meet in Washington, where the other body had agreed to meet; she also changed the date of sitting of the General Conference, as may be seen by the following resolution (p. 50, Minutes of the General Conference, 1864):

**Resolved**, That the rule for the sitting of the General Conference on the "last Wednesday in May" be suspended, and the "first Wednesday in May" be substituted. <sup>8</sup>

The A.M.E. Zion people ratified the platform and the General Conference of 1868 confirmed it. At the A.M.E. Zion General Conference of 1868, a resolution on this matter was offered by Rev. J.J. Moore and adopted, after this body had been officially informed by a committee of the A.M.E. Church that they were not prepared to unite with Zion on the plan agreed upon by the convention of the two connections held at Philadelphia:

... **Whereas**, They decline uniting on the basis agreed upon but now ask us to meet with them to unite on some other basis or plan; and

**Whereas**, Our people in adopting the plan proposed by the said convention did it in good faith and did not authorize us to offer or accept any other plan; therefore

**Resolved**, That we deem it inexpedient to meet with them according to their proposal. <sup>9</sup> The A.M.E. Church sent a committee of five ministers to the A.M.E. Zion General Conference, who subsequently reported on the action of their church, stating in substance

that:

... **Whereas**, There are certain propositions laid down by said convention which were submitted to the people, giving the interval of four years to canvass and take the votes of the people in the several portions of both connections; and

**Whereas**, There has not been that fullness of the members of our church which is their right; and

**Whereas**, Those congregations which have voted on the subject have expressed a willingness for union, but are averse to the general plan put forth by the convention; therefore be it

**Resolved**, That this body do not deem it politic or wise in us to form a consolidation on the basis laid down by the conventions of 1864, lest we interfere with the interests of our church and create dissatisfaction among our own members.<sup>10</sup>

They expressed a willingness to meet with the members of the A.M.E. Zion Church and arrange a new plan of union that they felt would be agreeable to both connections. After the completion of the A.M.E. Church Committee report, the A.M.E. Zion General Conference took the following action:

**Whereas**, The A.M.E. Bethel General Conference say in their communication or document that while they are willing for a union, they are not ready to unite upon the platform agreed upon by the convention in Philadelphia in 1864; therefore,

**Resolved**, That the whole matter lay on the table until 1872.<sup>11</sup>

This action, which had taken place on Tuesday, May 19, prompted a sinewy editorial in the official organ of the A.M.E. Zion Church, **The Zion's Standard and Weekly Review**, on May 20 1868, an extract of which stated:

The A.M.E. Zion Connection, having carefully kept within the bounds of the Platform as agreed upon by the two Connections, comes forward to make good her agreement and say "we are ready: ready to unite upon one common platform. We are ready to make common cause with you for the upbuilding of the Church of Christ. We are ready to meet the demands of the People; for the good of the People, we are reads, to sacrifice all our own interests, views, differences and mode of electing Executives, that the cause of Christ and His people shall be advanced here on earth. We are reads to meet with you and to sacrifice our connectional name, that we may present to the world a UNITED AFRICAN METHODIST CHURCH IN AMERICA, and the response is for THE ADOPTION OF A NEW PLATFORM": to this we demur; to this our Connection demurs. We now leave the matter, and let it never be said, that Zion was the cause of the future division between the

A.M.E. and A.M.E. Zion Connections, for WE WERE READY .<sup>12</sup>

The 1868 General Conference was practically devoted to matters of union. From this action, the General Conference entered immediately into consideration of a plan of union between the Methodist Episcopal Church (northern division) and the A.M.E. Zion Church. The apostle of Christian unity of the A.M.E. Zion Church, bishop-elect Singleton T. Jones, was the spearhead in effecting efforts of union between Zion and Bethel, and afterwards between Zion and the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was sent as the delegate of the A.M.E. Zion General Conference to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on a mission requested of the A.M.E. Zion General Conference and the acceptance of the Methodist Conference by telegraphic communication. He was elected a bishop in his absence, while he was on this mission in Chicago. Before making his own spellbinding address to that body, he presented the address of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church as follows:

To the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church --  
Greetings:

I am instructed by the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in America to say, that the M.E. Church is still regarded the mother of our organizations, and that, as we were induced to leave her, simply because she made a distinction among her children which seriously affected our interests, we are ready to return, if we can be assured that no invidious distinction will be made in regard to us.

We are ready, therefore, to enter into arrangements by which to affiliate on the basis of equality, and to become one and inseparable now and forever.

Aside from the condition of full equality with the 18. most favored of the Church, we desire the further stipulation "that a sufficient number of those whom we may select to exercise the Episcopal oversight of the colored element of the body may be set apart to that office, on the basis of perfect equality with all other bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

As we have practically demonstrated that a lay representation, especially in the law-making department of the Church, is at once sound, safe, and productive of harmony among the people, we hope, if at all compatible with your views of religious progress, that you will adopt the same as the rule of the Church.<sup>13</sup>

Bishop Jones' address was felicitous and was received with marked enthusiasm. The **Chicago Daily Republican** stated:

One of the most interesting incidents in connection with the Methodist General Conference, now in session in this city, was the speech of Bishop Jones before the Conference. . . . His remarks elicited the most enthusiastic applause. Mr. Jones' proposition

is that his church is ready to come into communion with the Methodist Episcopal Church on terms of perfect equality. It is difficult to see how the M.E. Church can refuse to accept these colored brethren on the terms they propose. It cannot, in conscience or reason ask them to come in on any other terms if it believes in the language of Bishop Jones, that a man is a man, and a Christian is a Christian, irrespective of the color of the skin. <sup>14</sup>

Two committee meetings were held on this matter at the General Conference following bishop-elect Jones address. At the third committee meeting, Bishop Jones presented a five point manifesto of "Stipulations of Affiliation and Union Between the M.E. And A.M.E. Zion Church." A report was to be made later in the session in harmony with these stipulations. In the report presented to the body on Monday, May 2, it was evident that time was needed to study the plan. They therefore resolved the following: . . . That this Conference entertain favorably the proposal of union between the two bodies aforesaid. .

That whereas the time of the sessions of these two Conferences is so far spent that it will be impracticable to have the necessary negotiations and to discuss and determine the details of the terms of union before their adjournment, that eight members of this Body be appointed, who, with the Bishops, shall constitute a Commission to meet and confer with a similar Commission of the A.M.E. Zion Church, and report to the next General Conference. . . .

That a copy of the foregoing action of this body be given to the delegate, and by him be forwarded to the General Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church. <sup>15</sup>

There was opposition to the report; however, on May 26 it was adopted by a very large majority. On returning to the A.M.E. Zion General Conference still in session at Washington, D.C. Bishop-elect Jones made his report on May 29.

"The Report was unanimously adopted; the thanks of the Conference was voted to the Delegate for his highly successful mission, and a Commission consisting of eight members of the Conference and Board of Bishops was ordered and appointed." The names of the two Commissions were to be published in the **Zion Standard and Weekly Review**, with the time and place of meeting, as soon as they could be obtained from the secretary of the Board of Bishops of the M.E. Church. <sup>16</sup>

The A.M.E. Zion Church at that time was the only Methodist body, with the exception of the Methodist Protestants, that had lay representation in its law-making body, which could have been a hindrance, in both instances, to immediate union. However, this plan of union with the Methodist Episcopal Church failed principally because of the crisis through which the black race and church were passing during this Reconstruction era. The Board of Bishops so expressed its sentiment against union with the M.E. Church in its Episcopal Address of 1872. The bishops afterwards stated in 1880:

The propositions coming from leading men in that church looked so fair and honorable, that we did not guard our people sufficiently against being misled by them; the result was that they took advantage of the situation to proselyte our people, and we found ourselves worse off at the end of this negotiation than at the beginning, with nothing gained except a little dear bought experience. <sup>17</sup>

African Methodism then encountered stiff competition. The public concern of the unsettled South after Emancipation had its eye on the race in politics, business, education, and religion. Religion, as in all ages, was one of the deep concerns of the movements affecting the relationship of the races and the destiny of the black people in general. The rapid success of both the Bethel and Zion Connections, both African church movements from the North, were not a little disturbing to Southern church people, particularly nationally governed bodies. A number of black leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South came in on this wave of Southern unrest. The white Southerners were not satisfied to have these organizations headed by Northern blacks working in the South, over whom they had little or no influence or control.

Some of the black leaders in the Southern wing of Methodism, themselves desiring to be leaders of their own people in the South, conferred with leaders of the Methodist Episcopal church, South, whom they knew to be susceptible of organizing a Negro branch of Methodism in the South. They coveted such control of Southern Negroes upon a segregated basis, such as Mother Methodism had retained by keeping the Negroes in their membership in this circumscribed form, especially in their Southern missions.

In 1866, provision was made by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for organizing these free Negroes into a separate and distinct body, if they so desired, over a four-year period. "It was further determined that should the time arrive when the Negro members should be so set apart, all the property intended for the use of such members, held by the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South should be transferred to duly qualified trustees of the new organization. <sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, many of the black congregations were voting themselves into the A.M.E. and A.M.E. Zion churches, which property they felt they had more than paid for through "blood, sweat and tears." Bishop Lomax brought out the fact in the 1892 General Conference. that there were "colored Methodist churches in the South organized by and deeded to free colored people long prior to the organization of colored Methodist churches in the North, and these churches now formed a part of Zion connection."<sup>19</sup>

The A. M. E. Zion Church has taught of the labors, thought and leadership of persons who embraced "The Freedom Church" as their Spiritual Haven. Frederick Douglass recounted his experience in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Bedford, Massachusetts, which caused him to walk out of it, cross the street, and join the A.M.E. Zion Church, never to return to the Methodist Church building because of the inhumane treatment he and other people of color received in the House of the Lord.

The Harriet Tubman story is that she was born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in the Talbot County area. Fleeing the oppression of slavery, she walked to freedom by way of Delaware and Pennsylvania until she arrived in New York State. She settled after the Civil War in the city of Auburn, New York. She developed her home property as a place of refuge and shelter for escaped slaves and homeless, worn out, impoverished men and women. She became a member of the Thompson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church largely because of the activism of bishops, pastors, and lay persons who embraced the Christian faith under the banner of the A.M.E. Zion Church, which was known as the Freedom Church to the abolitionists of her time. She and the Honorable Frederick Douglass spoke from platforms in behalf of the Abolitionist cause. The property, thirty-two acres, in Auburn, N.Y. was willed to the Church of her choice for development of an old folks home and orphanage. Since 1913, this property has been maintained and developed under the auspices of the leadership of the A.M.E. Zion Church. Their commitment to a Church guided by persons of color caused them to pledge, "I'll never turn back no more!"

The existence of the American United Methodist Protestant Church and the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, who trace their genesis to Peter Spencer in 1816. He established these church bodies in Wilmington, Delaware and its environs. Because of a distorted theological understanding of the nature of Christianity as set forth in the New Testament of the Holy Bible, these groups broke away from the Mother Methodist Church because of social indignities perpetrated by white clergy and laity on black children, youth, and adults. The history of these two branches of American Methodism is symbolized in the Statue of Peter Spencer which is located in the downtown area of the city of Wilmington, Delaware. Their commitment to scriptural holiness and the pursuit of a life leading to perfection has kept them from considering merger, assimilation, and, in some instances, a fraternal relationship with the parent Methodist church.

Given the long tradition of involving Methodist bodies in social action matters that would lead to a more wholesome society existing because of social justice, human rights, and respect for the dignity of all humanity, it is my belief that our energies might be more profitably spent in political action matters, liberation agendas, economic development programs, cooperative worship experiences, and joint mission enterprises, both home and overseas. Strategies should be developed within local geographic areas. To continue meeting at the level of Bishops only for discussion about an organic merger of these four churches is becoming somewhat futile, as I see it, because the Bishops will not and perhaps cannot effect a merger without the troops! These are the lay and clergy membership of the several churches.

Union programmatically--Yes! Union organically--very problematic. Given our histories, our "turf" preservations, our American political climate, the rise of overt violence resulting from racism, which permeates our religious and secular society, I do not despair, but my realistic assessment of the possibility of an organic union of Methodist bodies in America after fifty-six years in continuous ministry is that it will not come to fruition lifetime, nor in the twenty-first century.

<sup>1</sup> Henry B. Hoffman, "Transformation of New York Churches," **New York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin**, January 1938, p.7.

<sup>2</sup> Payne, **History of the A.M.E. Church**, pp. 34-37; **Rush, Rise and Progress**, pp. 41, 49-50.

<sup>3</sup> Payne, *op. cit.* p. 32; **Rush, op. cit.** p. 82.

<sup>4</sup> Payne, *op. cit.* pp. 27, 34-37; **Rush, op. cit.** pp. 83-86; **Moore, History**, pp. 101-107.

<sup>5</sup> **Hood, One Hundred Years**, pp. 88-90.

<sup>6</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 90-91.

<sup>7</sup> **Moore, History**, pp. 234-235.

<sup>8</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 91-92.

<sup>9</sup> **Moore, History**, p. 258.

<sup>10</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 259-261.

<sup>11</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 261.

<sup>12</sup> S. T. Jones, **Report made by the Delegate on Affiliation and Union Between the M. E. Church and the A. M. E. Zion Church ... and the Failure of the Union Project**, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> J. W. Smith, **Sermons and Addresses of Bishop S. T. Jones**, p. xiv.

<sup>15</sup> S. T. Jones, **Report on Affiliation . . .** p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> **Ibid.**, pp. 9-12; **Moore, History**, pp. 271-272.

<sup>17</sup> **Minutes**, Sixteenth Quadrennial Session, p. 52.

<sup>18</sup> Woodson, **The History of the Negro Church**, p. 173.

<sup>19</sup> **Minutes**, Nineteenth Quadrennial Session, p. 87.

6th Consultation of Methodist Bishops - April 26-23, 1995

"The Historical/Theological Basis For Unity  
From A C.M.E. Perspective"

by

Othal Hawthorne Lakey

Introduction

I realize that at 4:00 p.m. following lunch and a plenary session, you are awaiting the reading of another paper with bated breath. And I do realize and appreciate that you have come to this session more out of professional courtesy and christian charity than burning desire. Of course CME Bishops are here because they selected me to give this paper - and they knew what I would do to them if they didn't show up.

Seriously, I do feel highly honored to have been asked to share my thoughts with you this afternoon. The historical/theological basis for unity from a CME perspective is an important - and I hope to indicate, a crucial part of any discussion of the past, present and future of the unity among the people called Methodists. I could be however, as I also hope to indicate, the CME perspective, the historical/theological perspective on the disunity of Methodism might be even more significant for our discussion.

