

Minutes of the
Evangelical Renewal Fellowship Board Meeting
Exeter UMC, Exeter, NH
28 March 2009

1. The Board Meeting was well attended with 32 participants including our guest speaker, Rev. David Midwood, accompanied by James Marshall. The list of attendees appears in attachment 1.
2. Executive Coordinator Pastor Tom Bentum started the meeting with wishes of welcome and an open session of prayer followed by singing of inspirational hymns.
3. Rev. David Midwood, President of Vision New England next presented an outstanding and inspiration message on the findings of "The Recent Convert Study" conducted by Vision New England in 2007. The findings of this study should be of great interest to all New England UM pastors and their congregations. A summary of "The Recent Convert Study" findings appear in attachment 2.
4. Tom Bentum presented his Executive Coordinator Report to the board. He highlighted the work of our new reform effort led by Pastor Brian Wood. This work led to the presentation by ERF to the 2008 NEAC of a resolution encouraging churches to make evangelism a high priority. This resolution did go to the floor of the Annual Conference and was passed with some minor changes. The full Executive Coordinator Report appears in attachment 3.
5. Gail Ciesluk, Treasurer, next presented a financial report for the period 25 August 2008 to 27 March 2009. The full report appears as attachment 4. A full financial statement will be prepared in early July 2009 for the period covering 1 July 2007 to 31 June 2009 covering the current Treasurer's full term of office.
6. Pastor Tom Bentum presented the proposed slate of officers for the period 2009-2011 from the nominating committee. The proposed slate was approved by the membership. The elected officers were:

Executive Coordinator, **Tom Bentum**
Secretary/Treasurer/Membership, **Gail Ciesluk**
Renewal Conference, **Tom Bentum**
Prayer Coordinator, **Robbin Grill**
Communications, **Walter Ciesluk**
Reform, **Brian Wood**
At Large, **Mike Pike**
7. Tom Bentum presented the proposed Resolution on Prayer which ERF has submitted to the 2009 NE Annual Conference. The resolution appears in attachment 5.
8. John Lomperis, Harvard Divinity School, formerly of IRD, presented a summary of the constitutional amendments which will be coming up at all 2009 Annual Conferences for discussion and ratification. His presentation included a discussion of the motivation and issues involved and some recommendations on how to vote and respond to these issues. A summary and details of the material he presented appears in attachment 6 and 7 respectively.

9. The ERF members voted to accept an invitation from the Committee on Church and Society to meet in 16 May to continue the dialog on the issue of homosexuality in the church. Pastor Dan Weaver will prepare a draft statement reflecting the evangelical stance on this issue for this meeting.
10. The ERF members approved the expenditure of up to \$1000 for an attempt to secure, either Rev. Tim Wilkins, Cross Ministry or Rev. David Midwood, Vision New England, to conduct a Learning Session at NEAC 2009. Several attendees indicated that they would make donations to support this initiative.

Respectably submitted by

Gail Ciesluk
ERF Secretary

Attachment 1

Attendees

1	James	Batchelder	
2	Forrest	Bateman	
3	Bill	Beddie	
4	Tom	Bentum	Member
5	Linda	Booth	
6	Gail	Ciesluk	Member
7	Walt	Ciesluk	Member
8	Charles	Clement	
9	Rachel	Clement	
10	Carolee	Davison	
11	Gregory	Doak	
12	Nancy	Elliott	Member
13	Eric	Feustel	
14	Neil	Gastonguay	
15	Barbara	Harris	
16	Bob	Jackson	Member
17	Dave	Japikse	
18	Betty	Jenks	
19	Tom	Kyle	Member
20	John	Loker	
21	James	Marshall	Guest
22	David	Midwood	Guest Speaker
23	Stephen	Mott	Member
24	Cindy	Nickerson	Member
25	Laurie	Perkins	Member
26	Phil	Perkins	Member
27	Mike	Pike	Member
28	John	Robbins	
29	Arthur	Savage	
30	John	Thorpe	
31	Dan	Weaver	Member
32	Ella May	Weaver	Member

Attachment 2

The Vision New England Recent Convert Study

The purpose of this research project was to measure the most effective forms of evangelism in New England today. Recognizing that God's goal in evangelism is spiritual fruit (measured in converts), our goal was to determine what efforts, programs or factors most often produce Christian converts.

