We need your help. Our future depends on it!

A little bit of history

In 1908, the General Conference of the **Methodist Episcopal Church** recognizing the need for an organized men's ministry, authorized **Methodist Brotherhoods**. The name **Methodist Men** was adopted in 1942, that's when the first charters were issued. Since then various forms of organizational structure followed including a name change to **United Methodist Men** in 1968. During the 1996 General Conference, formation of the **General Commission on United Methodist Men** (GCUMM) was approved and assumed the responsibilities required by the General Board of Discipleship.

It should be noted that from day-one, by whatever name, the *men's movement* needed and received financial assistance in meeting their *required* and *stated* goals, whether funds came from the Methodist Church, conference, district, local church, individual contributions, or a combination of these. Back then even the GCUMM received the bulk of its funding from the Church through apportionments … but things were destined to change.

The changing times

Out of necessity the financial support for district leadership teams and chartered UMMen fellowships changed rather quickly to *self-funding* through event sponsorships such as golf tournaments, bowl-a-thons, EMS memberships and the like. The GCUMM was and is a leading example of self-funding that is now 75% of its total budget Unlike districts and UMMen's groups who have largely achieved self-funding, it's a much different story for the VA Conference UM Men Cabinet that has limited options to fund its *obligations*. Those options are limited to proceeds of the annual Spiritual Advance (*aka,* Retreat) and fundraising (see **¶ 648. United Methodist Men, Article 8. Finances, stated in *The Book of Discipline***).

Most readers will recall when the UM Assembly Center in Blackstone closed its doors in 2016, just a few months before the Spiritual Advance was to occur. **With the Center's closing the Cabinet's financial position went *kaput!***

Here's what's at stake

Your Cabinet's current level of cash in the bank is a little more than **$3,300**! Your Cabinet's obligations — through the participation of President Andrew Kissell are — the **Virginia Conference**, **GCUMM**, **Southeastern Jurisdiction UM Men** and the **National Association of Conference Presidents**.

Add to that the Cabinet's traditionally *stated goals* in the field of vital *MENistry*: Your Cabinet should continue its strong presence in, and support for **Heart Havens**, **Camp Rainbow Connection**, **Prison Ministries**, **Society of St. Andrew**, **Upper Room Living Prayer Center** and **Virginia Scouting**.

After VUMAC was boarded-up, we were for the most part able to meet our required obligations for the remainder of 2016, but for 2017 support for our stated goals declined. Unquestionably, there is much at stake! **To *paraphrase* an April 1995 response from the Apollo 13 crew**, "**Virginia Conference, we have a problem**."

Our bottom line

Obviously, our cash position of $3,300 falls well short of funding the obligations listed above — and the 2018 Spiritual Advance planning and program expenses — unless we launched a fundraising campaign. Accordingly, during the February 3, 2018, meeting of Virginia Conference United Methodist Men Cabinet, **a fundraising plan** was approved, a plan that is key to generating resources to produce the 2018 Spiritual Advance, and a solid footing on which to re-set our course to self-funding.

For many years your Cabinet's funding relied exclusively on the proceeds of the annual Spiritual Advance and occasional requests for donations. But now we find the Cabinet in unfamiliar territory having to begin our first-ever full-fledged fundraising campaign.

We need your help — local church UMMen units, District leadership teams, and individuals, too, — to support the work of the Cabinet in meeting its required obligations and goals in ministry and mission.

Please say, "YES, I want to be a 2018 UM Men Stakeholder."

**YES.
Count Me In!**