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A team from the United Methodist Committee on Relief, along with partner agencies, distributes water treatment supplies to people living in a makeshift camp in Gressier, Haiti. Melissa Crutchfield, UMCOR executive and team leader, stressed that the United Methodist Church's response will be a long-term one. "UMCOR is committed to staying for the duration," she said.

A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

Help for Haiti

United Methodists offer relief and prayer for shaken nation

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

For more than 20 years, Arkansas United Methodists have given their money and muscle to the hospital in Pignon, about 60 miles outside of Port-au-Prince in Haiti's northern Central Plateau.

Today, that 65-bed hospital is still standing — one of the few places where people can still receive medical care after the 7.0 earthquake that left much of Port-au-Prince in ruins.

Walter "Bubba" Smith, senior pastor of Christ of the Hills United Methodist Church in Hot Springs Village, has been keeping in touch with hospital staff through texting and Facebook.

"The hospital was damaged but not destroyed," Smith said. "We're hearing that they're OK. ... Because the other hospitals are not just damaged but now nonexistent, people

are trying to get the injured there from the Port-au-Prince region."

No United Methodist mission teams from Arkansas were in Haiti at the time of the earthquake in Jan. 12.

But even before the quake, Smith — who has made 15 mission trips to Haiti — already had plans to lead another Volunteers in Mission team from Aug. 26 to Sept. 2 to the Pignon hospital. At press time, that trip was still scheduled, but that could change as recovery efforts unfold.

The temblor has not deterred United Methodists from wanting to travel to the ravaged country. Since the earthquake, Smith said he has heard from several people who are interested in joining the trip and doing whatever they can to help.

For now, the United Methodist Church's Committee on Relief is strongly advising against volunteer mission teams traveling to Haiti. The

Why?

We often ask the question, "Why" in the face of the incomprehensible tragedies, both large and small. While the question is understandable, I believe it is the wrong question.

It can often be answered: There was slippage along a major earthquake fault, or the brakes failed on a car, or a cancer simply could not be cured, or human ineptitude got in the way so death occurs. But this really offers little comfort.

In the midst of tragedy, in the darkest night of the soul, the question is: "Whom do you trust?"

We understand that some things in life and human experience simply have no satisfying explanation. When we face those moments, "Whom do

we trust?"

I trust God. I depend on God for the strength and the faith to face whatever today and tomorrow may bring.

I trust the God who said, "I will neither leave nor forsake you." I trust the God Jesus trusted on the Cross. I trust the God who kept watch with me at my dying son's bedside. I trust the God who goes with my daughter as she heads toward Haiti as our UMCOR disaster response coordinator.

The question is: "Whom do you trust?" I trust God. I have faith in the God who has never deserted me. I have faith in the God who loves me. I trust God.

Charles M. Crutchfield



country is too chaotic for all but the most seasoned aid workers.

An UMCOR team — led by Melissa Crutchfield, Bishop Charles Crutchfield's daughter — has been providing immediate needs like food, water and medical care.

She told the United Methodist

News Service that her agency has just begun the long-term process of helping the country rebuild, and mission teams will be needed for years to come.

"UMCOR is committed to

[See HELP, page 8A]

Nolan Richardson, former Arkansas Razorbacks basketball coach, at left, speaks at Philander Smith College's celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 18. Also pictured at back are Ronnie Miller-Yow, chaplain; Maxine Allen, Arkansas Conference minister of ethnic ministries; E.C. Maltbia of the True Holiness Saints Center in Conway and Bishop Steven Arnold of St. Mark Baptis Church in Little Rock. At front is Rabbi Eugene Levy, vice president for student affairs Juliana Mosley; Johnny Hasan of the Islamic Center for Human Excellence and Bishop Charles Crutchfield.

Photo by Dan Pierce



Being a disciple is a learning process

BUD REEVES

Special Contributor

I have been in school — formally and informally — for a large portion of my life. In fact, all of life is school, if you are open to learning.

One of the common characteristics of effective leaders, according to leadership guru Warren Bennis, is that they are lifelong learners. There is always more to learn, especially in our rapidly changing world today.

One thing I have learned, more through experience than education, is that faith is caught, not taught. There is a non-rational, supernatural element to faith that can't be captured in doctrine or conveyed in a classroom. It is essentially an experience of the heart. However, once faith is caught, it needs to be taught because there is more to it than an emotional experience.

The church's business is making disciples of Jesus Christ, and discipleship is a learning process. There is a progression of faith that leads a person from being a seeker after God to membership in a community of faith. From membership we grow into disciples, and disciples develop into ministers (lay or ordained) who serve the Kingdom.

A large part of the discipleship development is education. Every effective church needs to be intentional about the process.

We must discern and decide what will make good disciples, starting with our children and youth to develop those qualities in individuals.

It's a cradle-to-grave endeavor. Too many Christians think their Christian education ended with confirmation, or they wait until they



Bud Reeves

are near the end of their lives to "cram for finals."

Our Wesleyan heritage supports our encouragement of education. John Wesley was a scholar as well as a "heart-warmed" disciple. The

Methodists in England made the Sunday School an institution. Charles Wesley expressed the Methodist desire to "unite the pair so long disjoined, knowledge and vital piety."

There are three areas of emphasis that I would include in any church's intentional process of faith development today.

The Bible comes first. John Wesley described himself as homo unius libri — a man of one book. Paul told Timothy, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work."

Paul's point is not to argue doctrines of inspiration, but to lift up the usefulness of Scripture for developing disciples.

We have plenty of resources for biblical study, but as a culture, we don't have the desire to pursue it. George Barna, in his wrap-up of 2009, found that "Biblical literacy is neither a current reality nor a goal in the U. S."

His research indicates that most folks would rather not dig too deeply into Scripture because it might conflict with beliefs they already hold.

Nevertheless, there is no

foundation for our faith and discipleship without the Word.

The second emphasis would be our Wesleyan understanding of salvation. We are people of grace, and there is no more relevant message for the world in the 21st century. When I teach the concepts of prevenient/sanctifying grace that Wesley held, people are amazed at an understanding of salvation that makes so much sense. That grace is amazing!

The third emphasis would be stewardship. We need to unlearn the concept of ownership and relearn the biblical mindset of stewardship. There has been a vast conspiracy of silence about stewardship because pastors and church leaders resist talking about money (which is also unbiblical and unfaithful).

Better education about stewardship would have positive financial results, but it is about so much more than money.

Stewardship involves the caretaking of our time, our personal resources, our planet — everything God has given us.

The critical piece in stewardship education is to teach this mindset to our younger generations while they are still receptive. The older generations of good stewards are passing away, and the newer Christians must learn stewardship to develop fully as disciples.

The Christian faith is a synthesis of heart and head, a partnership between spiritual experience and solid theological education. Let us never disjoin the pair!

William O. "Bud" Reeves is senior pastor of First UMC, Hot Springs. He can be reached at brobud@fumchs.com.



EDITOR'S CORNER

BY HEATHER HAHN

In case of emergency

Sometimes giving money just doesn't seem enough — particularly when we see the heart-wrenching images following a massive human tragedy such as Haiti's earthquake.

But sometimes money is primarily what's needed, and United Methodists across the state have given generously to the United Methodist Committee on Relief's recovery efforts.

Because of your outpouring, UMCOR staff and the agency's faith-based partners are providing clean drinking water and food for the displaced and medical care for the injured.

The health kits that UMCOR has requested are also needed, and I know for many, assembling them is something more tangible to do and give than numbers with dollar signs.

Still, I know that some of you are eager to do more. While Haiti is not yet ready for mission volunteers, UMCOR does have numerous resources to look to for those interested in helping people in crisis whether overseas and within the United States.

Even before the earthquake, I had planned to include in this issue some resources on disaster response. In the middle of ice-storm season and with tornado season just around the corner it seemed the right thing to do. Larry Gentry, the chair of the conference's Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Response, kindly pointed me in the right direction.

Here are some of the Web sites he suggested:

■ To learn about how UMCOR

works, visit new.gbmg-umc.org/umcor/work/.

■ From there, click on "Emergency Response" to learn more about UMCOR's procedures and needs in both domestic and international disaster situations.



■ To learn about other mission volunteer opportunities, visit new.gbmg-umc.org/about/us/mv/programs/.

Churchgoers may want to consider the six hours minimum training required to serve on a volunteer emergency response team. Such a team's mission is to provide a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster, under very specific guidelines that enable a team to be productive and caring while causing no further harm or being a burden to the affected community.

Classes are taught by "authorized" UMCOR trainers, and team members are given ID badges as evidence of training. If any church group would like to undergo the training to become an emergency response team, Gentry said the church members will need apply through their district coordinator who will arrange the training.

Should a disaster occur in your neck of the woods and your church wants to help, be sure to make your district superintendent among your first phone calls. The district office can help you find equipment and other help.

To contact me, please e-mail hhahn@arumc.org or call me at (501) 324-8037.

 <p>Volume 156 • No. 40 February 5, 2010 Martha S. Taylor • Director of Communications Heather Hahn • Editor Patrick W. Shownes • Communications Coordinator www.arumc.org</p> <p>The Arkansas United Methodist is the newspaper of record for the Arkansas Conference of The United Methodist Church. It is published once monthly, on the first Fridays of each month, and four special issues throughout during the year for a total of 16 issues per year.</p> <p>Send Correspondence & Change of Address to: Arkansas United Methodist, 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202; or e-mailed to Patrick Shownes at pshownes@arumc.org</p> <p>POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The United Methodist Reporter, PO Box 660275, Dallas, TX 75266-0275.</p> <p>The United Methodist Reporter (USPS 954-500) is published weekly by UMR Communications, 1221 Profit Drive, Dallas, TX 75247. Periodicals Postage Paid at Dallas.</p>	 <p>Arkansas Conference Communications 2 Trudie Kibbe Reed Drive Little Rock, AR 72202-3770 www.arumc.org (501) 324-8000</p> <p>Subscriptions - \$15.00, 1 Year - \$25.00, 2 Years - Free, Online For more information, visit www.arumc.org/aum or call (501) 324-8006.</p> <p>Advertising is welcomed. For a rate sheet or more information, contact Martha Taylor at (501) 324-8005 or mtaylor@arumc.org. While all advertising is reviewed before acceptance, it should not be considered endorsed by this newspaper or the Church.</p> <p>Submission Deadlines</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Issue Date</th> <th>Submission Deadline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>March 5, 2010</td> <td>February 10, 2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April 2, 2010</td> <td>March 17, 2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 7, 2010</td> <td>April 14, 2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June 4, 2010</td> <td>May 19, 2010</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Issue Date	Submission Deadline	March 5, 2010	February 10, 2010	April 2, 2010	March 17, 2010	May 7, 2010	April 14, 2010	June 4, 2010	May 19, 2010
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BY CHARLES CRUTCHFIELD

AN OCCASIONAL WORD from the Bishop

Dear Friends:

The terrible earthquake in Haiti once again reminds us of the fragility and uncertainty of life. Our hearts cannot help but be moved by the enormous human tragedy. It has also struck deep into our hearts on a personal level.

The Rev. Sam Dixon, the head of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and the Rev. Clint Rabb, director of Volunteers in Mission for the General Board of Global Ministries, were also victims of the quake.

They were in Haiti for a meeting dealing with better delivery of health services and died as a result of injuries in a building collapse. It gets

"One hundred percent of your gift [to UMCOR] goes to aid relief."

personal when you have friends who have suffered and died.

Our churches have an opportunity to continue to be a major factor in the response that is needed. Right now, UMCOR needs funds to respond to the disaster. We have people on the ground organizing the logistics of aid delivery.

UMCOR is a long-term responder. Our aid will continue long after the hospital ship sails and

the headlines disappear.

At an appropriate time, there will be opportunities for VIM teams to go to Haiti, but not just yet. We would only be helping to create a larger logjam for delivery of much needed help.

The UMCOR team on the ground is working with our partner organizations and the Methodist Church of Haiti to organize and prepare for the long-term delivery of medical aid, food, shelter, the

digging of wells and a wide variety of other pressing needs.

By your gift to UMCOR you will be ensuring that the long term aid Haiti so desperately needs will be effectively delivered by the people of the United Methodist Church to the people of Haiti.

Because all the administrative costs of operating UMCOR are provided through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering received from each church, each year, 100 percent of your gift goes to aid relief.

Your response to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering on March 14 will be critical.

Even more critical is the current response from each of us. If it has not already happened, you will be

given opportunity to donate to the Haiti Emergency Advanced Special No. 418325. If you prefer to donate on line, you can do so at:

umcorhaiti.org.

And on a very personal note, our daughter, Melissa, has been in Haiti as the head of the UMCOR team.

There is much that needs to be done. Please keep this in your prayers. Keep the Haitian people in your prayers.

For the sake of the people of Haiti, give generously to UMCOR.

Faithfully,

How to know when you're all grown up

DEENA MARIE HAMILTON
Special Contributor

February is the month that we buy candy, chocolates, cards and gifts for the ones we love.

When I think about love, there are so many passages of the Bible that reflect that emotion. Many couples have 1 Corinthians, chapter 13 read at their weddings.

But I want to focus on a different part of that Scripture where Paul says that when we were children we thought and reasoned as children do. But when we grow up, we quit our childish ways (1 Corinthians 13: 11).

But the question is: Do we really put those childish ways aside as we get older? There are times in our lives when revert back to them.

I have a friend whom I grew up with. We have been blessed to be friends for more than 20 years.

Our friendship goes back to middle school. Our children are like cousins and our mothers claim both of us as daughters.

We love each other as much as any two sisters could.

We went to Philander Smith College together, and the death of our mutual college friend brought us even closer.

In fact, it was the mother of our dear departed friend that reconnected us after years of separation in 2008. I've gone to one of her family reunions and was treated like family. She helped me at my



Deena Marie Hamilton

church with outreach programs, and we started a nonprofit organization together.

We aren't bonded by blood, but spirit. I feel that is a God-fashioned

friendship, but something happened between us that almost annihilated our treasured kinship.

I doubted her loyalty.

"Do we really put those childish ways aside as we get older?"

