



GREAT PLAINS ANNUAL CONFERENCE of The United Methodist Church

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Dear Clergy and Laity of the Great Plains Conference:

Miracles do still happen! Sometimes, they involve our Creator God calling us to action, unified to achieve a goal for the Kingdom on earth through our cooperation and shared vision.

I believe that is what has happened in the Great Plains Conference through your giving for "Miracle Sunday." This event, which extended through the spring and culminated with celebrations May 17, as well as with an offering at annual conference, helped raise money for theological education for pastors serving outside the United States.

Our connectional system in The United Methodist Church provided a lens through which we could see the importance of this effort. In our country, more than 70% of pastors have earned a master's degree in theology or similar studies. Outside the United States — including on the African continent, where our church is growing fastest — that number is less than 10%.

I believe theological education and leadership development is foundational to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church. Without a theological and biblical foundation that is rooted in Wesleyan values and insights, the witness and mission of the church is at risk. And a time when the world so urgently needs United Methodist leaders, there is insufficient support for theological education and leadership development outside the United States.

So, your gift is highly valued! Together, we raised \$136,530.90. Those funds will be pooled together with money raised from around the world. The funds will create an endowment to be used to help generations of pastors receive the education they need to best serve Christ in numerous contexts for ministry. In a way, you helped fund home-grown missionaries who will further spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the Great Plains, we have more than 100 pastors originally from outside the United States serving our churches. Most have master's degrees, and many have earned doctorates. The funds we raised together will help even more people receive the theological backgrounds they need to further the Wesleyan witness around the world.

I thank you for your generosity and for your willingness to look beyond the borders of this country to support pastors and communities around the world.

Bishop David Wilson
Great Plains Conference



