

November 2007

Dear RENEW Friend,

“There’s no place like home,” declared Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. Most of us agree with that declaration and look forward to Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays filled with good food, friends and family.

For some, thoughts of home do not evoke a warm and joyful feeling, but rather memories of anger, shame or need. I trust you will find a way during the upcoming holiday season to minister to those who need to know of a heavenly home where a heavenly Father always loves, and never forsakes. And, that you will share whatever joy is yours with such persons.

It has been a busy fall as we have worked on legislation for General Conference, attended the Women’s Division fall board meeting, prepared research on *The Book of Resolutions*, participated in meetings for General Conference delegates and turned in the manuscript for *Reclaiming the Wesleyan Social Witness: Offering Christ*. This book, written for all segments of our church, is now at the printer. It is our anticipation that we will be able to offer you this book in January 2008.

Checking out the *Book of Resolutions*—

RENEW’s research analyst, Liza Kittle (who did the research for Financial File IV), has done our network a great service by preparing an analysis of *The 2004 Book of Resolutions*. One would think that this important book would represent a wide spectrum of individuals and groups within our denomination. Liza’s research has revealed that of the 368 resolutions in the 2004 volume, an amazing 67.3% were submitted by three major church agencies: the General Board of Church and Society; the General Board of Global Ministries; and the Women’s Division. When three additional church commissions are added in, the percentage of total resolutions submitted by official boards and agencies jumps to 78.3%!

Why is this study important? The passage of these resolutions allows boards and agencies to shape their program ministries within the parameters of the very legislation they submitted, with the approval of General Conference. Many of these resolutions are politically partisan, supportive of questionable U.N. treaties and out of sync with mainstream United Methodists politically and theologically.

Through her research, Liza has provided a summary of approximately a third of the resolutions in the 2004 volume to help our network members see the bias and controversial positions of many of our resolutions. This is also an important tool to help delegates review resolutions

submitted at General Conference 2008, as new resolutions, or amended previous ones. You will want to acquire this report.

The Women's Division Fall Board of Directors Meeting—

The Women's Division showcased their General Conference legislation at the fall board of directors' meeting. The Division is submitting five new resolutions to General Conference 2008, revising nine resolutions for re-submission and endorsing two resolutions submitted by the General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Church and Society—both on immigration. In addition, five previously submitted resolutions expire in 2008 and will be recommended for re-adoption. Twenty-one Women's Division submitted resolutions currently in *The Book of Resolutions* are marked for retention (keep them unchanged). RENEW will be preparing an analysis of the Women's Division petitions and that analysis will be posted to our website as soon as it is ready, www.renewnetwork.org. You may also order the analysis by phone or mail.

I had the privilege of meeting the new Deputy General Secretary of the Women's Division, Harriett Jane Olson. She is a gracious and warm person, and comes with the reputation of being an intelligent, competent, bridge-building leader. Ms. Olson moved into her place of leadership with a personal reflection on Psalm 40, a tribute to the work of the Women's Division, a brief reflection on membership decline and lack of funding, and a slight reference to “critiques by our own who wish we were doing something else.” You may order my report on the enclosed card, or download it from our website. Let us be hopeful and prayerful as Ms. Olson begins her new role at the Women's Division.

“There's no place like home”—

There are many parallels in *The Wizard of Oz* to our Christian lives. At the RENEW fall retreat, Marilyn Anders opened up this story to participants in a new and refreshing way. We have reprinted this session in a program format for you to use as your November or December program—or even to save for January. For your gift of any amount this month, we will send this program to you.

As we move toward year-end. I want to ask you to send as generous a gift as you are able to help with our numerous programs and our General Conference related expenses. If you are not able to contribute, that is more than fine; you can always give your prayers!

Have a blessed Thanksgiving celebration, and be sure to bless others out of your abundance. Above all, “Offer them Christ.”

In Jesus,

L. Faye Short
President