Let me begin with a bit of "show and tell." Some of you might be familiar with this picture of this "Third Methodist Ecumenical Conference" held in London, England, September 4-17, 1901. Even though we may not remember these men and one woman personally, and most of their names have faded from our varied histories, I think it is important for our gathering here in Austin for a very significant reason: These foremost and most prominent leaders of the A.M.E., A.M.E. Zion, C.M.E. and Negro members of the M.E. Church gathered in a Methodist Ecumenical conference. They represented four different churches. They had only two things in common: They were black and they were Methodists. These questions arise: Why were they Methodist? And, why were they Methodists in four different churches? In my judgement it is the answer to these two questions which provide the historical/theological perspective of the C.M.E. Church on the basis of unity among the people called Methodist.

A. A people who were Methodist and a people who were Black

One of the phenomenon of early American religious history was the attraction American Methodism had for Africans who were slaves and Africans who became free. That is to say early Methodism had a strong appeal to slaves. At the beginning of the Civil War there were more slaves who were Methodists than any other denomination. And even as late as the beginning of the Civil War there were more slaves who were Methodists than any other denomination. And even as late as the beginning of this century there were more black Methodists than there were black Baptists! So this photograph taken in 1901 shows the representatives of the largest contingent of black Christians in the world - and they were Methodists!

The fact that they were Methodists means that they could have been something else - like Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians - why then were they "Methodists" and not one of something else? The reason was simple, yet profound: Methodism was a religion, not

a church. Some of the men on the picture had been born in slavery. All of them were of slave heritage - their fathers and mothers, or grandfathers and grandmothers had been slaves.

While they were slaves, Methodist missionaries, preachers, and circuit riders came to them. That is to say, it was in the throes of American slavery - the slavery John Wesley described as the most vile that ever saw the sun - in the midst of their pain, misery, and suffering - that Methodists preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ, of God's Amazing Grace and Redeeming Love.

However, the Gospel preached to the slaves did a lot more for the slaves than slave-owners and even some of the Methodist preachers had intended. (And when one reads the sermons and the catechism preached to and prepared for the slaves) one can see what they thought.) They thought it would make them better slaves - and sometimes it did. They thought it would make them more docile - and for some of the slaves it did. But the Gospel preached to the slaves did a lot more than that. Through the Gospel preached by Methodists, slaves came to know the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God of Moses delivering and enslaved people, David the Shepherd boy fighting Goliath, Daniel delivered from his den of lions, Hebrew boys... They came to know the God who loved them, and accepted them as his children. They came to know of Jesus Christ who died to save them from their sins, and they came to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit that they could feel in their souls. The Gospel proclaimed. God's power and judgement over all men - including slave owners - and over all earthly powers - including those powers that held them in the chains of bondage. It was the power of God that could deliver them and set them free.

Not only was the message of Methodism appealing, but the preaching style was engaging and powerful, and the hymns of Methodism expressed the ethos of the slave experience, and the worship was ideal for their physical, emotional and psychological state of being.

Through Methodism they "found the Lord," they were converted. Some of them felt a call to preach; Many of them were licensed and a few of them ordained deacons. The God of their Methodism they believed, set them free. Methodism was a powerful religious force. It was the God introduced to them via Methodism of whom so many sang with James Weldon Johnson as the God of our weary years and the God of our silent tears. Out of that matrix came those heroes of independent black methodism as we catch glimpses of Richard Allen, James Varick and William Henry Miles. However, as I have said, Methodism was a religion, not a church. What C. Eric Lincoln terms the invisible church.

#### B. Black Methodism, and Free African Americans: Exerting Religious Freedom

What I have just said accounts for the vast number of African Americans being Methodists. That 1901 picture personifies their desire to be Methodists. However, why were they there as representatives of four separate Methodist bodies? It would appear that their commonality of their african/slave heritage coupled with their intense love for Methodism would have brought them together as one church rather than separate churches. In considering the question we must understand the true nature of religious freedom.

From its beginning, Methodism was a very popular religion. Because of its popularity, it attracted all elements of its society. Inevitably, the Methodist Episcopal Church became shaped by and reflected the historical, social economic, and cultural forces in which it found itself. As a consequence, Africans or Negroes attracted to Methodism experienced great difficulty within the Methodist Episcopal Church. In their freedom - that is, to the extent that they were free, they chose to be Methodist, but create their own Methodist Church. Hence, black Methodists in Philadelphia under Richard Allen established the A.M.E. Church in 1787, blacks of John Street Church in New York under James Varick started the A.M.E. Zion Church, and after the Civil War, former slaves of the M.E. Church, South, started the C.M.E. Church under William Henry Miles.

Of course, this separation from the white church we all know and can understand. And we repeat it often to make sure that our white brother and sisters will fill adequately guilty. However, the crucial question is not why the white church as an institution was unacceptable, but why were separate black churches preferred. And this is where the matter of freedom in their religion - i.e. the power of self determination within segments of the race - assumes an importance we do not talk about as much as we should, and as much as we are going to have to if we are going to be serious about union. Maybe we don't talk about it because this is where black Methodist feel guilty. Let me discuss this phase of my presentation in terms of why the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was organized, December 16, 1870 in Jackson, Tennessee.

209,000 - M.E., South 1860  
78,000 - 1866

A.M.E. and A.M.E. Zion: "We Seek our Brethren"  
Missionaries from M.E.: Rescues blacks from former slave masters

Choices of C.M.E.s:

1. A.M.E. - A.M.E. Zion - were in essence "illegitimate" in that no established Methodist body "authorized" their existence.
2. There was a difference between free persons and freed persons. How those churches treated those whose heritage came out of the South had difficulty achieving proper treatment in those churches.

Miles and Vanderhorst

3. There was a feeling that political decisions of the two white churches - caused the M.E. church - North - to send missionaries to the South to "convert" newly freed blacks. There was an element of mistrust of the northern
4. They wanted their own separate, independent,

Accordingly, the 1866 General Conference of M.E. Church, South authorized:  
- Colored Quarterly Conferences

- Ordination of Black Deacons and Elders
- Annual Conferences
- Separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction

1870 - All property held be deeded to CME Church when organized.

1. Establishment of separate black church was viewed as a necessary first step - a temporary period of education and preparations - in anticipation of that time when the family of Methodism would be of such nature and temperament that blacks could share fully in the life of the church.
2. Effective mission to Afro/Americans - blacks - required meaningful cooperation and cordial relations with the M.E. Church, South.
3. Social/Political/Economic conditions manifested in overt acts of racism precipitated the rise of black churches - Social/Political condition of today might be of such a nature they can bring us together. Does or can Niehbuhr's delineation of the Social Sources of Denominations go the other way?
4. Theology of justice and inclusiveness.

#### Conclusion

Is there any hope? Yes - we keep showing up. No matter how were different, whenever "Methodists" call a meeting, we are there. That we keep showing up means something in our mutual methodism unites us in spite of our separate histories. We are sons and daughters of Wesley! Yes. But more importantly we are children of God.

## **HISTORICAL/THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR UNITY FROM AN A. M. E. Perspective**

**by Dr. Dennis C. Dickerson**

Richard Allen launched the African Methodist Episcopal Church while American Methodism was still in its infancy. The 1784 "Christmas" Conference in Baltimore which formerly organized the denomination occurred merely three years before Allen and Absalom Jones founded the Free African Society, a progenitor of the A. M. E. Church. The Methodist movement, which John Wesley intended as spiritual renewal for the Church of England, excited Allen because of the religious fervor and its energetic social witness which embraced poor whites and slave blacks.

Allen took the Methodist movement far more seriously than its American practitioners. John Wesley and his early followers in what would become the United States categorically denounced slavery and drew blacks into genuine religious fellowship with them. Methodist enlightenment on racial matters, however, did not survive the growing institutionalization of Wesley's grassroots religious revival. In fact, the racial egalitarianism of Wesleyan evangelism failed to translate into a sustained denominational practice. Puzzled black Methodists, buoyed by an evangelistic thrust which eschewed the color line, increasingly encountered discriminatory attitudes and actions which were inconsistent with the sect's recent past of racial liberalism. Hence, Richard Allen directed toward the creation of another version of Methodism. For Allen, African Methodism would succeed where American Methodism failed! None would be denied the right to hear the gospel or be shortchanged on full privileged which accrued to those in the Body of Christ. The Quakers tried it, the Methodist tried it, other denominations tried it, but African Methodism actually sought to recognize no temporal barriers which denied the common humanity of all peoples. Hence, the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816 became a movement imbued with a mission to preach Christ to the despised of American society and the world.

As the first Protestant denomination established on American soil, the African Methodist Episcopal Church holds a singular distinction among the nations major religious institutions. Though its origin lie in the 1787 founding of the Free African Society in Philadelphia, the denomination started in 1816 with representatives from several African American communities in the Middle Atlantic. While the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians trace their beginnings overseas in Europe, the A. M. E. Church was shaped principally by influences and events indigenous to the United States.

The rise of the African Methodist Episcopal Church derived from peculiarly American experiences. Among its earliest adherents were African Americans both slave and free. The former were chattel with rights that no white man was bound to respect, while the latter, though nominally free, lived under racially oppressive laws. What was normative treatment for African Americans temporally became the standard practice in the sacred sphere of worship and other related activities. Although evangelical whites acknowledged that African Americans were equal in the sight of God, they denied this religious reality in their social practices. When whites at St. George Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1787 ordered Richard Allen, Absalom Jones,

and their followers to a rear section, they rejected this indignity and deliberate mis-reading of the Holy Scriptures. Allen, who established in 1794 Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, redefined the theological thrust of Protestant Christianity in the United States. Hence, throughout the period prior to Reconstruction A. M. E. ministers and members understood themselves and their religious role as a "mission for freedom."

From the post bellum era to the start of World War I black migration to the A. M. E. Church grew dramatically from 50,000 in 1866 to 494,777 in 1890 and to 548,355 in 1916.

### **Growth of the African Methodist Episcopal Church 1866-1916**

Year	Numbers of Members	Number of Congregations
1866	50,000	1,600
1890	452,725	2,481
1906	494,777	6,647
1916	548,355	6,636

During this period of institutional maturation a different theme defined denominational perspectives. While the fight against bondage and restricted rights for the respective population of African American slaves and free persons claimed the energies of ante bellum A. M. E.s a "mission for justice" preoccupied their post bellum counterparts. Now that legal freedom had been attained, A.M.E.s like other African Americans proposed various strategies to maintain emancipation and insure their equal treatment in every realm of American life. Although these A. M. E. advocates studied the Constitution and especially knew the specific language of the newly ratified 13th, 14th and 15th amendments, they integrated theological concepts into their political discourse about these constitutional guarantees. Moreover, A. M. E. leaders both clergy and lay, and both male and female, identified themselves as race spokespersons who believed that their denominations had a special duty to seek justice and fair play for all African Americans. A "mission for justice" while not the only concerns for A. M. E. leaders, largely shaped the public persona of African Methodism toward the white establishment and the black population.

A range of watershed events in the united States thrust crucial challenges at African Americans from 1916 through 1966. The massive movement of southern blacks to northern cities placed such peculiarly urban issues as employment discrimination, unionism, housing, and general ghettoization on the agenda of the A. M. E. Church in an urgent manner. The battle against "Jim Crow" and the evolution of a civil rights movement also proved important in creating new opportunities for the A. M. E. Church. The impact of the New Deal, World War II, and other governmental initiatives pulled the denomination into involvements and stands which required action and rethinking by A. M. E. officials and rank and file members. Theirs became a "mission for liberation." By that one means an effort and perspective which aimed toward insurgencies of various sorts against societal structures which were racially oppressive. Furthermore, this theme looked beyond appeals to political, economic, and social institutions to grant freedom to African Americans. Rather, stress was placed on strategies to change or transform such structures so that the liberation of African Americans would be permanently established.

In the following paragraphs elaboration on these thematic tendencies in the A. M. E. Church development will be explored. All were derived from conditions endemic to the American historical environment, and they affected African Methodism from 1787 through 1966.

### A Mission for Freedom

The central theme which shaped and defined the founding and development of the African Methodist Episcopal Church between 1787 and 1865 was its mission for freedom. Richard Allen and other like-minded Blacks had strived simultaneously to relieve the spiritual and temporal restrictions which racism and slavery imposed upon persons of African descent. The Free African Society (1787), Bethel Church (1794), and the A. M. E. denomination (1816) became the institutional expressions of these concerns. Even as African Methodism spread from its founding site in the Northeast into South Carolina, and then on to states and territories bordering the Mississippi River, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Pacific Ocean, ministers and members asserted their rights to the freedom of worship among hostile and sometimes violent northern and western Whites and to personal liberty from southern slave holders and their hired bounty hunters. These became the dual objectives of the A. M. E. Church.

Moreover, particular preachers, parishioners, and parishes became intricately involved in the fight against slavery and in concrete efforts to win freedom for their chattel counterparts. From congregations holding abolitionist gatherings or sheltering underground railroad passengers to working in organizations directly agitating for the anti-slavery cause, African Methodists were an integral part of the onslaught against human bondage.

That mission for freedom drew the influence of the A. M. E. Church beyond the borders of the United States. An early interest in Africa expressed itself in the work of dissident Daniel Coker who became the first person out of the A. M. E. experience to carry to gospel to the mother continent. Richard Allen supported efforts to plant the A. M. E. Church in Haiti. Other African Methodists fleeing white rioters in various northern cities settled in Canada where the British crown promised them personal protection and safeguarded religious liberty in reconstituted A. M. E. congregations. That movement eventuated in 1856 into the British Methodist Episcopal Church, the progeny from the still youthful lions of an expanding A. M. E. denomination. The 1864 General Conference counted 50,000 members in the organization scattered among 1600 congregations. Its offshoot, the B. M. E. Church in that same year Canada embraced 42 churches and preaching places. The B. M. E. became a part of A. M. E. in 1884.

In persuasive publications on militant Black Presbyterian and Congregational preachers, historians Gayraud S. Wilmore and David E. Swift, respectively, in **Black Religion and Black Radicalism** and **Black Prophets of Freedom**, correctly contend that such religious leaders as Henry Highland Garnet, Charles B. Ray, Samuel E. Cornish, and others devoted greater time and effort to formal abolitionism than their A. M. E. counterparts. Since these ministers in White-led denominations were less obligated to engineer the spread and assume responsibility for the maintenance of an expanding, but independent Black ecclesiastical structure, they were free to engage in active frontline advocacy of emancipation. That did not mean, however, that A. M. E. adherents, though oftentimes inconspicuous, were asleep while the fight for freedom beckoned their involvement. Historian Carol V. R. George in her insightful essay, "Widening the Circle: The Black

Church and the Abolitionist Crusade, 1830-1860," argued that "a redefinition of black clerical leadership requires a new perception of the efforts of those who advanced the objectives of the anti-slavery movement in significant but generally unheralded ways.... While members of the clerical elite traveled, wrote books, and addressed anti-slavery audiences, as noted in the press, their less distinguished brothers built Sunday schools, raised money, and joined or sponsored local groups responsive to community needs, all efforts which had the effect of heightening the racial consciousness and collective identity of black people." Moreover, "if a new, more inclusive understanding of civil rights activity incorporated... strengthening a black witness in American life, promoting black institutional growth in churches and schools, and counseling racial cooperation and aid to fugitives....," then the definition of activist antebellum Black clergy becomes substantially broadened.

