

**SECTION I.**  
**PLAN OF ORGANIZATION FOR THE ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE**  
**A RECOMMENDATION TO THE JUNE 2002 SESSION OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE FROM**  
**THE CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES**

*“A New Structure For A New Day”*

ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
A NEW STRUCTURE FOR A NEW DAY

“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:19)

“No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.” (Matthew 9:16-17)

“And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’” (Revelation 21:5)

We worship and serve a God who is constantly doing new things, creating new hearts, calling forth new leaders, and inviting new ways of thinking and relating, and making new roads for the journey. The Alabama-West Florida Conference is being invited to a season of newness, and a future filled with new possibilities for ministry. The invitation is not newness for the sake of being novel or unique. Rather, it is an invitation to think about how we do ministry in the first decade of the 21st century.

**INTRODUCTION**  
**A BRIEF HISTORY**

Soon after his arrival as the episcopal leader assigned to the Alabama-West Florida conference, Bishop Larry Goodpaster began asking about the mission and vision of our conference. In response to numerous questions about his own vision, Bishop Goodpaster responded by encouraging everyone to pray and to have conversations about where we were headed as a conference. In addition, questions were raised about the way we are currently organized and structured to do our work as an annual conference.

In meetings with clergy and laity across our conference, in district settings, in local churches, and in conference meetings, Bishop Goodpaster, the district superintendents, the conference staff, and the conference and district lay leaders, listened to the hopes and dreams of the people of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. At the 2001 session of the Annual Conference, the members watched and responded to the video, “Who Moved My Cheese?” Also, the members of the conference broke into small discussion groups to share ideas and possibilities for the future of our conference. Notes of meetings and conversations were recorded and compiled. Finally, the Bishop and Cabinet, and the Conference staff members, and the Conference Council on Ministries began to discern a clear mission and vision for the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Included in that discernment was a list of priorities to guide our work and ministry in these first years of a new millennium. At the Fall 2001 meeting of our Conference Council on Ministries, a Task Force was authorized to begin the process of determining the most effective structure needed to bring our mission and vision into reality. We believed that the best structure is not only one that can be simply charted, but also one that grows out of the mission and vision of the conference. With the charge in hand, a small group of persons, some named by the Conference Council on Ministries, and some named by Bishop Goodpaster, began their conversations in October 2001. Over the course of more than five months, the group met, studied, worked, reviewed, and tested models and designs.

The Task Force has looked at plans of organizations from other Annual Conferences, studied The 2002 Book of Discipline, and read papers from the General Council on Ministries about the future directions for our work.

The Task Force has had the opportunity to have lengthy discussions regarding implications, and has always asked, what is being left out.

In March 2002 the Task Force presented a working document of a proposed reorganized plan for ministry in the Alabama-West Florida Conference to the Conference Council on Ministries. After more questions and small group discussions, the Council voted unanimously to endorse and recommend the plan to the 2002 session of the Annual Conference. The document you are now reading is the result of more than 18 months of prayerful listening, spiritual discernment, and organizational planning. The Conference Council on Ministries presents it to the Annual Conference for action and implementation.

## **PART 1**

### **Mission - Vision - Priorities**

Our mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ. We are clear that this is the one overarching, demanding and challenging mission for the church in this new day of the 21st century.

The mandate for this mission is clear and compelling from the Scriptures and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-19) The instruction for The 2000 Book of Discipline of our United Methodist Church is equally focused: Paragraph 120: “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.”

Paragraph 121: “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ by proclaiming the good news of God’s grace and thus seeking the fulfillment of God’s reign and realm in the world.”

Therefore, we boldly proclaim that the mission of the Alabama-West Florida Conference is to make disciples for Jesus Christ. This is why we exist, and this is our call to take up God’s mission in the world. The question that follows, then, is how we go about moving toward that mission? What will motivate us, drive us, and help us accomplish the mission?

