

1 The Centenary Fund and Preachers' Aid Society

2 **Report**

3 Conference Board of Church and Society

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5 The Board continues to look at three major issues: Immigration, Prison Reform and Poverty Reduction. In the next  
6 phase of our work, we will see beyond mercy ministries and work toward including justice ministries. We also look  
7 at issues related to Affordable Housing, Peace and the Environment as well as other issues that are presented to  
8 us.

9 As we look to the future, we will continue to support sending two young clergy to the Young Clergy Forum  
10 sponsored by GBCS each year.

11 At the 2015 Annual Conference, we had a Dessert Time. This was co-sponsored by Religion and Race, Christian  
12 Unity and Interfaith Relationships and Church and Society. This is a way to share how conference agencies work  
13 together on issues. This type of collaboration will continue with these and other entities.

14 **Immigration** Began to look at ways to work with Justice for your Neighbors (JFoN) to get our churches to work  
15 with immigrants that need legal assistance.

16 **Prison Reform** As we move toward justice ministries, we look at supporting legislation such as the Redeem Act.

17 **Poverty** The Board became members of the New Jersey Anti-Poverty Network. Through this entity, we are able  
18 to inform our churches about resources and training opportunities.

19 With the approval of the Poverty Reduction Resolution, the Board is beginning to organize District Reduction  
20 Poverty Committees.

21 **Peace with Justice** We were able to give one grant to Tansboro Trinity UMC to work with children.

22 **Affordable Housing** One of the new issues we are going to work on is affordable housing. This would relate to  
23 working with the homeless to those that are of need of affordable housing.

24 Cynthia Ann Kent, Chair  
25 Conference Board of Church and Society

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28 **Report**

29 Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns

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31 *In John 17:20-21, Jesus prays, not only for his disciples, but also for those, who are (literally) "trusting **into** me,*  
32 *through their word". His petition is inclusive of both, "so that they **all** may be one" and also reveals that this*  
33 *desired unity of faith is based on and reflective of Jesus and God's own oneness: "You are in me and I am in you; I*  
34 *pray that they may also be one in us." Moreover, this unity is said to validate Jesus and his mission before the*  
35 *world, "so that the world may trust that You sent me."*  
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37 At least, since the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910, Jesus' prayer for unity has been central to that great  
38 "Movement" of the Holy Spirit, called "Ecumenical" (meaning "world-wide"). It has opened the eyes of Christians  
39 everywhere, to see Christ present and at work in each other, in the various churches, and in the many peoples  
40 and persons with whom they minister. As most of our commission completes their second quadrennium of  
41 service, we rejoice to bear witness to the ongoing power of this prayer, which speaks of a unity that for us as  
42 United Methodists "is not an option", but "a gift to be received and expressed" (Discipline, 2012, #105, p. 88).