Actually, the position of A. M. E. preachers was far more complicated than their Black counterparts in the Presbyterian and Congregational ministry. African Methodist Episcopal ministers in the antebellum period faced the multiple tasks of founding, financing, and physically defending new congregations in towns and territories far away from the center of their Philadelphia-based denomination. While attending to these institutional tasks, these preachers frequently fought hostile whites who opposed independent Black churches in these many isolated border and southern locations. Though harassed and physically assaulted, determined, freedom-seeking A. M. E.'s struck double blows for their liberties as they spread African Methodism. Often, the defense of A. M. E. worship places and the people they served became the common protection of dual freedoms. Preaching in Black Presbyterian and Congregational pulpits in the Northeast, no matter how outspoken and courageous in dealing with unfriendly local whites, was not comparable to establishing A. M. E. churches in uncertain, rural communities in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, and Maryland. Moreover, stress upon institution building was not a diversion from the freedom struggle. Rather, it was an indispensable component and affirmation of it. These broader Black efforts worked permanently to secure liberty in racially oppressive settings. It also meant fighting slavery and building institutional structures to improve the general condition of the Black population.

Hence, a confident A. M. E. General Conference, meeting at its founding site in Philadelphia in 1864, seemed vindicated by the Civil War and the imminent victory of the anti-slavery North. With the abolition of Black bondage in the District of Columbia in 1862, the impact of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, and the sporadic, but expanding defection of slaves from their former masters, A. M. E. leaders knew that their efforts in institution building in previous decades now prepared the denomination for a massive mission to evangelize southern freedmen. With an institutional infrastructure, the A. M. E. Church, possessed of ministerial manpower and a persuasive ethos of self-help and racial pride, drew thousands of former slaves from Virginia to Texas into the growing organization.

Racial oppression created the sociological circumstances which brought the A. M. E. Church into existence. The founding of the denomination, however, moved a fundamental theological principle from the periphery of Protestant thought to its center. That all people were the same before God and in need of Christ's shed blood for redemption made everyone worthy of salvation and equal in His church. Although the Methodists and a few other sects professed these principles, their praxis too often denied them. African Methodism rose to assert that preachments about abstract spiritual

equality required affirmation in the temporal condition of people. These concerns were not only sociological, but also theological. Hence, the mission for freedom which shaped African Methodism during its first decades gave it a special identity among Protestant churches. Those who experienced racial oppression, fashioned a theology and appropriated a polity, to define their understanding of God and His presence God will make a way somehow in their struggle for liberation of both body and soul.

### **A Mission for Justice**

The postbellum period brought to African Methodism a different emphasis in where clergy and lay leaders applied their energies to achieve racial advancement. With chattel slavery ended, African Americans, empowered by three new amendments to the Constitution, entered into full citizenship. Since these recently won freedoms required enforcement and oversight, A. M. E. ministers often became preacher/politicians. In several southern states, mainly during the 1860s through the 1800s, they served in numerous governmental positions. In South Carolina, for example, seven A. M. E. clergymen held seats in the South Carolina legislature between 1868 and 1876. One of them, Richard H. Cain, pastor of the 3,000 member Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston and later a bishop, also won election to Congress. Henry M. Turner, elected a bishop in 1880 with Cain, served in the Georgia legislature. Florida and Alabama had Josiah H. Armstrong and Charles S. Smith in their respective legislatures during the 1870's. Armstrong attained the A. M. E. bishopric in 1896 while Smith was elected in 1900.

Clearly, they found in politics the means to supplement religious efforts to elevate the condition of African Americans. Like their counterparts in the southern states, A. M. E. leaders in the North made conspicuous contributions toward the attainment of non-discriminatory laws. The example of Ezekiel Gillespie, a founder in 1868 of St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is illustrative. In 1865 he joined other African Americans who petitioned the Wisconsin legislature to end the state's all white suffrage. In 1866, however, a successful lawsuit which Gillespie filed won for African Americans the right to vote. William B. Derrick, pastor of Israel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Albany, New York from 1880 through 1883, emulated Gillespie, but in the field of public school education. Derrick, who became a bishop in 1896, opposed "colored schools" and sought to eliminate such segregation. Similarly, Benjamin W. Arnett, an Ohio resident and the Financial Secretary of the A. M. E. Church, moved to rid that state of its racially discriminatory statutes. The "black laws" were ante-bellum efforts to discourage the settlement of African Americans in Ohio and sharply to restrict their rights. It was unlawful, for example, for whites to employ African Americans who had not posted \$500 as a bond for living in the state. Arnett, who represented Greene County in the legislature from 1885 through 1887, introduced in 1886 a bill to repeal the "black laws." Arnett, who was elected a bishop in 1888, shepherded the bill into law in 1887.

Bishop Henry M. Turner strongly advanced the view that A. M. E. clergy possessed a singular obligation to rail against racial injustice. Among many congressional acts during the post bellum period which protected African Americans from discriminatory treatment especially on public conveyances was the Civil Rights Act of 1875. In 1883 the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated this legislation. Bishop Turner codified his condemnation of the judicial decree in an 1893

publication which he edited. He called the book, **The Barbarous Decision of the United States Supreme Court Declaring the Civil Rights Act Unconstitutional and Disrobing the Colored Race of all Civil Protection**. Turner warned that "as long as the ...decision remains the verdict of the nation, it can never be accepted as a civil, much less a Christian country." He added that "the colored man or woman who can find contentment, menaced and shackled by such flagrant and stalking injustice as the Supreme Court has inflicted upon them, must be devoid of all manliness and those self-protecting instincts that prompt even animals to fight or run." He compiled the volume so African Americans could "ask themselves whether they can submit to" the Court's deprivation of their rights. Moreover, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, then a member of Bethel A. M. E. Church in Chicago and a confidant of some of the bishops, railed against lynching. Her publications and her Anti-Lynching League aroused activism against this commonplace barbarism.

A different emphasis motivated George W. Slater, a minister in the Iowa Annual Conference, in his "mission for justice." His poignant advocacy of socialism broadened the debate within the A. M. E. Church concerning what programs were best for black advancement. He became a member of the Socialist Party during the winter of 1907-1908 as a severe recession brought economic distress to members of his congregation. In 1913 he became secretary of the Colored Race for the Christian Socialist Fellowship. Slater believed the teachings of Jesus Christ were essentially socialist! The Lord's kingdom, Slater argued, was "a kingdom of justice -- justice in economics, food, shelter, clothing ...Slater observed that "scientific socialism is the only systemic expression of the social message of Jesus. It would express in the political and industrial life of the people of the world the spirit of the Gospel." Hence, for this A. M. E. preacher justice for African Americans lay in political efforts to achieve economic reform.

The uncertain status of African Americans in the political, social and economic sphere drew A. M. E. preachers out of their pulpits into the public arena. A. M. E. lay persons were similarly pulled into civic involvements aimed at protecting the citizenship rights of African Americans. To eschew these issues certainly would have made the A. M. E. Church a marginal institution among blacks. Hence, its "mission for justice" became yet another example of A. M. E. spokespersons striving hard to make the denomination relevant to the spiritual and temporal needs of the African American population.

### **A Mission for Liberation**

The labor needs of northern and western mills and factories pulled massive numbers of African Americans out of the agricultural South starting in 1916. In succeeding decades culminating in the 1960s the migration transformed the North and spearheaded major changes in the South. Moreover, the role and posture of the federal government toward issues of pivotal importance to African Americans precipitated unprecedented events which improved the political, social, and economic condition of blacks. Consequently, A. M. E. leaders pursued a "mission for liberation." Their perspectives and efforts increasingly focused on those structures and issues which would bring about permanent progress. They sought the destruction of some institutions while they advocated the erection of others. African Americans had reached a new plateau of struggle in the 20th century and A. M. E. leaders believed that the Church of Allen had a peculiar role to play.

The strides of two ministers in the Pittsburgh Annual Conference were illustrative of the new challenges and involvements which confronted A. M. E. clergy. The massive migration which World

War I inauguration brought thousands of African Americans to northern industries. This unparalleled influx of workers required A. M. E. clergy to respond to these newcomers in creative ways. Harrison G. Payne pastored Park Place African Methodist Episcopal Church in Homestead, Pennsylvania during the early 1920s. A large Carnegie steel plant which was located in the town drew to Homestead hundreds of African American migrants during this period. The Park Place congregation grew from 90 members in 1916 to 400 in 1924. To deal with severe housing shortages in the town, Payne in 1923 started a church-sponsored real estate agency to sell or rent homes to newcomers at low monthly rates. Benjamin M. McLinn, pastor of St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, Pennsylvania, became similarly concerned with African American workers. During World War II the federal Fair Employment Practices Committee attempted to rid defense industries of racial discrimination. mindful of this employment reality in his own community, McLinn and other black clergy in 1943 invited F. E. P. C. investigation at particular plants where they suspected bias in hiring and promotions.

A. M. E. ministers in southern and border states made strides which resulted in fundamental changes in American society. Dwight V. Kyle, pastor of Avery Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Memphis, Tennessee, behaved much differently from other African American preachers in the Bluff City. Long accustomed to accommodation in the perennial Crump political machine, protest against the social order became rare in black religious circles. Kyle, who served Avery Chapel from 1944 through 1948, promoted the F. E. P. C. in Memphis and chaired the Executive Committee of the local N. A. A. C. P. Audaciously, he ran unsuccessfully for the city council, an unprecedented move for African American clergy in that city. In South Carolina, Joseph A. DeLaine, a veteran pastor, also served as principal of a segregated school in Liberty Hill. Angered that Clarendon County provided no bus transportation for his students, DeLaine worked with the famed Thurgood Marshall to bring suit in 1948 against South Carolina's segregated school system. Marshall combined this case with another suit in Topeka, Kansas. In that community, Oliver L. Brown, pastor of St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church of Topeka, thought it unfair that his daughter Linda, should attend a distant segregated school while another facility, albeit for whites, was located close to their home. Marshall combined the Brown and Clarendon County cases, with two other suits, and argued them as **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas, et. al.** The Supreme Court gave its decision on May 17, 1954 and outlawed public school segregation. A. M. E. preachers spearheaded these initiatives which transformed American society! Their "mission for liberation" brought the pulpit into the public arena and produced lasting improvements in the condition of African Americans.

The resulting Civil rights Movement which flowered in the 1950s and 1960s rested on this thrust of liberation which in small and large ways Payne, McLinn, Kyle, De Laine, Brown and others fertilized after 1916. Grappling with new issues confronting African Americans, their individual efforts culminated in a thrust and an ethos that still shapes the A. M. E. vision of ministry and social witness.

The three movements for freedom, justice, and liberation were A. M. E. responses to the distinct stages of struggle in which African Americans were engaged. A. M. E. participation in such efforts has had a long lineage and has drawn a deep commitment from this Methodist body. Hence, any Wesleyan proposals which aim toward unity and closer cooperation must include the same depth of activism and engagement that has typified A. M. E. involvements over its two centuries of

existence. In this respect, the A. M. E. historical experience with the African American, African, Afro-Caribbean, and Afro-European struggle and economic empowerment should decisively influence how the social witness of more cooperative Wesleyan endeavors will be understood and pursued.

Although a different praxis may distinguish these four Methodist bodies from each other, they all share a common theological heritage in Wesleyanism. The African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, and United Methodist denominations, like the founder, esteem the early primitive church and its stress upon "the strict discipline of devotion" (Frederick Norwood, **The Story of American Methodism**, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1974, p. 43). Methodical attention to worship, prayer, evangelism, study of the scriptures are all attributes that these four Wesleyan bodies observe. Tradition derived from the normative practices of the early church are crucial to all Methodists assembled here. We also acknowledge, as did John Wesley, that we are heirs to the Protestant Reformation. The authority of the Bible, the priesthood of all believers, and justification by faith are matters of Methodist orthodoxy for our four Wesleyan bodies. Moreover, we accept John Wesley's view of spirituality or the "religion of the warm heart" as born of religious experience and spiritual fervor and governed by reason and order. Additionally, the doctrine of perfectionism and its challenge to Methodists to strive continuously against sin in both the individual and in society caused A. M. E. s to stress holy and upright living for Wesleyan adherents and to exhort the powerful to provide justice and equality to the disadvantaged. In these respects the A. M. E. Church has been zealous in its adherence to basic Wesleyan theology and doctrines and acknowledges its acceptance and practice of this heritage forms a basis of cooperation and unity with other Methodist bodies.

At the same the peculiar experience of the A. M. E. Church as an advocate for members who were enslaved, segregated, and colonized pressed the denomination to apply Wesleyan theology and doctrine to concrete temporal circumstances. That's why our A. M. E. theology and praxis are blended in ways that are sometimes indistinguishable. Since God is no respecter of persons and God wills that all should have life and have it more abundantly, then the Church cannot be blind to those incumbrances which prevent the realization of God's perfect plan for humankind. This theological perspective has permeated the A. M. E. historical experience. In 1992 the Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in their Episcopal Salutation in the **Doctrine And Discipline Of The African Methodist Episcopal Church** said "that our commitment must be to a ministry of liberation and reconciliation; the liberation of persons, and the reconciliation of man with God, of person with person, of person to history and environment, and of community to community". Moreover, "the A. M. E. Church must fully identify with the poor and the oppressed in their struggle for human dignity. That this participation in human development is not optional, nor is it an addendum to an already crowded agenda. **It Must Be The Very Heart of the Life and Work of Our Church.**"

Hence, A. M. E. insistence upon the Allen legacy of social activism is a theological imperative rather than a sociological predilection. Clearly, the theology of John Wesley and the witness of Richard Allen, James Varick, Miles, and Vandehorst require this conviction. Let us go forth in faith and hope together.

REMARKS BY CAROL H. RASCO  
Consultation of Methodist Bishops  
Austin, Texas  
April 27, 1995

Thank you for that very kind introduction.

During my few years as a classroom teacher and elementary counselor when I sometimes had children from homes with outhouses or even a dirt floor sitting beside children of affluence; during my volunteer days when I worked on foster care, juvenile justice, the arts and adult probation issues; throughout my 20 years of parenting and advocating for two children -- one a child labelled as cerebral palsied and retarded as well as a child labelled "normal"; and through 15+ years of actively working in government ... there are two things that I have mourned most:

- (1) An increasing poverty of spirit, particularly among children; and
- (2) Our society's piecemeal views of individuals, families and communities.

As the President's Assistant for Domestic Policy, my work is guided on a very simple premise:

***Every child shall be empowered to develop to her/his fullest potential throughout life.***

If we are truly serious about developing a stronger economy, increasing our competitiveness, and providing a life for our children better than that our parents and grandparents knew, then we have not a child to waste...and all children must be part of a community where they are empowered to become the very best she or he can.