The vision of the Alabama-West Florida Conference is to cultivate dynamic thriving congregations. Disciples are made, nurtured, and sent forth to serve in local congregations. The Annual Conference is called upon to work toward a vision of hundreds of thriving churches where disciple-making ministries are brought to life. Since the local church is the primary location for making disciples, the conference must channel its efforts, resources, and energy toward assisting all congregations to become disciple-making centers.

Following Jesus the Christ, the Alabama-West Florida Conference is invited to respond to the call to faithful discipleship by inviting, transforming, and sending persons equipped for ministry in the world. This process occurs most effectively in thriving congregations who, by God’s grace, are committed to making disciples who make disciples who make a different world. We envision a time when every congregation within the bounds of our conference is a thriving, flourishing, vital congregation serving God and following Jesus with joyful hearts and lives.

This vision and the primary task of the conference is best understood in terms of birthing, nurturing, resourcing, motivating and inspiring disciples, servants, and leaders within the congregations and districts of our area. We envision congregations discovering their own unique ways of being in ministry, of becoming dynamic congregations, and of moving away from simply surviving to engaging in activities characteristic of healthy, thriving churches.

What priorities will guide our ministry, refocus our conference, and energize our churches for ministry and service in the world? In order to live into the vision, and to be shaped by the vision that leads us toward

fulfillment of the mission, the Alabama-West Florida Conference identifies four specific areas for turning the vision into reality. We believe that these priorities for the first decade of the 21st century will help us

- Determine how and where we invest our time and energy
- Shape our structure
- Focus our plans and programs
- Direct our financial resources
- Evaluate mission and ministry proposals

### **Priority #1: Develop lay and clergy leaders**

Leadership is the key component of effective organizations and faithful congregations. We identify this as a priority for our work, believing that as we discover, nurture, and deploy leaders, congregations will thrive in their mission and ministry for Christ. For clergy, this means the prayers and resources of the conference will be directed at helping persons hear and respond to the call of God in their lives. It means providing all that is necessary for those persons to be prepared to serve God through The United Methodist Church. The conference ordains and/or grants licenses to those who are adequately prepared for service. The conference challenges and holds accountable all clergy to be retooled and reenergized for ministry in the 21st century. Believing that all baptized believers are ministers, the conference, the district, and the local church is charged with the responsibility of helping all persons discover their gifts and to utilize them in service for God in the world. We are to be in the business of equipping and training all persons to become more faithful disciples and quality leaders in the church and the world.

### **Priority #2: Plant new and grow existing congregations and faith communities**

Congregational development must be at the forefront of our work together as a conference. If we are going to cultivate thriving congregations, then we must be committed to assisting congregations to think and act in ways that will reach people in this new millennium. Historically we have known this as revitalization. Our attention and our energy must be turned toward helping congregations move away from a survival mentality and toward a dynamic, vital existence.

We are also committing ourselves to the planting of new congregations and faith communities across the conference. Studying and assessing demographic changes, as well as strategizing on where and in what communities churches should be started will become a major focus of our work at a conference level. In addition, we will give attention to the starting of other types of faith communities: campus ministry, house churches, cell groups, storefront missions, and other forms of sharing the gospel in this world.

### **Priority #3: Expand mission opportunities**

Jesus calls us to go into the entire world in order to share the Gospel. A thriving congregation is one that is giving itself away. It is a church that understands that at the heart of what it means to be a disciple is to follow Jesus into the mission field, in our own backyard, or across the ocean.

We will be focused on taking our disciple-making ministries outside the walls of our church buildings, as well as beyond the borders of our conference. Our priority will be to provide the opportunities as well as the preparing of persons to move into the mission field, whether in short term service, or lifelong commitment. Given the geographic location of our conference, it is imperative that we are prepared to respond if a disaster occurs. Working through United Methodist Volunteers in Mission and our Disaster Response teams, we will be ready should the need arise.