To accomplish this, we began with a convenience sample of 354 congregations, drawn from churches considered to be the best prospects to have adult converts and willing to cooperate with a Vision New England study. This list was balanced to provide a good representation of the various states, urban/suburban/rural congregations, and a variety of ethnic and denominational backgrounds.

Interviewers from a professional market research firm, who were all Christian believers, called the churches and asked to speak with the pastor. Interviewers then asked pastors for the names and phone numbers of up to six recent converts. Telephone calls were made to recent converts, and a ten-minute questionnaire was administered. We obtained 196 qualified interviews with recent converts.

TOP 12 Discoveries

1. The Power of Relationships

For 71% relationship with a caring Christian friend, neighbor, coworker, or family member, is the single most important factor in seeing a person come to a living faith in Christ.

2. Conversion Process

People come to faith in Christ over a period of time reported 86%.

32% over several months to a year

54% journey to salvation over several years

14% one point in time conversion

3. God is Reaching All Generations with the Gospel

Recent converts came from all age groups in survey population.

GenY 21%

GenX 36%

Boomers 34%

Seniors 9%

4. A Major Disconnect

80% of churches list evangelism as one of their top three priorities. Less than 2% of New England congregations experience ongoing adult conversion evangelism taking place.

5. Church Service

On site experience plays a major role (second only to personal relationship) in conversion for 63%, especially in smaller churches.

49% meeting with pastor

45% class for adults

43% coming to church with a special need or crisis

6. Alpha's New England Impact

28% of the new converts said they were reached through the Alpha course. Alpha appeared to be more

often found in denominational churches rather than non-denominational churches. Alpha was more often found in suburban than urban or rural churches.

7. Effectiveness of Classic Approaches

Only 14% of converts are coming to faith in Christ in one time conversion event experiences. Previous classic methods of gospel presentation are not as fruitful today as personal relationships & lifestyle witness.

8. Educational and Economic Factors

People of all educational levels, including well educated, are coming to faith in Jesus. People from all income levels are finding new life in Christ.

9. Church Involvement of Converts

77% of the new converts report attending church at least four times a month. Only 23% identify themselves as attending church less than four times a month.

10. Mercy Ministries Help Hurting Find Christ

A significant number of new converts report they became open to spiritual truth when they experienced a life crisis. The specific issues are diverse: loss of a job, death of a child, death of a spouse, illness, divorce, financial need, hard times, despair, grief, and depression. Mercy ministries that reach hurting people can help them find salvation.

11. The Pastor's Role: A High Priority

The influence of the pastor is absolutely critical in the process of evangelism. The pastor leads the way in personal relationship and example. Our survey results found pastoral leadership especially important in reaching younger adults. It is doubtful a church culture of evangelism can prevail without enthusiastic pastoral leadership.

12. Spiritual Seekers

A group of respondents reported they were simply searching for something. They were seeking spiritual resources or answers for their lives. This group represents all the age groups, demographic and income levels. People, who may have had negative experiences with a Christian or church, may be very open to friendships that connect with their spiritual search.

For more information on the Vision New England Convert Study or to purchase a copy call 978-929-9800 x 332 or email: pmcgowan@VisionNewEngland.org

The Recent Convert Study is available for \$10 each plus cost of postage/handling.

Attachment 3

Executive Coordinator Report:

Thomas Bentum
Evangelical Renewal Fellowship
Board Meeting, March 27, 2009
Exeter, New Hampshire

The highlight for me this past year was the work of our new reform effort led by Brian Wood. In the fall of 2007 I sent out a call for all those who wished to work in the area of reform to meet in Manchester for the day. A group gathered and we decided to submit two resolutions; one on reinstating Gordon-Conwell and the other encouraging churches to make evangelism a high priority. The bishop asked us to not move forward with the resolution for fear of getting a negative vote and killing the work being done by him and the Board of Ordained Ministry for reinstatement of the seminary. We agreed and we did not ask for a vote on the resolution. We felt our effort was indeed a success because the resolution was still printed in the Annual Conference booklet making everyone aware of the problem and it put some pressure on conference leadership to take this matter seriously.

