

August 20, 2009

Dr. F. Belton Joyner  
Secretary, The Judicial Council  
The United Methodist Church  
1821 Hillandale Rd, Ste 1B  
PMB 334  
Durham, North Carolina 27705

**RE: Response to Brief of Rev. James W. Foster, Docket No. 1009-9**

Dear Dr. Joyner and Members of the Judicial Council,

The brief received in my office on August 10, 2009 challenges the structure of the Texas Annual Conference and the authority of our Core Leadership Team, a structure that was approved by the Annual Conference three years ago on May 30, 2006. Please see Exhibits 7 and 8 attached to The Bishop's Report to the Judicial Conference ("Bishop's Report"), which I signed on June 24, 2009. No resolution, motion, or recommendation concerning the structure of the Annual Conference or the authority of the Core Leadership Team was before the Annual Conference at *any* time during the 2009 Annual Conference. Since challenging that structure or authority is the clear purpose and intent of this request for a ruling of law, the request was not germane to any proceeding of the 2009 Annual Conference.

Unlike the factual circumstances present in Decision 999, there was not even a petition related to the early retirement incentive plan pending before the Conference at the time of this request for a ruling of law (and no action was requested or taken on that subject at this Annual Conference). I would also respectfully submit that it is not a correct reading of Decision 999 that a bishop's failure to rule during the conference session makes a request for a ruling of law germane. Whether a bishop chooses to use all or part of the time permitted by the Discipline to respond to a request, cannot and does not effect whether the request is germane to the proceedings of the annual conference.

Finally, and in the alternative, all of the procedures of our structure (properly approved and authorized by the Texas Annual Conference *in 2006*) were followed, and all necessary approvals for this early retirement incentive plan were secured. Please see Exhibits 9, 10, and 11 to the Bishop's Report. Thank you for your consideration of this brief reply.

Grace and Peace,

Janice Riggle Huie

Enclosed: 13 copies for distribution to the Judicial Council

Cc: Rev. James W. Foster  
Dr. Gail Harrelson, Conference Secretary  
Mr. Gib Walton, Conference Chancellor