



wisconsin conference  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# REFLECTIONS

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## Looking Toward a Great Future

By Bishop Linda Lee

I have found that when I look to the future, the past reasserts aspects of itself. Some elements of the past are welcome and helpful, and help us keep moving forward. Other aspects of the past are obstacles to clear insights. As a result, looking and moving forward becomes a great challenge.

It's interesting to see what people spent time reading on the Internet last year. I believe it's one pulse of what the world sees as important. I looked up the top ten Yahoo searches for 2011. Osama Bin Laden was #10, the earthquake in Japan was #9, and what was #1? The new iPhone!!! The Church was not even on the list.

### What did United Methodists feel was important in 2011?

I wonder how many of the trillions of searchers were United Methodists in Wisconsin. And what were the things that most captured our attention in the world and the Church? We certainly had major political and social concerns expressed around the state budget, and we continue to be impacted by global economic shifts.

Our own denomination continues to look toward changes that we pray will empower us to be a new movement in the 21st century—a new movement that will go into the world as the hands and feet and voices of Jesus Christ in ways that are relevant and transformative.

Although many congregations are trying to come to grips with the convergence of the “crisis of relevance” identified in the Connectional Table assessment, the aging of most of the congregants, spiritual anorexia and the economy, there were also many new, creative ministries for which we thank God.

As I discern my own major life transition into retirement,



Bishop  
Linda Lee



remnants of my past begin to flash before my eyes—bringing joy and grief, pain and celebration, relief and hope.

### It's time to learn from the past; imagine new possibilities

For the Wisconsin Conference UMC, it is a good time to learn from the past; to keep what we value and to let go of that which no longer serves our mission to be and make disciples who are transformed. It is also a good time to look to the future and to imagine new possibilities and create new realities. Looking to the future opens uncharted horizons.

Yet, the future is born in the present. Dwelling in the past OR in the future robs us of the gift of the present. A very wise person once said, “You can't move forward while looking backward.”

### Take what's of value into the future

So I invite us in the Wisconsin Conference to take the time to reflect enough on the past to take the things we value with us into the future; things like our trust and faith in God; things like our commitment to world missions and paying our apportionments 100%;



Wisconsin Apportionment Giving Helps Support the Future of Many Important Ministries, East Angola Mission Partnership, left, and Northcott Neighborhood House, above.

things like our support of ministries such as Northcott Neighborhood House, United Methodist Children's Services, Harbor House, East Angola and our own Native American ministries.

I invite us to look toward the future and imagine how we might create new ministries for those who are incarcerated and their families, the homeless, especially children, and anyone victimized by violence. We have something to offer in addition to our food pantries and child care programs and other ministries to the poor and the sick. We are witnesses to hope. We hope that in spite of hurricanes and floods, tsunamis and earthquakes, fires and storms, we can continue to move into the future with confidence because we know that God is with us.

So I look forward to 2012—even as I focus in on those challenges that are before me and before us now. I have great hope for our Conference, our denomination and our world. I expect great things from us and from God! So glean what you need from the past, look toward the future, but most importantly continue in your present and ongoing faithful service and witness for Jesus Christ. The world needs you.



General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegates from Wisconsin

### Get Regular Updates from the General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegation Blog

Get the inside scoop about the General and Jurisdictional Conferences on the Wisconsin delegation's blog at [wjc2012.wordpress.com](http://wjc2012.wordpress.com). The delegates—who were elected by the lay and clergy members at the June 2011 Annual Conference in the Wisconsin Dells—launched the blog in hopes that it would be a tool for delegates to provide information and share their experiences with other members of the Wisconsin Conference. The blog will be updated regularly with information about the conferences, logistics and processes, and the delegation, as well as personal perspectives from those attending the conferences. For more information, contact administrator Carrie Kreps Wegenast at [revcarriekw@yahoo.com](mailto:revcarriekw@yahoo.com).

Keep Informed and Stay Connected!



In addition to *Reflections*, our print publication, we also publish a weekly *Enews* email newsletter which contains timely information about important UMC events, tips and resources, and more. The Bishop creates her monthly *Soul Food* blog, which is available online in print and as a video. Visit [www.youtube.com/wisconsinumc](http://www.youtube.com/wisconsinumc) to view other videos from the Wisconsin Conference and the United Methodist Church. Be sure to read and post comments on our Facebook page at



[www.facebook.com/wisconsinumc](http://www.facebook.com/wisconsinumc). Additionally, visit our website at [www.wisconsinumc.org](http://www.wisconsinumc.org) for information, tools, and links to all of our communications vehicles. You can sign up to receive *Enews* or share your story or event, by emailing [mvirnig@wisconsinumc.org](mailto:mvirnig@wisconsinumc.org).

# RESOURCES

THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER

January 27, 2012

## GOOD WORKS

### DVD takes biblical look at immigration

The United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas presents the DVD, *Gospel Without Borders*, which shows the experiences of documented and undocumented immigrants and examines what the Bible says about the treatment of the "stranger." Individual copies are available on the Christian site [EthicsDaily.com](http://EthicsDaily.com), which produced the documentary.

### Iowa church starts free music classes

On Jan. 15 St. Paul United Methodist Church in La Porte City, Iowa, launched a 12-week Sunday morning class to bolster music literacy. The class is free to participants and covers everything from chords, scales and intervals to church music history. The idea came to St. Paul's music director, Gabe Schott, because some would-be songbirds were reluctant to join the choir due to a lack of musical understanding, while others who were already lending their voices wanted to learn more. The church's pastor, the Rev. Mike Gudka, told the *Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier* "music has just blossomed" there since Mr. Schott—a sophomore studying music education at the University of Northern Iowa—took the job in 2010. Mr. Gudka said he's also seen a renewed energy for worship, more participation from members and new families coming to church.

### Deadline nears for mission application

Young adults between the ages of 20 and 30 interested in linking their faith to justice work are invited to apply to the US-2 and mission intern programs of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries. US-2s serve in the United States for two years. Mission interns serve for three years, about half of the time abroad and half of the time in their home country. Applications are due Feb. 5, with training and placement to begin in the summer of 2012. Visit [www.gb-gm-umc.org](http://www.gb-gm-umc.org).

## Minnesotans add \$2 million to malaria fight

BY VICTORIA REBECK  
*United Methodist News Service*

MINNEAPOLIS—Minnesota United Methodists have raised \$2,328,833 in pledges and gifts for Imagine No Malaria, the United Methodist Church's campaign to eliminate malaria deaths in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015.

That total, the highest amount raised by a United Methodist annual conference to date, is "a vivid demonstration of the vitality of our participating churches," said Minnesota Bishop Sally Dyck. "They have vision for the realm of God and compassion for people outside of their immediate community. Their creativity in raising awareness and giving generously is inspiring."

Malaria, a preventable disease spread by mosquitoes, no longer occurs in developed nations such as the United States. The church's Imagine No Malaria campaign has stated that deaths from malaria can be prevented even in sub-Saharan Africa, where it is estimated that a child dies every 45 seconds from the disease.

Imagine No Malaria, in partnership with the United Nations Foundation and working alongside organizations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization and others, already has diminished the death toll through medical aid, preventive measures, education, and communication. United Methodists around the world are working to raise \$75 million for the mission. The commitment from the Minnesota Conference now puts the amount raised at more than \$19 million.

Minnesota United Methodists had raised \$1.2 million in pledges by Nov. 30, 2011, and earned an additional \$600,000 from an anonymous donor—reaching the conference's total pledge goal of \$1.8 million. They then exceeded that goal by another half million dollars.

Minnesota—with 355 apportioned churches, not the largest conference in the United Methodist Church—is the only conference to exceed \$1.5 million in pledges and gifts to Imagine No Malaria and the only one to reach its goal before the end of the pledge period (seven months early). Additional pledges are expected.

"Young people have been particularly drawn to this ministry," Bishop Dyck said. "They are interested in



MINNESOTA CONFERENCE PHOTO BY SUSAN MULLIN

Faith United Methodist Church in St. Anthony, Minn., made a piñata mosquito for an Imagine No Malaria fundraiser.

church when church is saving lives."

What is now apparent is that "a sustained effort" can make a difference, said the Rev. Larry Hollon, top executive of United Methodist Communications, which handles the Imagine No Malaria campaign.

### Malaria deaths drop

Because of better prevention and control measures, malaria mortality rates have fallen by more than 25 percent globally since 2000 and by 33 percent in Africa, according to the World Malaria Report 2011 issued in December by the World Health Organization. However, a projected shortfall in funding threatens those fragile gains, the organization said.

The people of the United Methodist Church are stepping up "at a critical time," Mr. Hollon said. "As major-country donors are not increasing their pledges and, in some cases, reducing their contributions to the global effort to end malaria, the people of the Minnesota Annual Conference are giving a strong and encouraging message that the church can make a substantial difference in the fight against malaria."

Through their donation to Imagine No Malaria, Minnesota United Methodists "are making a strong wit-

ness to the world that it's critical for people of faith to tackle the diseases of poverty by backing up our words of concern with meaningful action," Mr. Hollon added.

The Minnesota bishop "is our strongest advocate as a whole," said Leia Williams, the Imagine No Malaria field coordinator in Minnesota. "She's a strong advocate for people in Africa, who don't have a voice in the United States, and she advocates for revitalization in local congregations through participation in global missions."

"Bishop Dyck made sure churches got the resources and training they need. She set aside a significant amount of time for me to address [the] annual conference session. She motivated the cabinet to engage local congregations. She personally solicited and obtained major gifts, including a matching gift to encourage congregational participation."

Ms. Williams also pointed to pastoral leadership. "In this bad economy, pastors still embrace that God is a God of abundance," she said.

### Best practices

Bishop Dyck said the secrets of Minnesota's success are the following best practices:

- Having a full-time field

coordinator;

- Promoting lay participation from many churches of all sizes in training events, which ensured that more churches made significant pledges;

- Asking district superintendents to commit themselves to the mission.

Twenty-one percent of Minnesota United Methodist congregations set a pledge goal of saving at least 10 lives per average worship attendee, raising more than \$1.1 million in pledges. The conference successfully exceeded its goal even with fewer than 30 percent of churches pledging at this level. Eighty-three other Minnesota United Methodist churches also set goals, collectively raising \$300,000 in pledges.

The total number of churches participating is 201. Sixty-eight percent of churches sent representation to training, exceeding all other conference training-participation levels.

"This has been a great example of combining large-gift cultivation and congregational participation," Bishop Dyck said. "Participating churches are showing their neighbors that they are relevant and compassionate."

The Rev. Rebeck is director of communication for the Minnesota Conference.

## BOOK REVIEW

# Book offers inviting intro to founders of Methodism

BY SAM HODGES  
Managing Editor

## John & Charles Wesley: Selections from their Writings and Hymns

Paul Wesley Chilcote, editor & annotator  
*Skylight Illuminations*, 2011  
Paperback, 263 pages

I was an easily distracted college student with little aptitude for abstract thinking. But I liked to hang out with philosophy majors, and under their questionable influence I signed up for a course in the works of Søren Kierkegaard.

I read the reading list, and that was about it. Every time I picked up one of the texts the print seemed smaller, which was never the case with *Rolling Stone* or *Sports Illustrated*.

Somehow I passed the course, but with my world view undisturbed. I did, however, pick up from the lectures and class discussion that “guilt” was a big deal for Kierkegaard. And I felt guilty for not having given his books a fighting chance.

Many years later I would come upon an anthology of Kierkegaard’s works called *Provocations*. I say “anthology,” but really it’s a collection of extended quotations, organized under themes.

I began warily, then eagerly, to read it. This philosophy-by-dollop approach—no section more than a page or two—worked well for me. I romped through it, underlining, even making the occasional excited margin note.

All this is by way of saying that some of us need help in making an assault on the heavy thinkers. We can do it, but we need a foot stool.

Such is now available for John and Charles Wesley, the brothers who founded Methodism. The book is called *John & Charles Wesley: Selections from their Writings and Hymns*, and the editor and annotator is Paul Wesley Chilcote.

### Arranged by themes

Dr. Chilcote is professor of historical theology and Wesleyan studies and director of the Center for Applied Wes-

leyan Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary. His previous books include *Recapturing the Wesleys’ Visions: An Introduction to the Faith of John and Charles Wesley*.

For the introduction of the new book, Dr. Chilcote offers a biographical sketch of the Wesleys, as well as a synopsis of their astonishingly busy lives as writers.

Charles Wesley composed some 9,000 hymns and sacred poems. He also wrote sermons, and kept a journal. The definitive edition of John Wesley’s writings is, Dr. Chilcote reports, a 31-volume project still in production, encompassing sermons, commentaries, hymns, journals, letters and more.

Who would not be intimidated at the prospect of getting lost in such a wood? But Dr. Chilcote has been of great help, finding short, salient passages of John Wesley’s prose, choosing equally telling passages of Charles Wesley’s verse, and arranging them under such themes as “The Triune God of Grace and Love,” “The Way of Salvation,” “A Community of Grace” and “A Compassionate Mission.”

### Enhanced by notes

In this book, right-hand pages are reserved for the Wesleys’ words. On the left are Dr. Chilcote’s annotations. They are concise, but far-ranging, offering theological insight, a close reading of images and metaphors, and the occasional historical and biographical detail, in the interest of context.

For example, he quotes a Charles Wesley hymn text that begins: “Life and death are in thine hand / In thine hand our child we see / Waiting thy benign command / Less beloved by us than thee.”

On the opposite page, Dr. Chilcote explains: “Smallpox devastated families and communities in the eighteenth century. In this hymn, ‘For a Child in the Small-Pox,’ Charles pours out his heart to God in prayer on behalf of his son. . . . Like most families of that time, he and Sally grieved the loss of chil-

dren to death, and this experience in life deepened Charles’ capacity for compassion. The child of whom he sings here, a musical prodigy by all accounts, did not survive this ordeal.”

Charles Wesley is not the other brother in this volume. If anything, he seems to be quoted more often than John. Dr. Chilcote is passionately committed to pointing out both the theology and poetic devices embedded in Charles’ verse.

But John Wesley is hardly neglected, and the comprehensiveness of his influence on Methodism gets a good under-

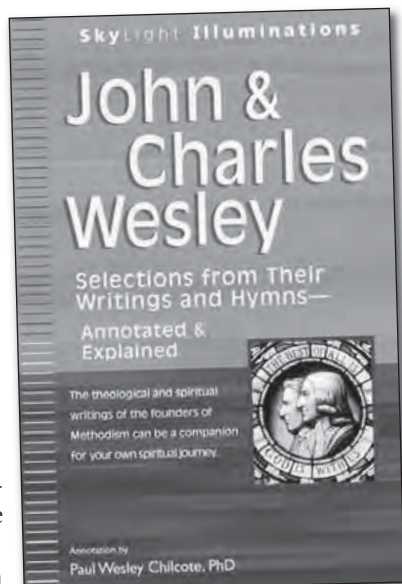
scoring here. That he had a gospel-directed heart for the poor comes through in a letter he wrote to a wealthy young woman who found charitable ministry difficult.

Wesley wrote her: “The lengthening of your life and the restoring of your health are invaluable blessings. But do you ask how you shall improve them to the glory of the Giver? And are you willing to know? Then I will tell you how: Go and see the poor and sick in their own poor little hovels. Take up your cross woman. Remember the faith! Jesus went before you and will go with you. Put off the gentlewoman. You bear a higher character.”

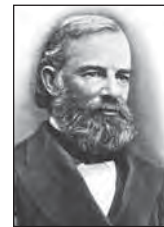
Dr. Chilcote is a good guide in this book. He writes well. He also cross-references the Wesleys with other Christian thinkers—Paul, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer—but never in a show-offy way: only to shed more light on his subjects’ faith.

Some might say that *John & Charles Wesley* constitutes a heavy sprinkling as opposed to a full-immersion in the brothers’ thought and expression. But I’m confident that any individual or small group who undertakes studying this book will emerge more deeply Wesleyan. And some will go on to wander themselves, happily, in the Wesleys’ vast wood.

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Paul Chilcote



Samuel Longfellow

## HISTORY OF HYMNS

# Hymn envisions peace at night, rising of hope

BY C. MICHAEL HAWN  
UMR Columnist

The tradition of an evening or vesper hymn is much less prominent than it used to be. Regrettably, many people no longer participate in a brief service that commends us to God’s care as we prepare to retire for the night. Because much of our worship takes place in the morning, references from night to light are much more common in our congregational song.

The evening hymn tradition may be traced to the ancient Greek hymn “Phos Hilaron,” referenced by St. Basil who spoke of it late in the fourth century as an old and anonymous hymn. This lamp-lighting hymn focused on the transition from day to night as candles or lamps were lit.

In stanza one, the night brings “peace profound” and petitions that our singing should “be blending with holy calm around.”

In stanza two, the sun is replaced by the “stars of heaven,” “telling still the ancient story [of] their Creator’s changeless love.” Humans take comfort in the predictability of the seasons and the cycle of day to night and night to day—changeless attributes of creation.

In stanza three we leave all of our “wants and burdens . . . to God’s care.” Through “God’s . . . care for all,” we “cease [our] fearing, cease [our] grieving. . . .”

In the final stanza, the “eternal stars arise,” evidence that “hope and faith and love rise glorious. . . .” The analogy between the rising stars at night and the rising of “hope and faith and love”

is further reflected through the “shining in the Spirit’s skies.”

The connections between the peace afforded in the night and the laying down of our burdens on the one hand, and the rising stars and the rising of hope, faith and love on the other, are beautiful images of the Romantic era that bind the natural order of creation with the needs and ideals of humanity.

Samuel Longfellow (1819-1892) was the brother of the famous American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He received his B.A. from Harvard University (1839) and his bachelor of

## “Now, on Land and Sea Descending”

Samuel Longfellow  
UM Hymnal, No. 685

*Now, on land and sea descending,  
brings the night its peace profound;  
let our vesper hymn be blending  
with the holy calm around.  
Jubilate! Jubilate! Jubilate! Amen!*

*Soon as dies the sunset glory,  
stars of heaven shine out above,  
telling still the ancient story,  
their Creator’s changeless love.  
Jubilate! Jubilate! Jubilate! Amen!*

divinity from Harvard Divinity School (1846). He served Unitarian congregations in Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania.

Longfellow was also active in hymnological circles, editing with Harvard classmate Samuel Johnson *A Book of Hymns for Public and Private Devotions* (1846) and *Hymns of the Spirit* (1864). He also compiled *Vespers* (1859) and *A Book of Hymns and Tunes* (1860), as well as a biography of his more famous sibling.

Longfellow’s hymns were influenced by the Transcendental philosophy that he encountered at Harvard Divinity School. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) introduced the term “transcendental” into philosophical discourse. Truth resides in an experience that goes beyond a physical and empirical understanding of objects and events, and is realized in the intuition of a person rather than the doctrines of organized religion.

Hymnologist Albert E. Bailey notes that as Longfellow “grew older he became less and less a sectarian, refused to be called a Unitarian, and finally adopted a position that he called theistic but which we should call more exactly Transcendental—that is, eliminating from his teaching all strictly Christian concepts.”

As one would expect from a Unitarian perspective, our hymn lacks Christological images. It appeared in 1859 and was included in the poet’s *Vespers*. It does not reflect the poet’s later Transcendental philosophy with its frequent references to God and, in the last line of the final stanza, to the “Spirit’s skies.”

Dr. Hawn is professor of sacred music at Perkins School of Theology, SMU.



**LEFT: Mission Celebration speakers and guests, left to right, Karen Ujereh, Nkemba Ndjungu, Thomas Kemper, Bishop Linda Lee, Mbwizu Ndjungu, Anna Ingles, and Deborah Thompson. RIGHT: Wisconsin Ministries and Missions on display**



## Statewide Mission Celebration Demonstrates Wisconsin's Spirit of Love and Connection

In his mission celebration greeting, Jorge Mayorga Solis, District Superintendent for the Metros regions, told a story about how he came to be a part of the United Methodist Church. "When I came from El Salvador in 1981, and learned how engaged the United Methodist Church is in ministries around the world, I fell in love with the Church," he said.

That spirit of love and connection was present throughout the statewide celebration of outreach ministries and agencies of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church. The celebration took place October 23rd–26th in four locations—Eau Claire Chapel Heights United Methodist Church (UMC), Appleton St. James UMC, Elm Grove Community UMC, and Madison Asbury UMC—so that people in different areas of the state could attend. More than 350 people participated.

Thomas Kemper, the General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries, was the keynote speaker at all four events. As General Secretary, Kemper serves as the chief mission executive of the United Methodist Church, which has a presence in more than 125 countries. He has an extensive background in mission work, including serving as Director of the General Board of Global Ministries, Secretary of the Board of Mission and International Church Cooperation for the United Methodist German Central Conference,

and Missionary in Residence for the German Board of Mission.

Kemper spoke about the theme of being "in mission with"—in mission with God, in mission with each other, and in mission with those we serve. He spoke about how God is leading the Church in mission, urging those present to "get God off of the sidelines. It is because of God that great things can happen," he said. He also emphasized the need for companionship, relationships, and a sense of ownership among the people of the Church. "Mission used to be seen as something coming from far away and dependent on money coming in. Now we are trying to learn that mission is from everywhere to everywhere and that it has to be owned by everybody; they are the ministry, and we are all the ministry, and we are all part of the cloth." He drew from an example from an African missionary who said he considered it a privilege to be able to send a message of belonging to the black people of Africa through his mission work. "[They thought], 'this is also our Church; not only the Church of the white people. It is our Church.'" In closing, Kemper spoke of mission as a way to give ourselves to those we serve wholeheartedly. "Mission is not primarily about money (and please pay your Apportionments)," he joked. "It is about giving of ourselves. . . only when we bring ourselves into it can we minister and be in mission with God."

Representatives from the ministries and agencies of the Wisconsin Conference UMC were present at the celebration, including those from the Disaster Response Team, East Angola Partnership, Health and Welfare Ministries, HIV/AIDS Task Force, Imagine No Malaria and other mission opportunities, Immigration Task Force, International Volunteers in Mission, National Volunteers in Mission, and Native American Partnership. They provided displays, flyers, and other resources to educate attendees about the mission work that they do. Special guests included missionaries from Cameroon, a Missionary in Residence from the North Central Jurisdiction Conference, and a representative from the East Angola Conference. Members of the Wisconsin Conference UMC staff were also present. Several churches, ministries, and agencies provided ethnic foods and desserts as part of the celebration, and there was time for both education and fellowship.

The love that Mayorga Solis felt when he first found the United Methodist Church in 1981 is shared by the many hardworking people who serve in the Wisconsin Conference UMC's outreach ministries and agencies. As the Conference lives out this year's theme "Love Unconditionally," our membership continues to show that love and connection to God, to each other, and to those they serve.

## Renew Your Walk with God at Camp

Camp—the word itself presents an image in one's mind. For some, it is a place of reflection, a time of renewal and a time to focus on faith and Christ. For others, it is the place where friends are made and life changes happen—people strengthen or renew their walk with God.

Whether you are looking for that life-changing experience or just some time away to be renewed, Pine Lake and Lake Lucerne Camps in Wisconsin can offer you the setting and the place that is just right for you all year round. Did you know that you can arrange anything from a family get-away to your local church retreat at either site? Or, perhaps you know of a youth who would grow at a summer camp. A summer camper said last summer, "My relationship with God is way stronger at camp," and many adults would agree. We invite you to come experience it for yourself.

Have you been away for a while, maybe you haven't heard the latest news? Ground is broken and the foundation is in for a New Youth Lodge at Lake Lucerne. Soon, Pine Lake will also be making improvements to the Dining Hall. Our goal is to make our camps "your open door to experience the wonder of God's creation and love in exceptional settings." We offer year round opportunities, so be sure to contact us to register your event in one of these new or renewed spaces. You can find out more at [www.UMCamps.org](http://www.UMCamps.org).

Watch for more camp materials like the church bulletin insert included in this issue of *Reflections*. Camp promotion packets were mailed to churches in early January. Please feel free to contact the Camp Office at [camping@wisconsinumc.org](mailto:camping@wisconsinumc.org) to request more catalogs, posters, or bulletin inserts for your church or yourself.



**Camper gets inspired.**



**Camping counselors have fun, too.**

# UMC Refugee Resettlement House Provides a Safe Harbor for Refugees in Milwaukee

Throughout history, church sanctuaries have served as places of respite for anyone fleeing persecution. The word “sanctuary” has come to mean a protected and safe environment free from politics, violence, or discrimination. It is understood that when a person enters a sanctuary, they are in a safe space.

However, for some refugees who seek sanctuary in Milwaukee, Wis., their “safe space” actually poses many dangers. After an arduous process of living in refugee camps, traveling miles away from their home country of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), and fleeing an oppressive government, several Karen refugees are placed in apartments that are infested with cockroaches, have extremely poor air quality, and lack properly working appliances. The living conditions have caused people to be hospitalized, lose their jobs, and compromise their health and wellbeing.

“We have let far too many families move into conditions that are best described as slum conditions,” said Pastor Rob Odum of Milwaukee Native American Ministry. “Quite frankly, the conditions some families left in the refugee camps were better than the squalid housing they’ve received in Milwaukee. It is important to note that in the case of refugees, most families would rather be in their home countries than in the U.S.”

In response to the plight of these refugees and others like them, Odum and Rev. Ebenezer Insor, Pastor of Emanuel United Methodist Church, are leading Circuit 33 (in the Milwaukee area) of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church in renovating the former Shalom Zone house. The house was part of the *Church in the City* ministry, which began in 2003. After work on it was postponed indefinitely, members of Circuit 33, the Metro Vision Team, Shalom Zone, and Emanuel United Methodist Church decided to transfer the house to Circuit 33 for the Refugee Resettlement House.

With funding assistance from the Metros District and the Cabinet, as well as the hard



**The Circuit 33 Refugee Resettlement House, formerly the Shalom Zone House, will provide quality housing for refugees in the Milwaukee area.**

work of many volunteers—including a youth group from Minnesota and a team from Northcott Neighborhood House—the house is getting a new lease on life, and refugees are finally getting the sanctuary they deserve. “We hope that this house will become one of many similar homes where newly arrived refugees can find a safe harbor in what must certainly be a sea of confusion,” said Odum.

The Refugee Resettlement House stems from the core values of the United Methodist Church. “If we are to be serious about the business of ‘radical hospitality,’ then this house is important,” said Odum. “We hope and pray that when a refugee family is housed with us that the family

can provide stability for their children, that the family’s sense of dignity and pride will grow, that health, physical safety, and security will improve, and the family’s educational and job prospects increase.”

For refugees who have left the lives they knew behind, the radical hospitality of people like those in Circuit 33 helps them not only feel welcome in a strange land, but also helps them find the sanctuary they so desperately seek.

For more information about the Refugee Resettlement House and other refugee initiatives, contact Pastor Rob Odum at [robodum@gmail.com](mailto:robodum@gmail.com) or Pastor Ebenezer Insor at [nanabayin@aol.com](mailto:nanabayin@aol.com).

## So, What’s the Plan?

By Dan Dick

Reflecting on 2011 and looking forward to 2012, one set of questions fit well in both views: what’s the plan? Where, exactly, is the Wisconsin Annual Conference going? What are our priorities? Our goals? Our objectives? These are all important questions—questions that different individuals, groups, agencies, boards, task forces and teams are wrestling with each and every day. The challenge is that we aren’t all talking together, so not everyone knows what everyone else is saying and doing. Confusion reigns.

So, let’s cut through some of the confusion and allow me to share some of the key conversations various and sundry leaders throughout the Annual Conference are having about where God is calling us in the near future.

1. We are about equipping people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Our Annual Conference is committed to our denominational mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
2. To do this effectively, our focus needs to be on the local church. “Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.” (Book of Discipline, 2008, ¶120, p. 87)
3. The health and vitality of local congregations depends on an empowered and well-trained collaborative team of clergy and laity leaders. One of our top priorities is leadership development.
4. We will work with districts, circuits, and local churches to provide



**Dan Dick**

quality resources and training that enable clergy and laity leaders to cultivate healthy, productive, spiritually-grounded congregational environments.

5. We will provide resources and training to improve communication—content, processes and technology—and to support loving, strong and respectful relationships within and beyond the local church.
6. We will continue to emphasize and support mission and outreach that motivates our members to move out into the world to “live, give, and love... beyond all expectation!” It is in the world that we manifest the outward and visible signs of our inward and spiritual graces. We strive to be a witness to the world of the saving grace and love of Jesus Christ.
7. We want to eliminate the false barriers of “us” and “them.” We are “United” Methodists—not defined by our differences and our disagreements, but bound together by our great love for God and neighbor. We want to discover and discern what God calls us to be together, and not waste our time arguing over what we are not.

The vision of the leadership at our Conference Center is a strong Church, moving with confidence into the second decade of the 21st century—not reacting to change as it occurs, but creating the change necessary to bring health and vitality to our ministries at all levels. Our plan is to maximize our potential for ministry, minimize the factors that prevent us from being faithful, and to live into the awesome future that God has in store.

## Conference Calendar

### January 30th

Annual Clergy Tax Seminar  
Sun Prairie Conference Center

### February 7th–12th (Begins)

Academy for Spiritual Formation (2-Year)  
Lindenwood Retreat Center, Donaldson,  
Indiana

### February 25th

Spiritual Growth Day Retreat  
St. Anthony’s Retreat Center, Marathon

### March 16th–17th

Wesleyan Heritage Overnight Retreat  
Pine Lake Camp, Westfield

### March 18th

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

### March 19th, 20th, 26th, 27th

Town Hall Meetings  
Capital-Coulee (19th), Chippewa-Heartland  
(20th), Metro North and South (26th),  
Nicolet-Winnebago (27th)

### March 31st

Apportionment Interpretation Team Training  
Sun Prairie Conference Center

### April 20th–21st

Embracing an Adult Faith Workshop  
New Richmond High School

### April 20th–22nd

Junior High Convo  
Blue Harbor Resort, Sheboygan

### April 22nd

Native American Ministries Offering

For a more comprehensive list of events and training opportunities, visit our website [www.wisconsinumc.org](http://www.wisconsinumc.org)

## REFLECTIONS

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# Carter's *Through the Year* shares personal faith stories

BY GREG BLUESTEIN  
Associated Press

ATLANTA—Jimmy Carter may never have been president if he didn't go square dancing.

