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REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

The relatively brief period since the Special Meeting of the Conference on January 16, 1965, could best be characterized as a time of brisk transition as leaders have labored to implement workable machinery for fulfilling the work of the Lord in this area of the United Church of Christ. The degree of success achieved is surely not known. However, as disciples of Christ we must be reminded that we are called to be faithful and obedient, not successful.

The actual PROGRAM of the Conference is its very center. How encouraging it has been to sense the developing strength as evidence has mounted that Standing Committees in the Conference and the the Associations have grasped their new responsibilities. Not all Committees were able to develop a fully planned program in this relatively limited period but we rejoice with those who have made such strides. Evidence of this effort will be revealed in reports at the First Annual Meeting.

The STAFF of the Conference represents those to whom ministers and churches look for guidance in discharging their efforts in Kingdom work. The Conference Minister, the Reverend Francis X. Pirazzini, assumed his responsibilities on April 1, 1965, and within these few months, the members of the Board of Directors have been thrilled with his immediate grasp of the varied complex demands made upon him. His hands will be more adequately upheld when the selection of the Staff is completed. An all-out effort is being made to hasten this process.

To provide a proper working environment, the Conference has leased very adequate, yet moderately priced, office space at 8525 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, Maryland, which is rapidly becoming the administrative nerve center of the Conference. The Associations have carefully deliberated and have reached decisions which point to final location of the Associate Conference Ministers' offices in East Orange, New Jersey; Frederick, Maryland; and Baltimore, Maryland, with very favorable leasing arrangements in each case.

By June 30, 1965, the Interim Associate Conference Ministers, the Reverend Joseph H. Stein and the Reverend Kenneth E. Bishop, will have completed their valued service to the Conference. Arrangements have been made to dispose of present parsonages. The Reverend Clara Spencer will continue to serve as Interim Associate in Christian Education until September 1, 1965, operating from the East Orange office. By authorization of the Board of Directors, Mr. Clayton M. Wallace will serve as Church Extension Consultant until June 30, 1966. By June 30, 1965, each area office will be reduced to one secretary as the secretarial staff in the Washington office is enlarged.

On behalf of the Conference, I would like to express to each one of these staff persons our sincere gratitude for the untiring patience and forbearance which has been requisite during these past months of transition. To those who are leaving important responsibilities, which have been conscientiously discharged, we extend our sincere best wishes for a meaningful and fruitful future.

Although it is extremely hazardous to single out particular persons for recognition, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the inspired guidance of the Reverend Shelby Rooks who served as Chairman of the interim Executive Council and Board of Directors during the months when many difficult decisions had to be reached. The Conference also owes a debt of gratitude to members of the Conference Personnel Committee under the discerning and gracious leadership of Mrs. Guy A. Benchoff, who have discharged their demanding responsibilities with fidelity.

Now, what about the FUTURE? Those who have been charged with the responsibility of serving on the Board of Directors are constantly seeking to clarify, to simplify and to implement those decisions which are necessary to serve God in a rapidly changing society. For this zeal and this marvelous spirit of unity, I personally am most grateful and acknowledge their sustaining leadership.

There are many areas which demand our most careful attention. For example, the impact of a burgeoning population in our Conference area places a great responsibility upon us to plan for inner city and suburban church extension projects. Not only does this require dedicated planning, but it requires a considerable outlay of funds if the job is to be adequately done. Another area of concern requires careful thought. The relationship of the Associations to the Conference will become clearer as responsibilities are more carefully delineated and as efforts are blended. The autonomy which Associations enjoy clearly demands meticulous planning as local churches cooperate to seize local challenges. The Conference will provide leadership to help make this local effort most effective.

The future of our Conference is extraordinarily promising. We commit our efforts to our loving Father God. May we keep our hearts and minds clear that He may reveal His will more fully to us. "Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Bernie Zerkel, Jr., President