I should have known not to do that, but I did. The fight that happened between us was explosive.

There was a lot of yelling and tears. There was a lot of regret and pain.

But putting childish ways aside, when the dust settled... believe it or not the friendship was not broken.

It was fortified. The bond between us was effortlessly stronger than before.

A test of true friendship is whether or not we are able to stay friends with someone after a fight.

When I think about a true

friend, I can't help but to think about the relationship that I have with Christ and how it has evolved over the years.

The words of wisdom imparted by Christ have gotten me through the storms of life as well as given me a deeper appreciation for the awe-inspiring power of God.

I've grown to fall in love with God because Christ is the lover of my soul and the giver of everlasting joy.

Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for a friend. When Christ died for us, there was no greater act of love that God could ever offer.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child and acted like a child, but at the age of 34, I can say that I'm all grown up with a new appreciation of life and most importantly love.

And now three things remain: faith, hope and love, but the most important of these is love because it never fails.

Being all grown up is not too bad when you have the love of a man named Jesus. He strengthens our relationships that we have with God and others. Because of Christ, my friendship with my soul sister was reconciled and made stronger.

Deena Marie Hamilton is the senior pastor of McCabe Chapel United Methodist Church in North Little Rock. She can be reached at rev.deenamarie@gmail.com.

Letters to the Editor

Today the Arkansas United Methodist with the United Methodist Reporter enclosed arrived. Thank you for both.

I like hearing about efforts to adjust the system: an intentional interim appointment, a review of "poor" tax policy, recognition of United Methodists in foster care, etc.

Also I relate to J. Clif Christopher's "best place to give" column (United Methodist Reporter, page 7B). My local church (First UMC in Batesville) has recently responded well to pledging and budgeting. Even so, it is always good to be appropriately transparent and explanatory as we render unto Caesar.

The choice is not merely to tithe or go to hell. Giving to feel good and giving for effectiveness are both sides of that coin.

Stan Reed,
Member of First UMC
in Batesville

Pat Bodenhamer and Steve Copley's column (Arkansas United Methodist, Jan. 8 edition) suggesting that we increase our state taxes to better serve low-income families is filled with flawed assumptions.

First they hint that an unfair amount of our taxes are paid by low-income families. This is not the case.

The fact is that although many

of these families pay no income tax, most receive annual rebates under the [federal] Earned Income Tax program. Also the low-income families have available to them housing subsidies, food stamps, Medicaid, residential heating assistance, welfare payments, free childcare assistance for working mothers, Pell Grants for education and other free government programs that are too numerous to mention.

Their article indicated that Arkansans support a tax system that steps on the backs of low-income workers. This simply isn't true! Arkansas people are some of the most charitable and sensitive people in our nation.

They further suggested that we revise our tax policy (increase taxes) so that state government could redistribute the wealth.

Presently our state, county and city governments are dangerously short of revenue, and our working middle-class families are struggling to make ends meet. It certainly isn't the time for a tax increase.

All of my adult life I have strongly felt that there should never be a separation between church and state. But after reading these two "tax experts," maybe I have been wrong.

Louis Burgess,
Member of Highland Valley UMC
in Little Rock

We don't get the whole Story without fully reading the Bible

MAY FAITH "ZOE" MILES
Special Contributor

We all keep Scriptures tucked into our heart's folds. They remind us who we are, to Whom we belong, and how big that Who really is.

However, when we pull Scriptures from context to get warm fuzzy feel-goods in our daily lives, we're like ballerinas returning to polished steps that make us feel competent.

Practicing these comfortable steps, we're denied a holistic study of art; therefore, we aren't equipped with a holistic understanding.

Lacking in knowledge, we won't swim through air. Instead, we'll hop about like bent-armed ducks.

Within a larger discussion of three fragrances drawing Generation Y to church — warmth, authenticity and power — I'm exploring what authentic church means.

The last article investigated biblical and moral accountability by examining my former dance instructor's unwillingness to train me, scared of hurting my feelings. I was thus robbed of being a real ballerina.

Having underlined the significance of biblical training, I want to go through the technique of a holistic biblical education.

When studying the Bible by plucking a handful of Scripture to analyze, we deny ourselves the whole Story. And it's a beautiful Story about this Creator God, who molds these earthlings to have spirits like Him. He cherishes them, but they hide from Him.

That's just the first three chapters. The rest of the 1,186 chapters tell the Story of this Creator's attempt to reconcile these beings to Himself.

By taking Scripture from this larger Story, we miss the picture and are at serious risk of manipulating God's word.

A traditional favorite is Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and



Mary Faith "Zoe" Miles

not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Using this Bible verse, we usually don't consider that God is speaking to the captive Israelites in

Babylon. God is warning them, "Don't hide behind false gods and prophets! Don't fall into the world!"

Leaving out the warning, we miss His call of reconciliation: "Seek me and you will find Me! I haven't left you!"

Jeremiah 29:11 assures the Israelites of God's faithfulness if they follow after Him, not to give me permission to assume God will

take my care of my luxury problems.

Furthermore, the rest of the chapter lets us know what happens when we don't seek Him.

The options are death by sword, famine or plague. That's something of which the body needs

to be aware.

To study the word holistically, it's been my experience that drawing from the original languages of the text, knowing specific aspects of the culture that the Word was addressed to and understanding how this Scripture fits into the larger Story has — as Christian apologist Don Miller explains — kept me from treating the Bible like a salad when it's really a chocolate thing.

Like most people, the members of my generation like chocolate. As individuals, we know that we get chocolate by taking responsibility for our own biblical education.

We will attend churches that will provide us with chocolate, tells us the Story and help us not look like bent-armed ducks.

Mary Faith "Zoe" Miles is a junior at Oklahoma City University in Oklahoma, a United Methodist institution. She can be reached at mmiles.stu1@my.okcu.edu.

Pastor heeds call as children's advocate

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

Pat Bodenhamer is the rare United Methodist elder who is at home in the halls of the state Capitol as she is behind a church pulpit.

For nearly three years, Bodenhamer has served as the state budget and tax outreach director for the nonprofit group Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families.

The organization researches and lobbies for public policy with the aim of benefiting Arkansas children, particularly those in poverty. Among other issues, the group has championed more state funding for prekindergarten and children's health care.

The group unsuccessfully opposed the constitutional amendment to establish a state lottery and more successfully campaigned to shut down predatory payday lenders.

For the past few weeks, Arkansas Advocates staff members have been at the state Capitol almost every day in preparation for Arkansas State Legislature's first-ever fiscal session starting on Feb. 8.

"My job right now is to tell the story to our partners, other nonprofit groups and churches, just to educate them on what the fiscal session is and how they can be a part of it," Bodenhamer said.

With the bad economy, Bodenhamer expects the session will be a challenging one. Gov. Mike Beebe has already proposed more than \$200 million in cuts to the state budget to compensate for tax revenue shortfalls.

"We're trying to preserve the programs children so desperately need in this state," she said. "We're also starting to build coalitions around ways to raise revenue that won't affect vulnerable families."

As part of her job, Bodenhamer visits and preaches at churches



Pat Bodenhamer

around the state to help build coalitions with Christian communities.

Laura Kellams, Arkansas Advocates' Northwest Arkansas director, has joined

Bodenhamer on many of these church visits.

"She is able to open doors for us with people who may not otherwise realize what we do at Advocates," Kellams said.

"She lets people of faith and ministers know that it's OK to get involved in politics from time to time if it furthers a mission that they care about. . . . The issues that we work on are so often aligned with the issues the church is working on — children who need health care, families who need food, children who live in poverty all throughout the state."

In late August, Bodenhamer preached at First United Methodist Church in Bella Vista where she formerly served as an associate pastor. She was there to take part in the congregation's Children's Sabbath, helping to draw attention to the poverty that exists even in prosperous Northwest Arkansas.

"This is the most wonderful church in that they respond so greatly to needs," says Sara Bainbridge, senior pastor of First UMC in Bella Vista. "Anytime that needs are brought to our attention, we respond. But they need to be brought to our attention because where we live, we don't always see the need."

Bainbridge pointed out that Bodenhamer is part of a long tradition of Methodist advocacy on public policy issues. Methodists have championed such reforms as

universal public education and child labor laws, Bainbridge said.

Bodenhamer traces her current calling back to the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. At the time, she was the Arkansas Conference's minister of mission and outreach and spent many sleepless nights at the conference office helping to coordinate the United Methodist relief efforts along the Gulf Coast.

The experience, she said, forever changed her view of ministry.

"I try not to get caught up in the little things," she said. "I look at it whether it's life or death: Will it enhance the kingdom?"

She decided one way to enhance the kingdom was to better understand the workings of very earthly governments.

She wanted to understand the roots of problems she encountered as a pastor.

"To my mind," she said, "if you come to my church and you're hungry, or you've been abused the night before, or you're worried about your mom and daddy because they don't have jobs or don't have housing, how can you hear the story of Jesus?"

She hopes her message will resonate with both sides of the political spectrum. One of the reasons she loves the United Methodist Church, she says, is that both sides are well represented.

"Both sides have valid points to make," she said. "We get the most ministry done — we enhance the kingdom — when we are balanced. Whether conservative or liberal, we all want to help the common good."

To learn more about Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, visit www.aradvocates.org. To invite Bodenhamer to speak to your congregation, e-mail her at pbodenhamer@aradvocates.org.

Scholarship deadline approaches for UM colleges

Special to the AUM

Applications are due March 1 for the United Methodist Higher Education Foundation Dollars for Scholars program to benefit students attending United Methodist-related colleges.

Scholarship applications must be postmarked no later than March 1, with the exception of applications from students planning to enroll in a two-year school, which may be received with a postmark date no later than June 1.

A total of 475 scholarships nationwide will be available to eligible applicants through the program, and the application may be downloaded from this link: www.umhcf.org.

"Students planning to attend Hendrix and Philander Smith Colleges in Arkansas should definitely take a look at this application," said Jim Argue, Jr., chief executive officer and president of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas.

"For each recipient, our Foundation gives \$1,000, United Methodist Higher Ed gives \$1,000, the college contributes \$1,000 and the students' local churches give \$1,000, for a significant \$4,000 award."

The United Methodist Higher Education Foundation is dedicated to helping students achieve their dreams by providing scholarship aid for United Methodist students attending the 122 United Methodist-related institutions.

Grant honors archivist's long service

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

CONWAY — For six decades, Mauzel Beal has made Methodism in Arkansas her life's work. A cradle Methodist, she has served as a youth director, educational assistant and her late husband's partner in ministry — supporting his work as a pastor and district superintendent.

Even when the late Jim Beal retired from the pulpit, Mauzel didn't just remain in the pews. Instead, she took on a new ministry as archivist for the Arkansas United Methodist Church.

In all that time, Beal has labored mostly behind the scenes, receiving little recognition for her church work.

That changed on Jan. 23 when the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas surprised her with \$40,000 grant given in her honor. The foundation's gift will expand and renovate the Arkansas Conference's Winfred D. Polk Archives in Hendrix College's Bailey Library.

Surrounded by dozens of friends inside the archives, Beal clasped her hands over her mouth in amazement and said "Wow!" as Jim Argue Jr., the foundation's president and chief executive officer, presented her with the grant.

"Mauzel, your friends and your colleagues are filled with appreciation for all you've done for the Arkansas Conference Commission on Archives and History, and so is the foundation," Argue said. "You've faithfully recorded our history and you've made sure our history is properly stored away for future generations. ... In addition to all your hard work, we love you."

The Arkansas Conference Archives holds records on all known Methodist pastors, the history of its leadership, the various denominations that merged and the work of many local churches.

The grant will be used to purchase seven fireproof, waterproof, crush-proof filing cabinets that will hold precious one-of-a-kind documents and photographs. The funds will also enable the Archives to double its number of bookshelves, provide a desk for two archivists, update computer software, provide new worktables for researchers and space for archival preservation.

Marcia Crossman, Beal's co-archivist for the past eight years, applied for the grant and invited Beal's friends from across the state to attend the presentation.

"She is the most humble person," Crossman said. "She will



Jim Argue Jr., president and chief executive officer of the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, presents Mauzel Beal with a framed certificate announcing a grant to the Arkansas Conference's archives made in her honor. Beal's friend Carole Teague, in the background, is one of dozens of friends who came to Hendrix College to see Beal recognized.

Photo by Heather Hahn

never claim any credit for the work she has done. She was a faithful pastor's spouse and still is and was there for Jim until the day he died. ... She has blessed me with sharing her faith. She has taught me how to be an archivist."

Beal had arrived at the Bailey Library on the morning of Jan. 23 expecting a quiet, routine meeting of the Arkansas Conference's Commission on Archives and History. She began to suspect something was up when she saw far more trays of sandwiches and snacks being delivered than seemed necessary for such a small group.

"Then all these people started to arrive and I worried that there wouldn't be enough sandwiches for all them," she said.

Among the crowd were her friends from the interdenominational group Church Women United, fellow members of First United Methodist Church in Conway and several retired United Methodist pastors.

"I love working in the Archives," Beal told those gathered. "As Marcia knows, I think often that maybe it's time to stop. Now maybe it is."

Beal became archivist nearly 19 years ago. Her calling began when the then chair of the North Arkansas Commission on Archives and History asked her to occasionally look up some records for him at the Archives so he didn't have to travel down from Batesville. He then requested she serve on the commission and work with Katie Rice, archivist of the Little Rock Conference.

"I said, 'I don't know anything at all about that work,'" she recalled. "He said, 'Yes, you will.' He talked me into

it. And at [Annual] Conference that year, he introduced me as the new archivist."

What she loves most about the job is connecting people with the information they need. The Archives receives about 200 requests for information each year from individuals all over the United States. Often people are searching for church histories, newspaper articles or the records and photos of long-gone Methodist pastors.

The Archives doesn't have much information for family genealogies, Beal said, but she and Crossman will do what they can to help with those requests as well.

"We never just tell people, 'Sorry, we don't have anything,'" Beal said. "We always try to do something to help."

Wayne Clark, Hendrix College's chaplain, said Beal has taken the lead in putting together a display case on Methodist history in the college's new campus center. The cabinet, he said, will remind people of the connection between the college and the church.

