



# IOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



## TREASURY NOTES

**JUNE 2008**

Publisher/Editor: Dr. Charles W. Smith; Telephone (515) 283-1991; [www.iaumc.org](http://www.iaumc.org)

### **Consultant's Report**

In last issue of the Treasury Notes I reported a summary of the consultant's report who had been engaged to review the workflow and systems of the Conference Treasurer's Office. In this edition I will summarize the recommendations of the consultant and briefly describe what is happening with each of the recommendations.

The first recommendation dealt with Human Resources and Benefits Administration. The consultant wrote, "One area where additional expertise could make a positive impact would be in the area of human resources, issues related to HR policies, practices and requirements are becoming more and more complex. They are also becoming a "lightning rod" for claims against an employer. Although this has been a responsibility that has been accepted by Dr. Smith to this point, we would recommend the addition of a human resources professional to your staff. It is a significant responsibility in addition to his financial and accounting oversight, property management duties and so on." They are also recommending that some of the work related to pensions and health insurance could rest with the position. Again, many changes in federal and state laws plus regulations have made benefits administration to a large extent more complex than in past years.

A joint committee from the Council on Finance and Administration, Board of Pensions and Human Resources was formed to begin the exploration of this recommendation in more detail. A position description will need to be written, a salary classification determined, and then funding for the position if the joint committee agrees with the consultant's recommendation.

The second recommendation is the accounting functions related to budgeting, reporting and

expense reporting software programs should be updated. The key areas are systems, processes and people. At certain times of the year, the accounting staff works many additional hours in order to complete the tasks of closings, budgeting and reporting. If the software system is changed, the current staff should be capable of producing the needed reports and maintain the accounts receivable and payable in a timely manner.

The Administrative Services has identified three vendors who have worked extensively with other Annual Conferences. These vendors have been contacted and work is being done to provide them with the information they need in order to make a proposal to the Conference. In building upon the work that has been done in other annual conferences, our cost of proposal development will be minimal, and we will benefit from their experiences in making a conversion.

The third recommendation is to form an Information Technology Advisory group. This group would provide direction for long-term strategic plans for our technology growth as well as help project priorities within budget limitations. The 2007 Annual Conference authorized the creation of an Advisory Committee; however, the focus of this committee as recommended by the consultant would be changed slightly. It would be a support to the IT staff and would serve to advise, counsel and help develop the best solutions for both the immediate and long-term needs of the Conference.

The IT Advisory Committee was organized and has met twice. At their last meeting, the committee developed a process that will assist them to help support and develop an infrastructure that can sustain and support the mission of the Annual Conference.

The fourth recommendation is Administrative Services should update its mission/purpose. The consultant's recommendation is a reminder that although the staff seeks a continual improvement process of evaluating effort, determining weakness, seeking/implementing solutions, and then evaluating outcome, it is good to step back and review our mission and purpose once again. To this end, the staff is in the process of engaging a person who can start with the mission of the Annual Conference, help administrative services develop a compatible mission statement and then use that statement to develop goals for the various components of our work and determine measurable outcomes.

This is a summary of the consultant's recommendation. In each one of the four areas listed, the consultant has suggested some detailed possibilities that could assist in implementing these recommendations. Some of these suggestions can be applied to our ministry easily and others will require time to develop and implement. One of the reasons CFA and Administrative Services commissioned this study was the last time this kind of detailed review occurred was around 1994-1995. Of course, since then systems, laws, benefits, and personnel have changed. As many of you know it doesn't do much good to hire a consultant, receive their report and then put it on a shelf. The report helps to set the direction and tone that I as conference treasurer and CFA will be developing over the next quadrennium.

### **Statistical Review**

By now each pastor and each treasurer should have received the data that will become part of the statistical tables. Please review the information on the report; if corrections are needed make them in the margins and send back to our office *before August 1*. We all want our statistical information to be accurate. After this date, this is the information used to calculate the *2009 apportionments*.

### **Conference Center Closed**

A reminder the conference center will be closed Friday, July 4 for our Independence Day.

### **Direct Bill Reminder**

The July Direct Bill for pension and health insurance will be mailed after July 1 when the data is updated in our system to account for the moves and retirement of clergy.

### **Speaking of Moves**

I am passing along a suggestion that was made by R. D. Streeter in a phone call. Instead of packing canned and boxed food items to be moved why not donate them to the local food pantry. Also, donate to other charities items you moved from the previous appointment and have not used or needed in this one. *Just passing it along.*

### **Conference Center Hours During Annual Conference**

During the Annual Conference Session which begins Thursday evening June 5 through Sunday, June 8, the Conference Center switchboard and office will be closed on Friday. There will be some staff at the center on Thursday while others will be moving equipment and materials to Ames. The switchboard and doors will be open on Thursday. However, the switchboard and doors are closed on Friday. There will be some staff in the IUM Foundation and Camp Registrar's office on Friday. You may reach them by using their direct phone number.

### **The May Apportionment Receipts will be reported in the next edition.**

### **Thank You**

Whether money is used in a local church or given beyond, to Conference and world projects, it begins with a gift placed in an offering plate. Please say thank you from the Conference to all your members who so faithfully and generously share their blessings from God.

In 2007, the United Methodist Churches of Iowa spent a total of \$104,305,110 for all causes. This is an 8.79% increase from the previous year. 85.18% of this money was used in the local level, 13.05% was paid in apportionments and 1.77% was given to advance and mission projects within Iowa, National and World projects.