But our commitment in DC means very little if parents, churches, schools, neighborhood organizations, businesses and voluntary organizations are not working together for the greater good of this country. I think we can all agree that children are best served in the context of families, and families are best served in the context of communities.

This administration has been committed from the beginning to a reinvention of government for families...to building our children's communities. Under the leadership of President Clinton, we have been forceful advocates for children, creating a tremendous track record putting children and families first. In our first two years, we:

- improved and expanded the successful Head Start program to serve more children and parents, and to serve them better; and we set up a pilot to expand service to families with infants and toddlers;

- passed the Family Preservation and Support Act which provides state child welfare agencies funds for services to keep families together in situations where child safety is not at risk;
- assembled one of the most impressive records of legislative accomplishments ever in the area of education - beginning with the reauthorization of Head Start - and continuing with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, School to Work, Goals 2000, Direct Lending and National Service. These initiatives, which we call this our Lifelong Learning Agenda, are at the very heart of President Clinton's New Covenant to provide increased opportunity;
- increased funding for WIC to serve more nutritionally at-risk infants, children and post-partum women;
- established the Childhood Immunization Initiative;
- increased child support collections so that single parents and their children can get the financial support they need and are owed;
- dramatically increased the Earned Income Tax Credit to give working parents in low wage jobs the ability to support their families;
- signed the Family and Medical Leave Act to make sure that American workers no longer need to choose between their jobs and their families in times of crisis;
- passed the President's "Crime Bill" to ban military-style assault weapons, add 100,000 more police to our streets and provide kids with the opportunities that will deter them from lives of crime through important prevention programs such as the Community Schools program.
- fought for guaranteed health coverage for all our families - a goal the President remains committed to.

The President has pursued his agenda in difficult times. We have followed an economic plan that has cut the deficit by 50 percent from its projected levels, produced the first three years of declining deficits since Harry Truman, and reduced government employment to its lowest level since John F. Kennedy. It's a track record of accomplishment for children that few Presidents can match. It is indeed government at its best.

While we are proud of our accomplishments, they alone won't help us to address the serious problems facing our children today. We must do more.

We must acknowledge that despite our best efforts, our children and our children's communities are in crisis. Twenty-three

percent of our children live in poverty and millions go hungry every day. Too many children are bearing children of their own. Drugs and guns have silently crept their way into schools and neighborhoods and playgrounds, and street violence and domestic abuse continue to claim the lives of our young people before they reach adulthood.

Those who won the 1994 election look at these problems, and then they look at the billions, even trillions, of dollars that we have spent to solve them. They ask, reasonably, why we should devote any further energy, or more importantly, money, to solving these problems -- when it seems the more we do the worse the problems get.

Surely, as we search for solutions that work, we need a full and honest debate about what to do. We need to look at what has worked and what hasn't, and why. We need to define our objectives more clearly, and perhaps the role of government, especially at the federal level, more narrowly.

But that discussion is not taking place today. There is no exchange of ideas, no weighing of the evidence. Instead there is a full-scale assault on nearly every single program that helps the neediest and most vulnerable and disadvantaged among us. And in the end, our children will suffer most.

The President has described what has been happening in Congress as "a war on the children of America." The war is taking many forms. Take the welfare reform bill recently passed by the House, The Personal Responsibility Act.

Now, let me assure you that no one feels more strongly about reforming welfare than Bill Clinton. For over a decade, Bill Clinton has been fighting to change welfare - to make it a hand up, not a hand out; a second chance, not a way of life. The welfare system as it developed over six decades had truly become an example of government gone awry. It worked to undermine basic values such as work and responsibility that are so central to this country's strength -- in the end trapping many of the people it was supposed to help in an intergenerational cycle of poverty and dependence.

But there are those in Congress who are interested in using a different approach. They want to take the programs apart, they want to slash what they're willing to spend on poor people, and ship the program, the problem and the responsibility for solving it off to the states.

In the end, this will do little to solve the fundamental problems of the welfare system; particularly since education and training, the very programs that enable people to move themselves off welfare, are being slashed. Furthermore, there are those in Congress that advocate ending child care entitlements designed to help families get and stay off welfare, eliminate all health and

safety standards for child care programs, and make cuts that would deny child care assistance to over 300,000 children.

As President Clinton so eloquently said in his address to the American Association of Counties:

*"The hardest and the most important part of welfare reform is moving people from welfare to work.. You have to educate and train people. You've got to make sure that their kids aren't punished once they go to work by losing their health care or their child care."*

There is a proposal to cut food stamps that would jeopardize the safety net for more than 14 million children, cut the school meals program that today delivers nutritious meals to over 25 million children, and at the same time reduce the number of women, infants and children getting assistance from the WIC program.

These proposals would turn back the clock on child welfare so that resources will be available only for crisis intervention and not prevention. States have made significant progress in working toward their family preservation and support plans, and have made commitments to other agencies and the private sector in the process. Withdrawing the federal legislation that encourages these accomplishments threatens to disrupt this cooperation and destroy this progress.

Beyond welfare, there are those in Congress that are threatening funding for school drug prevention programs like the Safe and Drug Free Schools program that has been the cornerstone of our nation's drug prevention effort ever since Nancy Reagan helped establish it eight years ago. The House passed cuts that would mean that 94% of all school districts would lose funding for their program.

The House has voted to dismantle the portion of the SSI program that provides cash assistance to poor children with severe disabilities. Their bill would eliminate all SSI eligibility and benefits for 225,000 children with severe disabilities who now receive help. This means that in the future, most disabled children would receive no SSI cash assistance for food, clothing and shelter.

And then there's health care reform. A goal that the President remains committed to by challenging the Congress to work with him to take the first steps towards guaranteeing health security to all Americans and containing health care costs for families, businesses and federal, state and local governments. Because their constituents are demanding action, some in Congress have begun to respond to the President's challenge by coming forward with proposals and bills.

As you know, Medicaid is a crucial safety net for mothers and

their children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. For some in Congress, "health reform" has turned into the code word for slashing Medicare and Medicaid and have suggested cutting federal spending on Medicaid by at least \$180 billion to \$190 billion between now and the year 2002.

With a cut this large, states -- many of which have been trying to expand coverage -- could be forced to shrink benefits or drop coverage for millions of mothers and children. Or, should the states choose to do so, they could pick up the tab to preserve the Medicaid program -- by raising taxes dramatically or by slashing services like education and public safety.

And that's not a complete description of the volleys currently taking place in Washington. The fall-out from this struggle will certainly reach beyond the tens of billions in cuts for children's programs over the next five years. This fall-out will reach our notion of who we are as a people and what we stand for as a society. Let's not be fooled by the rhetoric about block grants and greater flexibility and autonomy for the states.

**Our children are a national interest & we need to put them first.**

In just over 100 days since the election in November, we have learned a lot about the Contract With America. We have learned that at the very heart it is a financial arrangement -- one I daresay that caters to the interests of the very wealthy and the very powerful at the expense of the poor and the needy.

Our Nation does not need that sort of contract. As I mentioned earlier, the President envisions, instead, a covenant -- a sacred compact between government and the American people that reflects our long-held belief that every citizen has the right -- and the responsibility -- to rise as far as their God-given talents and determination can take them and to give something back to their communities in return.

That is the underlying principle of the President's New Covenant, which, as he said in his State of the Union address, is grounded in some pretty old ideas. These ideas have guided us for more than a century in our efforts to protect and support children.

Yet today, the foundation we have built to promote work over welfare and strengthen families is in jeopardy. And if Congress weakens or destroys these programs, it will represent a total

reversal of the historic commitment our Nation has made to its children.

In thinking about our agenda for children I am reminded inwardly on a constant basis of what an elderly physical therapist who had dedicated her life to young disabled children told me early in my son's life...she said, "Carol, I don't know a lot of philosophy or theory about programs for children like my son Hamp, but I think the best thing I can tell you as a parent is to remember the words of Joseph Addison, an essayist, poet:

*Everyone must have  
Something to do  
Someone to love  
Something to hope for.*

And how right she was and is in the case of not only Hamp, but all people with whom I've worked...and so at each age of life in our quest to reinvent how we approach the problems of our families and children, we must ask:

- #1: What do they have to do? If a young child, what is the preschool program available? Can they play, dance, sing, and soar? If a child, is school relevant? Is school safe? What is there to do after school?
- #2: Someone to love...and we all know that before you can love another, you must love yourself. Think about children's faces you've seen in schools, neighborhoods, children you've passed on those streets...do they have much to love about themselves? Many don't and therefore we can't truthfully expect the love, the caring to flow outward. Hate flows out as evidenced by the recent tragedy in Oklahoma. But it goes far beyond Oklahoma:
- Gunshot kills a child every two hours in the U.S., while a police officer is killed by guns every 5 days and 9 hours. (CDF)
  - More than 100,000 children bring a gun into school on any given day. (NEA)
  - Homicide is now the third leading cause of death for elementary and middle school children. (CD)

- The effect on inner-city children of exposure to violence has caused them to show symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder comparable to children in Mozambique, Cambodia and Palestine. (CD)

For too many young people it is easier to find a gun than a good friend, a good mentor, or a good spirit of community.

#3: Something to hope for...My son and daughter [and I hope yours] have many hopes -- I both thrive in that gleam of hope in their eyes and constantly look for ways to nurture and keep that spark present...help me, help our administration look for ways to create that hope for all children of this great country. Health security frees up a family for hopes and dreams, safer streets help free children to look at what education can be for them...but untreated ear infections, uncorrected vision problems, lack of immunizations, and today's most common fears among children leave little wonder about the rationale for a lack of hope.

In a recent survey conducted by Newsweek and the Children's Defense Fund, children between the ages of 10 and 17 reported:

WHAT THEY FEAR MOST

- 1) FAMILY MEMBER VICTIMIZED BY VIOLENT CRIME;
- 2) PARENTAL JOB LOSS; and
- 3) NOT BEING ABLE TO AFFORD A DOCTOR

These are real fears that dash the hopes of many children in this country and until each side - human development and economic development - is willing to sit at a common table - real reinvention of government for families will not occur. We can make application procedures simpler for families seeking help, we can devolve power to the states, we can provide incentives and tax credits, we can give health security, we can develop high standards for our students; we can talk about investments, deficits, inflation; and job creation. But unless we recognize that giving people at every age: (1) something to do, (2) someone to love, and (3) something to hope for; are all a part of a mandatory whole just as people and families and communities are both parts and "whole entities"... we will not have accomplished the task before us.

The American Dream is an intergenerational compact. One

generation is supposed to leave the key under the mat for the next generation. We repay our parents for their love in the love we give our children -- we must all be involved in building our children's community.

Forty-five years ago, the biggest threat to our county came from the other side of the Iron Curtain; from the nuclear weapons that could wipe out the entire planet. That threat has subsided substantially.

Today, our greatest national threat comes not from some external Evil Empire, but from our own internal indifference that tolerates unparented children, embattled schools, pervasive poverty, racism, and violence.

Not for one more year can our country think of children as some footnote on our national agenda. How we treat our children should be front and center of that national agenda...or ultimately it won't matter what else is on that agenda.

We have not a choice, we must take this moment in time to introduce a new order -- a new community -- for our children and families.

Dr. Foster . . .

And so we come full circle - what child's face is before you? Daily as individuals, as organizations -- what will I do to help build a child's community today. Because in the end, we all want to be able to say that we seized the moment -- we took hold of the opportunity and we did our very best.

Mirror Test/Children's eyes . . .

Thank you very much!

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**THE OPENING DEVOTION SERVICE**  
**OF THE**  
**SIXTH CONSULTATION OF METHODIST BISHOPS**  
**April 26, 1995**

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**Bishop Joseph Johnson, Worship Leader**

**ORDER OF WORSHIP**

The Prelude

The Call To Worship

**Leader:** This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**People:** Like Miriam, let us sing with gladness, for our God triumphs over evil and oppression.

**Leader:** Like Hannah, let us pray with grateful hearts, for the Lord our God hears our prayers.

**People:** Like Jacob, let us wrestle with God, for out of such struggles, new faith is born.

**Leader:** Like Abraham, let us respond to God's calling, for in faith's journey, we find our lives.

**People:** This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**The Invocation:**

O God of infinite love and caring compassion, who loves all of us and each of us, we thank You for the gift of this moment, and we offer it to You as a gift of worship, gratitude, and praise.

We come to Thee bringing a patchwork of hopes and fears, all bound together by the stubborn belief that what we do in the next three days, will make a difference in our future work together.

So, we offer this worship to You, wanting to believe, and daring to think, that You will speak, even to the likes of us.

May the fresh wind of Your Spirit blow through this, so that we might feel Your presence.

More, we cannot ask, and less, we cannot bear, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

**The Hymn: "And Are We Yet Alive"**

And are we yet alive, And see each other's face?  
Glory and praise to Jesus give, For His redeeming grace.

What troubles have we seen, What conflicts have we passed,  
Fightings without, and fears within, Since we assembled last.

But out of all the Lord, Hath brought us by His love;  
And still He doth His help afford, And hides our lives above.

Then let us make our boast Of His redeeming power,  
Which saves us to the uttermost, Till we can sin no more. Amen.

Charles Wesley

**The Litany: Rev. Dr. Dennis A. Haggray**

**Leader: For the gift of dreams and visions, we thank You, O Lord.**

**People:** For the vision of people like Abraham and Sarah who go forth into unknown futures and unknown places, with Your assurance being their only security, we give You thanks.

**Leader: For the vision of people like Jeremiah, who proclaim Your Word in difficult times as well as good, we give You thanks.**

**People:** For the vision of people like Anna and Simeon, who in patience and faith, wait for the fulfillment of the vision, we give You thanks.

**Leader: For the vision of people like Paul, who break old boundaries of faith that divide rather than unite, we give You thanks.**

People: May our vision and dreams be guided by Your Spirit, bringing vision to the young and dreams to the old.

Leader: **May our dreams and visions be guided by Your vision to preach good news to the poor.**

People: To proclaim release to the captive and recovery of sight to the blind and to sit at liberty those who are oppressed.

All: **MAY YOUR DREAM, O LORD, BE OUR DREAM!**

**The Old Testament Lesson: Micah 6:6-9**

Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Jarrett

**The Gloria Patri**

**The Gospel Lesson: Mark 12:38-34**

Bishop Clarence Carr

**The Hymn of Meditation: "Open My Eyes That I May See"**

Open my eyes that I may see, Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key That shall unclasp and set me free.  
Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see.  
Open my eyes, Illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my mind that I may read More of Thy love in word and deed.  
What shall I fear while yet Thou dost lead? Only for light from Thee I plead.  
Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see.  
Open my mind, Illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my way that I may bring Trophies of grace to Christ, my King.  
Echoed in love Thy word shall out-ring, Sweet as the note that angels sing.  
Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see.  
Open my way, Illumine me, Spirit divine!