Bill Mann, the chair of the Arkansas Conference Commission on Archives and History and a member of Pulaski Heights UMC, says Beal is like a "living museum."

"She has a wealth of knowledge about the United Methodist Church," he said. "Anytime we have a question about what's going on or where to go and who to talk to, she is the go-to person because she's been all over the state and knows everybody."

Preserving the past is something Beal cares about deeply. Her favorite saying is: "We are who we are... because of who they were."

Endowment bequeathed to Morrilton congregation

Special to the AUM

The Nathan and Virginia Gordon Trust recently established a \$500,000 endowment with the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas to benefit First United Methodist Church in Morrilton.

"Nathan was always close to his church," said Allen Gordon, nephew of Nathan Gordon. "His mother and father met when her father, the late Rev. Robert Bearden, was pastor of the church, and Nathan taught a Sunday School class there for many years."

Jerry Collins, senior pastor of First UMC in Morrilton, said Nathan and Virginia Gordon were generous to their church as well as their entire community.

"Funds from the endowment will be used as a tool to fulfill mission opportunities," he said, "not only for the Morrilton community, but also for the global community."

Nathan Gordon, who died in September of 2008, was a former Arkansas lieutenant governor and a Medal of Honor winner.

"We are pleased that the endowment which honors the Gordons will be used to further ministries at the church they both loved," said Jim Argue Jr., president of the United Methodist Foundation.

Founded in 1963, the foundation is responsible for over 500 trust accounts that have combined assets in excess of \$90 million.

NEW ARKANSAS CONFERENCE MAILING ADDRESS effective February 15, 2010

Effective February 15, the mailing address for Bishop Crutchfield's office and the Arkansas Conference Office will change.

The new mailing address is:
800 Daisy Bates Drive
Little Rock, AR 72202

The post office box numbers used by the Conference Treasurer and Pension & Benefits Offices remain the same. Our physical location remains the same. We are still located on the 2nd floor of the Kendall Science Center on the Philander Smith College campus.

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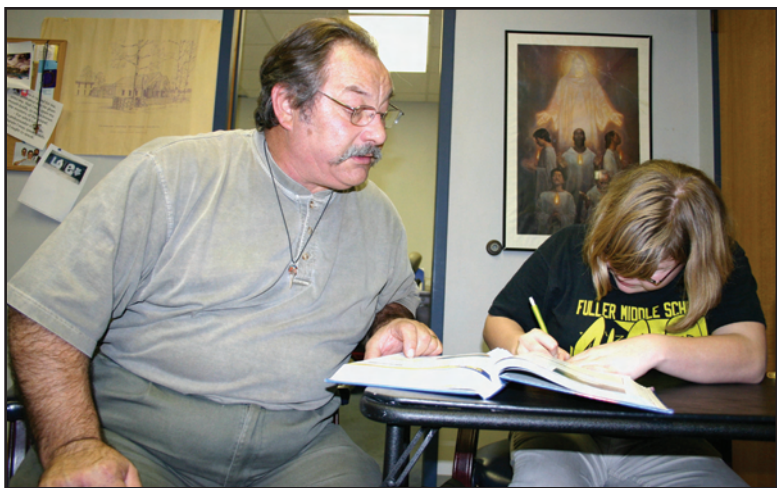
Chelsey Colburn, director of the Lighthouse Afterschool Mentoring Program at First UMC in Fordyce, reads *The Giving Tree* to youngsters.

Photo by Corrie Coates of First UMC in Fordyce



Ahliezah Franks, a freshman at North Little Rock High School's East Campus, practices her kicks during a Taekwondo class offered as part of McCabe Chapel UMC's "T'n'T" (Tutoring and Taekwondo) program.

Photo by Heather Hahn



Clayton Bulice, senior pastor of Primrose UMC in Little Rock, helps Fuller Middle School eighth-grader Summer Morrison learn more about volcanoes during the church's weekly tutoring session.

Photo by Heather Hahn

Teach your children well

With tutoring programs, churches help young disciples master reading, writing, arithmetic and even Taekwondo

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

At McCabe Chapel United Methodist Church, about a dozen children try to kick their grades up a notch while four teens prepare to pivot and kick.

Welcome to "Tutoring and Taekwondo," a ministry the North Little Rock church offers each Monday and Tuesday night for the young people in its low-income neighborhood of Dark Hollow.

"The kids call it T'n'T because it's dynamite," said Deena Marie Hamilton, McCabe Chapel's pastor.

For an hour and a half after school, Philander Smith College students help elementary and middle-school students with their homework. If any youngster fails to bring schoolwork to do, the tutors will give that child a worksheet instead.

After the tutoring session, instructors from Skydom Martial Arts Academy guide older teens in the movements of the Korean martial art.

Between these exercises of the mind and body, Hamilton serves a dinner she has prepared from ingredients donated by the group Potluck Food Rescue for Arkansas. One a recent evening, Hamilton gave each child enough green beans, French fries and turkey casserole to share with their families at home.

Hamilton introduced the ministry when she was appointed to McCabe Chapel UMC nearly two years ago in hopes of helping her small congregation of about 70 grow.

"We decided the best way to develop a relationship with the community is through the children," she said. "The big draw is the food. Some of these kids don't always get a healthy meal at home. But we want to make sure the kids also learn."

At least one of the program's participants attests that the program is helping her studies improve.

"I like doing my homework here because they're smarter than me," said Destinee Johnson, a fourth-grader. "They make me do my work. Before I started coming here I was making D's and F's. Now I make A's and B's."

Like McCabe Chapel UMC,

several other United Methodist churches across the state have extended their education ministries well beyond weekly Sunday School hour.

A number of churches now partner with area public schools to provide student needs. Likewise, churchgoers also volunteer to serve as tutors and mentors.

At McCabe Chapel, the 2-year-old tutoring program builds on a ministry six church members started in August 2007 called P.A.S.S. (Parents and Students Supplies) Plus. The ministry gives away school supplies and hygiene products twice a year.

This past August, the church provided 50 families with basic hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toilet paper and laundry detergent. The church also distributed school supplies to 149 students.

The church is gearing up this month to pass out another round of supplies for students and their families during the second semester.

Initially, Hamilton sought out older volunteer tutors. But this year, Hamilton's daughter, Dedra — a freshman at Philander Smith — recruited fellow students at the historically black, United Methodist college to help out.

LaQuita Beasley, a freshman from Nashville, Tenn., said tutoring the kids is great preparation for her planned career as a social worker.

"I love doing this," she said. "They definitely will keep you on your toes."

The Primrose Promise

Methodist have been committed to education ministries going back to the days of John Wesley when Methodist lay people were among the early leaders of England's nascent Sunday School movement.

Back in the 18th century, Sunday Schools didn't just teach the Bible. The church classes offered pretty much the only formal education available to poor children who toiled in factories the other six days a week. Early Methodists saw Sunday School as a way for these youngsters to lift themselves out of destitution.

At Primrose UMC in Little

Rock, church members want to show today's students that education can have even more immediate benefits.

"What we decided to do was to start rewarding the children for good grades," said Angel Pike, the church's child-care center director. "For a lot of kids we bring in, that wasn't happening at home."

Starting this school year, the church has requested students in kindergarten through high school bring in their report records. The church gives youngsters \$4 for each A, \$3 for each B and \$2 for each C. In turn, a student must pay \$1 back to the church for each D and \$2 for each F.

To receive the rewards, students also must not have received any bad marks in behavior or any suspensions; they must not have an excessive number of absences; and they must attend the church's Sunday School and worship service at least twice a month.

As part of the ministry, the church assigns each child an adult mentor. Those mentors mainly provide encouragement and ask the children how they're doing in school. For those who need more academic help, the church also offers tutoring sessions each Wednesday afternoon.

At the end of each nine-week grading period, the church then has a program before the entire congregation to honor the students receiving a payout.

The church has dubbed the ministry the "Primrose Promise."

"The congregation has bought into this wholeheartedly financially," Pike said.

For the first nine weeks, the church had distributed \$96 to four students.

Now, about a dozen students participate in the program. Eighth-grader Summer Morrison is one of the regulars at the church's tutoring sessions. On a recent Wednesday, she was reviewing information on volcanoes with Clayton Bulice, the church's pastor.

"What is magma?" he quizzed her.

"Molten rock," she answered with a broad grin. "Lava is what it's called once it gets outside the volcano."

Linda Johnson, Summer's



LaQuita Beasley, a freshman at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, helps 9-year-old Jamiah Murry, a fourth-grader at Crestwood Elementary School in North Little Rock, with her social studies homework at McCabe Chapel UMC in North Little Rock.

Photo by Heather Hahn

grandmother who works in the church's nursery, says she's seen her granddaughter's grades improve since Summer started attending the church's tutoring.

"It's a good setting and atmosphere for her," Johnson said. "These people help the children in any way they can."

Feeling at home

The tutoring program at Mi Casa — the Hispanic mission congregation of Lakeside UMC in Pine Bluff — doesn't just help students do better in school but also adjust to life in a new country.

Most of the children in the program have recently immigrated from Mexico, Guatemala or Honduras, and they arrive knowing little, if any, English.

When Mi Casa first started about a decade ago, Alicia Guerrero Frye, Lakeside UMC's associate pastor of Hispanic ministries, would visit the home of each family in the mission to help kids finish their homework, study for tests or work on science projects. Some years back, the Hispanic ministry received a bequest from the late Beverly Launius, a Lakeside member, who wanted the church to establish a tutoring program for the youngsters.

Seven retired and still active teachers now volunteer with the children, using Launius' gift to buy materials to teach English as a Second Language.

"It has been a Godsend," Guerrero Frye said. "One of the good

things about the program is that the children are so willing to help each other come up to the level where they need to be in English. I am just amazed at how well they do."

Geraldin Alfaro says the program, which meets each Thursday night, helped her feel at home after she arrived in Pine Bluff from a town near Guadalajara, Mexico.

"The ladies of Lakeside made learning English so much fun," she recalled. "We used to play Go Fish with words written on the cards. They used Simon Says to teach us different parts of the body. One minute we'd be doing games and one minute we'd be doing homework."

Alfaro, 19, is today a student at Southeast Arkansas College, and plans to soon marry at Lakeside UMC.

"[The tutoring] really was a blessing for me," she said, "and for the rest of the Hispanic kids in the program."

Reigniting the "LAMP"

For seven years, elementary school students spent Monday afternoons at First UMC in Fordyce as part of that congregation's Lighthouse Afterschool Mentoring Program. The tykes received one-on-one help with homework, then participated in a character-building lesson, games, singing, and then shared dinner together.

But in 2006, the program's director felt burned out and no one was immediately available to take

her place. The LAMP dimmed ... but only temporarily.

On Jan. 25, the church — known in Fordyce for the beacon that shines above its outreach center — reignited the LAMP.

Chelsey Colburn, a church member and English teacher at Fordyce High School, was inspired to relaunch the ministry after participating in the church's Disciple Bible Study.

As a student at Arkansas Tech University, she had been a mentor in a similar program, Age to Age sponsored by the campus' Wesley Foundation.

"Two hours is all we get to spend with them," Colburn said. "But maybe those two hours will show them that there are really people who want them to succeed."

Hammett Evans, Fordyce First UMC's pastor, says such educational ministries fit well into the church's Christian call.

"What better way to build God's kingdom than to serve at-risk children in our community and help them be successful in school?" he said.

"In doing so, we obey Jesus' commandments to seek the least, the last and the lost, and to show our love for God by loving our neighbor as ourselves."

Editor's note: Tutoring programs should follow a Safe Sanctuary policy. To learn what such a policy should include, visit www.arumc.org/safe_sanctuaries_.php.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

This Volunteer in Mission listing includes mission opportunities offered by local churches and districts. Often there is room for additional volunteers to join the team. For more information on any of these projects, contact the individuals listed or Don Weeks, Arkansas Area Volunteers in Mission coordinator, 18 Montagne Court, Little Rock, AR 72223; (501) 868-9193 or 681-2909; dweeks@arumc.org.

Mid-February to Mid-April: Mountain T.O.P. (Tennessee Outreach Project), sponsored by the Tennessee Conference, provides homes repairs in the Cumberland Mountains. Groups choose their own dates (arriving Sunday night and leaving Friday morning). \$200 per person. Samantha Tashman, sam@mountain-top.org or (931) 692-3999

March 6-14, 2010: Costa Rica. Painting, flooring, Bible School. Larry Acton, lacton@ritternet.com or (870) 520.3969.

March 20-27, 2010: "River of Life Ministries," Belize. Grace Community UMC in Fort Smith needs about 20 people for a construction/ medical/language mission. Contact Ken Duncan, VIM Team Coordinator at Grace Community UMC, (479) 285-9600.

May 29-June 6: Guatemala Mission Trip 2010. Doctors and surgical nurses are needed for the medical clinic. Contact Gwen Efird, (501) 666-8446, or Pulaski Heights UMC (501) 664-3600.

Aug. 26 – Sept 2 Christ of the Hills UMC has a mission trip planned to Haiti. Those interested should contact Walter "Bubba" Smith at (501) 922-4503 or e-mail srpastor@cohunc.com

Ongoing: "This Olde Church" Volunteers in Mission project. Help restore and repair churches in the Arkansas Conference. Teams will be painting, weather-proofing, doing general repairs, landscaping and other jobs. Teams DO NOT do roofing, plumbing or electrical. Teams can sign up by contacting Don Weeks at dweeks@arumc.org.

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HELP Continued from Page 1A

staying for the duration,” she said. “We are going to build a solid foundation for the long term.”

In the mean time, United Methodists across Arkansas have been answering UMCOR’s call for donated funds and health kits.

Members of Bay United Methodist Church decided to challenge their community to “Fill a Ford for Haiti,” filling a Ford Expedition and Ford Explorer full of the emergency kits on Jan. 24 to be sent to Sager Brown, UMCOR’s depot in Baldwin, La.

A year ago after an ice storm cut off power across much of northern Arkansas, the church received donations from UMCOR to feed its neighbors.

