

Dear Members of the 2007 US National Conference:

The planning for the 2007 US National Conference is complete. We are working hard to make it a positive experience. The response has been fantastic, with over 800 people registered. About 360 of them are delegates for the actual business session. This mailing is going only to them.

This conference will be unlike any United Brethren conference you have attended. Our overarching purpose is to “draw a line in the sand” to declare that from now on, we will walk a new direction. We will celebrate our heritage by pulling the positive, unchanging principles of our past into our future, while allowing those traditions, practices, and ministries that are no longer effective to simply stop.

This is a new day for the United Brethren. This new day calls us to bold initiatives for reaching the unchurched in our communities, successfully planting new churches in growing areas, and discipling believers to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The main speakers, the seminars, the worship times, the communion service, our time of repentance—all aspects of the conference will refocus our efforts on reaching unchurched people for Jesus.

The business session will also change. In the past, each National Conference spent several days discussing, amending, deleting, or accepting changes to the *Book of Discipline*. We did that every four years. Now we're on a two-year cycle. In 2005 we spent three long days revising the *Discipline* and drastically changing our structure. We don't need to do that again, less than two years later. Do we?

We have scheduled only three hours for conference business this year. I told the Executive Leadership Team that I wanted us to make minimal changes, and they agreed. After all, we're still adjusting to the myriad changes made in 2005. Instead, we will spend our days together casting the vision for a new direction for our Church. The only items of business we *must* deal with are:

- Giving final approval to the five referenda items (all of which passed by at least 90%).
- Removing items 5 and 8 from the National Church Covenant.
- Electing members of the Executive Leadership Team.
- A few other items of *Discipline* revision (see report 44).

Enclosed you will find a number of reports. We are not providing a notebook this year, so feel free to find a suitable binder to hold these reports.

As I already stated, this is a time to “draw a line in the sand” or “pound a stake in the ground” that testifies to our great desire to be a church that once again effectively reaches unchurched people and sees them become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. This is our greatest need as a denomination. We must refocus on fulfilling the Great Commission. Not only have we ignored the Great Commission, but we have been guilty of the sin of disobedience to our Lord's command.

The *Book of Discipline* is not our problem. Our disobedience is. We need the Holy Spirit to touch our hearts during this 2007 National Conference. Touch in a way that breaks us over our disobedience; that causes us to repent and leave this place convinced of our need to make disciples for Jesus as our number one priority. If nothing else happens in the next two years, we will make new disciples for Jesus. And if we don't make disciples for Jesus, nothing else we do will matter.

In Christ,



Ron Ramsey
Bishop, US National Conference