### **Priority #4: Become a church for all God's children**

Obedying the clear call of the Gospel and of the entire sweep of the Biblical story, we understand that the church is made up of all God's children. We are called upon to be inclusive in our worship and service, and to recognize the gifts of all persons. The diversity and richness of God's creation opens possibilities for new relationships and new ways of sharing ministry. We will be committed to overcoming racism and sexism in all parts of our conference, our districts, and our local churches. We will open opportunities for leadership and service for all age groups.

Of particular emphasis will be our programs and our advocacy on behalf of the children, the poor, and the marginalized in society. We believe, as we pray, that God's Kingdom will indeed come on earth, and it will be and can be modeled in the church Christ gave himself for on the cross.

## **PART 2**

### **The Organizational Plan for the Alabama-West Florida Conference**

Our Mission-Vision-Priority statement becomes the foundation for how we organize ourselves for effective ministry. The Conference is not the level at which disciples are made.

It is in and through the dynamic life of local churches that persons are invited into the life changing, life saving relationship with Jesus Christ. However, the Conference is the place where persons are trained and equipped, where congregations are coached and challenged, and where the vision is continually lifted up and refined.

We believe that fewer meetings at a conference level, as well as a more flexible and responsive structure will free people to be in ministry for Christ where they live. We also know that in order for resources to be available, for effective training to take place, for connections throughout the church to happen, and for responding to human need in a timely manner, some organization is essential.

The proposal that follows is built around our mission-vision-priority statement. It is designed to involve fewer people at boards, and more people at a local church level, or in a more focused task force level. It is also designed to bring everyone to a common table at which all Boards and committees are represented to make crucial decisions regarding our priorities for funding, our need for leadership, and our focus on the mission and vision.

The foundation of our proposal is the local church. Lay members and clergy gather for the Annual Conference session. In between the sessions of the Annual Conference, we propose the formation of three key teams: the leadership team, the mission and ministry team, and the administrative team. A common table will be developed from among the members of these teams. We will form a "Connecting Our Resources and Empowerment Team" to insure strong connections, a lean and responsive conference, and a flexible structure that allows us to meet needs and provide resources. This "C.O.R.E. Team" will have representatives from the boards and committees of each of the other three teams. In the pages that follow, this pattern is spelled out as currently envisioned. We also know that in some cases we will have to live into the future as relationships are forged and connections are made in order to equip local churches to become thriving centers of mission and ministry.

#### **A. The Local Church**

At the heart of who we are is the local congregation. Before there was a parish, and before there was a conference, John Wesley was busy organizing bands and societies. The local church grew out of the groups of people who came together for prayer, study, accountability, and mission in the community. The local congregation is made up of the baptized believers who offer themselves first to Christ, then to a church, and finally, to a district or conference. The local church is a key component of our connectional system.

Paragraph 201 of The 2000 Book of Discipline defines the church in this way: "The local church provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world."

Paragraph 202 continues: "The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. It is primarily at the level of the local church that the church encounters the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to know Jesus Christ personally and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches,

to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church."

We understand that any organization we propose for our conference must begin with a clear focus on the local church. We believe this is the significant part of our connection and that without it the conference cannot exist. The conference exists for the purpose of assisting local congregations to move toward becoming that "strategic base" for mission and ministry in the world.

## **B. The Annual Conference**

The Annual Conference is made up of the churches that are organized across a prescribed geographic area. churches are organized into charges sharing a common mission, a common territory, and a common pastor. Charges are organized into districts to be more responsive to the needs and concerns of the churches at a level that is closer to the communities and counties where they have been planted and chartered. The Annual Conference is composed of the churches, the charges, and the districts of the area. Without those churches where the people live and work and relate and are baptized, the Conference loses its primary reason for being. The 2000 Book of Discipline defines the purpose of the Annual Conference in Paragraph 601. "The purpose of the annual conference is to make disciples for Jesus Christ by equipping its local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church; all to the glory of God."

