

Report No. 2

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND

Introduction

The Ministerial Education Fund was established by action of the 1968 General Conference as a means of engaging the total membership of the Church in an effort to equip annual conferences, theological schools, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) to meet the need for increased resources for the recruitment and education of persons for ordained ministry. Since 1976, programs related to both diaconal and ordained ministry have been eligible for funding. And, since 1996, programs related to recruitment and education of both deacons and elders have received support.

Support is provided for the thirteen United Methodist seminaries in the United States and global initiatives through the GBHEM, as well as local pastor courses of study, continuing education, and other programs that strengthen the ministry of every local church. The 25% retained by each annual conference directly supports ministerial education in that conference.

The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) believes the Ministerial Education Fund is an important part of the general Church focus on the development of clergy and lay leadership for local churches in coming years. The Council shares the concern of GBHEM about the declining proportion of persons coming into annual conference membership who are graduates of United Methodist seminaries, the declining percentage of denominational financial support for United Methodist seminary budgets, and the corresponding increase in student indebtedness. It believes that it is essential that United Methodist

seminaries and their faculties play the key role in developing leadership committed to the connectional nature of The United Methodist Church and its mission in the world. Local churches and annual conferences are, therefore, urged to give increased visibility to this fund and the need it addresses.

Apportionment

The Ministerial Education Fund was first apportioned in 1970 to the annual conferences as one of the church's general funds. During the period through 2006, over \$594 million has been raised to support this important work. The Council recommends that the amounts apportioned for the 2009–2012 quadrennium be as follows:

Year	Apportionment	Percent Changes
2009	\$ 28,280,000	0.1%
2010	28,280,000	0.0%
2011	28,284,000	0.0%
2012	<u>28,286,000</u>	0.0%
Total	\$113,130,000	

Distribution

Amounts received by the conference treasurer for this fund shall be distributed as described in ¶ 816 of *The Book of Discipline 2004*. Promotion and interpretation of the Ministerial Education Fund shall be by GBHEM in cooperation and with the assistance of the General Commission on Communication (UMCom), the cost being a charge against that portion of the Ministerial Education Fund administered by the board, and within a budget approved by the board and GCFA.