

LANGFORD'S PROPOSAL ON APPORTIONMENT PAYMENT

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The Rev. Andy Langford of Concord, NC, has been a delegate to the last five General Conferences and currently serves on the General Church Connectional Table. He is proposing that local UM congregations no longer pay all apportionment items; instead, he suggests that they designate their payments to UM funds and agencies that are effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ. Langford calls this method of payment "Church-Directed Allocation." He notes that this method is allowed by the Book of Discipline. Paragraph 812 calls for "payment in full of these apportionments" but **IT DOES NOT SAY THAT PAYMENT IN FULL OF EACH INDIVIDUAL ITEM IS REQUIRED.** Langford notes that UM congregations outside the U.S. are currently paying only to the Episcopal Fund and not to the other six general church funds.

Langford's congregation in 2014 will pay only the Episcopal and Jurisdictional Administration Fund apportionments in full, but will pay nothing toward the other six general church apportionments. He claims that the majority of these, especially World Service, pay primarily general church staff instead of making disciples. Instead, his local church will designate the total apportionments of those six funds for one or more of the following UM causes:

- Jurisdictional Administration;
- Western North Carolina Conference Vision and Goals (including new church development);
- District Missional Engagement Fund and/or the District Congregational Vitality Fund.

The proper procedure, according to Langford, would be for a congregation's finance committee to recommend to its Administrative Council or Board the allocation of apportionment payments. Once the Administrative Council approves, the church treasurer would then send in payments as designated. The Conference Treasurer must then follow the designations of that congregation. No other person or body in the denomination can dictate how a local church pays its apportionments. If the total amount of money paid by the congregation equals 100% of the total monies apportioned to that congregation, the Conference Treasurer must then certify that the congregation has paid 100% of its apportionments.

Langford points out that for over 40 years, in excess of \$3 billion have been spent supporting the general agencies and other endeavors of our global

connection. And for over 40 years, our denomination in the U.S. has been in decline. He believes that United Methodists in local congregations must now learn how to set their own priorities. He says, "Churches in the U.S. should no longer continue to contribute to a failing general church denominational bureaucracy that is a waste of money and faithfulness to God. Congregations should use their monies in ways faithful to our Wesleyan tradition." In the process, he believes, congregations will help re-establish the role of the Annual Conference as the basic body of the denomination. For a full copy of Andy Langford's report, contact him at andy@concordcentral.org