Annually, lay members and clergy assemble to conduct the business of the conference, to chart the mission and financial course of the coming years, to credential the clergy, and to receive reports of the various agencies and institutions of the conference. Every charge is represented at the annual meeting, and every charge is responsible for helping to keep the connection alive.

The Alabama-West Florida Conference is composed of nine districts, and over 670 local churches. In order to expedite the business of the conference as we gather annually, several standing committees are in place. These committees tend to function as a task group, performing their assigned tasks for the year and not meeting again until the following year, unless otherwise called.

- ❑ The committees of the Alabama-West Florida Conference are:
- ❑ Committee on Planning and Agenda for the Conference
- ❑ Committee on Resolutions and Petitions
- ❑ Committee on Courtesies and Introductions
- ❑ Committee on Standing Rules
- ❑ Committee on Journal
- ❑ Committee on Archives and History
- ❑ The Episcopacy Committee
- ❑ The Administrative Review Committee

In Addition to these committees whose work is defined either by The 2000 Book of Discipline or by the Standing Rules of our conference, there are several agencies and institutions directly related to the Alabama-West Florida Conference. These agencies have their own Boards of Directors, and report to and are accountable to the Annual Conference.

- ❑ Blue Lake Assembly
- ❑ United Methodist Children's Home
- ❑ United Methodist Homes for Aging
- ❑ Pastoral Care, Counseling and Training
- ❑ United Methodist Foundation of Alabama-West Florida
- ❑ The Alabama-West Florida Credit Union
- ❑ Huntingdon College
- ❑ Birmingham-Southern College

## **C. The Leadership Team**

The Leadership Team will be responsible for development of leaders within the Annual Conference. Each of the team members will have specific leadership task that deals with the development of servant leaders in the local church.

The Leadership Team consists of the following (paragraph numbers reference these boards and committees either in The 2000 Book of Discipline or in the Standing rules (SR) of our Conference.

1. The Cabinet ¶429
2. The Board of Laity ¶629
3. The Board of Ordained Ministry ¶632
4. The Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries ¶631
5. The Board of Communications ¶643
6. The Committee on Nominations and Personnel SR5 A new and vital function of this committee will be to develop a pool of names of persons who have expertise and are willing to serve beyond their local church. In addition to recruiting, this committee will also be charged with equipping persons for their service in the conference.

Growing out of our mission-vision-priority statement, the Leadership Team will support the following innovations and directions for the Alabama/West Florida Conference:

- Provides Biblical, Theological and Spiritual Formation for teachers and leaders.
- Develops training events to support the mission and ministry of the conference and local churches.
- Engages in recruitment, development, training and deployment for lay and clergy ministry.
- Development of resources.
- Discovers and maintains a “talent pool” for task groups within the conference. Provides this “talent pool” as a human resource for the local churches.
- Supports our ministry to students, especially on our college campuses.
- Supports candidates for ordained and representative ministries.
- Develops a strong and vital communications network.

## **D. The Mission Team**

The Mission Team will be responsible for providing resources and models for districts and local churches to be more effective in their own unique places of service. At the heart of the work of this team and its boards will be the mission and ministry of the local congregations. The Mission Team will be empowered at the C.O.R.E. Team’s direction to find those resources and share those resources that are in keeping with the mission, vision, and priorities of the Annual Conference.

The Mission Team will consist of five Boards. Each of the Boards will have divisions of responsibility in accordance with The 2000 Book of Discipline. Each board of the Mission Team will be composed of nine (9) members, one of whom will be the chairperson. These persons will be nominated by the Committee on Nominations and Personnel and will be elected by the Annual Conference.

The divisions as listed below are the current areas of responsibility defined either by The 2000 Book of Discipline, or by our own Annual Conference. Others may be added over time, on recommendation of the CORE Team and/or the Annual Conference. As the work of the Board is identified, the team will form Task

Groups to carry out the various responsibilities. These Task Groups will come into existence for one purpose as defined by the Team, and will cease to exist once the task is completed.

For the Alabama-West Florida Conference, we will organize our Mission Team with the following five boards and their divisions:

1. Board of Discipleship ¶628
  - Division of Education ¶628.2
  - Division of Evangelism ¶628.3
  - Division of Worship ¶628.4
  - Division of Stewardship ¶628.5
  - Division of Spiritual Formation ¶628.6
  
2. Board of Global Ministries ¶630.6
  - Division of UVMIM ¶630.6
  - Division of Advance Specials
  - Division of Health and Relief Ministries
  - Division of Parish and Community Development ¶630.5
  
3. Board of Church and Society ¶627
  - Division of Criminal Justice
  - Division of Children and Poverty
  - Division of Critical Issues
  
4. Board of Congregational Development
  - Division of New Church Starts
  - Division of Small Membership Church ¶624
  - Division of Consulting
  
5. Board of Advocacy and Racial Ethnic Ministries
  - a. Division of Religion and Race ¶640
  
  - b. Division of COSROW ¶641
  
  - c. Division of Racial Ethnic Local Church
    - i. Hispanic Ministries
  
    - ii. Native American Ministries ¶650
  
    - iv. Strengthening the Black Church, 21st Century
  
  - d. Division of Christian Unity and Interreligions Concerns ¶639
  
  - e. Division of Committee on Disability Concerns ¶649
  
  - f. Division of Emerging Ministries

Growing out of our mission-vision-priority statement, the Mission Team will support the following innovations and directions for the Alabama-West Florida Conference:

- Vital Worship
- Bible Study

- Faith Sharing
- Education
- Stewardship
- Missions
- Evangelism
- Social Justice
- Advocacy
- Spiritual Formation
- Cultural Interaction
- Congregational Development, Parish Development, and Revitalization

## **E. The Administrative Team**

The Administrative Team shall be responsible for the fiscal, legal, and property matters of the Annual Conference. This includes, but is not limited to the collection and disbursement of financial resources relating to the entire annual conference budget. It will be responsible for assuring that financial resources are available and used by the Leadership Team and the Mission Team that are in keeping with the annual conference mission, vision, and priorities.

The Administrative Team consists of the following Disciplinary required councils and agencies of The United Methodist Church.

1. Council on Finance and Administration ¶¶609-626
2. Board of Pensions and Health Benefits ¶636, ¶¶506-1509
3. Conference Board of Trustees ¶637
4. Commission on Equitable Compensation ¶623

The Administrative Team performs these essential functions for the Annual Conference:

- Budget, Fiscal Review
- Financial Resources
- Interpretation
- Data Management
- Financial Policies and Procedures
- Property and Legal Management

## **F. The C.O.R.E. Team**

*Connecting Our Resources & Empowerment Team*

At the heart of our new organizational plan is a common table, where chairpersons and leaders from all the boards and councils come together to evaluate and continually revise and refine our ministry as an annual conference. Guided by our mission-vision-priority statement, this flexible and responsive team can allocate resources, discover new persons for service, and constantly hold one another accountable to the vision. This team will be the core of the structure, providing a connecting link among all the teams, boards, and councils in our work.

In addition, the C.O.R.E. Team will provide a comprehensive program of nurture, outreach, and witness, along with leadership training, and the planning and administration of the conference's organizational and temporal life, in accordance with the mission of the United Methodist Church. The C.O.R.E. Team shall be amendable to the Annual Conference.