“This was a way for our community to give back after receiving help this time last year,” said Angie Gage, the church’s pastor. “We got one teacher in the high school all excited about it, and she got all her students excited. She’s told them that if they bring in a health kit, they’ll get 25 bonus points.”

Gage also heard that members of a nearby Baptist church were engaging in a little friendly competition to see how many kits they could assemble.

On the day of the event, the church received enough boxes of kits to fill the Expedition with the seats folded down. Individual kits went inside the Explorer.

At press time, the church had received more than 450 kits of the basic hygiene supplies and more were still coming.

Other United Methodists have gathered to assemble kits and taken special offerings to support relief efforts.

These Arkansas United Methodists are continuing a relationship that goes back at least to the early 1980s when Dr. Guy Theodore, a Haitian and U.S. citizen serving as chief surgeon at the Little Rock Air Force Base in Arkansas, met the late Jay Lawhon, a prosperous United Methodist farmer from McCrory.

Philander Smith grad tracks down missing family from afar

Like thousands of Haitians in the United States, Berlin Charles spent the day after the earthquake frantically calling, texting and praying for any sign that his loved ones back home were OK.

“[My sister and I] were calling every single minute, just in case somebody would pick up the phone,” Charles said.

“We were sending text messages and sending e-mails to everybody we know who might know something. And we were out of luck.”

But on the morning of Jan. 14 — two days after the earthquake that leveled much of southern Haiti — Charles finally received a text message from his brother in Port-au-Prince. The short message said that Charles’ brother and sister, both college students in the city, were safe in a neighbor’s house.

Charles, 32, came to the United States in 2001 on a scholarship from the Arkansas Conference to study at Philander Smith College, a historically black United Methodist campus in Little Rock.

A native of Pignon, Charles

first came into contact with the United Methodist Church through the medical missionaries volunteering at the hospital where he worked.

He was one of two promising students the hospital selected to attend Philander Smith. But Charles was the only one able to acquire a visa.

Once in the United States, Charles soon became friends with Don Weeks, the Arkansas Conference’s Volunteers in Mission coordinator, and Maxine Allen, who was then Philander Smith College’s chaplain.

With Weeks, he visited United Methodist churches around the state to testify to the importance of Volunteers in Mission projects. On summer breaks, he also often stayed in the Weeks’ home.

“He’s almost like a family member to us,” Weeks said.

“He’s lived up to our expectations, and he’s just a pleasant young man.”

Today, Charles is working on his master’s of business administration at Everest University in Pompano Beach, Fla.

But he still keeps in contact with United Methodist friends in Arkansas. He also attends a United Methodist congregation near his graduate school whenever he can get a ride.

He said he has been grateful for the prayers and support he’s received.

He recently heard from his parents, a sugar cane farmer and teacher, in the relatively unscathed town of Pignon. They were able to track down his siblings in Port-au-Prince and bring them safely home much to Charles’ relief.

He hopes Americans will continue to send aid to Haiti even when the country is no longer in the headlines.

“It was already a poor country, and this is a long-term investment,” he said. “They need food, water, clothes, shelter and people who have nursing skills.”

Charles also hopes one day to return to Haiti.

“My goal was and is to go back to Haiti to help,” he said. “With my experience, I think I can help a little bit.”

— HEATHER HAHN

Theodore had a dream to provide healthcare and healing for his home community of more than 140,000 people in northern Haiti. Lawhon, who had recently established his charity World Christian Relief Fund, agreed to partner with Theodore to build the hospital.

With other United Methodist volunteers, Lawhon did carpentry work on the hospital, drilled more than 700 water wells and helped in reforestation efforts.

He died in 2003 at the age of 84. The Arkansas Conference each year gives a Volunteer in Mission Award named in Lawhon’s honor.

Theodore is still at work leading a health organization that now

includes the hospital as well as six clinics.

Dr. William Scurlock, a general surgeon and member of First UMC in El Dorado, annually joined medical mission trips to the Pignon hospital from 1991 to 2001.

“We’d work for 10 days and operate night and day,” Scurlock recalled. “Dr. Guy would have people lined up to operate on. ... It was probably one of the better hospitals in Haiti at that time. We got patients from all over who came there for

surgery.”

At 77, Scurlock doesn’t expect to return to Haiti. But he’s thrilled that his son Dr. David Ross Scurlock, a family physician and experienced medical missionary in Atlanta, has volunteered to join the relief effort with Doctors Without Borders.

“The Haitian people are the most resilient and resourceful people I’ve ever seen,” the elder Dr. Scurlock said.

“I’ve seen Haitians wait patiently all day for surgery without so much as a whimper. They are tough.”



From left, Hannah Keith, Summer Turman and Bailey Gage, youth group members at Bay UMC, load up the back of church pastor Angie Gage’s Ford Explorer with health kits for Haiti.

Photo by Ginna Turman

How to help:

■ Sager Brown, UMCOR’s Depot in Baldwin, La., is coordinating a shipment of health kits to provide individuals with basic necessities. Instructions for assembling and shipping health kits are available at new.gbgn-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/supplies/health-kit/

■ The following districts have designated locations for individuals and other churches to drop off Disaster Health Kits for the people of Haiti.

Northeast District

— Bay UMC, 300 Central Ave., Bay. Contact Angie Gage at (870) 781-3262 or pastor. angie@gmail.com

— Rector UMC, 115 W. Third St., Rector. Contact Velda Bell at (870) 595-2552 or vsbell@att.net

Northwest District

— Elm Springs UMC, 110 School Ave., Elm Springs. Contact Denni Palmer at umteach@hotmail.com

North Central District

— Wesley United Methodist Church, 2310 E. Oak St., Conway. Contact Ken Brumley at (501) 358-2389 or David Hoffman at (870) 723-3830 to arrange a drop off.

— Lonoke First United Methodist Church, 220 S. Center St., Lonoke. Contact Steve Brizzi at (501) 676-6767

South Central District

— District office, Hot Springs. (501) 622-2512.

■ For those interested in serving as relief or rebuilding volunteers in Haiti, the General Board of Global Ministries has prepared an Web site on the internet at new.gbgn-umc.org/about/us/mv/haiti. A letter on volunteering from Bishop Joel Martinez, interim general secretary, is linked at the list.

■ Donations to support UMCOR’s Haiti Relief efforts can be made to Haiti Emergency, UMCOR Advance No. 418325. Checks can be made to UMCOR with Advance No. 418325 Haiti Emergency in the memo line. Checks can be put in your church’s offering plate or mailed to UMCOR, PO Box 9068, New York, NY 10087.

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Small church fills hungry elementary students' bellies

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

Holy Communion is a feast for more than just Sunday worshippers at Friendship United Methodist Church.

When churchgoers approach the altar for the sacred meal on the first Sunday of each month, many will bring food to be distributed to hungry children in the nearby elementary school.

"We share a meal with Jesus and we want to extend that meal one degree out into the community," Robert Reid, the church's pastor said.

"We always ask for God's blessing on the food, and we pray that hopefully someone's eyes will be opened and hearts will be touched by the ministry we do on behalf of Jesus Christ."

Since last September, the church — which has an average weekly attendance of about 17 — has delivered each month about \$150 to \$200 worth of food to Ouachita Elementary School in Hot Springs County.

The congregation's donations supplement the snacks, canned goods and other staples the school



From left, Lynn Shaffer, Bill Bryant, Friendship UMC's pastor Robert Reid and Jerri Smith pack backpacks full of nutritious food to for hungry youngsters at nearby Ouachita Elementary School.

Photo by Gretchen Hendricks
Originally appeared in the *Malvern Daily Record*, reprinted with permission

receives once a month through Arkansas Rice Depot's Food for Kids program. Friendship UMC also donated backpacks for the youngsters to carry the food home.

Heather Neel, the school's counselor, says teachers have identified about 25 students who need help getting enough food to eat.

"But since the economy is in such bad shape, sometimes the Rice Depot couldn't give us as much food as they needed," Neel said. "It was a great blessing that Robert Reid called and asked whether the church could help."

Because of Friendship UMC's generosity, she said the school can now send children home with

backpacks full of nutritious food every two weeks.

"We're talking about kids who might not get supper because maybe their parents don't get home from work until late at night," Neel said. "The food they provide us isn't just snacks but it's also meals that kids can prepare themselves like cans you don't need a can opener to open."

Neel can attest that children have a hard time minding their teacher when their minds are on an empty stomach. Hungry youngsters get grouchy, they put their heads on their desks, they cause disruptions in class and their grades slip.

Church member Jerri Smith said participating in the ministry has been an eye-opening experience.

"I live right here in Friendship, but I never knew things were this bad," said Smith, who is among the church volunteers who routinely packs the backpacks with food. "I never knew there were kids here who went hungry."

Smith and her sister Julia Benavides now buy extra food whenever they visit the grocery store to support the ministry.

Lynn Shaffer, the church's treasurer, said the donations make Communion more meaningful.

"It's just a good feeling knowing you're filling an empty stomach," she said.

At Christmas time, the church decided to add a small bag of chocolate and fruit-flavored treats to each backpack.

While church members were sorting out candies for each bag, Reid's 5-year-old son Dakota and 3-year-old Dalton looked at the treats with envy and asked why the church was doing this.

Reid explained that the candy would be a Christmas present for kids in need.

"I really do want these to eat," Dakota said, "but I am glad that the kids are getting it so they'll have candy for Christmas."

His dad says his elder son still asks whether the kids enjoyed their presents.

Indeed they did, Neel said.

"They came back and told me, 'Oh, it was so good,' and 'That's my favorite kind of candy,'" she said. "To these kids, anything you do for them is greatly appreciated."

COMING UP

The youth of Grand Avenue UMC, Seventh Street and Grand Avenue, Stuttgart, will present the Justin Graves Band at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 8. A love offering will be taken. To learn more, call the church at (870) 673-6317.

The United Methodist Women of Henderson UMC, 13000 W. Baseline Road, will have a chili dinner from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Feb. 10 in the Family Life Center. Customers can buy chili and pie or a hot dog and pie for \$6. To learn more, call (501) 455-2209.

Ash Wednesday is Feb. 17. Check with your local church for service times.

Piney Grove UMC, 2963 Airport Road, Hot Springs, will celebrate the grand opening of a new family program that helps people kick destructive habits and adopt healthier lifestyles. The opening will be at 5-8 p.m. Feb. 20 in the church's Big House. The program includes Celebrate

Recovery for adults; Life Hurts, God Heals for teens; and Celebration Station for kids ages 6-12. To learn more, contact Celebrate Recovery Ministry Leader Bart Haringsma at (501) 620-3097.

St. Paul UMC, 2223 Durwood Road, will celebrate its centennial with a reception at 6:30-8:30 p.m. March 6 in the Jackson Room of Crowne Plaza Hotel, 201 S. Shackleford Road. The cost is \$20. The church will also mark its 100th anniversary with one worship service at 10:45 a.m. March 7. Bishop Charles Crutchfield will preach, and Phil Hathcock, district superintendent, will also participate in the service. The service will include an anthem especially composed for the celebration. Following the service, lunch will be served.

To learn more, contact Sherry Hankins at (501) 666-9429 or stpaulumc@sbcglobal.net.

Mount Sequoyah Conference and Retreat Center, 150 NW

Skyline Drive, Fayetteville, will host the 2010 Small Church Leadership Institute on March 8-12 for laity and pastors. Speakers in clued Alice Mann, senior consultant with the Alban Institute; Tim Reaves, the chair of the North Carolina Conference Commission on Evangelism; and Doug Anderson, executive director of the Bishop Rueben Job Center for Leadership Development at Dakota Wesleyan University. Cost varies from \$359 to \$439 and includes the program fee, lodging, meals and all materials. Commuter rates available.

To register, visit www.mountsequoyah.org. To learn more, contact Marilyn Braswell at (800) 760-8126 or programs@mountsequoyah.org.

The deadline for the next edition of the Arkansas United Methodist is 5 p.m. Feb. 10. Submissions must be typed or printed and include the time, date and the street address and phone number for the church or event. E-mail submissions to editor Heather Hahn at hhahn@arumc.org.

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Pastor References Available Upon Request

District superintendent honored

Special to the AUM

Illiff School of Theology in Denver will honor Rodney Steele, North Central District Superintendent, with the 2010 Distinguished Alumnus award.

Steele, who has served as a district superintendent since 2005 and has been an endorsed candidate for bishop most recently in 2008, will be honored at the seminary's annual Alumni/ae Awards Banquet at 6 p.m. Feb. 11 in the school's Great Hall. Five other alums will also be honored at the dinner.

The award recognizes an



Rodney Steele

Illiff in 1980.

Gary Powell, his fellow Illiff alumnus and United Methodist pastor in Oregon, nominated Steele for recognition of his "outstanding contribution to parish ministry."

"Rod is a faithful servant, a skilled leader, an inspiring leader, a dedicated husband and father and a credit to Illiff," Powell wrote in his nominating letter.

alumnus/a who has served the religious community and/or Illiff with distinction.

Steele has served in United Methodist ministry for 30 years since graduating from

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COLLEGE NEWS

"Breaking Barriers... Building Bridges... Think Justice" is the theme for the 2010 Religious Emphasis Week at Philander Smith College on Feb. 21-26.

All activities and events are free with the exception of the Living Legends Banquet, which is \$25 per person.

Events include:

Feb. 21

■ 10:45 a.m.: Opening worship with United Methodist Bishop Violet Fisher at Wesley Chapel UMC, 1109 S. State St., Little Rock.

■ 7 p.m. Communion service and reception at Wesley Chapel UMC Feb. 23

■ 11 a.m.: Lecture by Abraham Smith of Perkins School of

Theology at Southern Methodist University in the Kendall Center

■ 7 p.m. Evening worship featuring African Methodist Episcopal Bishop Vashti McKenzie in M.L. Harris Auditorium Feb. 25

■ 7 p.m.: Living Legends Banquet in the Kendall Center. Honorees include Annie Abrams, O.C. Jones, Raphael Lewis and Bishop Kenneth Hicks.

Feb. 26

■ 7 p.m.: Worship service with speaker E. Dewey Smith, senior pastor of Greater Travelers Rest Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., in Wesley Chapel UMC.

