

2009 THE CONFERENCE JOURNAL

**North Carolina Annual Conference
Raleigh Area
of
The United Methodist Church
Southeastern Jurisdiction**

Successor to

The North Carolina Conference, Methodist Protestant Church, 1828-1939
The North Carolina Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, 1837-1844
The North Carolina Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1845-1939
Blue Ridge -Atlantic Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, 1879-1939
Eastern District, North Carolina-Virginia Conference, Central Jurisdiction,
The Methodist Church, 1940-1967

being

The Forty-First Session of The United Methodist Church and the One
Hundred Eighty-Fourth Session of the oldest constituent member Conference of United Methodism in the North Carolina Conference

June 10 - 13, 2009

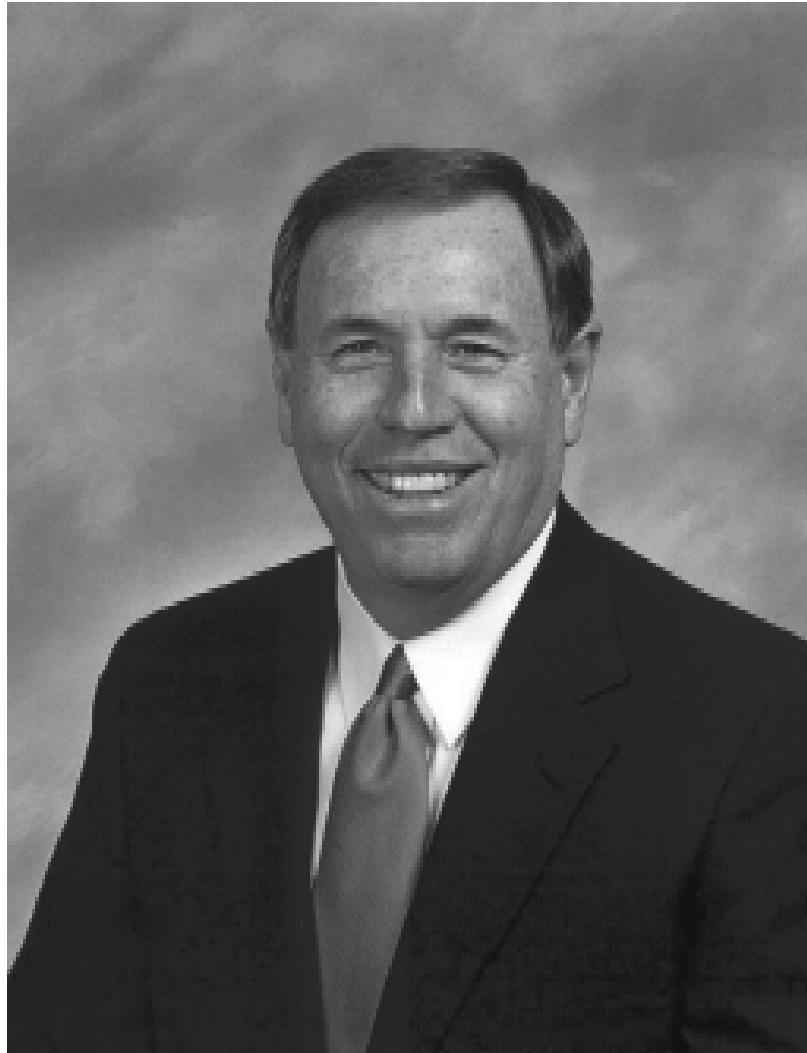
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Raleigh Area Bishop

A Future with Hope . . .

Learning together

With a new theme and an old story the people of the United Methodist Church in the eastern half of North Carolina gather as an Annual Conference in June.

The story tells of God's steadfast, redeeming love and of God's sometimes faithful, sometimes fickle people. We are the people in that story today, gathering in response to God's initiative, sowing seeds of faith, extending hands in love, conducting the business of the Annual Conference. But it is not "business as usual."

A new theme calls us to envision "A Future with Hope." As in the old story, this future is not our own imagination's invention. We hear today as the prophet heard, "For surely I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "plans for your welfare and not to harm, to give you a future with hope." (Jeremiah 29:11) This word came to Jeremiah during Judah's 70 year exile in Babylon. The faithful suffered personal hardship and cultural turmoil. Yet they endured because their hope was strong, based on the promise of God.

The new theme is introduced for the quadrennium (2009 – 2012). Each year an emphasis is given to an aspect of our life together as United Methodist Christians. This year, the emphasis is on *Learning*. We desire to learn how to be fruitful in our lives as Christian disciples. Conference participants will learn what it takes to be an Acts 2 church, as congregations are called to practice *radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional spiritual formation and risk-taking ministry in the world*. Rev. Adam Hamilton, Senior Pastor of The Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City, will teach about effective leadership. Through worship and prayer, the assembly of believers will learn how to listen to the still, small voice of God, whose whispers of hope overpower the drone of depressing daily news from the world.

Dr. Albert Einstein calls us to "learn from yesterday, live for today and hope for tomorrow." As we conduct the business of the Annual Conference and engage in holy conferencing to accomplish our work, we also seek spiritual renewal and power to fulfill the mission of the church, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

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