

2009 North Texas Annual Conference Report

How can we become a movement for transformation of the world through commitment to Jesus Christ?

This was the main theme of the 2009 North Texas Annual Conference held last week in Plano.

There are four areas of focus:

1. To develop Christian leaders for the church and the world, both lay and clergy.
2. To create new churches to minister where there are presently none, and to revitalize existing congregations to better understand and serve the vision of Jesus.
3. To be inclusive and embrace the poor as valued members of the family of faith and to serve them, as Jesus instructed.
4. To educate the people of the UMC on global health issues and to treat and prevent the devastating results of diseases and poor health care throughout the world.

How can we do this?

We begin with ourselves, to seek to intentionally grow in our understanding of the wondrous grace of God and His love of us, and the power of the Holy Spirit within us.

As we grow in our commitment we are able to reach out to others with the message of God's love and with a common vision.

Our vision is for the future, and we must prepare our youth for leadership, with their hopes and dreams. And we must be willing to welcome change as our world changes, while celebrating the dedication and wisdom of our past generations of leadership.

The Conference Lay Leader challenged the laity to take the initiative to work toward our vision one person at a time, and then join together to do bigger things, such as:

- Getting involved with missions with the poor. Maybe a group could adopt an elementary school. Everyone would benefit, especially the children.
- Addressing the issue of hunger. Food banks need food. Maybe we could buy what we need in quantity and give half to CCA.
- Encouraging volunteers. People want to be involved. They want to make a difference. Perhaps they could commit to inviting one person a month to church and sharing our vision.

The Conference Lay Leader said the success of our plan is up to the laity as well as the clergy. It's not just the pastor's job to build the church. It is the responsibility of all of us to share in the work of making disciples for Jesus Christ.

The Youth Report talked of the transforming effect of mission activities, local and distant. Youth were encouraged to listen for a call to ministry to proclaim the gospel, and members were encouraged to seek out young people for consideration and exploration of ministry.

The Conference Committee on Finance and Administration is mindful of the economic climate and has asked the various committees to try to reduce their budgets for 2011 by 15%. The new budget for 2010 will show a decrease of 1.9% in apportionments.

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The new **elders and deacons** were celebrated, the retirees were honored, and the clergy and spouses who passed away during the year were memorialized.

The reports of various Conference, Jurisdictional and World committees show the love and compassion for the many we serve, and we can be extremely proud of the connection that allows us to accomplish these things, through our apportionments, and through the love of Jesus, for the transformation of the world.

Loraine Nelle, Lay Member of Annual Conference