

January 2007

Dear RENEW Network Friend,

As we transition into a New Year, I want to thank you for your faithful support over the past year and to invite you to continue the journey with us into 2007.

Over the holidays I took the occasion to go over the RENEW mailing list and, I must say, it proved to be a humbling and rewarding experience for me. **I was amazed afresh at the scope of our network—spanning all jurisdictions and all but two states.** Numerous states were highly represented, as were numerous churches. Some were members of Esther’s Court or Deborah’s Council. I was pleased to see many pastors on our mailing list—and a bit surprised to find the names of several who are not in agreement with RENEW. Above all, **I felt deeply thankful for the thousands of individuals God has sent to network with us.**

Together we face 2007—a pre-General Conference year. RENEW is heavily at work refining our proposed legislation, communicating and networking toward General Conference 2008. As United Methodists, we know we will be electing GC delegates and passing pertinent GC legislation at this year’s Annual Conferences. Deadlines and procedure for legislation varies from conference to conference, and you will want to check your conference web site, or call your conference office for specifics. Most Annual Conference petitions are due in by the end of January or in February. You can obtain the instructions for petitions to General Conference 2008 from your Annual Conference office.

**RENEW and Good News will have recommended petitions posted to our websites right away ([www.renewnetwork.org](http://www.renewnetwork.org); [www.goodnewsmag.org](http://www.goodnewsmag.org)).** You may obtain a set of the RENEW petitions using the enclosed response card. Petitions to General Conference are strengthened when they come recommended from an Annual Conference, however, “Any organization, clergy member, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference....” (Par. 507, *The Book of Discipline*); therefore, prayerfully consider your role in the legislative process for your Annual Conference and for General Conference 2008.

Many within our denomination who disagree with the evangelical, mainstream understanding of Christian faith and practice and Biblical authority are working diligently in preparation for General Conference 2008. There will, no doubt, be petitions, demonstrations and orchestrations to influence delegates and the future of this denomination. We have only to look to the Episcopal and Presbyterian denominations to see the challenges ahead for us. **It is essential for us to work and pray toward the retention of our Wesleyan, scriptural, evangelical heritage for the sake of faithful United Methodists, for the sake of our children and for the honor of the Lord's name.**

May I encourage you to be a part of "The Urgent Appeal" to prayer identified in my December letter to the network. You can obtain a packet to guide you in prayer (and fasting) from our web site, or by request using the enclosed card.

As a part of a renewal coalition, the RENEW Network has been assigned certain tasks and asked to raise specified funds to assist with the cost of renewal commitments toward General Conference 2008. Many of you, have given faithfully of your time, prayers and resources over the years; some are unable to contribute financially—yet have prayed faithfully and shared information with others; some have received information and prayed, but have not elected to give financially. **I sincerely believe General Conference 2008 will be our greatest challenge yet. I appeal to all who receive this letter to make the greatest commitment possible to prayer and financial support.**

You will probably agree with me that these are tumultuous times—within the nation, the world, the church, and often within our own personal lives. **Regardless of our personal circumstances, or the circumstances that surround us within the culture, it is good to know that God is in control.** He is the Lord and does not change like shifting shadows. Jesus is our defender and friend. Because of these truths, and other biblical promises, we face the future with confidence and peace.

May this year find you in the center of His will, always doing what is pleasing in His sight.

Sincerely in Christ,

L. Faye Short  
President