

Statement on Interim Operations Team/Connectional Table proposals

January 27, 2012

How has the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry already responded to the Call to Action?

The Board of Directors of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, under the leadership of its president, Bishop Marcus Matthews, enthusiastically endorsed the *Call to Action Report* and set to work 18 months ago to respond. The Board engaged Novak and Associates to conduct an institutional audit and implemented their recommendations by eliminating redundancy, trimming staff, and voluntarily reducing our 2012 operating budget by 8 percent. GBHEM is also bringing forward legislation to the 2012 General Conference to reduce the size of our elected Board from 64 to 22 members.

We understand that the church is asking for change, and we have responded in significant ways. The Office of Loans and Scholarships has reduced staff without compromising function with a new software tool. In addition to the technical changes we have made, we are also addressing the adaptive challenge by rethinking how we resource and train church leaders, in both the U.S. and Central Conferences. We are in the process of researching and developing Cyber-Campus, which will offer online training to Cabinets, Boards of Ordained Ministry, and District Committees on Ministry.

The Leadership Table, one of the Four Areas of Focus, under the leadership of Bishop Grant Hagiya, has recently launched Spark 12, a program that will help connect creative young adults with a passion for ministry and mission with the resources, mentors, and philanthropic networks needed to launch ministries.

We have partnered with the African bishops to create the African Association of United Methodist Theological Institutions, which will begin to coordinate theological education on the continent. In February, GBHEM will host the Global Theological Education Conference in Seoul, Korea, partnering with Yonsei University School of Theology to resource theological education in Asia.

The IOT legislation was crafted in a month's time last summer – well after our response had been implemented. I think the IOT's proposal is one of several that has value. It reminds me of what John Deschner said about Karl Barth's theology being like a whetstone. It can help you hone your theology, but it should not be swallowed whole.

Kim Cape

General Secretary, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry