

COUNCIL ON FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Introductory Comments:

The C.F. & A.'s purpose "shall be to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the Annual Conference." (Book of Discipline, ¶610.)

Highlights & Accomplishments:

The most prominent responsibility of the C.F. & A. is to recommend to the Annual Conference an annual budget that is reasonable and workable so as to take into consideration the effect it will have on local church apportionments. Preparation of the budget is an on-going process which occupies much of the Council's agenda. The budget process includes: (1) Plan for Ministry and Budget Proposal submitted by the Boards, Agencies, and Committees; (2) Review and recommendations from the Visual/Quality Improvement Team and the Cabinet; (3) C.F. & A. review and final recommendation to the Annual Conference.

Meetings during the year were spent on the conference audit report, finance office staffing, policies and procedures related to financial management, approval of Tyler Associates to implement a feasibility study regarding a capital campaign to endow retired clergy health premiums, and decisions dealing with a shortfall in the 2003 budget.

The apportionment payments in 2003 were at 90.7 %. The goal for 2003 was 95%. This calculated out at a shortfall of \$330,000 from the amount budgeted for 2003. However, because of action taken by conference agencies and staff to limit expenses, expenses came in more than \$100,000 under revenues for 2003. This blessing allowed the conference to end the year in a better financial position than had been expected. Most of the year apportionment income was running close to 5% behind other years. Even with the difficult economic period for many churches, we can celebrate the fact that more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of all churches paid their apportionments in full. A number of congregations gave beyond what they had been asked to share. The conference has been faithful in meeting the financial obligations within the conference as well as paying our General Conference apportionment at 100% for the 15th consecutive year. Thank you to the church congregations and to the church agencies for your financial faithfulness throughout the conference.

Several Council members participated in the Common Thread Program in the Chippewa District. This program placed a guest speaker in every church pulpit throughout the district. The purpose was to communicate the connectional importance of our United Methodist Church, and to tell the story of how their apportionments do make a difference in making disciples for Jesus Christ.

The feasibility study for a capital campaign was implemented by Tyler & Associates. This study was to see if the conference could initiate a capital campaign to assist in the conference's long range liability regarding retired clergy health premiums. The results of the study will be presented to the 2004 Annual Conference with recommendations on the follow-up of this important issue within the conference.

Several changes have been brought about in the Director of Finance & Administration Office. A new Conference Benefits Officer has been hired. A new staff member has been added to better divide up the various financial duties within the office. This was action initiated because of the embezzlement case and it has been recommended by the audit report for several years. There has been continuous updating and/or adding new policies and procedures to provide better financial management.

Plans For The Coming Year:

C.F. & A. will continue to work hard in providing an Annual Conference budget which is attainable according to the conference's resources.

C.F. & A. members will continue to participate in the Common Thread Program as it is implemented in other conference districts.

C.F. & A. will continue to work with the Foundation Office in the establishing of an Office of Development to assist in finding other financial resources to help the conference budget.

C.F. & A. members will participate in a Task Force which will be studying the conference's long range liability regarding retired clergy health insurance premiums. Members of the Task Force are: Don Frank, Phyllis Rodriguez, Jane Daniels, Joan Fordham, David Ogden, Lisa King, Jack Werner, Fran Deaner and Doug Stallsmith.

C.F. & A. will continue to work closely with conference agencies, as needed, regarding budget preparation and control.

C.F. & A. will be establishing a Task Force to look at the implications on the conference budget dealing with the many designated and restricted funds which are being depleted.

C.F. & A. will continue to rely heavily on the Director of Finance & Administration, and the office staff in carrying out the workload of financial affairs. The Director and staff are to be commended for their time and effort in keeping the conference financial program operating at a high level of proficiency.

Douglas Stallsmith, President, C.F. & A.