The resolution on evangelism did go to the floor of the Annual Conference and, with some changes made by the members, it passed. Again I felt this was a success, not that we were able to make churches now do evangelism, but that the issue was raised and discussed and moved us as an annual conference, even if only a fraction, in the right direction. We must not tire of the sometimes seemingly little pushes and shoves we are able to do because we do not know where our faithfulness will take us. That is in God's hands.

We once again met in January of this year to discuss reform. I was pleased with the amount of interest and commitment shown to this task. We are only presenting one resolution this year and that will be on making prayer a priority. Most of our work will be in educating members of Annual Conference on the amendments coming from General Conference and working to defeat those dealing with restructuring General Conference and the one dealing with church membership. This will be a new task for us and it will take a different strategy than passing a resolution.

This year we are trying a new format for our board meeting. It will now be a one day Saturday event with worship and a speaker in the morning and a board meeting in the afternoon. I think this will accomplish what we need to do as a fellowship but we will need to evaluate it as we always do. The three important parts of our fellowship at this time are our annual board meeting, lunch at Annual Conference and our reform team work. Those three things will continue to be where I put my energy in the coming year.

Attachment 4

**ERF Treasurer's Report
27 March 2009**

Net worth

Net worth

As of 8/25/2008

As of 3/27/2009

Account	Total
Assets	
Bank and Cash Accounts	
LFCSB ERF Checking	816.79
LFCSB ERF Savings	565.95
Total Bank and Cash Accounts	1,382.74
Total Assets	1,382.74
Net Worth	1,382.74

Account	Total
Assets	
Bank and Cash Accounts	
LFCSB ERF Checking	943.26
LFCSB ERF Savings	607.73
Total Bank and Cash Accounts	1,550.99
Total Assets	1,550.99
Net Worth	1,550.99

Income and spending

8/28/2008 through 3/27/2009

Subcategory	Total
Income Categories	
BD Mtg. registration 28Mar09	285.00
Donation 2009	15.00
Investment Income	
Interest	1.78
Total Investment Income	1.78
Membership Dues (2008-2009)	60.00
Total Income Categories	361.78
Expense Categories	
Annual Conference 2009	65.00
Internet Service	150.00
Postage	42.00
Renewal 2008 Cancellation Expenses	
Speaker	(75.00)
Total Renewal 2008 Cancellation Expenses	(75.00)
Secretarial Expenses	11.53
Total Expense Categories	193.53
Grand Total	168.25

Attachment 5

RESOLUTION ON PRAYER

Submitter: Alan Grill on behalf of the Evangelical Renewal Fellowship

Whereas "The effective prayer of a righteous person can accomplish much". James 5:16

Whereas we are called on to "Pray without ceasing" 1st Thessalonians 5:17;

Whereas we can "... with confidence draw near to the Throne of Grace..." Hebrews 4:16;

Whereas God has promised if" .. We humble ourselves and pray and seek His face ... He will hear our prayers ..." 2nd Chronicles 7:14.

Be it resolved:

That we, The New England Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church be in an intentional "Season of Prayer and Fasting";

That our churches create opportunities and programs to promote prayer and fasting for our congregations;

That these programs can include where and when appropriate other churches in the conference, and/or communities as well as the public at large, and where necessary and feasible hold these events in venues other than the church;

That the conference provide resources, where and when necessary, to enable churches to fulfill this Resolution.

Attachment 6

THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Dear Fellow Annual Conference Delegate,

This year at Annual Conference we will be voting on a number of proposed amendments to The United Methodist Church's Constitution. We, _____, respectfully offer the following guide for your consideration. Your role in this process is very important, and we look forward to your full participation in the debate. Thank you.