To learn more, call Philander Smith's Office of Religious Life at (501) 370-5344.

The Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics & Calling at Hendrix College will host the E. Stanley Jones Conference on Evangelism at March 1-2.

The keynote speaker will be Lacey Warner, associate dean of academic formation and programs and associate professor of the practice of evangelism at Duke Divinity School.

The conference will kick off with a worship service at 6:30 p.m. March 1 in Greene Chapel with Warner preaching. The conference will continue at noon March 2.

Hendrix College is at 1600 Washington Ave. in Conway. To register, e-mail Vicki Sutton at suttonv@hendrix.edu or call (501) 450-4590.

OBITUARY

TEXARKANA, Ark.

Clyde N. Swift, 91, of Texarkana, Ark., died Jan. 2, 2010,



Clyde N. Swift

in a local hospital. He was born Oct. 3, 1918, in Gillham to Henry and Leona Grayson Swift.

He was a retired United Methodist elder, serving

over 45 years in the ministry, and was the pastor emeritus at Fairview United Methodist Church in Texarkana. He is also the father of two pastors.

He graduated from Henderson State Teachers College and attended Asbury Theological Seminary.

He met his wife, Ellavee, in the early part of his ministry at Dierks Methodist Church in Dierks. He was preceded in death by his seven siblings and his son-in-law, Billy Joe Daugherty.

He leaves to cherish his memory his wife of 64 years, Ellavee Swift; one son, David Swift, pastor of Timothy and St. Mark United Methodist churches, and his wife, Ann, of Camden; one daughter, Sharon Daugherty, senior pastor of Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Okla.; his mother-in-law, Ethel Hobson of Dierks; six grandchildren, three

great-grandchildren; and a number of nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Funeral services were held Jan. 6, 2010, at Fairview UMC with Barbara Gilbert, senior pastor, and family members officiating.

Burial was in East Memorial Gardens under the direction of Texarkana Funeral Home in Texas.

Memorial contributions may be made to Fairview United Methodist Church, 1524 Laurel St., Texarkana, Ark., 71854, or the charity of your choice.

RISON AND RECTOR

James "Jim" Stone, 63, of Rison and Rector, passed away Jan. 21, 2010, at the Jefferson



Jim Stone

Regional Medical Center in Pine Bluff after a yearlong struggle with cancer.

The United Methodist elder was born in Pine Bluff on March 9, 1946, the younger son of J.W. "Jake" and Merle (Ferguson) Stone.

He was married to Carol Anne Gaultney in Jonesboro on Nov. 3, 1965.

He retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1987 after serving for 21 years. Stone joined the ministry in 1998 and enjoyed being the pastor

of Rison and Mount Carmel United Methodist churches since 2007.

He was preceded in death by his parents, J.W. and Merle Stone.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Carol Anne (Gaultney) Stone.

He is also survived by his four children and their families: Mary and Lendell Small of Rector, and their children, Michael, Jake and Tyler; Doug and Yuki Stone of Okinawa, Japan, and children Kirra, Gwen, Billy and Kahana; Billy and Mary Beth Stone of Fort Hood, Texas, and their children, Kristin, Hunter and Tanner; Hope and Jerry Ermert of Piggott, and their children, Elizabeth, Miranda and Micah. He is also survived by two step-grandchildren, Seth and Chasity Garrett.

His survivors include his brother, Bill Stone of Cumming, Georgia; two nieces, Jonette (Glenn) Gowan and son, Justin of Flowery Branch, Georgia, and Laura Burgess of Lawrenceville, Georgia. Also surviving are several loving cousins.

He leaves behind his legacy of a loving family and a host of friends who are better off for having him in their lives.

Funeral services were on Jan. 24 at Rison United Methodist Church and Jan. 26, 2010, at First United Methodist Church in Rector. Burial followed in the Pleasant Grove Cemetery.

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD



Rock Springs United Methodist Church recently recognized the Montgomery family's donation of their sister Nell (Montgomery) Harper's house to be a parsonage for the Wilmar charge. Pictured from left are Lemuel Terrell, Mary Elizabeth (Montgomery) Terrell, Rock Springs' pastor Hardy Peacock, Sue (Montgomery) Miller and Victor Montgomery.

Photo courtesy of Rock Springs UMC



First UMC in Malvern held its inaugural community Christmas dinner on Dec. 25. John Allan Funk, at left, who organized the free feast for more than 100 people, sits with Mike Taylor, the volunteer pianist for the event. The church has organized five Thanksgiving community meals, and plans to make the Christmas gathering another annual tradition.

Photo by Tammy Keith
Originally appeared in the *Tri-Lakes Edition* of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, reprinted with permission



Twenty United Methodist youth workers from Arkansas attended the Perkins School of Youth Ministry at Southern Methodist University in Dallas on Jan. 10-14. Pictured from left at back are Steven Henley, Ellen Brown, David Sutton, Belinda Guinn, Cody Bauman, Emily Johnson, Todd Lovell, Justin Warren, Greg Pair and the conference's minister for youth and young adults Rod Hocott. Pictured from left on the front row are Brandon Bates, Kayte Dunn, Ruth Jones, Michelle Moore, J.J. Whitney, Jay Clark and Elizabeth Bradberry. Not pictured are Terry and Gail Moser and Brooke Crumpler.

Photo courtesy of Michelle Moore



David Williams, pastor of DeQueen UMC, officiated the baptism of Evie Moore, whose big brother, McGuyre was diagnosed with leukemia in 2009. Despite going through intense treatment, McGuyre was able to attend the baptism. Williams anointed both little ones with oil. Pictured with the youngsters from left are Evie's sponsors Cathy Seal and David Hall, Williams, and proud parents Jane and Mac Moore.

Photo courtesy of DeQueen UMC



A dozen United Methodist NOMADS from Arkansas last fall attended the group's annual meeting in Columbus, Ind. The group, whose name stands for Nomads on a Mission Active in Divine Service, is a mission outreach for people with recreational vehicles. Those who attended were Ron and Charlene Glasgow from Garfield, Jerrel and Linda Fielder from Conway, Jerry and Becky Fay from Hot Springs Village, Paul and Kathy Bauer from Cherokee Village, Howard and Carol Stoner from Texarkana and Cecil and Doris Jones from Royal.

Photo courtesy of Arkansas NOMADS



Pea Ridge and Brightwater UMC celebrated on Dec. 13 that its new parsonage in the Windmill Estates subdivision of Pea Ridge is now debt free. The churches' pastor, Matt Daniels, who lives in the parsonage with his wife Rhonda and daughter Gwendolyn, led the mortgage burning. Two years after buying the new parsonage, the churches made the final payment on the house in October 2009.

Photo courtesy of Pea Ridge UMC

Denomination planning event to 'Change the World'

SPECIAL TO THE AUM

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — United Methodists everywhere are encouraged to begin planning now to join in "Change the World" on April 24-25.

During that weekend, United Methodist Communications invites congregations to join with others in their communities to create and participate in service or fundraising projects.

The churchwide event aims to inspire positive and long-lasting change. Activities can include revitalizing a food-pantry program, creating a new ministry to help the homeless or increasing awareness of global health issues like malaria. Churches can utilize existing ministries or initiate a new outreach event.

"Change the World challenges the people of the United Methodist Church to see the world holistically by giving and serving beyond the four walls of sanctuaries and Sunday school classrooms," Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications, said. "Our hope is that not only will church members participate, they will invite neighbors in the community to work side-by-

side with them to make a sustainable difference in diverse ways."

On April 25, World Malaria Day, the United Methodist Church will formally launch a \$75 million campaign called "Imagine No Malaria" to eradicate deaths caused by the mosquito-borne disease.

Churches are being asked to host events such as campouts to experience sleeping under bed nets like families in Africa who rely on mosquito netting for protection against malaria.

These events will help raise awareness and funds that support Imagine No Malaria.

The April "Change the World" event was created as part of the denomination's Rethink Church campaign in partnership with the United Methodist Publishing House and the Imagine No Malaria initiative.

Rethink Church advertising will complement the April events, so churches can take advantage of the publicity.

To learn about *Change the World* or how you can create an event for your church, visit www.rethinkchurch.org/changetheworld.

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Home Study: Save \$\$\$ Christian Bible College, P.O. Box 8968 Rocky Mt., NC 27804 Phone (252) 451-1031; www.christianbiblecollege.org

Theresa Hoover United Methodist Church is seeking a part-time Church Secretary responsible for administrative support of the Pastor and various auxiliaries in the Church. Minimum requirements high school diploma/GED or Equivalent, previous experience as secretary/administrative assistant desired and understanding of United Methodist Connectional system desired. Send a resume to: hooverumc@aol.com, Attn: Ruth Jones or call (501) 379-1561 for a complete job description.

St. Luke United Methodist Church is seeking a nursery caregiver for children (birth - 5 years old) on Sunday mornings. Send resume to St. Luke UMC, 6401 West 32nd St., Little Rock, AR 72204, fax (501) 562-2652, phone (501) 562-2651, e-mail stluke6@att.net.

To see more photos of church activities, visit www.arumc.org/news

First Laity Convocation to teach leaders UM way

HEATHER HAHN
Editor

There's a reason why John Wesley's movement came to be known as Methodism: He introduced a new method — indeed a new way — of life.

The Arkansas Conference will hold its first Laity Convocation: "Leading in the United Methodist Way" on Feb. 13 in hopes of helping today's churchgoers recapture a bit of that original Methodist spirit. The gathering for lay leaders and certified lay speakers will be at St. James United Methodist Church in Little Rock.

The gathering won't just be a history lesson but also a bit of a pep talk and a reminder that United Methodists have something special to offer the world, said Asa Whitaker Jr., the conference's lay leader.

"United Methodists have a unique story to tell in Christendom," he said. "That began with the thinking of John Wesley. ... What I want us to regain is that sense of theology — and I use that word loosely — that is uniquely Methodist."

Specifically, Whitaker said Wesleyan theology says something vital about God's grace and how it applies to each person uniquely. No matter what someone's relationship is with God, he said, Wesley's understanding of grace and how people should respond to that grace applies.

Whitaker came up with the idea for the event last year after joining the bishop, members of the cabinet and other conference staff for a seminar on "The United Methodist Way" led by Michael Roberts, the director of Connected In Christ, and Roy Smith, director of conference's ministries.

"This was really a mountaintop experience for a lot of folks," Whitaker said. "We had a sense that

church leadership was really serious about moving forward to try to regain what I sense to be the original purpose John Wesley had."

He contacted Barbara Clark, the director of the conference's lay speaking ministries, about organizing a similar program for laity. Clark was equally enthusiastic.

"There's a need for us to get together and have some input and instruction, and try to get on the same page of what we need to do," Clark said. "We don't have all the answers but we're just going to come together and exchange ideas."

Clark and Whitaker will each speak briefly, but Roberts and Smith will lead the main part of the program.

Smith said he hopes to stress the distinctive role laity have played and continue to play in the denomination.

"Lay leadership is a central part of who we are," Smith said.

"The early Methodists had an extremely important lay component to the movement. Laity worked in partnership with clergy whether it was in the societies in the earliest days or whether it was circuit riders working with lay preachers and teachers in spreading across the frontier."

He said the convocation will also emphasize the need to continue Wesley's dual commitments to evangelism and social justice.

"This is who we are as United Methodist at our best," Smith said.

The 2010 Laity Convocation will be from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Feb. 13 at St. James UMC, 321 Pleasant Valley Drive, Little Rock. Registration is \$10 for an individual; \$5 each for five or more individuals attending from the same church. Registration deadline is Feb. 9. To register, visit www.arumc.org/register.

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Rev. Siegfried and Sherry Johnson at the Tel Dan Nature Reserve in the Upper Galilee

... with Rev. Siegfried Johnson, Sr. Pastor of First UMC Mountain Home, on a 10 day journey of a lifetime, departing Little Rock on May 2, 2011. Having led over a dozen trips with Educational Opportuniteis to the Holy Land and Greece/Turkey, Rev Johnson —whose graduate studies focused on Hebrew and Semitic Literature/Archaeology —is an experienced tour leader. You will see the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Nazareth, Megiddo, the Old City of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Masada, and much more.

For details or questions, contact Rev. Johnson at sjohnson@fumcmh.org or at 870.425.6036



Faith Funds

Called to God's Service

A warm smile and enthusiasm for her calling characterize Natasha Murray-Norman, the newest recipient of a UMFA Seminary Scholarship. She relocated with her family to Rossville, Kansas, and attends Saint Paul School of Theology, a United Methodist seminary in Kansas City.

For a long time Natasha was committed to God's work, but unsure exactly what form it would take. In 2006 she felt God's call not only to preach, not only to pastor, but to serve Arkansas United Methodists.

Natasha has two children in elementary school and commutes 90 miles to seminary on Mondays and Tuesdays. The other days of the week she is the student pastor of Campus Ministry at Washburn University, about 16 miles from home. This hectic schedule would be very difficult to manage without financial help from the United Methodist Foundation.

"Through the United Methodist Foundation, God has provided me a way to pursue my calling to ministry."



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REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

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Missions leader

German layman to head
Global Ministries | 2B



Wesley's means of grace

How spiritual disciplines
transform us | 6B



Giving shelter

Churches open doors
in cold weather | 8B

Section B

February 5, 2010



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL JEFFREY/ACT ALLIANCE

A Mexican rescue team frees Anna Zizi from the home of the parish priest at Port-au-Prince's Roman Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption on Jan. 19.

UMCOR joins on-the-ground relief for Haiti

BY LINDA BLOOM
United Methodist News Service

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and a host of other faith-based groups are on the ground in Haiti as they determine how to help earthquake survivors.

With more than \$2 million in donations received by Jan. 20, UMCOR already has provided emergency grants for immediate needs to the Methodist Church of Haiti and GlobalMedic, a Canadian relief agency.

An assessment team led by UMCOR's Melissa Crutchfield gathered Jan. 20 in the Dominican Republic and then entered Haiti. She is accompanied by five others with the relief agency, the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) and United Methodist Communications.