The Georgia Democrat credits a rural square dance club he joined in 1953 with helping him win a state Senate seat by a scant 66 votes.

"If I hadn't received support from our square-dancing friends, I would have lost and never become a state senator," he wrote in his latest book, *Through the Year with Jimmy Carter*. "And if that had occurred, I never would have run for office again."

Mr. Carter has penned 26 different books, including childhood memoirs, treatises on the Middle East and accounts of his presidency. But none are like his latest, which offers 366 devotionals, each with a biblical passage, a personal story and an original prayer.

The one-page items are sprinkled with lessons Mr. Carter gleaned from more than 30 years of teaching Sunday school classes and anecdotes from his country upbringing to his ascent to the White House and beyond.

"The totality of my teaching presents a view of a lay person. I'm not a theologian," he said in an interview. "I'm extracting real messages from the Bible or from Christian faith that apply to daily existence and that's applicable whether you're a farmer, a journalist, a lawyer, a teacher or a political office holder."

In the book, Mr. Carter is open about struggles over his own faith. He writes that he felt "despondent and alienated from God" after losing his first bid for Georgia's governor in 1966, and said his wife Rosalynn went through a rough patch when he lost to Ronald Reagan in 1980. But he said he retrenched during those dark times and worked to remind himself of the role religion has played in his life.

"If there is no basis for our faith . . . then how do we account for the presence of Jesus Christ in hundreds of millions of lives across the globe?" he wrote in the book. "How could Jesus still be alive to me? How could so many hearts be touched and minds



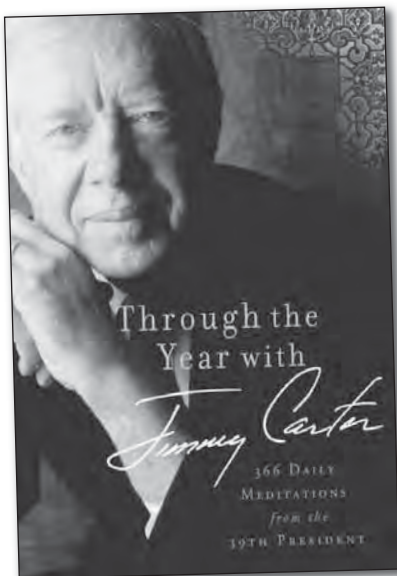
PHOTO COURTESY SARAH SAUNDERS/THE CARTER CENTER

***Through the Year with Jimmy Carter*, the former president's latest book, is a collection of 366 devotional essays.**

stimulated by Jesus to seek ultimate truths about life and the world around us?"

His book casts some political debates with religious overtones. He condemns the Patriot Act and waterboarding, writing that Christians "cannot keep silent just because the injustice doesn't affect our own families or friends." And he said it would be "foolish" for the devout to deny global warming.

"While we may disagree on the causes or rate of global warming, shouldn't we all agree that we have a responsibility to take care of the Earth?"



Mr. Carter is also candid about some of his shortcomings, such as his lack of patience, his penchant for jealousy and his fights with his wife over trivial issues. One year, when he forgot her birthday, he hastily scrawled out a note to give to her, and it turned out to be one of her favorite gifts. It read: "I promise that I will

never make another unfavorable comment about tardiness."

Spread throughout the book are history lessons, with insights over the ancient tensions between Jews and Christians, the roles of politicians and

prophets in biblical times, and the impact of martyrs and apostles on Christianity's spread across the globe. He tells those stories with a healthy dose of jokes he's heard from the pulpit and the White House.

In one passage, he said his brother Billy was on his death bed when he told a friend he had carried out a long affair with the friend's wife.

"His friend's face dropped. The man gulped a couple of times—and then Billy laughed and said, 'No, I'm just joking.' That was Billy."

In another passage, Mr. Carter mentions a *USA Today* poll question that probes readers on what they would ask if they came face-to-face with God. Mr. Carter didn't say what his answer would be in the book, but in an interview he said he would ask about Christ's role in the creation of the universe. He said he would not, however, waste a question asking about life after death.

"I'm supposed to have complete faith in life after death as a Christian who has, I would guess, as strong faith in Christ as possible," he said, adding: "I'd rather be surprised."

Mr. Carter said he hopes the book will help send the message that "God calls us to live out our faith." He urges readers to keep their religion in mind, reach out to new people and enjoy an expansive life. After all, he writes, he never would have guessed that square dancing would have helped him win an election.

"Rosalynn and I enjoyed the square dancing—but we've probably enjoyed a lot more what's happened since," he wrote. "You just never know?"

## Q&A: Relying on God during life in leadership

Jimmy Carter was president for four years, but his new book is based on a role that he's held for nearly 70 years: Sunday school teacher. *Through the Year with Jimmy Carter* offers advice for Christians and provides insights into his life as president, submarine officer, missionary and husband.

Mr. Carter, 87, answered questions from **Adelle M. Banks of Religion News Service** about prayer, death and relating to non-Christians.

**The lessons published in this book include some you taught during your presidency. Did you have a different approach—or subjects you didn't touch—when you were leading the country?**

No, I didn't have a different subject. What I try to do each Sunday is begin my lesson for about 10 or 15 minutes discussing current events, the recent experiences that I have had or where I'm going next week. And then seeing how that applies to biblical principles, basic moral values that apply to every human life.

**You talk openly about parts of your personal life, such as disagreements with your wife, or selfishness. Do you think that helped your classes relate to you more as a fellow Christian than a former president?**

I think it does. I know that everybody in the audience has similar personal relationships at one time in their life. And so I try to apply what has happened to me and how I withstood those challenges in my own life in a way that might be applicable to other people's lives.

**You also admitted that it's sometimes hard for you to pray. Why is that?**

Sometimes I feel a little bit estranged from religious factors or from God.