The membership (voice and vote) of the C.O.R.E. Team shall include:

1. The Conference Lay Leader, who serves as Co-Chair of the C.O.R.E. Team with the Bishop
2. The Dean of the Cabinet
3. The Conference President of United Methodist Women
4. The Conference President of United Methodist Men
5. The Conference President of United Methodist Youth
6. The Chair – Board of Pensions and Health Benefits
7. The President – Council on Finance and Administration
8. The Chair – Board Ordained Ministry
9. The Chair – Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries
10. The Chair – Discipleship
11. The Chair – Global Ministries
12. The Chair – Church and Society
13. The Chair – Congregational Development
14. The Chair – Advocacy and Ethnic Ministries
15. The Chair – Conference Board of Trustees
16. The Chair – Equitable Compensation
17. The Chair – Communications
18. - 24. Seven At-Large members for inclusiveness/expertise

The Ex-officio membership (voice, no vote) shall include:

- 1 The Bishop, who serves as Co-Chair of the C.O.R.E. Team with the Conference Lay Leader
- 2 The Conference Secretary
- 3 The Director of Connectional Ministries
- 4 Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services
- 5 The Director of Congregational Development
- 6 The Director of Communications
- 7 The Director of Discipleship Ministries
- 8 The Director of Mission Outreach and Advocacy

Growing out of our mission-vision-priority statement, the C.O.R.E. Team supports the following innovations and directions for the Annual Conference.

- The C.O.R.E. Team lives with the vision of the annual conference, therefore all ministries are held in mutual accountability around the vision.

- The interactive process for decision-making will generate a cooperative and coordinated process.
- The C.O.R.E. Team, by implementing the annual conference vision, focuses its spiritual, human, and fiscal resources.
- All of the ministry areas will have a part in the decision-making processes.
- Accountability has immediate feedback.
- The clergy and laity will share the leadership in the conference.
- Needed subcommittees, commissions, and task forces are determined as they emerge from perceived needs. Each can be created and dissolved as needs change.
- The C.O.R.E. Team should evaluate the effectiveness of the ministries of the conference regularly and should help develop responses to enable the conference meet its unique calling.
- The ministry units can make it easier for members of the local church to understand and appreciate the organization of the annual conference.
- Emerging Ministries

## **PART 3**

### **The Conference Resource Center**

#### Staffing

In this proposed plan, the Conference Headquarters building will remain in Andalusia, while the Episcopal office remains in Montgomery. However, in keeping with the nature, the purpose, and the new focus of our work as an annual conference, we will rename it as the Conference Resource Center. As such, the staff persons who work on behalf of the conference and the local churches will refocus their roles and responsibilities.

We see our Conference Resource Center to be the place where our local churches turn for assistance in becoming thriving congregations. The staff members exist to provide the resources and leadership for local churches. We believe that the entire purpose of the conference is to be turned toward the local church, while maintaining a vital connection with the general church. In so doing, all the resources of the denomination are available for local churches. From printed material and curriculum, to workshop leaders and spiritual direction, to financial resources, to team leaders, our purpose is to equip local churches for ministry in the world. In many ways, our building in Andalusia becomes a “service center” responsive to the questions, the requests, the needs, and the concerns of our constituents, i.e., the local churches and their many members.

We also know there are times when the leadership of the conference (bishop, cabinet and staff members) will also challenge churches to become more effective in their ministry. We will offer opportunities to grow and learn and expand mission outreach and inward spiritual growth. Our overall purpose is to glorify God by fulfilling the mission in effective and efficient ways.

In order to fulfill the mission-vision-priority statement of our conference, and in order to be a resource center that serves the members of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, we propose the following staff positions.

*The Director of Connectional Ministries.* The role and the responsibilities for this position are spelled out in The 2000 Book of Discipline. This position, along with the bishop, connects all the pieces of our ministry, connects us with the general church, and connects all the districts and congregations to the mission-vision-priority statement.

*The Director of Congregational Development.* This person will be responsible for working directly with the bishop and cabinet in the areas of new church starts, small membership church ministry, cooperative parish development, and coaching congregations in their move toward becoming thriving churches.

*The Director of Mission Outreach and Advocacy.* This person serves as our Conference Mission Secretary with links to the Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, Disaster Response, and other mission endeavors. In addition, this position serves as a resource agent for all groups and committees that call us to faithful ministry with and inclusiveness for all God’s children.

