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REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LAY MINISTRY



**GENERAL CONNECTIONAL BOARD
MEETING, MAY 1 - 3, 2007
MEMPHIS, TN**

DEPARTMENT OF LAYMINISTRY

Mr. Chairman, College of Bishops, my fellow colleagues, Members of the Judiciary Council, College Presidents, Delegates, and my Fellow Laity – I greet you in the precious name of Jesus Christ who provides my every need.

It is my privilege to make this, my ninth report of my stewardship serving the people of God, the Laos!

Things continue to move forward in the Department of Lay Ministry thanks in many ways to the inspiration and contributions that come from our local churches.

Hail to the Chief

However, we are greatly grieved by the passing of our brother in the Lord, Chief Dr. I. Carlton Faulk.

His faith and energy will long remain a beacon of hope and resolve as we trample out the new vintage of the Department of Lay Ministry.

Dr. Faulk led us to adopt seven guiding principles as we build a legacy of education on the plains of West Africa, especially Nigeria.

As a result of the faith and commitment of Dr. Faulk the people of Ikot Ndua Iman – village of Onna, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria voted to grant some forty (40) acres of land to develop the new Chief Dr. I. Carlton Faulk Technical School.

We will work assiduously to raise \$400,000 to bring this dream to reality.

The family of Dr. Faulk has agreed to establish a Faulk Foundation, which will assist this effort, as well as provide funding for other schools approved by the Foundation and embracing the aforementioned seven principles.

Graham/Webb

W.L. Graham/Roscoe C. Webb Scholarship funds have risen to more than \$100,000. Given our starting point was zero; the Lord has blessed us mightily. We appreciate and thank the good lay people in this amazing achievement. The fund will operate for the benefit of males attending higher education institutions.

Where there is vision...

Where there is vision, the people flourish. Certainly this has been reflective in our Communications of Information & Technology (CIT) Ministry.

Under the effective and capable direction of Sis. Theresa Duhart, the CME website has becoming a leading site - a prototypical model of what this effective medium should communicate.

CME TV, a core creation convention services platform developed by the CIT Ministry, is functioning with all deliberate speed. Venues include the Women's Missionary Council, the Pastor's Conference, the General Conference, the Annual CME Convocation, and the Lay Institute.

Consequently, we have been able to save money for every CME convention we have worked based. Comparable market costs are multiple times higher than ours.

The Future of CIT

We believe the time has come and now is to separate the CIT ministry from the Department of Lay Ministry.

What did not exist only nine years ago has grown at a rapid and unabated pace despite tremendous opposition.

It is now fully grown. It's time to leave home.

The question remains – what is the best means of executing this separation.

Of course, we have our opinion.

We believe CIT should be a separate entity with one of the active Bishops of the CME Church serving as Chairman.

This would entail a conveyance of the assets currently owned by the CME Church through the Department of Lay Ministry to CIT.

Of course, the precedence is there from similar grants to our institutes of higher learning.

The historical affinity would remain just as it does with the schools.

However, a principal objective of CIT would be to make a financial contribution to the CME Church every year.

Additionally, CIT would not require any budget from the CME Church. The organization would be self-sustaining.

Connectional Ministries

Our thanks to our Steward, Stewardess, and Usher leaders—Charles Taylor, Maxine McClury, and Diana Winton respectively.

Since the last Connectional Lay Institute in 2005 President Clifford L. Harris has led the Connectional Lay Council.

Thanks to Cliff, the Department is publishing a monthly course of study. The courses are heavily demanded and reflect the extent to which training is imperative for our local churches to pursue.

We extend much gratitude to our Chairman, Bishop Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr. and the wife of the General Secretary, Mrs. Wanda F. Taylor.

General Conference matters

Unfortunately, the 2006 General Conference failed to act upon the report of this General Secretary effectively frustrating and dismissing years of work and planning without a decision one way or the other.

However, the General Conference did decide to turn the clock back on years of progress by the Connectional Lay Institute by changing the methodology by which one becomes a delegate.

Part of the argument for this change was that it was too complicated to follow the same delegate election system utilized by the local churches to elect delegates to the Annual Conference.

Consequently, it was voted that whomever registers for the Institute shall be eligible to vote at the Connectional Lay Institute.

Given no delegate substitution policy was enacted - be assured this General Secretary, the Connectional Lay Council, and the Department of Lay Ministry will follow the law.

This means anyone who does not register shall not vote. There were no provisions enacted to substitute an unregistered person for a person who registered but is not in attendance.

This means anyone planning to vote must register even if their intention is to substitute in place of an otherwise registered person who is not present.

That is to say, the voting requirements shall be the same as in a general election in the United States.

If you are not registered – you may not vote. You may not vote in someone’s place that did properly register.

Next Connectional Lay Institute

Given the success in 2005 of following the 19th Annual CME Convocation with the 13th Quadrennial Connectional Lay Institute we shall once again ask the 23rd Annual CME Convocation to embrace this cooperative effort.

This was included in a resolution contained in the report of the General Secretary at the General Conference however, as earlier explained, the recommendation and the report were not considered at the General Conference.

Ministry to Men (MTM)

We previously noted that the ever-growing Graham/Webb Scholarship Fund has been voted by the Lay Institute to extend only to male scholars. One of the major problems confronting us among black male men is their shocking absence from institutions of higher learning.

It is our intention to work with the new General Secretary of MTM, Mr. Leo Pinkett, to formulate strategies required to develop a dynamic, credible, and highly motivational male ministry in the CME Church.

As a matter of fact, April 28 & 29 I attended my first MTM retreat lead by Bro. Pinkett in Atlanta, Georgia. The Department of Lay Ministry is extremely impressed and encouraged about developing latent energies among males from our membership and for our ministries.

Currently, the Department of Lay Ministry intends to work alongside the MTM to develop contacts and networks at convention levels where we identify affinity organizations that are already conducting successful male ministry conferences.

We intend to utilize Department resources, especially those technological ones, to convince potential partners about advantages we may extend them through the CME Church.

Although we have accomplished much there are miles to go before we sleep. We can do all these things because it is Christ that strengthens us and because, in the words of Bishop Henry M. Williamson (the new Chairman of the MTM), it is “together we can”.

Recommendations for the Standing Committee on Lay Ministry action:

-Considering the threat of lawsuit in an increasingly litigious society, the CME Church must act to preserve its integrity and good name. Adopt the separately distributed disclaimer regarding use and official source of online data regarding the CME Church and request the editor and publicist print it in each edition of the Christian Index.

-Approve we seek cooperation with the Convocation Committee to conduct the 14th Quadrennial Connectional Lay Institute to follow the 23rd Annual CME Convocation in 2009.

-Pursue and adopt a strategy for separating the CIT Ministry from the Department of Lay Ministry.

-Approve the establishment of the Faulk Foundation and how it shall be organized.