■ See 'UMCOR,' page 4B

Hands-on help

United Methodists assemble health kits

BY MARY JACOBS
Staff Writer

When the TV news stations began reporting from the earthquake in Haiti, Jessica Patton couldn't just watch.

"When I see people on TV in such anguish, it's hard to watch without doing something hands-on myself," she said.

So Ms. Patton, a member of First United Methodist Church in Salt Lake City, Utah, sent out an e-mail to fellow church members and enlisted about 15 people to join her in assembling health kits at the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) West's depot in Salt Lake.

The help was welcomed. UMCOR's two relief supply warehouses have issued a request for

United Methodists to provide health kits that can be sent to earthquake-devastated Haiti. The kits, valued at about \$12 apiece, contain items such as towels, bandages and soap, and will be distributed to Haitians forced to leave their homes.

In response to the call, churches across the U.S. have mobilized their

■ See 'Health Kits,'
page 3B



PHOTO BY BILLY REEDER

From left, Andy Jones, Spree Hilliard and Lori Williams, students at the Arkansas Tech University Wesley Foundation in Russellville, Ark., pack health kits to send to Haiti through the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

FAITH WATCH

Religious riots kill over 200 in Nigeria

Fighting in mid-January between Christians and Muslims in central Nigeria killed more than 200 people. Conflicting accounts said the violence started either when Muslim youths set fire to a church or when the rebuilding of a destroyed Muslim home in a predominantly Christian neighborhood sparked an argument. More than 13,500 Nigerians have died in sectarian violence in the last decade, the Associated Press reported. Witnesses said rioters armed with knives, home-made firearms and stones attacked passers-by and fought with security forces.

Bishops regret flight of Mideast Christians

Catholic bishops in the Middle East lamented the exodus of Christians from the region, in a statement released Jan. 19 by the Vatican. Tens of thousands of Catholics have fled Iraq since 2003, while Christians in the Holy Land have dropped from 20 percent to 2 percent since the state of Israel was founded in 1948, according to Religion News Service. Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories makes daily life difficult [for Christians],” the bishops said, “with regard to freedom of movement, the economy and religious life”—including limited access to Christian shrines.

Postal Service plans Mother Teresa stamp

The U.S. Postal Service this year plans to honor Mother Teresa with a stamp in honor of her humanitarian work. The Nobel Peace Prize-winning nun cared for the sick and needy in India and other countries for almost five decades before her death in 1997. Her stamp, tentatively set for an Aug. 26 release, will feature a portrait by Thomas Blackshear II, an artist from Colorado Springs, Colo.

—Compiled by Bill Fentum

Survivor: Trio kept faith in rubble

BY KATHY L. GILBERT
United Methodist News Service

There were times, trapped beneath tons of concrete in the collapsed Hotel Montana, when the Rev. James Gulley thought help would never come.

But Mr. Gulley, the Rev. Sam Dixon and the Rev. Clinton Rabb always knew they were in the hands of God.

When help did come 55 hours after a massive earthquake hit Haiti and reduced the hotel to a pile of crumbling concrete, Mr. Gulley was pulled to safety, but his friends both died of their injuries.

“I have no answer about why I was given the gift of life and Sam and Clint were not,” Mr. Gulley said in an interview. “I can’t answer that any better than Job could answer why some people suffer more than others. All I can

do is continue to try to use that gift in God’s service in whatever way it is intended. I’m grateful to be alive, and I accept that gift.”



Jim Gulley

The three men, working with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), were in Port-au-Prince to meet with members of the Methodist Church of Haiti to talk about ways to improve and develop the country. They had scheduled a meeting with members of IMA World Health, including United Methodist Sarla Chand, at the Hotel Montana.

“A driver from the Methodist Guest House dropped us off, and when we walked in they were sitting in the lobby checking their e-mail.”

The group gathered and were heading to the hotel’s restaurant when there was a rumble, Mr. Gulley said. “We had just passed the reception desk. I looked up and the hotel was shaking; in the third second, it fell on us.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF GBGM

Two Port-au-Prince residents use rudimentary materials—crowbars and shovels—in an attempt to clear rubble from the Hotel Montana and search for survivors in the aftermath of the powerful earthquake that rocked the Haitian capital.

The six humanitarian workers and two other men trapped inside elevators were suddenly confined to a small area.

“The first thing I heard was Sam saying his legs were broken. Then Clint said his legs were also broken. We called out to each other and the others said they were OK.”

The group struggled to remain calm even though Dixon and Rabb were “suffering terribly,” Mr. Gulley said. They were afraid they might run out of oxygen but soon felt some cool air coming around the edges.

“We tried to joke, to think of funny stories, but we didn’t have too many. We talked about how ironic it was that we had come to Haiti to offer aid and now we were the recipients of relief aid.”

After night fell on the first day, they knew no one was coming until morning. But when another day and night came with no help they began to feel despair, Mr. Gulley said.

At one point he started singing

“Peace Like A River” and the others joined in. When help came from French firemen, Mr. Gulley and the others started singing the doxology, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

“It was good for those of us who were not so badly hurt,” Mr. Gulley said. “But I think it was harder for those who were pinned because they had such high expectations after some of us were pulled out.” Mr. Gulley said it took the firemen four hours to get him out.

“Sam was still alive, he was the last one whose fate we knew about,” Mr. Gulley said. Some reports said Dixon had been evacuated and was alive.

Dixon had removed his wallet from his back pocket in an effort to get more comfortable, Mr. Gulley said. “I picked up his wallet and put it in my pocket. I didn’t realize I was taking away his only identity.”

Mr. Gulley and Dixon had worked together for many years.

“My first trip abroad in 1999 was to Haiti with Sam,” Mr. Gulley said. Fighting through tears, he said, “We began in Haiti and that’s where we parted.”

THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER

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THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER (USPS954-500) is published weekly by UMR Communications Inc., 1221 Profit Drive, Dallas, Texas 75247-3919. Periodicals postage paid at Dallas, Texas and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER, PO Box 660275, Dallas Texas 75266-0275.

THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER has provided denominational news coverage since its beginning as the Texas Methodist newspaper in 1847. The Reporter has no official ties to the United Methodist General Conference or to any of the denomination’s general boards or agencies. This newspaper aims to provide readers with a broad spectrum of information and viewpoints consistent with the diversity of Christians.

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Send Correspondence and Address Changes (include mailing label) To: P.O. Box 660275, Dallas, TX 75266-0275 Telephone: (214) 630-6495. Subscriptions are \$26 for 52 issues per year. Click on “subscriptions” at www.umportal.org, e-mail circulation@umr.org or send a check to UMR Communications, Attn: Circulation, 1221 Profit Dr., Dallas, TX 75247.



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German layman to head UMC missions agency

BY ELLIOTT WRIGHT
Special Contributor

NEW YORK—A former missionary with strong United Methodist roots in his native Germany and broad ecumenical and international experience will be the new chief executive of the denomination’s General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).

Thomas Kemper, 53, a layman, will become the first general secretary of a United Methodist general agency from outside the U.S. He begins March 15.

Since 1998, Mr. Kemper has led the Board of Missions and Internal Church Cooperation of the United Methodist Germany Central Conference. He is in his second four-year term as a director of Global Ministries, a 190-year-old organization with personnel, projects and mission partners in 136 countries, and has been a missionary in Brazil.

“Thomas Kemper is uniquely qualified and gifted for this position,” said Bishop Bruce R. Ough of West Ohio, president of the GBGM and co-chair of a search committee. “His global perspective, missionary experience, sound Wesleyan theology, broad ecumenical involvement and



Thomas Kemper

passion for Christ’s mission will benefit the General Board of Global Ministries and the entire United Methodist Church.”

Mr. Kemper said the mission agency should hold mercy and piety together, and that he profoundly believes that “the gospel can transform individuals and the world.”

He has traveled extensively, done field work in Africa, worked with Vietnamese boat people in England, and speaks five languages.

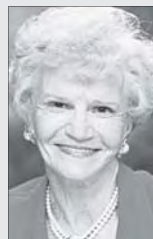
Mr. Kemper and his wife, Barbara Hüfner-Kemper, were missionaries in Brazil from 1986-1994 through the German United Methodist Board of Missions.

He earned a Master of Education in adult education at the University of Hamburg in 1982 and a Master of Arts in sociology in 1985 from the University of Bielefeld.

UM CONNECTIONS

Philip Awards honor evangelist leaders

The Rev. Marvin Howard of Chattanooga, Tenn., and the Rev. Rose Grindeim Sims of The Villages, Fla.,



Rose Grindeim Sims

received the Philip Award for Outstanding Leadership in Evangelism from the National Association of United Methodist Evangelists.

The award was presented Jan. 8 at the United Methodist Congress on Evangelism in New Orleans, La. Dr. Sims is a United Methodist pastor and author of a book, *New Life for Dying Churches*; Mr. Howard has served as a minister in the Holston Conference for more than 30 years.

Methodist Foundation extends clergy rate

The Texas Methodist Foundation recently announced that its special "clergy appreciation rate" for United Methodist clergy will be extended through Dec. 31. The program, introduced in June 2009, entitles clergy with primary residence in Texas or New Mexico to receive an additional one-half percent interest above the Foundation's already competitive rates. Visit www.tmf-fdn.org.

Deadline extended for ethnic internships

The deadline to apply for a 2010 Ethnic Young Adult (EYA) Summer Internship in Washington, D.C., has been extended to Feb. 15. Young adults ages 18-22, interested in exploring issues of public policy, social justice advocacy and social change are eligible; openings remain for applicants of Hispanic American, Native American and Pacific Islander ethnicity. The program runs May 30-July 31. For information, contact the Rev. Neal Christie at the General Board of Church and Society, (202) 488-5611.

—Compiled by Mary Jacobs

■ **HEALTH KITS** *Continued from page 1B*

congregations as well as men's groups, Bible studies, small groups and Sunday school classes to assemble health kits for Haiti.

Members of First UMC in Lubbock, Texas, spent Sunday morning, Jan. 17, assembling 1,000 kits. Volunteers at Grace UMC in Mount Juliet, Tenn., spent Sunday morning, Jan. 24, putting together 10,000 health kits.

First UMC in Towanda, Pa., set up a donation bin for needed items and invited members of the community to help assemble the kits. Members of Aldersgate UMC in Rockland, Maine, assembled 50 health kits as part of the church's "Jesus and Java" coffeehouse program and Sunday worship.

"Everyone is so moved by the plight in Haiti," said the Rev. Jackie Brannen, Aldersgate's pastor. "We can't all get to Haiti, but we can certainly do something for the people of Haiti."

Ongoing need

UMCOR officials say they anticipate a continued need for health kits, adding there's no way that they will receive more health kits than can be put to good use. Kathy Kraiza, director of UMCOR's relief supplies, estimates that hundreds of thousands of kits will be needed in the days and months ahead. A large shipment of health kits to Armenia had emptied most of UMCOR's stock of health kits just before the quake.

Melissa Hinnen, director of communications for UMCOR, says churches have responded generously to the call for health kits. UMCOR

hopes to send three shipping containers of the kits to Haiti very soon, most likely to areas outside of Port-au-Prince.

"We're trying to reach out to areas where there are no news cameras," she said.

UMCOR officials on the ground in Haiti are reporting that they will need layette kits as well, she added. The kits will provide basic necessities to new mothers whose babies will be born in Haiti in the coming months.

Within a week of the quake, about 100 volunteers a day turned up at UMCOR West's depot in Salt Lake City to help assemble health kits. Some churches also sent already-assembled kits. On Jan. 21, the depot shipped 23,000 kits to Haiti, completing emptying out the depot's supply.

The Rev. Brian Diggs, director of UMCOR West, says that dollar-for-dollar, UMCOR can provide more kits with donated cash. But there are other advantages when volunteers assemble the kits themselves.

"It gives people a more tangible feel for mission work," he said. "And for local churches, it's an avenue to invite people to come from outside of the congregation to help."

"Making kits can be contagious, in a way that giving money might not," he added. "And it helps more people to know what's going on in our churches."

Local TV news programs featured health-kit assembly projects at United Methodist churches; many local newspapers carried stories explaining how readers could donate items or help as-

How to make a health kit:

UMCOR requests that the following NEW items be placed in a sealed, one-gallon plastic bag.



- 1 hand towel (15" x 25" up to 17" x 27"). No kitchen towels.
- 1 washcloth
- 1 comb (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized)
- 1 nail file or fingernail clippers (no emery boards or toenail clippers)

• 1 bath-size bar of soap (3 oz. and up)

• 1 toothbrush (single brushes only in original wrapper, no child-size brushes)

• 6 adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages

• \$1.00 to purchase toothpaste

(NOTE: Toothpaste is purchased in bulk to be added to health kits to ensure that the product does not expire before they are sent.)

The emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Strict rules govern product entry into international countries, so UMCOR requires that the kits contain only the requested items—nothing more.

Health kits should be shipped in boxes (not exceeding 66 lbs. per box) to one of UMCOR's two supply depots:

UMCOR Sager Brown Depot
P.O. Box 850, 131 Sager Brown Road
Baldwin, LA 70514-0850

UMCOR West Office and Depot
1479 South 700 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84104-1605

More instructions are available at <http://new.gbmg-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/supplies/health-kit/>.

semble kits at United Methodist churches in their communities.

"To feel that your hands are touching something that will help someone

in Haiti—that's the spiritual side of it," said Ms. Hinnen. "This is a very basic way that we can care for people."

Pitching in

The Rev. Bob Kaylor, pastor of Park City Community UMC in Park City, Utah, says his church of 350 members sent about 50 volunteers to UMCOR West to help assemble kits, including several families.

"We had a couple of families with 5-year-olds, and they helped too," he said. "It gives everybody an opportunity to pitch in and help."

Mr. Diggs issued an appeal to the Western Jurisdiction for at least 20,000 health kits to restock the inventory shipped out for Haiti. He says he's focusing on replenishing the health kits.

Even after the initial rescue and relief efforts have been carried out, the depot will likely have a continued demand for the health kits and layette kits.

"We send these out to the most vulnerable populations, who are in constant need of these kinds of supplies," Mr. Diggs said. "It won't be long before the next story hits the news, and people will forget about Haiti. But this is a situation that will go on for years."