One time that I remember specifically: I ran for governor the first time and I was a moderate on the race issue. I wanted to see an end of segregation in the South and my main opponent was an arch segregationist in Georgia, Lester Maddox. And eventually he won the election and I lost so I kind of gave up on God and on my faith.

But I had a very famous evangelical sister, Ruth Carter Stapleton. She ministered to me and pointed out to me that when we faced a serious loss or sorrow or disappointment in our life, or failure, that that

should strengthen us, give us patience and actually improve our ties with God because we can't solve our problems on our own.

**You say Christians need to share their relationship with Christ with the world. What if you approach uninterested non-Christians?**

If they say "I'm not interested," I'm reluctant to push it. It depends on the circumstances. But quite often I find that non-Christians are interested in the basic elements of Christianity. I've had national leaders, presidents of countries when I was in office—the communist leader of Poland, the dictator of South Korea at the time—who actually asked me about my Christian faith and I ministered to them.

**Q: You quote Jesus speaking about hope in eternal life. Do you ever fear death?**

No, I don't fear death. I'm not looking forward to dying. I'd like to live as long as I can in a healthy and productive way, but I don't have any fear of death.

**Is there one particular issue of injustice you think deserves special attention?**

The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. That's the biggest need that's not been met yet in the world, and the biggest challenge that we have.

**How much longer do you expect to teach Sunday school at Maranatha Baptist Church?**

We have a very small church. We only have about 30 members that come every Sunday. But we have anywhere from 100 to 800 visitors who come to our little church just to hear me teach. That's a special ministry that we have. So I'll teach as long as I'm physically and mentally able and as long as the church wants me to continue.

**You've taught the Bible for decades. Are there still some lessons to be learned?**

Sure, there are. My wife and I read the Bible every night just before we go to bed. One night she reads it aloud and the next night I read it aloud. We actually do it in Spanish so we can learn more about Spanish language. You get different inspiration or ideas from the Bible as you read it a second time or a third time or, sometimes, a 10th time.

## COMMENTARY

# A faithful approach to managing your money

BY TOM LOCKE  
*Special Contributor*

For many United Methodists, the subject of money is touchy indeed. Jesus tells us that it is more blessed to give than to receive; Luke lets us know that the measure we give is the measure we'll get back; Paul instructs us to sow generously.

But we have families to raise, mortgages to pay, children to put through college. And the recession has made most of us feel worried about our finances and concerned about what the future holds.

How do we reconcile the pull of the real world with the exhortations to give that we are given in Scripture? The Texas Methodist Foundation offers the following tips for doing just that:

- **Start with prayer.** Talk with God about helping you discern how to fulfill God's purposes with your money.
- **What do you value?** Your church? Your local food bank? The shelter for abused children in your community? Most of us could make a long list of worthy programs; the challenge is to focus that list to the top two or three causes that really mean the most to you.
- **If your church is not at the top of that list, ask yourself why.** Are you participating enough in the life of your church community to make it meaningful to you and your family? Are there things you would change about your church that would make it more meaningful for you, your family, and the community? If so, there's no time like the present to get more involved. A real relationship with your church makes your decision at annual stewardship time much easier.

- **Look at your will.** Have you given careful thought to where your money will go upon your death? If your spouse, children and other family members are taken care of, it may be time to think seriously about a sizable bequest to your church or to other important nonprofit organizations.
- **Consider whether it's time to make a significant gift,** one from which you can derive joy for several years. Perhaps you want to endow a scholarship at a nearby Methodist seminary; maybe you would like to become a sustaining member of your favorite charity. This type of giving allows you to participate in the fruits of your generosity—you can assist in the selection of the scholarship recipient, for example, or get involved in a much-needed program at the charity you're supporting.
- **Think about a faith-based investment.** The Texas Methodist Foundation's Methodist Loan Fund (for churches) and Individual Fund (for individuals) allows every dollar you invest to be managed in a way that is a win-win. Your money is safe, secure and growing to meet the needs of your family, all the while providing seed money for loans to United Methodist congregations that are building new sanctuaries, space for after-school programs and soup kitchens.

Mr. Locke is president of the Austin-based Texas Methodist Foundation, a statewide nonprofit organization offering assistance to United Methodists through investments, loans, stewardship services, grants, endowment services and the TMF Institute for Clergy and Congregational Excellence. For information, visit [www.tmf-fdn.org](http://www.tmf-fdn.org).

# Okla. church sends Bibles to UM ministers in Congo

BY CHRIS KINYON SCHUTZ  
*United Methodist News Service*

The word of God is reaching poor and illiterate people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in several ways, thanks to the generosity of a United Methodist congregation in Tulsa, Okla.

The project was born in 2004 when the Rev. Jim Lenderman, then a pastor in Conway, Ark., heard an African bishop speak at the United Methodist General Conference in Pittsburgh.

Mr. Lenderman said he was astounded to hear that few United Methodist pastors in the central African country have their own Bibles in their own language.

The pastors must walk 12 to 20 miles for a chance to read the one Swahili Bible shared by thousands of people in the region. They must rely on their memories of what they read to preach and conduct Bible studies.

Mr. Lenderman said he was unable to imagine serving a congregation without that most basic tool, the Bible. "God captured my heart," he said. The course of his life changed in an instant.

He vowed to work "until the need is met" to send Bibles to the Congo in both Swahili and other indigenous languages.

"I've committed myself for life," he said.

He took his mission to Tulsa's Asbury United Methodist Church in 2008. "It stirred something in our church," said Mr. Lenderman, who is an associate pastor there.

## Distribution of Bibles

During Lent in 2011, the Asbury congregation gave \$272,000 toward the project—funding to provide more than 22,000 Bibles.

In July 2011, the church was able to buy 8,000 Bibles for \$12 each. Distribution is "at an intentional pace—when they need it and where they need it," Mr. Lenderman said, because of the challenges of transportation, storage and security in the Congo.

Each pastor receives one case that contains 16 Bibles.

Mr. Lenderman made two visits to the Congo in 2011, including an initial distribution of Bibles in February, when video was shot to help promote the mission.

