



Annual Conference Leadership Services

Lewis Center for Church Leadership
of Wesley Theological Seminary

www.churchleadership.com

The most important task of conference leaders is not to look after the churches of the conference. They have pastors and lay leadership to do that. Conference leaders are responsible for the United Methodist witness within the geographic bounds of the annual conference during their tenure. It is conference leaders to whom the whole annual conference looks for the stewardship of this calling.

Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

The Lewis Center for Church Leadership offers a range of services and resources to assist bishops, cabinets, and other annual conference leaders respond constructively to the challenges of the church today. These services draw on three areas of expertise:

- **Research and Consulting.** The Lewis Center offers customized data analysis that builds on its existing knowledge base pertaining to the critical subjects of congregational and denominational vitality and growth. All Lewis Center research is heavily weighted toward *applied research* to enhance service, vitality, and growth. Lewis Center director, Lovett H. Weems, Jr., can meet with your cabinet and others to discuss research findings and help you evaluate the *actionable strategic insights* necessary to guide the church toward the future.
- **Leadership Development.** The Lewis Center can assist conferences in their leadership development efforts through carefully developed and field-tested resources and training programs aimed at helping leaders address real-life challenges essential for the church to increase its service, vitality, and growth.

Research and Consulting Services

- **Challenges and Opportunities Analysis.** Customized data reports reveal the big picture in terms of a conference's membership trends and patterns. Analyzing factors such as membership and worship attendance, professions of faith, death rates, expenditure patterns, and diversity, the Lewis Center can help assess the vitality of the United Methodist witness and identify key opportunities and challenges.
- **Clergy Supply Analysis.** An analysis of patterns and trends impacting the availability of clergy for appointment to congregations. These data provide information on the size and composition of the clergy pool, significant trends and their implications, retention rates, and comparisons with other conferences. This study helps a conference anticipate the emerging shape of the clergy supply and its implications for conference actions.
- **New Church Starts.** In partnership with Dr. Don House and RRC, Inc., of Bryan, Texas, the Lewis Center can conduct a study of all new church starts over a twenty year period to identify

key success variables, to compare patterns in new and existing churches during that period, and to compare findings with those of other conferences.

- **Customized Research and Consulting.** Responding to a conference's particular needs and concerns, the Lewis Center can develop a custom-tailored research initiative to provide needed data, information, and insights.

Leadership Development Services

- **Lewis Pastoral Leadership Inventory.** The Lewis Center can administer its Lewis Pastoral Leadership Inventory (LPLI) among some or all of the clergy in your conference to assess leadership competencies, leadership development needs, and continuing education needs conference-wide – and to help individual pastors develop and grow. The LPLI is a 360° leadership assessment instrument that measures 75 indices of pastoral effectiveness developed over two years of field-testing.
- **The Right Start: Beginning Ministry in a New Setting.** The Lewis Center offers a day-long training event for pastors who are preparing to move to a new congregation. The program shares best practices related to leaving well and preparing the way for a successor, the first days, weeks, and months in a new church, and dealing with the emotional dimensions of pastoral transition.
- **Boards of Ordained Ministry Residency Process.** Out of its years of research on the early years of ministry and the United Methodist probationary (now residency) process, the Lewis Center can do an analysis of a board's process and make recommendations based on best practices identified by research related to helping new clergy move from readiness for ministry to effectiveness in ministry by the time of ordination.
- **Funding the Church's Vision.** The Lewis Center has developed a range of resources and training modules to promote effective stewardship practices in the local church. These can be offered regionally by the Lewis Center or done in cooperation with a conference stewardship office or conference foundation.

About the Lewis Center. Established by Wesley Theological Seminary in 2003, the Lewis Center for Church Leadership has developed a solid track record in helping the United Methodist Church address its current challenges. Committed to the broad goal of helping the church reach more people, younger people, and more diverse people, the Center focuses on improving leadership effectiveness and providing actionable insights and best practices to promote effective ministry. It provides innovative ideas, research, resources, and training so that there is an increase in congregational and denominational vitality and growth.

The Center staff of five, along with other researchers and consultants who assist with special projects, also draws on the expertise of the entire Wesley faculty and a wide array of gifted practitioners. The Center is directed by Dr. Lovett H. Weems, Jr., a preeminent expert on leadership practice and theory in the United Methodist Church. A respected pastor, educator, author, and researcher, leaders from throughout the denomination look to Dr. Weems for guidance on the challenges facing the church today.