[mjacob@umr.org](mailto:mjacobs@umr.org)



PHOTO BY JESSICA PATTON

Volunteers help assemble health kits at UMCOR West's supply depot in Salt Lake City. The Rev. Brian Diggs, director, says a steady stream of about 100 volunteers per day, for four days, assembled and packed thousands of kits.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAUL JEFFREY/ACT ALLIANCE

Under the watch of United Nations troops from Argentina, earthquake survivors in the quake-ravaged Haitian city of Leogane unload emergency supplies provided by Diakonie, a member of the ACT Alliance, and Caritas Internationalis, on January 20.



ABOVE: A survivor of the January 12 earthquake sits dejectedly in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Belair.

LEFT: A family in the Haitian village of Dabonne stands in front of the temporary shelter they built following the destruction of their home in the Jan. 12 earthquake. They used old lumber salvaged from the ruins of their previous house.

■ UMCOR

Continued from page 1B

Other United Methodist-supported organizations, including Church World Service, Action By Churches Together International (ACT) and Stop Hunger Now, also are responding with aid.

Paul Jeffrey, a United Methodist photojournalist and missionary on assignment with ACT, watched a Mexican rescue team free Anna Zizi from the home of the parish priest at Port-au-Prince's Roman Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption.

"The rescuers were crying afterwards," reported Mr. Jeffrey. It was a welcome opportunity to feel joy amid such devastation, he said.

ACT has deployed a "rapid support team" to Haiti, which will work with members with offices already in Haiti. UMCOR is a pending member of the new ACT Alliance.

Despite rescue efforts, few survivors were being pulled alive from the rubble a week after the earthquake struck.

The Reuters news organization reported that 75,000 bodies were buried in mass graves and that Haitian officials say the toll could be close to 200,000. An organization called Partners In Health said 20,000 people are dying daily "who could be saved by surgery," according to a Jan. 20 story in *The Wall Street Journal*.

Distributing water

UMCOR's partnership with GlobalMedic will focus on the distribution of clean drinking water, says the Rev. Tom Hazelwood, an UMCOR executive. It also will provide medical attention to earthquake survivors.

GlobalMedic is deploying paramedics, water technicians and a doctor to assist the sick or injured, UMCOR reported. A water distribution hub will provide 65,000 people daily with clean drinking water.

Working through local nongovernmental organizations and the United Nations network in Haiti, GlobalMedic also will distribute 110,000 sachets of PUR water purifiers, 5 million Aquatab water purification tablets and 110,000 oral rehydration sachets.

The supplies are being shipped into the Dominican Republic, and then transported by ground into Haiti, Mr. Hazelwood said.

One of the tasks for the UMCOR team in Haiti this week will be meeting with Gesner Paul, who leads the Methodist Church of Haiti, to assess how best to work with church members there.

Organizing volunteers

Mission volunteers from the United Methodist Church have been a strong presence in Haiti for years, so another priority is organizing for future volunteer teams.

"We know the [immediate] need is for medical volunteers," Mr. Hazelwood said. "We're looking at trying to centralize the volunteer process."

Bishop Joel Martinez, interim general secretary of the GBGM, is advising volunteer teams not to set out for Haiti immediately. "The time for volunteers will come, and their assistance will be crucial," he said.

Church World Service has sent in Don Tatlock, its Latin America and Caribbean program manager, to coordinate its efforts in Haiti.

Recovery has been slow, Mr. Tatlock reported. "People are still sleeping outside in makeshift tents on street sides, parks or any open area," he said. "In some neighborhoods, you see signs written on sheets asking for water and food."

Church World Service relief kits and blankets are being distributed in Port-au-Prince, and the agency's partners in Action by Churches Together are bringing in water and sanitation equipment.

Mr. Tatlock said a European psychosocial team supported by Church World Service also was arriving in Haiti to work with disaster survivors and first responders. "The situation is so horrifying that there is concern of post-traumatic stress syndrome for members of search and rescue teams," he said in a report on the agency's Web site.

Food aid flown in

A planeload of 80,000 pounds of water, medicine and medical supplies organized by Stop Hunger Now is being distributed in Haiti, says the Rev. Ray Buchanan, the United Methodist pastor who is the food aid group's founder and president.

People line up for the distribution of emergency supplies by Diakonie, a member of the ACT Alliance, and Caritas Internationalis, in the Haitian city of Leogane.



He also has talked to Mission of Hope, the partner group in Port-au-Prince that received most of those supplies, about a previous supply of pre-packaged meals. "They told us that since the earthquake, they've been feeding 50,000 a day using the meals we sent in December," Mr. Buchanan added.

Stop Hunger Now still has five containers of bottled water and three containers of more than a half-million meals ready to go to Haiti. "We're currently doing our very best trying to find military transport," he said. "We're working with the Army, Air Force and the Navy."

Meal donations have come from a variety of sources, including a Jan. 18 packaging event in Lynchburg, Va., organized by the Rev. Larry Davies, the United Methodist district superintendent there. The effort, which resulted in 210,000 meals, "really touches the heart of what Stop Hunger Now is trying to do," Mr. Buchanan said.

Volunteers also are needed in the United States to help assemble health kits and other relief supplies for Haiti

at UMCOR's two supply depots—Sager Brown in Baldwin, La., and UMCOR West in Salt Lake City—as well as other church-owned regional warehouses.

Those interested in volunteering at UMCOR West can contact director Brian Diggs at (801) 973-7250, or e-mail WestDepot@umcor.org. To volunteer at Sager Brown, call (800) 814-8765.

How to Help:

Gifts to support UMCOR's Haiti Relief efforts can be made to Haiti Emergency, UMCOR Advance #418325. Checks can be made to UMCOR with "Advance #418325 Haiti Emergency" in the memo line. Checks can be put in the church's offering plate or mailed to: UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY 10087. Online donations can be made at umcor.org. The entire amount of each gift will be used to help the people of Haiti.

Haiti needs medical specialist volunteers

Medical specialists are the first category of volunteers needed to assist earthquake survivors in Haiti.

Officials with UMCOR and other units of the General Board of Global Ministries said they would be working with the Methodist Church of Haiti and other organizations to provide medical and other services to Haiti.

"We have already received an outpouring of inquiries and offers for volunteers to provide a variety of services," wrote Bishop Joel Martinez, the GBGM's interim top executive, in a letter to bishops. "While we are encouraged by this spirit of support, we strongly advise that teams and others not set out for Haiti at this time."

Many other volunteers will be needed later as Haiti recovers from the Jan. 12 earthquake, which destroyed much of Port-au-Prince, resulted in an estimated 75,000 to 200,000 deaths and left upward of 2 million people homeless. Currently, however, the country's shattered infrastructure cannot support volunteer teams.

Dalton Rushing, director of communications in the office of United Methodist Volunteers in Mission for the denomination's Southeastern Jurisdiction, said transportation also remains a concern. "The main problem is that it's just about impossible right now for volunteers to get in and out of Haiti," he said.

Mr. Rushing said his office is flagging the names of people with medical skills on potential volunteer lists.

The New York Times reported a looming medical crisis in Haiti as the wounds of thousands of earthquake survivors remained untreated and the number of bodies left in the wreckage increased the risk of disease.

The GBGM advises that some medical specialists may want to respond to a call from the U.S. government for trauma surgeons, orthopedists, anesthesiologists and others with experience in treating crush injuries.

Those volunteers must be able to serve for at least two weeks, and be willing to live and work in spartan conditions. Preference will be given to physicians who are Creole or French speakers and to those credentialed through the Medical Reserve Corps in their home state or

the ESAR-VHP (Emergency Services Advanced Registration of Volunteer Health Personnel) program.

For information, contact Michala Koch at Michala.Koch@hhs.gov. For information on becoming part of the Medical Reserve Corps go to www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

United Methodist volunteer teams have been working in Haiti for decades and Mr. Rushing predicted that people with any number of skills—including experience in construction, education and pastoral care—would be welcome once the country is able to support those workers.

"This situation is so dire that we need everybody," he added.

Short-term volunteer experiences can last from one week to two months. A map outlining the regions covered by the denomination's U.S. jurisdictional volunteer coordinators can be found at umvim.info.

Contact information for the jurisdictional coordinators is: North Central, Lorna Jost, (605) 692-3390, umvim-ncj@brookings.net; Northeastern, Gregory Forrester, (607) 756-7799, umvimnej@twcny.rr.com; Southeastern, Paulette West, (404) 377-7424, sejinfo@umvim.org; South Central, Debbie Vest, (913) 568-8826, vimsjc@sbcglobal.net; and Western, Heather Wilson, (818) 333-6730, umvimwj@hotmail.com.

Placement for individual long-term volunteers, serving two months to two years, is possible as the recovery in Haiti progresses. More information is available at www.individualvolunteers.info.

"We will be working in Haiti for a long, long time," Mr. Rushing said. "The underlying problems of extreme poverty in Haiti have really increased the amount of work it's going to take to recover from this disaster."

—Linda Bloom, *United Methodist News Service*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PAUL JEFFREY/ACT ALLIANCE

United Nations troops from Argentina keep the crowd back from a distribution of emergency supplies by Diakonie, a member of the ACT Alliance, and Caritas Internationalis, in the Haitian city of Leogane.

Trading new patterns for old

BY ANDREW C. THOMPSON
UMR Columnist

Editor's note: This is the second in a multi-part series on the means of grace in Christian practice.

My last column began looking at our need to re-engage the means of grace. These are—in the apt phrase of Methodist scholar Lacey Warner—“disciplined practices of Christian formation.” And they help us to grow as mature disciples of Jesus Christ by drawing us to a place where God’s grace can transform us.



Andrew Thompson

The means of grace are crucial to the Church’s future for one important reason: Never before has the deck been so stacked against the possibility of our salvation.

Salvation is a Latin word, the root of which is *salus*. And *salus* means health or well-being. So salvation simply describes what it means to be healthy in an ultimate sense. As we are saved, we are healed of diseases both physical and spiritual so that we can be restored fully to the image of God in which humanity was originally created.

I am drawn to Wesleyan teaching partly because it refuses to concede that salvation only happens after our earthly deaths. Why did Jesus bother with the Resurrection, when he could have died on the Cross and ascended directly to heaven? It’s because he took on flesh not only to point the way to paradise but also to show us that salvation starts here and now.

John Wesley himself insisted that Methodists understand salvation in this sense. “It is not a blessing which lies on the other side [of] death,” Wesley wrote, “or (as we usually speak) in the other world.” Salvation is rather something that the Holy Spirit begins working in our lives at the present.

For Wesley, salvation extends “to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul till it is consummated in glory.”

When I say that the deck is stacked against us, I’m talking about the character of our society. Cultural messages tell us we’re just

fine and that we deserve to satisfy whatever appetites happen to seize us. The popular fast-food motto “Have it your way” could serve for our entire consumer culture: Food, sex, power, money and more junk than you can stuff in a mini-storage unit are all there for the taking.

The truth is that we do have real needs. They’re just not the ones you see advertised in most TV commercials. The real irony is that one of our greatest needs is the need to be freed from the gluttony and avarice that drive our insatiable consumerism.

Here’s where the means of grace become really important: As disciplined practices of Christian formation, the means of grace have the ability to replace the unhealthy patterns of our lives with healthier ones. And in the process, they can open us up to the kind of transformation that heals us of our sin and sets us on a new way of life.

The persistent tug of our surrounding culture is to keep our eyes cast toward the things of the world. But when we begin to adopt a pattern of life shaped by faithful practices of discipleship, we find that the incessant temptations of the world begin to lose their hold.

Thomas à Kempis wrote, “Habit already formed will resist you, but it shall be overcome by a better habit.” We can be assured of that statement’s truth because the better habits we’ll be adopting are nothing less than practices given to us by Jesus and that serve as channels of his grace.

In the next few columns, I’ll look at examples of the means of grace—and why each is important. But first, I wanted to show why they are so crucial for us today.

Wesley insisted that an outwardly changed life depends on an inward renewal of the soul. And he was equally insistent that such a change—salvation!—progresses according to our intentional use of the means of grace.

At one point, he summarized our faithful participation in the means of grace as an “exercise of the presence of God.” And he followed that with an assurance: “Never can you use these means but a blessing will ensue. And the more you use them, the more will you grow in grace.”

The Rev. Thompson maintains a blog at www.genxrising.com. e-mail: andrew@mandatum.org.

Connectional Table affirms plans for holistic 21st-century church

BY MARY BROOKE CASAD
Special Contributor

As the new year begins, I am excited to share with you how God is truly doing a new thing in the life of the United Methodist Church. Leaders across the church worldwide—lay people, clergy and bishops—are laying the groundwork for much-needed change in our denomination.

For years, we have heard grim reports about our membership decline, primarily in the U.S. and Europe, and our inability to do anything about it. Today, however, leaders across the United Methodist Church are awakening to a new sense of purpose and possibility, a new vision of collaboration and change, and most importantly, awakening to the need for bold and decisive action.

In the coming year, our leaders will be drafting the blueprints for the new architecture of the United Methodist Church.

Last November, members of the Connectional Table (CT) affirmed the Call to Action Steering Committee’s provocative proposal calling for a “holistic 21st century method for being and doing church around the world in radically new ways.” It stirred our collective imagination and garnered support from our leaders spanning the diversity that comprises our denomination.

The seven recommendations of the proposal include:

- developing metrics for effectiveness and accountability across the church;
- rebuilding a leadership development system with special attention to young people;
- eliminating the guaranteed appointment;
- recasting the quadrennial General Conference;
- reordering the life of the church;
- establishing a “global office” or central organizing center for coordination and efficiency; and
- constructing a viable financial future.



Mary Brooke Casad

The Call to Action Steering Committee was formed last spring in response to the global economic crisis and the need to build on the successes of aligning our mission and ministries across the church. As you may recall from General Conference 2008, United Methodists embraced our renewed mis-

sion to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We also affirmed the Four Areas of Focus as expressions of how we live out our faith as the body of Christ. In the four focus areas, we work to: combat diseases of poverty by improving health globally; engage in ministry with the poor; develop principled leaders; and create new places for new people and revitalize existing congregations. The Call to Action work seeks to make adjustments to our systems and structures so we can live our mission to its fullest.