CONFERENCE COUNCIL ON YOUTH MINISTRIES

This year, the Conference Council on Youth Ministries excelled beyond the standards of excellent ministry programs and opportunities of this Annual Conference. All of our events across the border increased in the number of attendees, as well as the number of people who were touched by God's love. The empowerment of the youth in this Conference is amazing, and in every aspect of our ministries, there has been an awesome sense of togetherness and cooperation between individuals. The Council, in particular, has revamped our Youth Annual Conference moving from one state-wide event to four regional events to encompass all areas and aspects of our very diverse Conference. Our election of leaders has been changed for the better as well; in fact, instead of an "election," we have moved towards a discerning process for choosing our Executive Committee.

While our ministry is continuing to grow, we do have concerns about how we might better serve the Conference and God. Although we do have an outstanding base of empowered youth, we are having some difficulty finding equally committed adults. This causes some communication issues; however, the Conference Council on Youth Ministries is providing training for youth leaders and addressing the need for defining adult advisor expectations and roles. Our biggest concern though, is the number of youth that we are not reaching, especially with respect to the Ethnic Youth Caucuses. Although we are trying with all our best efforts, there is still much work to be done, and it is our hope that our work is done with the care and love of God.

However, already the Conference Council on Youth Ministries has begun to change for the better. For example, we have planned and executed the Regional Youth Conferences held in place of the event previously known as Youth Annual Conferences (YAK). Through the Regional Youth Conferences, we are planning to increase district and local church networking, hoping to create youth

team clusters, modeled by the newly adopted Circuit Plan for Ministry at Annual Conference. We pray the revisions and definitions of the roles and expectations of adult leaders will be understood, so that the Conference as a whole is a large “Safe Sanctuary” for youth and adults. We trust that communication and accountability between all areas and individuals will continue to improve so that connecting with youth from the Chippewa District to Ethnic Youth Caucuses will ensure a reliable and respectable relationship.

For 2004-2005, the Conference Council on Youth Ministries is challenging itself to be a more inclusive body. We are encouraging one another to step out of our comfort zones, and to make ourselves available to anyone and everyone who needs a ministry that we can provide. We want to reach out to all and to continue to be led by God. Specifically, we are looking to grow in relationship with the Ethnic Youth Caucuses, and to serve on their organizations so that they will be comfortable to serve on the Conference Council on Youth Ministries as well. We hope that through the Regional Youth Conferences, all areas of Wisconsin will be represented, and the involvement of youth will only increase. With the involvement of youth in mind, we are challenging the Conference to help us raise our Youth Service Fund to be among the top twenty percent of Youth Service Fund contributors in the denomination. Through the Circuits, we will provide training for youth and adult leaders to make sure the Clusters are an uplifting and helpful resource for every local church. We feel that through these goals, God’s plan will work through the youth and adults of this Conference—together.

*Submitted by Kaitlyn Aliota
Conference Council on Youth Ministries President*

CONFERENCE YOUTH COORDINATOR’S COMMENTS

Excitement continues to brew as we welcome the 2004-2005 Conference Council on Youth Ministries and sadness is also heavy in my heart as we say goodbye to the seniors this year. This class is the first class that I have seen all the way through from Jr. High (8th graders) all the way through High School. It’s hard to believe that I have been here long enough to see them this far. For anyone in youth ministry, this is the best and sometimes hardest feelings I have experienced in Conference Youth Ministries thus far. Each year relationships with the youth grow stronger and each year I have to say goodbye for now to another group.

With that in mind, we enter this next year with many new anticipations and celebrations for what was accomplished in the year past. CCYM shifted from Youth Annual Conference, which only reached about 30 churches in our conference of 512 churches to Regional Youth Conferences. The Regional Youth Conference’s were well received and have the potential to be a growing experience. CCYM also shifted from a officer ‘election’ process to a officer ‘discernment selection process.’ There were a few bumps and bruises with the process but a much more Christian atmosphere than we had experienced previously.

Youth Ministry Institute had an excellent faculty class this year. There were 24 participants who will be a part of the graduation ceremony at Annual Conference. Participants have been very enthusiastic about the experience and have found a network and community of youth leaders that supports them in their ministry settings. Youth workers with experience have felt that they have learned many new things as well. Several of the youth leaders have commented that they wished this ministry training had been available when they first started. YMI has been an awesome blessing and a direct opportunity to equip leadership for local church ministry. The YMI Exec Team is developing the next step for the Youth Ministry Institute.

For me, this has been a fulfilling year. We have worked hard at developing Christian ways of

making decisions. We have sought to better resource the church and encourage churches to develop safe sanctuaries. We are encouraged by the continued empowerment of young leaders and we are excited by what the future holds before us. Thank you, God, for the gifts that we have been blessed with!

Amy Valdez Barker, Conference Youth Coordinator

<i>Yearly Youth Ministries – Event Registration Reports</i>			
EVENT NAME	DATES	LOCATION	# OF PARTICIPANTS REGISTERED
Youth Annual Konference	April 4-6, 2003	Sky Lodge – Christian Camp – Montello	196 registered 175 attended (shortened due to winter storm)
Jr. High Convo	May 2-4, 2003	Green Lake Conference & Retreat Center, Green Lake	636
WAYM – Safe	Spring 2003	Throughout the state.	232 participants
Pages of Annual Conference	June 15-18, 2003	Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, Middleton	12
WildFire! Youth Mission Trips	June – August, 2003	Oklahoma City - Pennsylvania - Odanah - Red Cliff - UMCS - Superior - Youth '03-Knoxville -	38 115 30 20 18 75 75
WildFire! Youth in Ministry Camp	July 7-12, 2003	Lake Lucerne Camp & Retreat Center	45
Clergy Kids Retreat	August 8-10,	Pine Lake Camp &	14
Youth Ministry Institute	October, 2003 – May, 2004	Throughout the state.	24
Conference Confirmation Retreat	October 11, 2003	Kalahari Resort & Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells	349
Sr. High Convo	November	Alliant Energy Center,	1314

VISION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAM

On October 17, 1998 at a called session of the Annual Conference, The Wisconsin Annual Conference approved a new organizational design for our conference. This design included a team, overseen by the Bishop, to “watch over” the Annual Conference. The purpose of the Vision Quality Team was to watch the processes and work of the conference to determine if there are better ways of being faithful as conference. The Team celebrated the hopeful places of transformation and paid attention to the places where change was needed. The VQIT can recommend change, create task groups to evaluate how to do our work better, and to ask the right questions so that change can occur.

We met several times each year to “listen in” to what is going on in the conference. We listened to Director’s reports, reports from other people in the conference and shared our own experiences of what was going on in our midst. While there is not space in this report for all the work that we have done on the past four years, here is a brief overview of some of the tasks performed.

- June 2001 we surveyed people from the conference as to how the churches are using Annual Conference Staff and resources to determine if the local church was utilizing these resources. A large percentage of the churches in the conference, especially those near Madison, did avail themselves to the resources provided.
- The Committee on Finance and Administration requested that the VQIT review plans for ministry and make budget recommendations based on the plans. This required two days of hard work each year, where many hard questions were asked and recommendations made. We also had a chance to celebrate the many ministries which often go unnoticed.
- We worked with Nominations on concerns we had over issues concerning conference leadership.
- We discussed ways for BOOM and the Lay Ministry groups in the conference to strengthen leadership.
- We fielded requests from the Annual Conference to create specific groups to deal with specific issues. Most recently this led to the creation of a group to look at the number of District Superintendents in the conference, which led to the creation of the Circuit Ministry plan and to the creation of the Transformation Committee.
- We have dealt with staffing issues, including the recent recommendation that the Leadership Development position not be filled at this time, while we work on other avenues of leadership development.
- Recommended that we accept a proposal made by the Foundation to begin work on a Stewardship Center to help local churches in the area of stewardship.
- We constantly work on creating better avenues of communication so that we get better feedback and assessment.

These are a few of the things we have worked on in the past few years. I also want to express my own appreciation in working with Bishop Rader these last four years on VQIT. She has led us with passion and sensitivity, and has a real heart and love for this conference. And I am sure that I speak for the whole committee when I say that we like any of her hairstyles better than Dan Schwerin’s rapidly fading hairline!

Kent Ingram