



May 2001

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing to you with the sincere request that you carefully read all of the information contained in this mailing. This is an important priority! Following that, I strongly urge you to determine how best you can support and participate in the Igniting Ministry initiatives described in the information provided.

These are exciting times in the life of our church. This year, the United Methodist Church will set in motion a multimedia campaign that will help us give voice to God's prevenient grace by directing powerful messages to more than 70 million unchurched in America. This effort is called Igniting Ministry. It will continue for four years and, hopefully, beyond as a compelling instrument on behalf of God if you and others in the local churches across our nation participate. Without your participation it is unlikely that anything significant will happen.

The Igniting Ministry effort is an inviting ministry. It issues a call and invitation for all to come to our churches. The Igniting Ministry effort is a welcoming ministry. It declares that all are welcome in our churches. The Igniting Ministry grants us the opportunity to demonstrate Christian hospitality, in the true sense, to unchurched strangers. That is a sacred responsibility so often overlooked. Beyond that, and most important, is the purpose. Igniting Ministry is a discipling ministry. That is our calling, and that is our mission.

Our Florida United Methodist Communications team is ready, willing and able to provide each of you with all the information, training and assistance you will need to participate in this vital, ongoing ministry. Please make good use of those resources. **When your congregation's plans are in place, please share how you plan to participate in Igniting Ministry on the form enclosed with this mailing and send it to: Bishop's Office, P. O. Box 1747, Lakeland, FL, 33802-1747.**

This should not and must not be just another campaign or promotion to fill our pews. In the months and years to come, we United Methodists will declare that our hearts, our minds and our doors are open. Let us make careful preparation and let us mean it. That is my hope and prayer. I invite each of you to join me in prayerful and active support of Igniting Ministry.

Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker

