

Vision 2020 - Foundation Document

North Georgia Annual Conference Leadership Forum Vision - We envision an Annual Conference in 2020 where every congregation is making disciples for Jesus Christ lead by effective and spiritually maturing laity and pastors serving in partnership.

We envision an Annual Conference which will focus its human and financial resources on the basic tasks of leadership development, the establishment of new faith communities and the birthing of a steady stream of mission efforts which will have a transformational impact on North Georgia and the entire world.

1. Leadership development of laity and clergy will often be accomplished by mutual training and joint programming. While there will be training directed primarily toward the clergy and other events intended for laity, much of our leadership development will be planned and implemented within a collaborative environment. The Board of Ordained Ministry, Order of Elders, Order of Deacons, and the Cabinet will have particular responsibility for spiritual formation of the clergy. Specific leadership training programs will be developed for clergy during their probationary years. The Council on Ministries, Board of Laity, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and United Methodist Youth will provide training for laity and clergy in five key areas – evangelism, education, mission, worship and stewardship.

2. The establishment of new faith communities will involve challenging our Annual Conference to start at least 200 new faith communities by the year 2020. Our efforts would be led by The Committee on Church Development and the Cabinet; and will involve not only traditional methods of church planting, but also would utilize partnerships with large churches committed to parenting new congregations. We will also employ satellite congregations and store front faith communities which may never have a permanent facility; as well as new faith communities emerging from within existing congregations.

We intend to be flexible in designating leadership for new faith communities. Full-time pastors, part-time local pastors, and lay speakers can begin new works among us. To do this type of evangelism will require a better system of training and nurture for our pastors who do not attend seminary.

3. A third area of emphasis is the “birthing” of a steady stream of transformational mission opportunities. Our major goal here is to see broken, displaced and hurting people worldwide experience through our Conference the power of God that brings physical, emotional, relational and spiritual health. We envision an Annual Conference which continually assesses the mission needs of our area and the world to discern where and how God would have us respond with compassion. In this way, the world around us will be changed because of the grace of God working through us. We agree with John Paul II in that this 21st century will be a “new springtime” for the gospel message especially in Africa, Asia, and South America. We want North Georgia to be a part of God’s movement in these places. As we labor with our global neighbors, perhaps their missionary zeal and witness will open new doors for the Holy Spirit to transform us.

Key issues that we must address are the core values, motivating vision, and mission directions which form our covenant together as the people of God. We envision the leadership forum as a place where these fundamental agreements can be forged before they go to the Annual Conference session for discussion and possible adoption. Once there is honest agreement about these vital areas of ministry and some basic boundaries of action established, tactics can be left to other Boards and Agencies of the Annual Conference.

Our Church exists in and for the world. While it is primarily at the level of the local church that the Church encounters the world, the Annual Conference is given the task of equipping the local

church for effective ministry and to provide avenues for ministry beyond the local community. The Annual Conference is not to duplicate the work of the local church, but to provide support for congregations and their leaders.

As we move into this new century we stand in need of a fresh anointing of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. As we look around the world, we see the Church growing and dynamic where there is an openness to the Holy Spirit. A renewed commitment by all of us to prayer, fasting, Bible study, worship, Christian conversation, and acts of mercy will open our hearts and minds to God's movement in our lives and our Church.