**The Meditation:**

**Bishop Joseph Johnson**

**The Doxology**

**The Benediction:**

**Bishop Joseph Johnson**

## THE 6th CONSULTATION OF METHODIST BISHOPS

April 26, 1995

### Opening Meditation

by Bishop Joseph Johnson

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

"Thy shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." Luke 10:27.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, in the power of High might." Ephesians 6:10.

Thanks be to God for bringing us together as Bishops in the Wesleyan tradition to grapple with the theme, "Visioning from a Historical/Theological Perspective: Radical Implications for future Ministry." Perhaps our greatest challenge will be to identify and accentuate those things we have in common as we struggle with the enormous task of concentrating our efforts in our common fight against the enemy of God and God's people, and in striving toward the unity that Christ mentioned in John's Gospel when he prayed:

That they may all be one; as Thou, Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me. John 17:21.

A brief word from the Lord, buttressed by the Holy Spirit, might prepare us to engender a strategy that would help us to achieve what we came here to do.

From the Gospel, that word comes from the writer of the third gospel, Luke, who records Jesus Christ as saying, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and all your mind; and love your neighbor as you love yourself" (**Good News Bible**).

And from the Epistles, Paul writes a word to the Ephesians that's relevant to believers of all ages, saying, "For in the future, find strength in your union with the Lord, and the power which comes from His might". Ephesians 6:10. (20th Century New Testament Bible)

The Gospel informs us of our primary mission, which is to love God with all our being, and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, and the Epistle reminds us that we will face a continuing spiritual war in the future, and that to win this war we will need the strength, power, and might of God.

We all know the nursery rhyme:

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall,  
All the King's horses, And all the King's men,  
Couldn't put Humpty back together again."

Like the character in the nursery rhyme, Humpty Dumpty needed somebody to put him back together again, the Christian Church needs a strategy that would help put our society back together again. In the next three days, what will we do to help put our society back together again? I believe we can begin by revisiting and practicing traditional Methodism as bequeathed to us by John Wesley.

Having graduated from two Methodist seminaries, Duke and Emory, having taught over 10 years in one, Hood Theological Seminary, and having heard many sermons by preachers of at least five churches of the Methodist tradition, I have heard very little of the doctrines embraced by John Wesley, such as **Justification by Faith, Witness of the Spirit, Prevenient Grace, the New Birth, Sanctification, and Perfection, or Scriptural Holiness.**

Lovett H. Weems, Jr. in his small pocket guide, **John Wesley's Message Today**, said that "Wesley based his preaching on holiness, sanctification, and Christian Perfection in scripture, tradition, reason and experience." (p. 55)

In a world beset with a proliferation of poverty, racial and class conflict, broken families, abortion, diseases, hopeless young people, high crime, and drugs, and spiritual malnutrition, as Tony Evans said in **America's Only Hope**, "Only a Spiritual reformation, led by the church, on the basis of biblical authority, can save our nation from its moral decay." (p. 19)

Before we can wage an effective battle against the enemies of God and become one as Christ wants us to be, we must take seriously the claims Jesus Christ has on our individual and corporate lives. Perhaps, if we focus on, and put into practice the instructions John Wesley left us, maybe then we will be able to better understand our kinship as being one big Christian Methodist family and our mandate being to practice scriptural holiness.

So John Wesley speaks from heaven today reminding us that true Methodists live lives of holiness as defined by the Word of God. Wesley defined the life of "holiness" in one word, **Love**. About holiness, Wesley said, in **The Works of the Rev. John Wesley**, edited by Thomas Jackson, "It is the love of God and neighbor". To be able to love God and neighbor requires that one is continually involved in a purifying process called "sanctification" by John Wesley. As one of my professors at Duke, Dr. Paul A. Mickey said in his book, **Essentials of Wesleyan Theology**,:

By His (God's) grace, He sanctifies His children, purifying their hearts by faith, renewing them in the image of God, and enabling them to love God and neighbor with the whole heart.

Dr. Mickey implied that he understood Wesley to view sanctification and holiness as approximate equivalents. He quoted Wesley from **The Works of John Wesley**, vol. 6, p. 281:

That without holiness no man can see the Lord;\_ that this holiness is the work of God, who worketh in is both to will and to do;\_ that He doeth of His own good pleasure, merely for the merits;\_ that this holiness is the mind that was in Christ, enabling us to walk as He also walked;\_ that no man can be thus sanctified till he be justified;\_ and, that we are justified by faith alone.

Therefore, Wesley combined Ethics and Faith, the love of God and the love of neighbor and presented them as the path people called Methodists should follow.

If we live up to the claims our Lord Jesus Christ has on our lives and to the expectations John Wesley had for the Methodist Church, then we can not only build a foundation for unity, but also a solution for putting Humpty Dumpty back together again.

I conclude with this story by Dr. Anthony Evans from his book, **America's Only**:

### "CHECKMATE"

The true story is told of a world champion chess player who was visiting art galleries during his vacation in Europe. While touring one of the galleries, he came across a painting that stopped him in his tracks. It was a picture of a chess game.

On one side of the painting was the devil. He was laughing, excited, and full of joy. He was about to make his move. On the other side to the painting sat a young man whose face was filled with terror. He sat biting his fingernails, his knees were knocking, and sweat was pouring down his face. The chess champion understood the scenario when he saw the title of the painting. It was called Checkmate. The devil was about to make the final move to claim this young man's soul.

The chess champion was awestruck by the painting. He studied it for hours. Gradually a smile came across his face. A gleam twinkled in his eye as he asked for a chessboard. Upon receiving it, he set the board up precisely as it was in the painting.

After studying it for a while, he turned to the young man, as though he were alive and said excitedly, "young man, I have some good news for you. Things are not as bad as they seem. Even though it looks like you've lost, there's still one more move left on the board. After the devil makes his move, you will get the final move."

That's the message I bring to us today as we seek answers to perplexed problems face both in the world and in the Church, and as we seek to impact our ministries on the future. Despite the problems we face, despite the diabolical tricks and continual presence of the devil, and despite the fact that it seems like all is lost, things are not as bad as they seem because we still have one more move. We as Bishops of the Church, must be willing and courageous enough to make that move. Yes, the devil will make his last move, but thank God, the last move is ours.

We must have a vision of what that last move is, then we must aggressively and prayerfully make it. We must make that move by living a life of Scriptural Holiness, the likes of which John Wesley embraced, practiced, and taught.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, help us to --  
Take time to be Holy, speak oft with our Lord;  
Abide in You always, and feed on Your Word;  
Make friends of Your children, help those who are weak,  
Forgetting in nothing, Your blessings to seek.  
In the name of the Father, and Son, and of the Blessed Holy Spirit, Amen.

CONSULTATION OF METHODIST BISHOPS

Worship Service

Thursday, April 27, 1995  
9:00 A.M.

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

O Lord, open my lips.  
And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

HYMN 149 Cantemos al Señor

SCRIPTURE Ephesians 4:11-16

MEDITATION "Unity With A Mission"

PRAYER

Loving God, as the rising sun chases away the night, so you have scattered the power of death in the rising of Jesus Christ, and you bring us all blessings in him.

Especially we thank you for

the community of faith in our church ...  
those with whom we work or share common concerns ...  
the diversity of your children ...  
indications of your love at work in the world ...  
those who work for reconciliation ...

Mighty God, with the dawn of your love you reveal your victory over all that would destroy or harm, and you brighten the lives of all who need you. Especially we pray for

families suffering separation ...  
people different from ourselves ...  
those isolated by sickness or sorrow ...  
the victims of violence or warfare ...  
the church in the Pacific region ...

HYMN 344 Tú Has Venido a la Orilla

BENEDICTION



**The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**  
A New Text -- 1984

*Bishop Felton E. May, Liturgist*  
*Bishop George W. Bashore, Pianist*

**GATHERING**

**OPENING SENTENCES**

The grace, mercy and peace of Jesus Christ be with you.  
And also with you.

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE**

O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King,  
the triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God,  
assist me to proclaim,  
to spread through all the earth abroad  
the honors of thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,  
that bids our sorrows cease;  
'tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of canceled sin,  
he sets the prisoner free;  
his blood can make the foulest clean;  
his blood availed for me.

**PRAYER**

Almighty God, you are infinite, eternal, and unchangeable,  
glorious in holiness, full of love and compassion,  
abundant in grace and truth.

All your works praise you in all places of your dominion,  
and your glory is revealed in Christ, our Savior.

Therefore, we praise you,  
Blessed and Holy Trinity,  
One God, forever and ever.

**PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

**FIRST LESSON**

*Reader: Bishop Frederick H. Talbot*

**\*ACT OF PRAISE: GLORIA PATRI**

**\*APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again

to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

**\*LESSON FROM THE GOSPELS**

*Reader: Bishop Nathaniel Linsey*

**HOMILY:** *Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel*

**RESPONSE**

We confess that often we have failed  
to be an obedient church.

We have not done your will.

We have broken your law.

We have rebelled against your love.

We have not loved our neighbors,

and we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray.

Free us for joyful obedience,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

## DECLARATION OF PARDON

Anyone in Christ becomes a new person altogether;  
the past is finished and gone,  
everything has become fresh and new.  
Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:  
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

## SERVICE OF THE TABLE

*Co-celebrants: Bishop Joseph Johnson  
Bishop Nathaniel Linsey  
Bishop Frederick H. Talbot  
Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel*

## THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.  
And also with you.

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

Lift up your hearts.  
We lift them to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

## THE PREFACE

It is right and good to give you thanks, Almighty God,  
for you are the source of light and life.  
You made us in your image  
and called us to new life in Jesus Christ.  
In all times and places your people proclaim your glory  
in unending praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We remember with joy the grace by which you created  
all things and made us in your own image.  
We rejoice that you called a people in covenant  
to be a light to the nations.  
Yet we rebelled against your will.

In spite of the prophets and pastors sent forth to us,  
we continued to break your covenant.  
In the fullness of time,  
you sent your only son to save us.  
Incarnate by the Holy Spirit,  
born of your favored one, Mary,  
sharing our life,  
he reconciled us to your love.  
At the Jordan your Spirit descended upon him,  
anointing him to preach the good news of your reign.  
He healed the sick and fed the hungry,  
manifesting the power of your compassion.  
He sought out the lost and broke bread with sinners,  
witnessing the fullness of your grace.  
We beheld his glory.  
On the night before he died for us, Jesus took bread;  
giving thanks to you, he broke the bread  
and offered it to his disciples, saying:  
"Take this and eat; this is my body which is given for you,  
do this in remembrance of me."  
Taking a cup, again he gave thanks to you,  
shared the cup with his disciples and said:  
"This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood.  
Drink from this all of you.  
This is poured out for you and for many,  
for the forgiveness of sins."  
After the meal our Lord was arrested,  
abandoned by his followers and beaten.  
He stood trial and was put to death on a cross.  
Having emptied himself in the form of a servant,  
and being obedient even to death,  
he was raised from the dead  
and exalted as Lord of heaven and earth.  
Through him you bestow the gift of your Spirit,  
uniting your church, empowering its mission,  
and leading us into the new creation you have promised.  
Gracious God, we celebrate with joy  
the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ.  
Grant that in praise and thanksgiving  
we may be a living sacrifice,  
holy and acceptable in your sight,  
that our lives may proclaim the mystery of faith.  
**Christ has died,  
Christ is risen,  
Christ will come again.**

Loving God, pour out your Holy spirit upon us  
and upon these gifts,  
that they may be for us the body and blood  
of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Grant that we may be for the world the body of Christ,  
redeemed through his blood,  
serving and reconciling all people to you.  
Remember the saints who have gone before us  
since the Fifth Consultation, March 1991:

*Bishop Herman Leroy Anderson*  
*Bishop Joseph Benjamin Bethea*  
*Bishop Richard Laymon Fisher*  
*Bishop Edwin Ronald Garrison*  
*Bishop W. Kenneth Goodson*  
*Bishop Nolan Bailey Harmon*  
*Bishop Ernest L. Hickman*  
*Bishop Francis Emner Kearns*  
*Bishop Elisha P. Murchison*  
*Bishop Kimba M. Wakadilo Ngoy*  
*Bishop Frank Lewis Robertson*  
*Bishop Roy Hunter Short*  
*Bishop P. Randolph Shy*  
*Bishop William Milton Smith*  
*Bishop Rembert E. Stokes*  
*Bishop John B. Warman*  
*Bishop Alfred E. White*

In communion with them and with all creation,  
we worship and glorify you always.

Through your Son Jesus Christ  
with the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church,  
all glory and honor is yours, Almighty God,  
now and forever. Amen.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

#### BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The bread which we break,  
is it not a sharing in the Body of Christ?  
Because there is one bread,  
we who are many are one body,  
for we all partake of the one bread.  
The wine which we drink,  
is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?  
The cup which we bless  
is the communion in the blood of Christ.

## SHARING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP

### CLOSING

#### PRAYER

**Bountiful God, we give thanks  
that you have refreshed us at your table  
by granting us the presence of Christ.  
Strengthen our faith,  
increase our love for one another,  
and send us forth into the world in courage and peace,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

#### \*HYMN:

FRANK VON CHRISTIERSON, 1900.

ST. STEPHEN CM  
WILLIAM JONES, 1726-1800

1. Break forth, O liv - ing light of God, Up -  
2. Re - move the veil of an - cient words, Their  
3. O let thy Word be light a - new To  
4. O may one Lord, one faith, one Word, One

on the world's dark hour! Show us the way the  
mes - sage long ob - scure; Re - store to us thy  
ev - ery na - tion's life; U - nite us in thy  
Spir - it lead us still; And one great Church go

Mas - ter trod; Re - veal his sav - ing power.  
truth, O God, And make its mean - ing sure.  
will, O Lord, And end all sin - ful strife.  
forth in might To work God's per - fect will. A - men.