‘These changes will support your call to bring the presence of Christ to those in need, in your own community and beyond.’

The Connectional Table and the Council of Bishops named 18 United Methodist leaders to serve on the steering committee. Their task was to discern steps the church must take to adapt to a rapidly changing world and to reverse the decline of the UMC in the U.S. and Europe. These seven recommendations are a result of their hard work.

What will this mean for our church? It will mean making our collective ministry more effective in living out God’s hope for humanity by engaging younger leaders, improving our ability to respond to the needs of a changing world and assessing and changing the ways in which our institution no longer serves us in our disciple-making mission.

Most importantly, these changes will create more doorways to discipleship for you and for those who have yet to walk through our doors, called by God to serve. These changes will support your call to bring the presence of Christ to those in need, in your own community and beyond.

The overall success of the Call to Action strategy will depend on collaboration with other groups established by the 2008 General Conference also considering significant changes in our connection. These groups include the Study Committee on the Worldwide Nature of the United Methodist Church, the Min-

istry Study Commission, and the Committee on Faith and Order.

These groups have already begun to engage in open dialogue to foster an unprecedented level of collaboration with an eye toward General Conference 2012. This will undoubtedly bear much fruit for the Kingdom of God.

The CT approved \$500,000 for the steering committee to continue the next phase of its work, which includes naming a new 12-person steering team, conducting listening sessions in annual conferences and performing an operational assessment of the entire denomination. Stay tuned to learn how our leaders take these recommendations in the next phase. To read the full report from the Call to Action Steering Committee, visit www.connectionaltable.umc.org.

In that same spirit, CT member Bishop John Schol led discussions at our November meeting about how to align local churches, annual conferences and general agencies in the Four Areas of Focus to strengthen the mission of the UMC. Aligning mission and ministry at all levels of the denomination is one of the CT’s ongoing conversations.

Our meetings serve as a time when the members can become a learning community around the Four Areas of Focus. Presentations from general agencies as well as local churches and ministries in the community where we meet help inform the conversation of how we help provide a network of Four Areas of Focus ministries across the denomination.

UM Communications has launched an online survey through January 2010 to gauge how local churches and annual conferences have embraced the Four Focus Areas for mission and ministry. To participate, visit www.umc.org/focusareas.

I also want to highlight an important appeal throughout the UMC. We heard from our bishops in the Philippines about the devastating effects of the recent typhoons that ravaged several communities, and approved a churchwide appeal proposed by the Council of Bishops to provide aid for people of the Philippines who suffered tragic losses.

To contribute to this relief effort, visit www.umcappeal.org. We look forward to being with our sisters and brothers in the Philippines in April for the spring Connectional Table meeting, as we strengthen our connection as a worldwide church.

Ms. Casad is the executive secretary for the Connectional Table of the United Methodist Church. Reprinted from her blog, abouttheconnection.blogspot.com.

WESLEYAN WISDOM

Definition of 'liberal' has drifted from its generous roots

BY DONALD W. HAYNES
UMR Columnist

Historian Christopher Strain was quoted recently in the *Palm Beach Post*: "We live in a wireless world and often a witless one as well. I feel like we've been caught in a mood of fear and apprehension, a post-9/11 fog that we haven't pulled out of yet—sociologically, culturally, politically and economically. [I would add "religiously."] The end of this decade may mark the close of the American Century if China does indeed become the world power

it's capable of becoming. And that's frightening."

And that fear extends to United Methodism as well. In *Methodist Connectionalism*, Russell Richey of Emory's Candler School of Theology offers historical perspective and opens with these sobering lines:

"United Methodism in the United States—indeed mainstream Protestantism—remains in trouble. The signs abound. They appear at General Conference, they bedevil annual conferences; they polarize faculties; they sometimes traumatize congregations. Caucuses vie for attention, place and priority. They divide us by agenda. Meetings fracture. We unite, not as a whole, but into warring parties, sometimes by region, and often under the

general banners of liberal and evangelical. Here we huddle by caucus or commitment, our identity established by differentiation, prepared for trench warfare between the two major camps. . . . Gatherings become tense, contentious, even mean-spirited affairs. Fewer and fewer follow . . . malaise reigns."

Russ Richey is a very mild-mannered man! If he said it is bad, it must be bad indeed!

Are these prophetic voices or has a spirit of fear simply been turned loose in the halls of academia and the United Methodist connection gatherings? Has the polemic of the political arena usurped the catholic spirit of Wesley's conneXion? Are we preachers of the gospel or cultural chameleons?

An old septuagenarian does not like to hear voices of doom so near his own denouement! At least to me, it is helpful to recall my own journey from a time in my own faith life when I was "contentious, tense, even mean-spirited . . . prepared for trench warfare." I propose that we need today what I discovered as a seminary student: what it means to be truly liberal!

By the time I was a teenager, "modernism" was an early 20th-century caricature of "liberalism." I was warned not to attend a "modernist" college or I would lose my faith. I went, and sure enough, I met a professor straight out of Boston School of Theology, perhaps the most theologically liberal faculty among the Methodist seminaries.

I was prepared for warfare and I unsheathed my fundamentalist sword. My sophomore mastery of biblical literal-

ism, Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and sanctification as an instant work of grace were my "talking points." I embarrassed my friends and disgusted my critics as I stormed against any hint of biblical higher criticism through all my undergraduate years. I was a self-appointed defender of the faith.

Then came seminary. A professor who had grown up in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church asked me to be his reader for his post-exilic prophet course and testified that his embrace of biblical criticism was as much a dramatic work of the Holy Spirit as his conversion. When I met with this professor, William H. Brownlee, I felt I was having a session with Jesus.

Then right in the middle of seminary, I heard Dr. E. Stanley Jones, and saw him lift up his tattered Bible and say, "The Word did not become printer's ink; the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." I had to re-read the entire New Testament with a red pencil in hand!

Dr. McMurry Richey, full of grace, introduced me to the Jesus I never knew as a fundamentalist. From them I learned what it meant to be "liberal." But somewhere since 1952, the word "liberal" has morphed into something far different from the spirit of its roots.

A layman, Harold Warstler, became my midlife mentor. Harold was a product of River Brethren pacifism. He and I came to Jesus from diametrically opposite positions of faith and works.

Some of his beliefs I found intellectually shocking, but the kindness in his face, his quiet humor, his self-effacing manner and the unselfishness in his

mission among the poor were all factors in his becoming a major influence in my faith journey. Harold personified the cross; I saw Jesus in Harold.

The Saturday night after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, I received a telegram from the governor. As pastor of a county seat "First Church," I was being asked to appeal for reconciliation and dialogue.

My sermon that Palm Sunday morning was, "If Jesus Came to Our Town." I imagined meeting him at the edge of our mountain village, walking him past our school, our hall of justice, our "Church Street." Then I asked the ushers to open the door so Jesus could walk down the aisle of First Methodist Church of Franklin, N.C. Now we all sensed his presence in our town, in our church, in our pulpit.

I was humiliated and humbled as I asked my congregation on that scary day in 1968: "Jesus is now standing beside me. What do you think he would have me say?" In context, Jesus placed grace over law, the person over prejudice, compassion over regulation, humanity over ethnicity, need over custom.

Doctrinally, I never became a "radical liberal." I suppose my best label would be "evangelical liberal." Whatever the label, becoming more "liberal" meant becoming more gracious, more tolerant, more gentle in argument, more "freed-up" from some old taboos of my holiness code days and more brave in calling our culture into the crosshairs of our Christian message. With a great debt owed those who liberated me from fundamentalism and doctrinal straitjacketing, I was able to let God go free of my confined doctrinal boxes.

In short, liberals were liberal, gentle and kind. The lines of Edwin Markham's poem "Outwitted" described my changed theology and attitude toward people with whom I disagreed:

*"He drew a circle that shut me out,
heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.*

*But Love and I had a wit to win; we
drew a circle and took him in."*

At about that same time, I began actually reading John Wesley's sermons rather than simply repeating the most common of his quotes. I internalized his "Catholic Spirit" sermon and redlined the words, "If thy heart is as mine, give me thy hand," trying to seek its meaning in my parish ministry and in conference leadership. This became the quintessential meaning of the word "liberal" to me.

Since seminary, when I was embracing a liberalism of catholic spirit,

I have seen both political and theological liberalism hurling absolutist postures that stereotype terms of ridicule, castigation and mockery. Is that historic liberalism? Have we soiled the word? Where is Edwin Markham when we need him?

God is not through with Methodism. We are not predestined to go from movement, to machine, to monument. Every pastor, every local church, every connectional meeting could put our impediments on the table. The term "connecting table" is appropriate—if we can live out the language. At every level—individually and structurally—we must be willing to be laid aside or be used. We can seek a new spirit and a new language.

Long ago I found true liberalism to be a Christ-like spirit that reflects Paul's litany in Philippians 4: whatever is honorable, pleasing, commendable, reflective of excellence, worthy of praise. The old mentor continued, "Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in [Jesus] and the God of peace will be with you."

Sociologist B.J. Gallagher reminds us that in Chinese, the word "crisis" has two meanings: "danger" and "opportunity." The Florida newspaper editor followed that quote with these words: "So America stands, near the beginning of a new century, at the dawn of a decade, moving forward more tentatively than in the past, less sure our ourselves than in the past, knowing only that, as always, fortune favors the brave—but never the foolish."

I would substitute the United Methodist Church for "America," and cite Proverbs 1:7—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Perhaps the Chinese are correct; crisis brings danger and opportunity. In his "A Jesus Manifesto for the 21st Century Church," Leonard Sweet writes, "Christians have made the Gospel about so many things . . . things other than Christ. Jesus Christ is the gravitational pull that brings everything together. . . . Without him all things lose their value."

Let us say with the charwoman who looked at the painting of Aldersgate, "Do it again, Lord, do it again." At every strategic point in history, God's will is clear: "thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

Dr. Haynes is an instructor in United Methodist studies at Hood Theological Seminary. e-mail: dhaynes11@triad.rr.com.

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Shelter from the cold

Churches find ways to help others stay warm

BY MARY JACOBS
Staff Writer

For a kid, a day off from school due to snowy weather is an unexpected treat. A “snow day” can be a nightmare, though, for working parents who can’t afford to miss a day on the job.

Sara Ryan saw that as an opportunity for ministry. A middle school teacher and member of First United Methodist Church in South Charleston, W. Va., she doesn’t have to go to work when school is cancelled, so she decided to help parents who do. She spearheaded a “Snow Day” program at the church. Now, any day that schools in Kanawha County are closed, parents in the community can drop off children for a day of fun activities.

“It’s a way to let the community know that somebody cares for them,” said Ms. Ryan, who is also director of Christian education at the church.

The South Charleston church’s program was one of many examples of ways that United Methodist congregations went into action during the early January cold snap. When an arctic blast sent temperatures plummeting, churches responded with open doors and warm spaces.

When temperatures were forecasted to dip below zero, the Rev. Jim Bryant, pastor of Missouri UMC in Columbia, Mo., sent an e-mail out to

church members asking for volunteers to help set up a temporary warming shelter at the church. He got 100 answers.

“I just sat here in my office looking at my computer with tears in my eyes,” he said. With cots and blankets provided by the Red Cross, the church was able to open for five nights, serving as overflow space; the city’s four shelters were already overflowing.

Similarly, St. Andrews UMC in Orangeburg, S.C., served as a “warming station,” as did Moody UMC near Birmingham, Ala.

“We show our love by our actions more so than our words,” said church member Bob Hill, who helped coordinate the effort. “If we can’t live it, it’s kind of hard to preach it.”

When the weather hit a 25-year record low recently in New Orleans, city officials opened extra shelters and asked local churches for help. The Rev. Martha Orphe, director of multicultural ministries in the Louisiana Conference, helped coordinate United Methodist volunteers.

The first night of the cold snap, she said, “the shelters were so full that people had to sleep sitting up.” Churches of several denominations teamed up with the Salvation Army and the Red Cross to get additional space up and running quickly.

“This was such a collaborative effort—it was beautiful to see,” said Dr. Orphe.

When the weather turns cold,



PHOTOS BY KENNY KEMP/THE CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Gena Ryan, director of music at First UMC in South Charleston, W. Va., kept snowbound kids occupied as the church hosted its “Snow Day” ministry when local schools closed.

many homeless shelters can’t meet the extra demand. To fill the gap, some churches, like Lexington Park UMC in Lexington Park, Md., help provide extra space for the homeless during the winter months.

The Rev. Ken Walker, lead pastor of the church, coordinates an ecumenical program with 15 area churches (including four other United Methodist churches) that sign up to provide facilities or food and volunteers.

The need for shelters in the winter is more urgent than some might guess, Mr. Walker said.

“In southern Maryland, the weather’s typically not that bad, but I was talking to a homeless gentleman today who may lose his foot due to hypothermia because he was outside.”

In South Charleston, W. Va., four “snow days” have been declared already this school year. As word of First UMC’s program has gradually gotten out, 19 kids turned up for the most recent day.

Local businesses donated pizzas and donuts. Other members of the church, including a few fellow teachers, turned up to supervise and hand out snacks.

A local TV station featured a positive story on the “Snow Day” ministry,



Sara Ryan, a middle school teacher and member of First UMC of South Charleston, W. Va., hands out cupcakes to children who attended the “Snow Day” ministry at the church.

but Ms. Ryan says the best reviews came from harried parents who had nowhere else to turn. A single mom with no other childcare options feared losing her job if she missed any more work. She told Ms. Ryan that “a load had been lifted,” thanks to the program.

“Kids rarely get an opportunity to just be kids,” said Ms. Ryan. “We had games and activities ready, but we really didn’t need them. The kids mostly just played and hung out.”

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PHOTO BY ERIN C. SCHWARTZ/THE COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Missouri United Methodist Church in Columbia, Mo., set up cots and blankets provided by the Red Cross. The church served as an emergency shelter to help offset the crowding in the city’s homeless shelters during a recent period of bitter cold weather.