*The Director of Discipleship Ministries.* Serving as a resource person for all age groups within the life of the conference, this director works directly with our ministry with children, youth, young adults, and other age groupings.

*The Director of Communications.* This position represents a merging of the office as it currently exists in Montgomery, with the work that is also currently being done in Andalusia. Rather than duplicating efforts, we envision an office of communications that develops new strategies for networking our ministries, telling our stories, promoting our efforts, and learning with one another.

*The Treasurer/Director of Administrative Services.* This is a continuation of the current office, responsible for the conference budget, for pensions, and for health insurance matters.

### Short Term Goals and Plans

In order to eliminate duplication, we will merge the responsibilities for communications into one office. Rather than having an office in Montgomery, with other communication pieces coming out of Andalusia, we believe one Office of Communications can provide more efficient and effective work in our conference. The Office of Communications will be located in Andalusia, and will include the Media Resource Center and the Web-based presence currently in existence.

In response to the Study on the Role of the Superintendents that was completed three years ago, we will not assign the District Superintendents to serve as ex-officio members of any of the Boards of our new structure. We envision the work of the superintendent to be more focused on the local congregations and the clergy within the Districts where they are assigned. Being freed from an excessive number of meetings in Andalusia or Montgomery, the superintendents will be able to devote time and energy to coaching and cultivating thriving congregations. The exceptions to this plan will be on the following boards: the Board of Ordained Ministry (3 superintendents), the Board of Laity (1 superintendent), the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits (1 superintendent), the Conference Board of Trustees (1 superintendent), the Commission on Equitable Compensation (1 superintendent), and the Council on Finance and Administration (1 superintendent). Those who serve as part of the Conference Resource Center will have as their primary objective the needs of the local church. They will serve as resource persons, or as individuals who are able to connect congregations with the resource people or materials needed for specific questions. Our facility in Andalusia will be intentional about becoming a true center for resourcing ministry and equipping persons for ministry in the world.

### Long Term Goals and Plans

For more effective cooperation and closer communication, we will relocate the Office of Financial Administration to Montgomery by December 31, 2003. Because of the combined responsibilities for the budget, pensions, and health insurance, we believe there is value in having the Episcopal Office and the Fiscal Office located in the same geographic place. The time frame allows an opportunity for a smooth transition and the physical moving of the office.

As part of our vision for cultivating thriving congregations, we will place a district staff person in each of the nine districts by December 31, 2004. The job description will include but not be limited to working closely with the District Superintendent in assisting local churches in discovering their vision and planning for their ministry. The staff person will work in conjunction with the District Superintendent in coaching clergy and laity in serving more effectively in the new millennium. As we live into our mission-vision-priority statement over the next twelve months, the C.O.R.E. team will develop a more detailed position description, and a means of financial support for this position. The intent is to locate our staff closer to the local congregations and to be more responsive to specific needs and concerns in our churches.

### Transition Period

The current organization, including the existing Conference Council on Ministries, will function through the remainder of 2002.

The Committee on Nominations and Personnel will be reconstituted according to the following pattern: the Bishop, who serves as chair, the Conference Lay Leader, the Conference Secretary, the Director of Connectional Ministries, the Presidents of the United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and United Methodist Youth, the District Superintendents, and the District Lay Leaders.

A newly formed Committee on Nominations will begin the process of identifying the members of the new Boards of Discipleship, Global Ministries, Church and Society, Congregational Development, Advocacy and Racial Ethnic Ministries, Higher Education and Campus Ministry, and Communications. Attention will be given to inclusiveness, diversity, and expertise in naming persons to these Boards.

At the fall meeting of the Conference Council on Ministries, the Committee on Nominations and Personnel will submit the list of nominees for the new boards for action. The CCOM will review the nominations with attention given to inclusiveness, diversity, and expertise. The CCOM will elect these persons to serve as an interim C.O.R.E. team and will, upon adjournment of the fall meeting, cease to exist.