**DIRECTORY**

**PAN-METHODIST BISHOPS**

**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION  
CHURCH**

**CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH**

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

PAN-METHODIST DIRECTORY OF BISHOPS

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Frank C. Cummings  
Eleventh District

Zedekiah L. Grady  
Sixteenth District

C. Garnett Henning  
Fourteenth District

Richard A. Hildebrand  
Retired

Frederick C. James  
Second District

J. Haskell Mayo  
Fourth District

Donald G. Ming  
Sixth District

P6/(b)(6)

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (Continued)

Henry W. Murph  
Retired

D. Ward Nichols  
Retired

H. Thomas Primm  
Deceased

Robert L. Pruitt  
Leave of Absence

Hubert N. Robinson  
Retired

Harold Ben Senatle  
Nineteenth District

Rembert E. Stokes  
Retired

Frederick H. Talbot  
Twelfth District

Cornelius E. Thomas  
Ninth District

Robert Thomas, Jr.  
Eighth District

Robert V. Webster  
Seventeenth District

McKinley Young  
Fifteenth District

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AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH

Herman L. Anderson  
Deceased

George E. Battle, Jr.  
Seventh District

Cecil Bishop  
Third District

Clarence Carr  
Twelfth District

Clinton R. Coleman  
Retired

Alfred G. Dunston, Jr.  
Deceased

S. Chuka Ekeman, Sr.  
Sixth District

Charles H. Foggie  
Retired

William A. Hilliard  
Retired

J. Clinton Hoggard  
Retired

Joseph Johnson  
Eighth District

John H. Miller, Sr.  
Retired

Enoch B. Rochester  
Tenth District

William Milton Smith  
Deceased

Ruben L. Speaks  
First District

Marshall H. Strickland  
Eleventh District

Richard K. Thompson  
Ninth District

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**AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH (Continued)**

**George W. Walker, Sr.**  
Fourth District

**Milton A. Williams**  
Fifth District

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**CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**Richard O. Bass, Sr.**  
Fifth District

**Oree Broomfield, Sr.**  
Seventh District

**E. Lynn Brown**  
Ninth District

**Henry C. Bunton**  
Retired

**C. D. Coleman**  
Retired

**Joseph C. Coles, Jr.**  
Retired

**Marshall Gilmore**  
Eighth District

**William H. Graves**  
First District

**Dotcy I. Isom, Jr.**  
Third District

**Chester A. Kirkendoll**  
Retired

**Othal H. Lakey**  
Sixth District

**Nathaniel L. Linsey**  
Second District

**Thomas L. Hoyt**  
Fourth District

**Charles L. Helton**  
Tenth District

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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

L. Scott Allen  
Retired

Ralph T. Alton  
Deceased

Edsel A. Ammons  
Retired

Daniel C. Arichea, Jr.  
Banguio Area

James Mase Ault  
Retired

Thomas S. Bangura  
Retired

George W. Bashore  
Pittsburgh Area

Joseph B. Bethea  
Deceased

Robert M. Blackburn  
Retired

Bruce P. Blake  
Dallas Area

Heinrich Bolleter  
Central/Southern Europe

Victor L. Bonilla  
Puerto Rico Methodist  
Autonomous Church

Ole E. Borgen  
Retired

Edwin C. Boulton  
Ohio East Area

Monk Bryan  
Retired

William R. Cannon  
Retired

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**Kenneth Carder**  
Nashville Area

**Alsie H. Carleton**  
Retired

**Edward G. Carroll**  
Retired

**Wilbur W. Y. Choy**  
Retired

**Sharon B. Christopher**  
Minnesota Area

**Roy C. Clark**  
Retired

**Wayne K. Clymer**  
Retired

**Emerson S. Colaw**  
Retired

**Judith Craig**  
Ohio West Area

**Done Peter Dabale**  
Nigeria Area

**Emilio J.M. De Carvalho**  
Western Angola Area

**William W. Dew, Jr.**  
Portland Area

**Jesse R. DeWitt**  
Retired

**Ernest T. Dixon, Jr.**  
Retired

**Ralph E. Dodge**  
Retired

**R. Sheldon Duecker**  
Chicago Area

**Paul A. Duffey**  
Retired

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R. Kern Eutsler  
Retired

Robert E. Fannin  
Birmingham Area

Moises D. Fernandes  
Eastern Angola Area

H. Ellis Finger, Jr.  
Retired

Ernest A. Fitzgerald  
Retired

Eugene M. Frank  
Retired

Elias G. Galvan  
Phoenix Area

Jose C. Gamboa, Jr.  
Retired

Edwin R. Garrison  
Deceased

Paul L. A. Granadosin  
Retired

William Boyd Grove  
Albany Area

Benjamin R. Gutierrez  
Davao Area

Charles W. Hancock  
Retired

W. T. Handy, Jr.  
Retired

Paul Hardin, Jr.  
Retired

John Wesley Hardt  
Retired

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J. Woodrow Hearn  
Houston Area

Kenneth W. Hicks  
Retired

Leroy C. Hodapp  
Retired

Don W. Holter  
Retired

H. Hasbrouck Hughes, Jr  
Florida Area

Joseph C. Humper  
Sierra Leone Area

Earl G. Hunt, Jr.  
Retired

Neil L. Irons  
New Jersey Area

S. Clifton Ives  
West Virginia Area

Rueben P. Job  
Retired

Christopher Jokomo  
Zimbabwe Area

L. Bevel Jones, III  
Charlotte Area

Charles Wesley Jordan  
Iowa Area

Kainda Katembo  
Southern Zaire Area

Leontine T. C. Kelly  
Retired

Hae-Jong Kim  
New York West Area

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Walter Klaiber  
West Germany Area

J. Lloyd Knox  
Atlanta Area

Arthur F. Kulah  
Liberia Area

David J. Lawson  
Illinois Area

Clay Foster Lee, Jr.  
Holston Area

William B. Lewis  
Dakotas Area

Dwight E. Loder  
Retired

Richard C. Looney  
South Georgia Area

Joao Somane Machado  
Mozambique Area

Joel N. Martinez  
Nebraska Area

James K. Mathews  
Retired  
Interim for Bishop Stith

Felton E. May  
Harrisburg Area

Calvin D. McConnell  
Seattle Area

Joel D. McDavid  
Retired

P6/(b)(6)

Marshall Meadors, Jr.  
Mississippi Area

Paul W. Milhouse  
Retired

C. P. Minnick, Jr.  
Raleigh Area

Ruediger R. Minor

Eurasia Area

Noah W. Moore, Jr.  
Retired

Robert C. Morgan  
Louisville Area

William W. Morris  
Alabama-W. Florida

Susan Murch Morrison  
Philadelphia Area

Fritz Mutti  
Kansas Area

Abel T. Muzorewa  
Retired

Emerito P. Nacpil  
Manila Area

Alfred J. Ndoricimpa  
Burundi Area

Ernest W. Newman  
Retired

Kimba M. Wakadilo Ngoy  
North Shaba Area

Roy C. Nichols  
Retired

Alfred L. Norris  
NW Texas-New Mexico

P6(b)(6)

**William B. Oden**  
Louisiana Area

**Benjamin R. Oliphint**  
Retired

**Fama Onema**  
Central Zaire Area

**Donald A. Ott**  
Michigan Area

**Raymond Owen**  
San Antonio Area

**Edward J. Pendergrass**  
Retired

**Almeida Penicela**  
Retired

**Sharon Zimmerman Rader**  
Wisconsin Area

**John W. Russell**  
Retired

P6/(b)(6)

**Carl J. Sanders**  
Retired

**Roy I. Sano**  
Los Angeles Area

**Franz W. Schafer**  
Retired

**Ann Sherer**  
Missouri Area

**Louis W. Schowengerdt**  
Retired

**Roy H. Short**  
Deceased

**Herbert F. Skeete**  
Boston Area

Eugene O. Slater  
Retired

Dan E. Solomon  
Oklahoma Area

Robert H. Spain  
Retired  
Interim Columbia Area

W. Maynard Sparks  
Retired

Hermann L. Sticher  
Retired

Forrest C. Stith  
New York Area  
James K. Mathews, (Inter

Thomas B. Stockton  
Richmond Area

Mack B. Stokes  
Retired

Marvin R. Stuart  
Retired

Mary Ann Swenson  
Denver Area

Melvin G. Talbert  
San Francisco Area

Prince A. Taylor, Jr.  
Retired

James S. Thomas  
Retired

Jack M. Tuell  
Retired

Edward L. Tullis  
Retired

P6/(b)(6)

**Jose L. Valencia**  
Retired

**Hans Vaxby**  
Northern Europe Area

**Lance Webb**  
Retired

**Frederick D. Wertz**  
Retired

**Melvin E. Wheatley, Jr.**  
Retired

**C. Dale White**  
Retired

**Woodie W. White**  
Indiana Area

**Lloyd C. Wicke**  
Retired

**Richard B. Wilke**  
Arkansas Area

**Joe A. Wilson**  
Fort Worth Area

**Joseph H. Yeakel**  
Washington Area

P6/(b)(6)

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# Response

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN • May 1994

Women,  
Crises  
and  
The Church

page 8





BISHOP  
KENNETH L. CARDER

# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NASHVILLE AREA  
520 COMMERCE STREET, SUITE 201  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37203  
TELEPHONE 615-742-8834  
FAX 615-742-3726

November 30, 1995

CONFERENCES  
MEMPHIS  
TENNESSEE

*file  
United Methodist  
Children's Initiative*

Ms. Carol Rasco  
Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy  
The White House  
West Wing, 2nd Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Carol:

Enclosed is a copy of the final draft of the Episcopal Initiative Proposal which was adopted by the Council. Thank you for your assistance in putting the proposal together.

The new Task Force has been named and Bishop Jack Meadors is the chairperson. We would like for you to continue as a consultant to the Task Force. We will be in touch with you as our plans progress.

Again, thank you for your contribution to this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Kenneth L. Carder

KLC/mt

Enclosure

cc: Bishop Jack Meadors

**PROPOSAL FOR AN EPISCOPAL INITIATIVE  
ON  
CHILDREN AND POVERTY**

**AUTHORIZATION**

The Council of Bishops, in session April 29 - May 5, 1995, adopted the following resolution presented by the Episcopal Initiatives Committee:

Throughout the world children are suffering and dying as victims of violence, poverty, neglect and exploitation. During the last ten years 100,000,000 children died of poverty related causes; every two hours a child is killed by gunfire in the United States. Genocide is being visited upon the world's impoverished, abused and neglected children.

The God of the Exodus and of Jesus Christ identifies with the least, the defenseless, and the most vulnerable. God hears their cries, knows their suffering and seeks to deliver them. God's suffering and redemptive presence among the most vulnerable of God's children summons the Church to join the divine initiative of liberation, reconciliation and salvation.

The Council of Bishops is, therefore, requested to authorize the Episcopal Initiatives Committee to develop a means by which the Council can lead The United Methodist Church to a transforming response to the reality of God's presence and ministry with the world's children.

A task force was appointed by the Episcopal Initiatives Committee and directed to prepare a proposal for an episcopal initiative focusing on children and the poor. The following is the report of the task force to the Episcopal Initiative Committee.

**THE CRISIS AMONG CHILDREN**

Child sacrifice has been taboo among the world's great religions for at least three thousand years. Yet today children are being sacrificed to the gods of consumerism, violence, and neglect. Economic injustice, racial and ethnic and religious hatred, and the abuse of political power are resulting in genocide of the world's most vulnerable citizens, children who live in poverty.

Malnutrition kills an estimated thirty-five thousand children every day. Approximately ten million children die of poverty-related causes each year. During the last decade, wars have slaughtered two million and disabled between four and five million children. More than five million have been forced into refugee camps and at least twelve million have been left without homes. More children than soldiers now die from war. Twelve million of the world's children are growing up homeless.(1) Some eighty million children between the ages of ten and fourteen work for low wages in often dangerous conditions to supply inexpensive products for citizens of more affluent nations. About

thousand American children died from guns. Homicide is now the third leading cause of death of American children ages five to fourteen. Within a fifteen year period as many kids died from guns in America as there were American soldiers killed in the Vietnam War. Almost three million children were reported abused or neglected in 1992, one very eleven seconds. (4)

The statistics do not tell the full story of what is happening to the world's children. Children are victims of many poverties. Spiritual poverty is more difficult to measure, but its devastating effects on the affluent and the impoverished are evident. To be deprived of love, hope, and transcendent meaning is to be robbed of the abundant life which Christ intends for all. All children have a basic need and right to know that they are loved infinitely by God and that God seeks for them a life of joy, hope, and meaning. Children need to experience their identity and worth as both recipients and means of God's grace. What is happening to the world's children represents a sinful devaluing of God's gracious gift of life and a thwarting of God's justice for all humanity.

The state of the world's children challenges The United Methodist Church to evaluate its basic theological grounding, its Wesleyan heritage, and its mission. Responding decisively to the crisis among "the least of these" is to share in the life and mission of the God of the Exodus and Jesus who is making possible new opportunities for bringing good news to the poor and release to the captives.

## **THEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL/MISSIONAL MANDATE**

The plight of children and the impoverished raises critical theological concerns. The Apostle Paul confronts us with the basic challenge: "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us . . ." (Ephesians 5:1) The primary issue is the nature and action of the God whom we imitate. The church is called to imitate and be a sign of the presence of the God revealed in the Scriptures and supremely in Jesus Christ.

The nature and purpose of God are revealed to Moses as One who sees, hears, and knows the sufferings of the oppressed: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them . . ." (Exodus 3:7-8) Throughout the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Prophets, connection with the most vulnerable classes of society including impoverished children is essential to defining the nature of God. In fact, the essential defining character of the God of the Bible as distinguishable from other gods is precisely this God's connection to the vulnerable, especially the "widows and the orphans." (cf. Exodus 22:21-24, Psalm 10:17-18, Psalm 68:4-6, Isaiah 10:1-4, Jeremiah 5:28-29)

Faithfulness to God requires solidarity with and justice for the most vulnerable, the widows and orphans. Relationships of justice, compassion, and mercy toward the poor are more important than cultic practices and are normative expectations of the people of God. "Give justice to the weak and

(Matthew 10:37-39, Luke 14:26-27). He clearly calls for caring for all children as our children. All children are equally loved by God and God seeks the fulfillment of the divine image in every child.

James defines authentic religion in these words: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for the orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." (1:27) As the body of Christ, the church is to be a sign, foretaste, and instrument of God's reign in the world. The church, therefore, must identify with those with whom Christ identifies and to whom he ministers. Indeed, the faithfulness of the church is measured by the presence of and response to "the least of these," especially the children and the poor.

## **METHODISM AND THE POOR**

Methodism was born among the impoverished of eighteenth century England. So significant was John Wesley's ministry with the poor that he affirmed, "And surely never in any age or nation, since the Apostles have those words been so eminently fulfilled, 'the poor have the gospel preached unto them,' as it is at this day." (5) Studies document that the poor were the central focus of the early Methodist movement.(6) Everything Wesley did in leading the Methodist revival was influenced by the impact on the poor--where and to whom he preached, the design of preaching houses, availability of published material, education of children, leadership of the classes and societies. Wesley considered regular visitation of the poor as a necessary spiritual discipline. He would no more neglect regular visitation of the poor than he would miss partaking of the Eucharist. The poor literally accompanied him to his grave. As directed in his last will and testament, he was carried to his grave by six poor people who were paid one pound each. The black drapings used in the Chapel for his memorial service were remade into dresses and distributed to poor women.(7)

Children and their total needs were of particular concern to the early Methodists. Wesley was especially concerned that impoverished children not only learn "to read, write, and cast accounts, but more especially (by God's assistance) to 'know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent'"(8). The curriculum of the Methodist schools included religious instruction, worship, and even fasting as well as strong academics. Methodist preachers were expected to spend time with the children. Whenever a society included ten children, the preachers were to establish a band and meet with them twice a week. Some preachers hesitated on the basis "But I have no gift for this." Wesley's firm response was "Gift or no gift, you are to do it, else you are not called to be a Methodist preacher."(9)

Wesley's commitment to children and the impoverished went beyond friendship and proclamation. He sought to provide holistically for their needs. He provided education, opened free health clinics, established a sewing cooperative for women in poverty, provided a lending agency, opposed slavery, visited the imprisoned and ministered to condemned malefactors. Methodism in the eighteenth century was a movement of the poor, by the poor, and for the poor; and Wesley considered affluence the most serious threat to the continued vitality and faithfulness of the

of the church.