- | | | | |
|-------|---|---------|---|
| I. | This proposed amendment sounds benign, but is in fact an attempt by homosexual advocacy groups to circumvent the church's teachings on the practice of homosexuality. Its passage would lead to more church trials and continued rancor over the practice of homosexuality. (Vote No) | X. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| II. | This proposed amendment calls all organizations in the UMC to adopt ethics and conflict of interest policies. (Vote Yes) | XI. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| III. | This is the first of 23 proposed amendments regarding the Worldwide Nature of the UMC. All of these amendments would lead to another costly layer of church bureaucracy, separate the US church from the vital and growing Central Conferences, and lead to the weakening of our Connectional system. We encourage you to "no" on all of these amendments and we have noted that below with the acronym "WWN-UMC (Vote No)" throughout the remainder of this guide. | XII. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| IV. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) | XIII. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| V. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) | XIV. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| VI. | This proposed amendment would allow General Conference to provide for a "transitional" period for newly created annual, missionary, or provisional annual conferences, not to exceed two quadrennia, during which such conferences would be represented at General and regional conferences <u>on other than a proportional</u> basis. This could codify the unfortunate way that the Cote d'Ivoire was brought into the Church, delaying their proper representation levels for a maximum of two quadrennia. (Vote No) | XV. | This proposed amendment to Par. 32 BOD would reduce the minimum period that a person must be an active member of the UMC before he/she can be elected as a delegate to Annual Conference. (Vote Yes) |
| VII. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) | XVI. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| VIII. | This proposed amendment would ensure that church membership is open to all without regard to race, <u>gender</u> or status. (adds gender) (Vote Yes) | XVII. | This proposed amendment to Par. 33 BOD would add the laity on the Committee on Investigation to those who can vote on ordination and character of clergy at Annual Conferences. (Vote Yes) |
| IX. | This amendment would ensure a minimum basis of support for the election of bishops at jurisdictional conferences. (Vote Yes) | XVIII. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XIX. | This proposed amendment to Par. 35 BOD would allow all clergy members, including provisional members and local pastors who meet educational requirements to vote for delegates to General, Jurisdictional, or Central Conferences. (Vote Yes) |
| | | XX. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXI. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXII. | This proposed amendment to Par. 37 BOD would add the Church in Bermuda to the Baltimore-Washington Conference. (Vote Yes) |
| | | XXIII. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXIV. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXV. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXVI. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXVII. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXVIII. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXIX. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXX. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXXI. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |
| | | XXXII. | WWN-UMC (Vote No) |

Attachment 7

I. Constitutional Amendment #1: change'4 as follows:

Inclusiveness of the Church - The United Methodist Church is a part of the church universal, which is one Body in Christ. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth **and that we are in ministry to all**. All persons ~~without regard to race, color, national origin, status or economic condition~~ shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, **and** upon baptism be admitted as baptized members. ~~and~~ **All persons**, upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith **and relationship in Jesus Christ, shall be eligible** to become professing members in any local church in the connection. In the United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body ~~of the Church because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition~~.

2. Guidelines adopted for Global Restructuring:

Worldwide Nature UMC #24

Resolved: That the Council of Bishops and Connectional Table jointly appoint a study committee of twenty (20) persons representative of all geographical regions of the church. This committee shall include persons from the prior committee. -This committee shall report back to the 2012 General Conference with legislation possibly altering the Book of Discipline so that the United States would be one Regional Conference out of many within the worldwide United Methodist Church. The study will include consultation with the Affiliated Autonomous, Affiliated United Churches and GCFA. Cost for this study will be borne by the Episcopal Fund and the General Administration Fund. The study will consider the following principles:

A. Basic Guidelines

1. "The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ;" Matthew 28: 19 further clarifies that this mission is to "all nations." The United Methodist Church must find a way to better organize itself for this global mission.
2. The unity of the United Methodist Church is a gift given by God; any proposed restructuring changes of the United Methodist Church must ensure that the church is united by our mission, our doctrine, and our discipline.
3. In order for the Church to be effective in diverse locales, some freedom to vary within the Church must be given to Regional Conferences as long as it is not contrary to the mission, doctrine, or basic discipline of the United Methodist Church. For example, some Regional Conferences must be given the right to ordain persons without the educational criteria required in the United States.
4. The United States portion of the United Methodist Church needs the "central conferences" as much as the "central conferences" need the United States. The United Methodist Church must continually be conscious of matters of equity in the church.
5. Since representation is a key issue across the church, the Study Committee will give that increased attention.
6. Because of our respect for other churches of the Wesleyan tradition, special attention will be given to the impact of proposed changes in our relationship with member churches of the World Methodist Church

B. Scheduling Guidelines

1. The General Conference would meet for one week with the same number of delegates as currently elected apportioned in the same way as now done.
2. Following the meeting of the General Conference, the US delegates to General Conference would meet as the US Regional Conference to conduct its business.
3. General Conference will always meet prior to any and all Regional Conferences.
4. While this arrangement could continue indefinitely, each body could decide to meet at a separate time and place. However, for reasons of cost and the long-range plans already made for General Conferences in the near future, it is envisioned that back-to-back meetings will be held in the United States for the first two quadrennia after passage.