The Interim C.O.R.E. team will begin their work in January 2003. At the 2003 session of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, the Interim C.O.R.E. team will report to the conference on its work, its response to the vision, its plans for the coming year, and its suggested revisions in the process, if any. Also at that session, the conference will formally elect the C.O.R.E. team and Board members to serve for the remainder of the 2000-2004 quadrennium, including any changes to provide balance, expertise, diversity and inclusiveness.

We will keep always before us our mission of making disciples. We will seek to accomplish that mission in more effective ways, in every congregation of the annual conference. We will work faithfully and prayerfully to live out the vision of an annual conference where every congregation is a vital, dynamic, thriving center for ministry in every community across our area. The proposed structure will turn the entire Annual Conference and its resources toward cultivating those congregations. Each local church will find its own unique way of becoming a thriving church. The conference, the staff, the bishop and cabinet, and the organizational place will be committed to strengthening every church for its ministry in its context. Above all, we will be focused on serving Christ and glorifying God in all we do.

**LOCAL CONGREGATIONS**

**THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**THE CORE TEAM**

**MISSION TEAM**

- **Board of Discipleship ¶628**
  - Division of Education ¶628.2
  - Division of Worship ¶628.3
  - Division of Stewardship ¶628.4
  - Division of Evangelism ¶628.5
  - Division of Spiritual Formation ¶628.6
- **Board of Global Ministries ¶630**
  - Division of UIMVIM ¶630.6
  - Division of Advance Specials
  - Division of Health and Relief Ministries
  - Division of Parish and Community Development ¶630.5
  - Conference Committee on Mission Personnel ¶1312.6
- **Board of Church and Society ¶627**
  - Division of Criminal Justice
  - Division of Children and Poverty
  - Division of Critical Issues
- **Board of Congregational Development SR42**
  - Division of New Church Starts
  - Division of Small Membership Church ¶642
  - Consulting
- **Board of Advocacy and Ethnic Ministries**
  - Division of Religion and Race ¶640
  - Division of COSROW ¶641
  - Division of Racial Ethnic Local Church SR44
    - o Hispanic Ministries SR47
    - o Native American Ministries ¶650
    - o Asian Ministries
    - o Strengthening the Black Church, 21<sup>st</sup> Century
  - Division of Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns ¶639
  - Division of Committee on Disability Concerns ¶649

**LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- **Bishop and Cabinet ¶429**
- **Board of Laity ¶629**
  - District Lay Leaders
  - Lay Speaking Ministries ¶629.6
  - United Methodist Men ¶645
  - United Methodist Women ¶644
  - United Methodist Youth ¶646
- **Board of Ordained Ministry ¶632**
  - Joint Committee on Incapacity ¶648
  - Board of Pastor's Assembly SR38
- **Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry ¶631**
- **Board of Communications ¶643**
- **Committee on Nominations and Personnel SR5**
  - Recruitment and Equipping

**ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM**

- **Council on Finance and Administration ¶609**
- **Board of Pensions and Health Benefits ¶636**
- **Conference Board of Trustees ¶637**
- **Commission on Equitable Compensation ¶623**

**COMMITTEES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

- **Annual Conference Session Planning and Agenda SR9**
- **Committee on Resolutions and Petitions SR4**
- **Committee on Courtesies and Introduction SR6**
- **Standing Rules Committee SR3**
- **Journal SR7**
- **Archives and History ¶638**
- **Episcopal Committee ¶634**
- **Episcopal Residence Committee ¶635**
- **Administrative Review Committee ¶633**

**AGENCIES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

- **Blue Lake Assembly SR58**
- **Methodist Children's Home**
- **Home for the Aging**
- **AWF United Methodist Foundation (Ref. GCPA)**
- **AWF Credit Union**
- **Pastoral Care, Counseling and Training SR38**