Children are amazingly resilient. Recent studies suggest that the primary sources of the resiliency of children include a supportive community and hope. Loving relationships, hope for the future, and a sustaining value system are necessary for children to flourish and fulfill their God-given potential. All children need to know that they are made in the image of God and loved supremely by God who is present with them and who intends abundant life for them. Jesus Christ welcomes them as an integral part of a community of grace and service. Children of all economic conditions need to experience the gospel.

The crisis among children and impoverished people is, in reality, a spiritual crisis that affects all persons. The growing fear and sense of powerlessness and boredom among the middle class and affluent have roots in the poverty of vision, community, and hope. The "poverty of affluence" and economic poverty are related. Without a challenging vision that includes justice and compassion for the most vulnerable, we become self-absorbed. Studies indicate that attitudes toward wealth are changing and wealth is increasingly seen as "mine" rather than being considered a trust from God. The Biblical witness and our Wesleyan tradition clearly affirm that separation from "the least of these" robs the affluent of abundant life. Relationships of justice and mercy between the wealthy and the impoverished are means of transforming grace to both.

Recent legislation in the United States intensifies the urgency and the opportunity for the church to be in ministry with children and impoverished people. Local, state and federal governments are open to form partnerships with the church. The current political climate makes the prophetic and compassionate voice of the church on behalf of children and the impoverished all the more important. Public policy decisions that affect the children and the impoverished urgently need participation by the church in the local, state, national, and world political arenas. The time is now for the church to become the voice of the voiceless.

In response to the crisis among children and the impoverished and in faithfulness to Jesus Christ, the Council of Bishops launches an Episcopal Initiative focusing on children and poverty. We call upon all segments of The United Methodist Church to be shaped by God's presence with "the least of these." **Ours is the first generation in history to have the capacity to accomplish what has previously only been imaginable. God, through technicians and scientists, has brought the goals of removing and preventing needless suffering within reach. What is needed is a renewed vision of God's reign of justice, generosity, and joy for all people. Being empowered by that vision is the challenge and opportunity before The United Methodist Church and the world.**

## **GOALS OF THE EPISCOPAL INITIATIVE**

The crisis among children and the impoverished and our theological and historical mandates demand more than additional programs or emphases. **Nothing less than the reshaping of The United Methodist Church in response to the God who is among "the least of these" is**

1. Each bishop develop ongoing relationship/friendship with at least one child in poverty and the child's family. Such relationships will be part of our covenant with one another and experiences will be shared in our Covenant Groups at Council meetings.
2. Each bishop contribute financially above the tithe to help children in poverty.
3. Any increases in salary of jurisdictional bishops in the coming quadrennium be used individually or corporately in ministry with children and the impoverished.
4. Immediately following the meeting of the Council, bishops of each Area initiate discussion with the appropriate officials in their states on the impact of recent federal welfare and health care "reform" legislation on children and the impoverished and work for just and compassionate public policy. Where possible, coalitions with other judicatories will be formed.
5. The Council of Bishops devotes a significant part of forthcoming Council meetings to addressing issues and concerns related to children and poverty and to share models of reaching children that are operative in their episcopal areas.
6. Bishops inform Cabinets and Conference leadership of the Episcopal Initiative and request that they join the bishops in forming relationships with children in poverty, contribute financially to alleviate poverty, and initiate dialogue with appropriate local leaders on the needs of children.
7. Covenant to pray daily for the children and the impoverished of the world.
8. During global episcopal visitation, bishops be intentional in assessing the needs of children and spend time interacting with them.

## **ORGANIZING FOR IMPLEMENTING THE INITIATIVE**

Further development and implementation of the Episcopal Initiative requires the approval of the following:

1. The appointment by the Episcopal Initiatives Committee of a task force of no more than seven bishops. The task force shall have the responsibility of guiding and coordinating the development and implementation of the Initiative.
2. The task force shall select a Coordinator/Guide for the Initiative.
3. The task force shall select consultants and/or writer(s) who shall assist in the development of the foundational resource document(s).

- Abingdon Press, 1992), p. 533.
- (8) Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), p. 106.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p. 232.
- (10) See Wesley's "Thoughts upon Methodism", dated August 4, 1787, and his sermon "On God's Vineyard" which was written in 1787 after Wesley visited the societies across England.

**NOTE**

**The above report was adopted unanimously by the Council of Bishops on November 3, 1995. The section "Immediate Action by the Council of Bishops" was referred back to the Task Force for refinement and implementation. Number 4, however, was moved to "Organizing for Implementing the Initiative" for immediate implementation.**

12/13/95

CHR

Bishop Felton  
May will  
receive an  
invite for  
WH Conference  
-jed

orig of all: CHR

cc: cover ltr  
to Jeremy &  
DEC 4 1995

Dennis:  
I strongly  
CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA  
CONFERENCE

endorse an  
invitation  
to Bishop May.  
What are  
chances?

CHR



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
HARRISBURG AREA  
ROOM 214 - 900 SOUTH ARLINGTON AVENUE  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17109-5097  
TELEPHONE: (717) 652-6705

FELTON EDWIN MAY  
RESIDENT BISHOP

December 1, 1995

*File  
to Meth Child  
Street*

Ms. Carol H. Rasco  
Assistant to the President  
for Domestic Policy  
West Wing, 2nd Floor  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Carol:

Thank you again for your help.

Enclosed please find a copy of the final draft of our proposal for an  
Episcopal Initiative on Children and Poverty.

The Council of Bishops voted unanimously to support this initiative.

I understand that there is a forthcoming leadership conference on Youth,  
Drugs and Violence (Crime) to be called by President Clinton.

You know of my interest and passion regarding these matters. If you  
think I can make a contribution to this conference I would be available  
to attend.

May the blessings of this advent season be a gift to you and your  
family.

Grace and Peace,

*Felton Edwin May*  
Felton Edwin May

eh  
enclosure

*file*

**PROPOSAL FOR AN EPISCOPAL INITIATIVE  
ON  
CHILDREN AND POVERTY**

**AUTHORIZATION**

The Council of Bishops, in session April 29 - May 5, 1995, adopted the following resolution presented by the Episcopal Initiatives Committee:

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Malnutrition kills an estimated thirty-five thousand children every day. Approximately ten million children die of poverty-related causes each year. During the last decade, wars have slaughtered two million and disabled between four and five million children. More than five million have been forced into refugee camps and at least twelve million have been left without homes. More children than soldiers now die from war. Twelve million of the world's children are growing up homeless.(1) Some eighty million children between the ages of ten and fourteen work for low wages in often dangerous conditions to supply inexpensive products for citizens of more affluent nations. About one million Asian children labor in cramped quarters, making carpets for sale in the West.(2)

Economic marginalization puts millions of children at risk. In the last ten years the real incomes of approximately eight hundred million people in some forty developing countries has been reduced. In Latin America, the drop in incomes has been as much as 20 percent. In sub-Saharan Africa the decrease has often been even more severe. Cuts in essential social services have meant health centers without doctors and medication, schools without books and teachers, family planning clinics without staff and supplies.(3)

The growing disparity in the distribution of basic resources threatens to drastically increase the number of poor people and intensify their suffering. A fifth of the world's people now share less than 1.5 percent of world income. Those most at risk in this growing inequity are the children. They are the most vulnerable to simple disease, injury, illiteracy, neglect, malnutrition and abuse. The opportunity to close the gap for children now exists; but the door is not likely to remain open for very long because the expense increases with each year of inadequate action.

Accompanying the economic disparity and violence is the ever-present threat of diseases and epidemics. Although progress has been made in the prevention of childhood diseases, new threats are emerging. AIDS, for example, is creating orphans around the world. World-wide, as many women as men are contracting the AIDS virus. In Africa, for example, women now account for 55 percent of all new cases of HIV. The estimates of children orphaned by war and AIDS in Uganda alone run from six hundred thousand to 1.2 million.

An increasing number of children in the United States suffer from the demons of violence, poverty, neglect, and inadequate health care. The gap between the rich and poor in the United States is wider than any time since World War II. The U. S. is twice as affluent as it was in 1964 when child poverty was actually declining. Between 1979 and 1989, child poverty increased by 21 percent while the GNP grew by more than one fourth. The top 20 percent of American households increased their share of the national income by more than one hundred and sixteen billion dollars between 1967 and 1992. The poorest 20 percent now have only 5 percent of the nation's income. According to the Economic Policy Institute, the upper 10 percent of U.S. families gained as much income in the 1980s, \$543 billion, as did the remaining 90 percent. Crime, violence, retribution, neglect, and despair are bred and nurtured in the soil of America's growing economic disparity.

The United States now has the highest rate of poverty in more than thirty years. Approximately 15,700,000 American children live in poverty, nine million lack basic health care, and preschool vaccinations lag behind some third world nations. Recent "welfare reform" legislation, many social scientists agree, will only intensify the poverty among children; and the adverse consequences of health care "reform" are most likely to fall on children, especially impoverished children. At the time technology and science have the means of treating and preventing many diseases, those resources are less available to the most vulnerable people, the children and the impoverished.

Every two hours a child is killed by gunfire in the United States. Between 1967 and 1991, fifty thousand American children died from guns. Homicide is now the third leading cause of death of American children ages five to fourteen. Within a fifteen year period as many kids died from guns in America as there were American soldiers killed in the Vietnam War. Almost three million children were reported abused or neglected in 1992, one very eleven seconds. (4)

The statistics do not tell the full story of what is happening to the world's children. Children are victims of many poverties. Spiritual poverty is more difficult to measure, but its devastating effects on the affluent and the impoverished are evident. To be deprived of love, hope, and transcendent meaning is to be robbed of the abundant life which Christ intends for all. All children have a basic need and right to know that they are loved infinitely by God and that God seeks for them a life of joy, hope, and meaning. Children need to experience their identity and worth as both recipients and means of God's grace. What is happening to the world's children

represents a sinful devaluing of God's gracious gift of life and a thwarting of God's justice for all humanity.

The state of the world's children challenges The United Methodist Church to evaluate its basic theological grounding, its Wesleyan heritage, and its mission. Responding decisively to the crisis among "the least of these" is to share in the life and mission of the God of the Exodus and Jesus who is making possible new opportunities for bringing good news to the poor and release to the captives.

## **THEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL/MISSIONAL MANDATE**

The plight of children and the impoverished raises critical theological concerns. The Apostle Paul confronts us with the basic challenge: "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us . . ." (Ephesians 5:1) The primary issue is the nature and action of the God whom we imitate. The church is called to imitate and be a sign of the presence of the God revealed in the Scriptures and supremely in Jesus Christ.

The nature and purpose of God are revealed to Moses as One who sees, hears, and knows the sufferings of the oppressed: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them . . ." (Exodus 3:7-8) Throughout the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Prophets, connection with the most vulnerable classes of society including impoverished children is essential to defining the nature of God. In fact, the essential defining character of the God of the Bible as distinguishable from other gods is precisely this God's connection to the vulnerable, especially the "widows and the orphans." (cf. Exodus 22:21-24, Psalm 10:17-18, Psalm 68:4-6, Isaiah 10:1-4, Jeremiah 5:28-29)

Faithfulness to God requires solidarity with and justice for the most vulnerable, the widows and orphans. Relationships of justice, compassion, and mercy toward the poor are more important than cultic practices and are normative expectations of the people of God. "Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked" (Psalm 82:1-4). These words from Isaiah are typical of the prophets' definition of faithfulness to God:

Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and calling of convocation--I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them. When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (1:12-17)

The tithe is a means of caring for the poor. Deuteronomy makes clear that the tithe is intended as aid to the poor: "When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year (which is the year of the tithe), giving it to the Levites (the landless tribe), the aliens, the orphans, and the widows so that they may eat their fill within your towns, then you shall say before the Lord your God: 'I have removed the sacred portion from the house and I have given it to the Levites, the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows, in accordance with your entire

commandment that you commanded me; I have neither transgressed nor forgotten any of your commandments." (26:12-15)

In Hebrew Scripture God is the one who executes justice for the widow, orphan and stranger. God is not defined in terms of abstract holiness, or omnipotence or omniscience but by relationship to the vulnerable. It is this God we are to "imitate". Any other god is an idol.

This God who is defined by relationship to the vulnerable is incarnate in Jesus Christ. Matthew depicts Jesus as a child born of Mary before marriage and adopted graciously by Joseph who thereby becomes a prototype of justice and mercy. Matthew depicts Jesus as an illegal alien and refugee in Egypt, thus combining the characteristics of impoverished child and of the alien or immigrant.

In Luke, Jesus is born in a manger among the homeless. He begins his ministry in Nazareth with the words from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."(4:18-19) Jesus associated with "outcasts and sinners," the marginalized of society. He was executed between two criminals and buried in a borrowed tomb. He so closely identified with the poor and "the least of these" that ministry done unto them is done unto him (Matthew 25:31-46).

The Gospels identify the reign of God with children. Mark's Gospel declares:"And taking a child he set it in the midst of them, and embracing it he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one of these in my name, receives me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but that which sends me'."(9:36-37) It is for them that the reign of justice, generosity and joy is especially directed (Matthew 18:1-5). Jesus strongly rebukes those who would hinder and thwart the divine will for children (Mark 10:13-16). He breaks down the distinction between "our " children and the others (Matthew 10:37-39, Luke 14:26-27). He clearly calls for caring for all children as our children. All children are equally loved by God and God seeks the fulfillment of the divine image in every child.

James defines authentic religion in these words: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for the orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." (1:27) As the body of Christ, the church is to be a sign, foretaste, and instrument of God's reign in the world. The church, therefore, must identify with those with whom Christ identifies and to whom he ministers. Indeed, the faithfulness of the church is measured by the presence of and response to "the least of these," especially the children and the poor.

