

annually to a United Methodist clergy and lay person in each annual conference for outstanding work in Christian evangelism.

- Dr. Randy Casey-Rutland, Florida Conference statistician, reported conference membership in 2003 was 329,018, a decline of 3,106 people. The average worship attendance was 161,375.
- In the services of licensing, commissioning and ordination 36 people were licensed for pastoral ministry (full-time, part-time and student local pastors); 19 were commissioned for ministry and received as probationary members (four on the deacon track and 15 on the elder track); one was received as a probationary member from another Christian denomination; two were ordained as deacons in full connection; and 12 were ordained as elders in full connection.
- This year's annual conference celebrated the retirement of two deacons in full connection, seven elders in full connection, one associate member and five local pastors.

For complete coverage of the 2004 Florida Annual Conference Event visit e-Review Florida United Methodist News Service online at <http://www.flumc.info>. e-Review also offers discussion boards where you can share your opinions about conference decisions with other Florida United Methodists.

Stories, pictures and other conference event resources are available through the Florida Conference Web site at <http://www.flumc.org>.



JUNE 3-6, 2004  
BETHUNE-COOKMAN COLLEGE  
DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA

## Florida Conference celebrates annual gathering in new way and place

By J.A. Buchholz

DAYTONA BEACH — More than 2,000 Florida Conference clergy and laity gathered June 3-6 at Bethune Cookman-College (B-CC) here for the 2004 Florida Annual Conference Event. Under the theme “A Light to the Nations,” delegates experienced both a new setting and new ways of being in ministry together.

This year Florida’s United Methodists spent time on the campus of United Methodist-related B-CC. The event’s plenary sessions took place in the college’s new Performing Arts Center. The gathering was also held over a weekend to give delegates who work an opportunity to attend.

A highlight of the gathering was the presence of Bishop José Quipungo, who presides over the Eastern Angola Conference of the United Methodist Church. An offering was collected to support ministry initiatives in Eastern Angola, including completing the reconstruction of Quéssua United Methodist Church and providing Community Based Health Care training for the conference. The offering total was \$64,258, with money still being collected, according to Dr. Randy Casey-Rutland, conference treasurer.

In addition to celebrating the presence of Quipungo and his wife, Dr. Laurinda Vidal Quipungo, a physician, delegates considered and voted on a number of proposals that will reshape the way the conference does its business.

### Connecting for Transformation

Delegates approved the Florida Conference Cabinet’s “Connecting for Transformation” proposal, which will reduce the conference’s districts from 14 to nine, encourage churches to be part of a cluster group of churches within their district and change the responsibilities of district superintendents.

Each of the nine new districts will be as equal as possible regarding the number of churches and missions, membership, finances, land size and ease of transportation within the district, and each will have between 50 and 85 churches and missions.

Each district will establish a leadership council of 12 to 15 clergy and lay leaders that will assist the superintendent in making major strategic decisions and function as the superintendency, finance and nominations committees, and board of trustees. Each new district will hold a gathering of clergy and laity in the fall of 2004 to elect the leadership council, which will act as the transition team empowered

to address nominations, budgets, reorganizations and issues related to district offices and parsonages.

District conferences will be eliminated, with the district leadership council empowered to review district budgets and determine connectional giving responsibilities. The district annual conference orientation will elect district leadership. The new district structures will take effect July 5, 2005.

### Conference Equipping Network

Delegates also approved eliminating the Conference Council on Ministries in favor of the Conference Equipping Network (CEN). The creation of the CEN is intended to move the conference away from maintaining programs and toward identifying and fulfilling future ministry and leadership needs.

The CEN’s core is the Leadership Connection, a team of no more than 15 laity and clergy that will be responsible for setting the vision for and identifying ministry needs. That group will also create task teams to focus on meeting the identified ministry needs and visions.

The CEN will focus more on providing information, researching ministry trends and needs, developing ministries and equipping people for those ministries, and seeking and evaluating input and feedback to assist in future research.

### Celebrate Jesus

Attendees also had the opportunity to live their faith by taking part in a mini-Celebrate Jesus mission June 4. More than 400 people canvassed the streets surrounding Daytona’s Community and Stewart Memorial United Methodist churches, praying with people and inviting them to a Family Fun Day held the next evening at the Daytona Beach Band Shell as the culmination to the Celebrate Jesus mission. Delegates also gave away bottled water and light bulbs.

### Other business

- Delegates approved increasing the salary of district superintendents to \$79,850 for 2005, an increase of about \$5,000 above the 2004 salary.
- Delegates approved the Florida Conference Council on Finance & Administration’s recommended budget of a little more than \$18.8 million. This is a \$124,091, or 0.7 percent, increase over the 2004 budget. That includes an estimated 7 percent increase in general church and jurisdictional apportionments.
- William (Bill) Walker was elected Florida Conference lay leader, succeeding T. Terrell Sessums. Walker served as the conference’s director of Connectional Ministries from June 1999 to June 2003.
- The 2004 Grindheim-Sims Award was given to the Rev. St. Clair Moore, pastor of Rogers Memorial United Methodist Church, Bradenton. The award is given annually to the pastor of a small membership church who has distinguished him- or herself through efforts in evangelism and church growth.
- The 2004 Denman Evangelism Awards were presented to the Rev. Jocelyn Jean Baptist Adhemar, pastor of St. Johns United Methodist Haitian Mission, Boynton Beach, and Rafael Ortega, a lay member of Village United Methodist Church, North Ft. Lauderdale. The awards are presented