C. Powers of the General Conference

Essentially, the power of the General Conference will remain the same. As stated in ¶16, the General Conference will be in charge of "all matters distinctly connectional." In those places where the discipline is overly complex and not easily divided, this petition submits guidelines to direct the work of the study. Specifically, it will have authority over the following:

1. Resolutions on global issues
2. Constitution, ¶1-99
3. Doctrinal Standards, Doctrinal History, Doctrinal Heritage and Our Theological Task ¶101-104
4. Mission Statements and Global Mission Initiatives, ¶120 - 141
5. Social Principles ¶160 - 166 that relate to a universal or global ethic
6. The Local Church and Church Membership
 - a. All definitions and basic functions of the local church
 - b. The requirements, definition, and meaning of membership
7. Ministry of the Ordained
 - a. Nature and function of the orders of Deacon and Elder - including the basic qualifications as found in ¶304
 - b. Historic examination for Elders and Deacons
 - c. The system of itinerancy
 - d. General provisions detailing clergy membership at the annual conference level and gender inclusively within the clergy
8. The Superintendency
 - a. All details concerning the Episcopacy because Bishops remain Bishops of the whole church.
 - b. Nature and Function of District Superintendents
9. The Conferences ¶501 - 591
10. The Annual Conference ¶601 - 609
11. Administrative Order ¶701 - 2406 except for ¶815 - 816
12. Church Property ¶2501- 2505
13. Judicial Administration, ¶2601 - 2719
14. Relationships with other denominations, world communions and interreligious groups
15. Financial Matters regarding the following funds: World Service, Episcopal, Interdenominational Cooperation, and General Administration, and Africa University.

D. Duties and Powers of Regional Conferences

The duties shall remain as stated in , 31 for Central Conferences:

1. To promote the mission of the church within their own boundaries. See ¶ 31.1
2. Elect bishops in the regional conferences where there are no jurisdictional conferences – see ¶31.2
3. Establish required boards and officers – see ¶31.3
4. Determine boundaries of annual conferences within its borders – see ¶31.4
5. Appoint a judicial court for questions about the rules and actions of the regional conference see ¶31.6
6. Appoint a committee to determine the appeal of a clergy member from the decision of a committee on trial – see ¶ 31.7
7. Make Rules and Regulations for work within its boundaries as allowed by the General Discipline

Specifically, it will have authority over the following:

1. Resolutions on regional issues
2. The Local Church and Church Membership
 - a. Details concerning admission into the church
 - b. The method of keeping the rolls of each church
- c. Organization and administration of each local church
3. The Ministry of the Ordained
 - a. Candidacy process for both licensed and ordained ministry
 - b. Requirements for Ordination - see " 330-331 and 335
 - c. Evaluation and details of conference membership
4. The Superintendency
 - a. Organization of District Superintendents
 - b. Selection, assignment, and term of District Superintendents
5. Councils and Agencies of the Annual Conference ¶610 - 655
6. The District Conference ¶656 - 669
7. Church Property ¶2506 - 2552
8. Regional funds for work within its borders -Black College Fund ¶815

E. Powers and duties of Jurisdictional Conferences - remain the same, see ¶27

F. General Agencies

All General Agencies remain as agencies for the whole church.

G. Powers of Annual Conferences, District Conferences and Charge Conferences remain the same.

H. Financial implications of any proposed structural amendments.

These proposals are guidelines for the study committee, its work, and its report back to General conference in 2012.

Furthermore, this committee shall study, answer, and (if necessary) provide legislation to these questions:

1. How can apportionments begin to live into this worldwide nature of the church?
2. Conduct a full review of the Discipline, identify all areas of the Book of Discipline requiring changes to implement this report.

Constitutional Amendment #19: change ¶32 from

The ordained ministerial delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected by and from the ordained ministerial members in full connection.

to

The clergy delegates to the General Conference and to the jurisdictional or central conference shall be elected from the clergy members in full connection and shall be elected by the clergy members of the annual conference or provisional annual conference who are deacons and elders in full connection, associate members, and those provisional members who have completed all of their educational requirements and local pastors who have completed course of study or an M. Div. degree and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.