## **METHODISM AND THE POOR**

Methodism was born among the impoverished of eighteenth century England. So significant was John Wesley's ministry with the poor that he affirmed, "And surely never in any age or nation, since the Apostles have those words been so eminently fulfilled, 'the poor have the gospel preached unto them,' as it is at this day." (5) Studies document that the poor were the central focus of the early Methodist movement.(6) Everything Wesley did in leading the Methodist revival was influenced by the impact on the poor--where and to whom he preached, the design of preaching houses, availability of published material, education of children, leadership of the classes and

societies. Wesley considered regular visitation of the poor as a necessary spiritual discipline. He would no more neglect regular visitation of the poor than he would miss partaking of the Eucharist. The poor literally accompanied him to his grave. As directed in his last will and testament, he was carried to his grave by six poor people who were paid one pound each. The black drapings used in the Chapel for his memorial service were remade into dresses and distributed to poor women.(7)

Children and their total needs were of particular concern to the early Methodists. Wesley was especially concerned that impoverished children not only learn "to read, write, and cast accounts, but more especially (by God's assistance) to 'know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent'"(8). The curriculum of the Methodist schools included religious instruction, worship, and even fasting as well as strong academics. Methodist preachers were expected to spend time with the children. Whenever a society included ten children, the preachers were to establish a band and meet with them twice a week. Some preachers hesitated on the basis "But I have no gift for this." Wesley's firm response was "Gift or no gift, you are to do it, else you are not called to be a Methodist preacher."(9)

Wesley's commitment to children and the impoverished went beyond friendship and proclamation. He sought to provide holistically for their needs. He provided education, opened free health clinics, established a sewing cooperative for women in poverty, provided a lending agency, opposed slavery, visited the imprisoned and ministered to condemned malefactors. Methodism in the eighteenth century was a movement of the poor, by the poor, and for the poor; and Wesley considered affluence the most serious threat to the continued vitality and faithfulness of the Methodist movement.(10)

Wesley was convinced that the poor are means of grace. He wrote in his Journal, April 15, 1745, "Religion must not go from the greatest to the least, or the power would appear to be of men." He found the gospel of God's universal grace validated in the poor. The response of the poor to the proclamation of the gospel of prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace was a primary source of Wesley's own assurance of salvation.

Francis Asbury shared the Wesleyan evangelical zeal for the poor. He warned the preachers that faithfulness requires that they be among the poor. The building of plain preaching houses and focus on the less economically well-to-do continued until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then American Methodists sought to compete with other churches for the "weightier" people, the more wealthy. Preaching houses, homes, and camp meetings as centers of liturgical and congregational life were replaced by more ornate buildings built on main streets. Gradually the church distanced itself from the poor, who became objects of mission rather than constitutive to the life of the church. That trend has continued to this day and the poor are seldom present in our worship and fellowship.

The United Methodist Church in the United States is experiencing an alarming loss of not only impoverished children but middle class children as well. The decline in church school enrollment and attendance among children in United Methodist churches precisely at a time when children are increasingly at risk physically and spiritually is a judgment upon us and a call to immediate action. The American church may be fulfilling Wesley's fear of the consequences of affluence and separation from the impoverished: Having the form of religion but lacking its power.

A church separated from "the least of these" is separated from the source of its identity and power, the God who is among the most vulnerable as the Crucified and Risen One. Receiving the gifts of

the children and the impoverished, therefore, is a means by which God restores and brings life. The state of the world's children and poor people challenges "the people called Methodist" to reclaim their identity and mission as a sign, foretaste, and instrument of the coming of God's reign of justice, generosity, and joy.

## THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The crisis among the world's children and impoverished people represents a *kairos* opportunity for The United Methodist Church. Many agencies, governments, and individuals are paralyzed by fear and despair in the face of the overwhelming needs. Yet signs of hope abound for 'those who have eyes to see and ears to hear'. For the first time in history it is actually possible to create a world in which all children share in at least the basic opportunities for life. The technical resources are available to protect children from the most common diseases, to provide them with the necessities of food, shelter, clothing, and health care. For the most part, we know what to do and how to do it. What is lacking are the vision and the moral will. Vision and moral will are the responsibilities of the church.

Children are amazingly resilient. Recent studies suggest that the primary sources of the resiliency of children include a supportive community and hope. Loving relationships, hope for the future, and a sustaining value system are necessary for children to flourish and fulfill their God-given potential.

All children need to know that they are made in the image of God and loved supremely by God who is present with them and who intends abundant life for them. Jesus Christ welcomes them as an integral part of a community of grace and service. Children of all economic conditions need to experience the gospel.

The crisis among children and impoverished people is, in reality, a spiritual crisis that affects all persons. The growing fear and sense of powerlessness and boredom among the middle class and affluent have roots in the poverty of vision, community, and hope. The "poverty of affluence" and economic poverty are related. Without a challenging vision that includes justice and compassion for the most vulnerable, we become self-absorbed. Studies indicate that attitudes toward wealth are changing and wealth is increasingly seen as "mine" rather than being considered a trust from God. The Biblical witness and our Wesleyan tradition clearly affirm that separation from "the least of these" robs the affluent of abundant life. Relationships of justice and mercy between the wealthy and the impoverished are means of transforming grace to both.

Recent legislation in the United States intensifies the urgency and the opportunity for the church to be in ministry with children and impoverished people. Local, state and federal governments are open to form partnerships with the church. The current political climate makes the prophetic and compassionate voice of the church on behalf of children and the impoverished all the more important. Public policy decisions that affect the children and the impoverished urgently need participation by the church in the local, state, national, and world political arenas. The time is now for the church to become the voice of the voiceless.

In response to the crisis among children and the impoverished and in faithfulness to Jesus Christ, the Council of Bishops launches an Episcopal Initiative focusing on children and poverty. We call upon all segments of The United Methodist Church to be shaped by God's presence with "the

least of these." Ours is the first generation in history to have the capacity to accomplish what has previously only been imaginable. God, through technicians and scientists, has brought the goals of removing and preventing needless suffering within reach. What is needed is a renewed vision of God's reign of justice, generosity, and joy for all people. Being empowered by that vision is the challenge and opportunity before The United Methodist Church and the world.

## **GOALS OF THE EPISCOPAL INITIATIVE**

The crisis among children and the impoverished and our theological and historical mandates demand more than additional programs or emphases. **Nothing less than the reshaping of The United Methodist Church in response to the God who is among "the least of these" is required.** The evaluation of everything the church is and does in the light of the impact on children and the impoverished is the goal. The anticipated result is the development of forms of congregational and connectional life and mission that will more faithfully reflect and serve the God revealed in Jesus Christ. Communities of faith shaped by God's presence with the most vulnerable represent alternatives to the values and visions of the prevailing culture.

**The primary goal is evangelization, the proclamation in word and deed of the gospel of God's redeeming, reconciling, and transforming grace in Jesus Christ to and with the children and those oppressed by poverty.** The United Methodist Church is called to be a means of grace to the vulnerable. The church must also be open and hospitable to God's transforming grace *through* the vulnerable. Receiving the gifts of the children and the impoverished will be a means by which God evangelizes the contemporary church. Evangelization involves incorporation into the community of grace those who are marginalized; therefore, the church must go beyond social service delivery. It must nurture and build just, hospitable, and compassionate communities in which the least have access to God's table of abundance. The focus is upon communicating and living the gospel of Jesus Christ with all children and intentionally reaching out to impoverished persons as recipients and means of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

**Providing resources for understanding the crisis among children and the impoverished and enabling the church to respond is also a goal of the Initiative.** Components of the resources will include the following: description of the crisis, theological/historical/mission grounding, and strategies for faithful response by local churches and connectional entities. Among the questions to be answered in the resources are these: What is the nature and extent of the crisis among children and the impoverished? In what way is the crisis a theological crisis for The United Methodist Church? What realities put children at risk? What are the causes of poverty? How extensive is poverty around the world, especially among children? What are the implications for The United Methodist Church of God's special presence among the vulnerable? How can The United Methodist Church more adequately incorporate children and the impoverished in its life and mission? How can the church respond to current victims of poverty? How can the church prevent poverty and avoid children being put at risk? What must local churches, church institutions, and connectional agencies be and do to respond to the crisis among children and the impoverished? What is the relationship between economic poverty and "the poverty of the rich"? How can the resources of the impoverished and the resources of the affluent be brought together for the fulfillment of God's purposes? How can the church be a prophetic presence in the formation of public policy related to children and the impoverished?

## **IMMEDIATE ACTION BY THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS**

The Council of Bishops is requested to approve the following actions to be implemented immediately:

1. Each bishop develop ongoing relationship/friendship with at least one child in poverty and the child's family. Such relationships will be part of our covenant with one another and experiences will be shared in our Covenant Groups at Council meetings.
2. Each bishop contribute financially above the tithe to help children in poverty.
3. Any increases in salary of jurisdictional bishops in the coming quadrennium be used individually or corporately in ministry with children and the impoverished.
4. Immediately following the meeting of the Council, bishops of each Area initiate discussion with the appropriate officials in their states on the impact of recent federal welfare and health care "reform" legislation on children and the impoverished and work for just and compassionate public policy. Where possible, coalitions with other jurisdictions will be formed.
5. The Council of Bishops devotes a significant part of forthcoming Council meetings to addressing issues and concerns related to children and poverty and to share models of reaching children that are operative in their episcopal areas.
6. Bishops inform Cabinets and Conference leadership of the Episcopal Initiative and request that they join the bishops in forming relationships with children in poverty, contribute financially to alleviate poverty, and initiate dialogue with appropriate local leaders on the needs of children.
7. Covenant to pray daily for the children and the impoverished of the world.
8. During global episcopal visitation, bishops be intentional in assessing the needs of children and spend time interacting with them.

## **ORGANIZING FOR IMPLEMENTING THE INITIATIVE**

Further development and implementation of the Episcopal Initiative requires the approval of the following:

1. The appointment by the Episcopal Initiatives Committee of a task force of no more than seven bishops. The task force shall have the responsibility of guiding and coordinating the development and implementation of the Initiative.
2. The task force shall select a Coordinator/Guide for the Initiative.
3. The task force shall select consultants and/or writer(s) who shall assist in the development of the foundational resource document(s).

4. Approval of a budget for the work of the task force and implementation of the Initiative in the amount of \$100,000 ( \$30,000 - Consultative Services, \$60,000 - Production of Resources, \$10,000 - Project Coordinator)
5. The task force shall develop and facilitate a format for hearings to be held in each episcopal Area during September--October 1996.

The following represents a time line for the development and implementation of the Initiative:

- Appointment of Task Force, November, 1995.
- Selection of a Coordinator/Guide, Consultants, Writer(s), January 1996.
- Hearings and consultations in Episcopal Areas, September/October 1996.
- Completion of Foundation Document and Further Strategies, November '96 through March '97.
- Presentation of Foundation Document and Action Plan to the Council of Bishops, Spring 1997.
- Implementation by local churches and connectional entities, Spring 1997--

*Submitted to the Episcopal Initiatives Committee by Task Force on Children and the Poor: Bishops Sharon Rader, Chairperson, Kenneth Carder, Felton May, Jack Meadors, Fritz Mutti, and Alfred Norris.*

## ENDNOTES

- (1) *The State of the World's Children*, published by UNICEF, 1995.
- (2) Pharis J. Harvey, "Where Children Work: Child Servitude in the Global Economy", *Christian Century*, April 5, 1995.
- (3) *The State of the World's Children*, 1995.
- (4) Marian Wright Edelman, "Cease Fire! Stopping the Gun War Against Children in The United States", *The Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, Winter, 1995.
- (5) *Works of John Wesley*, Jackson edition, Volume VI, p. 308.
- (6) See Theodore Jennings, *Good News to the Poor* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990) and M. Douglas Meeks (editor), *The Portion of the Poor* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).
- (7) Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), p. 533.
- (8) Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), p. 106.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p. 232.
- (10) See Wesley's "Thoughts upon Methodism", dated August 4, 1787, and his sermon "On God's Vineyard" which was written in 1787 after Wesley visited the societies across England.



# Bishop: Church can help children in poverty

By **DIANE HUIE BALAY**  
 Associate Editor

Millions of children worldwide are suffering hunger, abuse, ignorance and spiritual deprivation as a result of poverty and related causes, says United Methodist Bishop Kenneth L. Carder.

In an impassioned speech to the United Methodist Council of Bishops at their recent meeting at Lake Junaluska, N.C. Bishop Carder lamented the suffering and deaths of these children and challenged the bishops and the church to do something about it.

Bishop Carder was speaking for an episcopal task force that included Bishops Sharon Rader, Felton May, Jack Meadors, Fritz Mutti, Alfred Norris and Carder. Bishop Rader chaired the task force.

Pointing out the growing inequity in the distribution of the world's wealth, Bishop Carder said that 20 percent of the world's people "now share less than 1.5 percent of world income."

Children are most vulnerable to this economic disparity, he said. Poverty breeds disease, injury, illiteracy, neglect, malnutrition and abuse, the bishop continued.

U.S. children are not immune from these dangers, he said.

"The gap between rich and poor in the United States is wider than at any time since World War II.

"The U.S. is twice as affluent as it was in 1964 when child poverty was actually declining.

"Between 1979 and 1989, child poverty increased by 21 percent while

the Gross National Product grew by more than one fourth."

Spiritual poverty is another problem, Bishop Carder said, although it is more difficult to measure.

"All children have a basic need and right to know that they are loved infinitely by God and that God seeks for them a life of joy, hope and meaning," he said.

Quoting New Testament references, the bishop depicted Jesus as born of an unwed mother, homeless in Bethlehem, an alien and a refugee in Egypt who later associated with "outcasts and sinners," the marginalized of society.

"He was executed between two criminals and buried in a borrowed tomb," the bishop said.

Bishop Carder reminded his listeners of John Wesley's work with the poor and of how Wesley was especially concerned that impoverished children "not only learn to read, write and cast accounts" but more especially to "know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent."

"Gradually," the bishop said, by the middle of the 19th century, "the [Methodist] church distanced itself from the poor, who became objects of mission rather than constitutive to the life of the church. That trend has continued to this day, and the poor are seldom present in our worship and fellowship."

Bishop Carder said the task force sees the crisis among the world's children as a challenge and an opportunity for the church.

"Many agencies, governments and

## About children and poverty

According to United Methodist Bishop Kenneth Carder (see related story at left):

- \* Some 10 million children die each year as a result of poverty and violence.
- \* More children than soldiers are killed in war.
- \* During the last decade, wars slaughtered 2 million and disabled between 4 and 5 million children.
- \* 12 million children worldwide are homeless.
- \* 80 million children between ages 10 and 14 work for low wages in often dangerous conditions to supply inexpensive products to citizens of more affluent nations.
- \* 1 million Asian children labor in cramped quarters, making carpets for sale in the West.
- \* In Uganda, some 600,000 to 1.2 million children are orphaned by war and AIDS.
- \* In the United States, 15.7 million children live in poverty; 9 million lack basic health care.
- \* 50,000 American children died from gunfire between 1967 and 1991.



PHOTO BY SKJOLD

For the first time in history, it is possible to create a world in which all children, including these on an urban playground, have access to the basic opportunities of life, says Bishop Kenneth L. Carder (see related story at left).

which all children share in at least the basic opportunities for life."

The technical resources are available, he said.

"What is lacking are the vision and the moral will. And those are the

individuals are paralyzed by fear and despair in the face of the overwhelming needs," he said. "Yet signs of hope abound for 'those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.'

"For the first time in history it is