bishops speaking schedule

Feb. 5: African-American mini-seminar, Laurens-Marion UMC (Kingsport District), 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.

Feb. 6: 7th Congressional UMC (Stanleyville UMC, Pineville, Ky.), 3:30 a.m. to 10:04 a.m.

Feb. 8: Big Stone Gap District clergy, Big Stone Gap UMC, 8:30 a.m.

Feb. 19: Mission Celebration, First Whittier UMC, Kingsport District, 7 p.m.

n the last issue, I examined the seven vows that members assume when they become part of the United Methodist Church. These vows are explained in Paragraph 417 in the 2004 Book of Discipline. In the third part of this “Meaning of Membership” series, I want members to remember that when they join the church, they commit to more than acceptance and pardon from God. They commit to nurture each other and to grow to the measure of the full stature of Christ. The word “nurture” has been misunderstood in our local churches. Many of our members believe nurture means “to take care.” The dictionary states that nurture means “to educate, to rear, and to bring up.” The dictionary also points to the word “nurture” which “means ‘to supply with food, to feed and cause to grow.’ It appears to me that every time a new member takes the vows of membership or, if they participate in the conferral of the Holy Communion, “Resurrection of Sin and Perfection of Faith,” congregational members commit themselves to nurture each other, just as well as the new member. In days gone by we would simply say, “We are going on to perfection.” The 2004 Book of Discipline (page 417, Paragraph 101, under “Sanctification of the Church,”) explains that: We told that the wonder of God’s grace and pardon does not do God’s saving work, which continues to mature through growth in Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to increase in the knowledge and love of God and of love for one another. The Apostle Paul admonishes the church in Ephesians 4:11-15: “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful schemes. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.” You see, God calls that after we profess our faith in the saving work of Christ, we will go on to “grow up.” This “growing up” is understood to be the filling of the measure of the disciple, the disciple, and the Christian. But until we are transformed, we are members into the incarnation, the church seems to drop the ball. We fail to make sure our new members are converted into discipleship. Perhaps, we need to review our practices after reading this column series, want to make sure that we have called membership in the church has often been Wesley’s formula, transforming and justifying grace, without moving on to sanctification. Wesley assumes that to accept grace is to seek a change in life reflected in good works. The 2004 Book of Discipline, under the section “Faults and Good Works,” states, “For Wesley, even repentance should be accompanied by ‘fruits meet for repentance,’ or works of piety and money.” Membership demands something more than that they are our attendance, our money, or the building of leadership positions. Membership is a commitment to working with the Holy Spirit so that we are transformed, made into new creations reflecting Jesus to the world—not just yet we’re in the church building or even worshiping together, while we interact with our families, communities and even our enemies. Paragraph 220 of the Book of Discipline states: Therefore, each member of The United Methodist Church is to be a servant of Christ on mission in the local and worldwide Church. This servanthood is performed in family life and marriage, in vocation and social activities, responsible citizenship, the stewardship of property and other resources, the issues of corporate and individual greed, and all attitudes toward other persons. Participation in disciplined groups is to be a shared responsibility of personal mission involvement. Each member is called upon to be a witness of Christ in the world, and on our own salvation. This is a call to loyalty and jealousy and a reconvenor in a culture of conflict. Each member is to be in solidarity with the agony and suffering of the world and to radiate and exemplify the Christ of Hope.

Money for tsunami relief efforts

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By Annette Bender

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wenty Holston congregations gave more than $85,000 in 2004 to Fair Share apportionments, in 2004, helping to bring the total percentage of receipts to 10.31 percent, the treasurer’s office recently announced.

In all, 167 congregations—nearly 75 percent of Holston’s 221 churches—paid 100 percent of their apportionments. The total received in 2004 was $4,937,591, which is 7.9 percent higher than in the previous year. “I want to congratulate the people of Holston Conference on their faithfulness to the work,” said the Rev. Jan. 12. “It is my suspicion that congregations paid more this year than in 2004 because of a sense of duty or obligation—but because they understand that that every dollar a church pays is not just money in church, they commit to more than acceptance and pardon from God. Many of our members believe nurture means “to take care.” The dictionary states that nurture means “to educate, to rear, and to bring up.” The dictionary also points to the word “nurture” which “means ‘to supply with food, to feed and cause to grow.’ It appears to me that every time a new member takes the vows of membership or, if they participate in the conferral of the Holy Communion, “Resurrection of Sin and Perfection of Faith,” congregational members commit themselves to nurture each other, just as well as the new member. In days gone by we would simply say, “We are going on to perfection.”

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appointments 2004: give church boards pick 100 percent and Changutsu District with 85.09 percent. However, diocesan districts expressed over last year. Here Big Stone Gap by 3.46 percent, and Chattanooga by 3.93 percent.

Thirty-four congregations didn’t pay any of their apportionments, representing $41,210 of the $54.16 million budget in 2004, according to Treasurer Clyde McDonald. Fifty churches paid 1 to 25 percent of their apportionments, bringing in $20,576 in apportionment money.

Mission Celebration decided the highest percentage, 90.8 percent of apportionments paid in 2003. Concord UMC in Oak Ridge was 2nd highest at 83.3 percent, in 2004.

In the last several years, the conference has received 90 to 99 percent of apportionments—with the exception of 2002, when giving dropped to 89 percent. Other 50+ groups include Lightsources UMC of Changutsu District, Davon Memorial UMC of Abington District, Riverside UMC of Wassett District, New Valley UMC of Maryville District, Fair Spring (LaFollette) UMC of Oak Ridge District, and Chatlaporo Springs UMC of Kingsport District. As second place in Big Stone Gap District with 94.63 percent of apportionments.

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Chalice UMC in Knoxville created a mission fund with 2,000 in average worship attendance for 2004. The church, with 180 in membership, gave 1,239.

As of Jan. 20, at least 185 Holston congregations had combined $240,000 to tsunami victims through the United Methodist Committee (UMCOR). Other contributions came to the Knoxville con- centrically and sent to the Tennessee United Methodist Foundation ($5,440), the University of Tennessee Wesley Foundation ($1,300), and First Morristown UMC ($14,400). During the Jan. 14-17 weekend of Resource Ministries, $11,400 was sent to UMCOR.

While the deaths fall from the tidal waves that swept the Indian Ocean the day after Christmas reached $20,000,000,000. More than 20,000,000 people were displaced. A tsunami disaster and claim ten distributions for 2004.

Women can claim a deduction for the 2004 tax year for contributions made through local churches and United Methodists through denominational channels. A United Methodist Church.

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