It is difficult for Americans to imagine what a printed Bible means to a minister in the Congo, Mr. Lenderman said. Over the years, invading armies destroyed many Bibles.



UMNS FILE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

**A choir sings during worship at Jerusalem United Methodist Church in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Last year, Asbury UMC in Tulsa, Okla., raised \$272,000 to send 22,000 Bibles to the Central African nation.**

Tears poured from the eyes of a 90-year-old United Methodist minister when he received a Bible. "He never imagined in his entire life that he would ever own a Bible," Mr. Lenderman said.

"There is nothing like seeing a person getting a Bible for the very first time."

## 'Proclaimers'

The Bible project is part of Asbury's "three-pronged" approach to offering God's word to the Congo, Mr. Lenderman said.

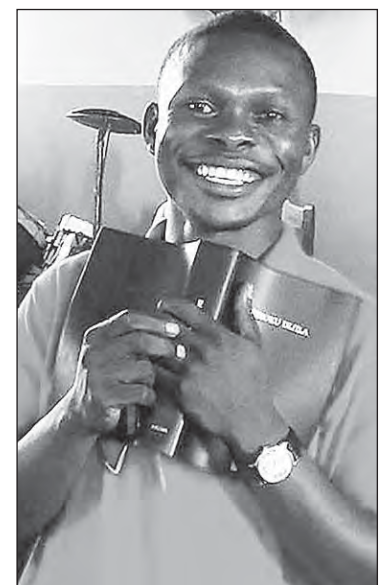
The second prong is the purchase and distribution of digital devices called "Proclaimers," which play an audio version of the New Testament. Designed for areas where technology is scarce, the devices run on electricity, batteries, solar power or hand-crank, Mr. Lenderman said.

These enable the word of God to reach groups of listeners, he said, especially those who can't read.

Proclaimers are from the nonprofit group Faith Comes By Hearing, based in Albuquerque, N.M., which produces audio versions of the Bible in hundreds of languages and formats.

This year Asbury UMC plans also to provide about \$7,500 to buy 50 Proclaimers for the Congo as part of a pilot program. Local residents will learn how to use the device and form listening groups.

Tryouts of the Proclaimers have been "incredibly fruitful," leading to the formation of new churches and new listening groups, Mr. Lenderman said.



UMNS PHOTO COURTESY ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**This smile shows the happiness felt by a man in the Democratic Republic of the Congo who is holding a Bible in his own language.**

In the future, Asbury is planning a third prong, a Bible story-based literacy program through Literacy and Evangelism International, which teaches reading up to the fifth-grade level.

In other places where that program has been tried, "80 percent accept Jesus Christ as their savior," Mr. Lenderman said. And, "because they're now literate, they can get a job."

Ms. Kinyon Schutz is a freelance writer based in the Oklahoma City metro area and a longtime United Methodist.



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

# Start Planning to Change the World May 19–20

Get ready to RETHINK CHURCH in your congregation during the third-annual *Change the World* weekend May 19–20, 2012. For two days, churches around the world will get out into their communities to bring the concept of RETHINK CHURCH to life. Through out-of-the box grassroots campaigns like talent shows, candlelight vigils, picnics, sleep-outs, and food drives, they will provide food for the hungry, aid the homeless, stock food pantries, visit the lonely, clean and renovate cars, schools, and homes... and indeed, change the world. This year's event will focus on building community locally and fighting malaria globally. In addition to the many events that will be taking place throughout Wisconsin, the Cabinet and Wisconsin Conference UMC staff will organize a mission day in the Madison/Sun Prairie area.

Past *Change the World* weekends have been very successful. The first *Change the World* weekend occurred April 24–25, 2010. Over 100,000



people from over 1,000 churches participated.

During the 2011 event May 14th–15th and throughout the year, over 2,000 outreach activities took place in 15 countries. More than 40 Wisconsin churches participated. Behind these numbers are real stories of people making a difference.

Last year, Marshall United Methodist Church in Marshall, Wisconsin, participated in a Box City for the Homeless. Youth slept outdoors in a 'box city' for the night to experience what it's like to be homeless. They collected pledges and donated all of the funds they raised to *Madison Cares*, a residential facility for those who are severely mentally ill and homeless.

Merrimac United Methodist Church in Merrimac, Wisconsin, raised money to dig a well for a community in Uganda.

Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church in West Bend raised more than \$700 for the Washington County Humane Society through their project, *Creatures Great and Small*.

St. James UMC in East Troy did a variety of projects, including home repair, picking up trash along the side of the road, landscaping, and making blankets.

Mosinee UMC collected supplies and assembled health kits, planted a community garden at the church, and helped with the Circuit Nine tornado cleanup in Merrill.

Faith United Methodist in Superior worked on the Letter Carriers Food Drive. They sorted approximately 13,000 pounds of food for their food pantry.

Asbury UMC in Madison sponsored a day of freebies for the community, including Jiffy Lube oil changes and Sonic hamburgers.

Bishop Linda Lee noted the importance of projects like these and hoped that the *Change the World* weekend would be a catalyst for United Methodists here in Wisconsin as well as all over the world to continue to reach out.

"United Methodists are seeking more and more ways to take the concept of 'church' and move it outside the walls of an actual building," she said. "This weekend—though it is just two days—has the ability to make a great

and lasting impact on many, many lives. Our hope is that congregations will want to continue these same kinds of efforts all year long."

Now is the time to ask yourself and those around you if you are ready to *Change the World*. Register at [www.umcom.org](http://www.umcom.org), invite friends and family to join you, and start brainstorming! There are also several resources on this website to help you along the way, including promotional materials, project ideas, a sermon series, planning tips, and other tools.

*Change the World is a global movement of United Methodists doing what they can to improve lives and community. It was created by United Methodist Communications as part of an effort to "Rethink Church" by utilizing outreach events to make a positive difference in the world beyond the church doors. The event is based on a concept originated by the Rev. Mike Slaughter, author of *Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus*. Other partners in the event include the United Methodist Publishing House, the General Board of Discipleship (Worship Division), United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, and the General Board of Global Ministries.*



**ABOVE: Children from India perform for the Cabinet. LEFT: Cabinet Prays with Methodists from India.**

## Wisconsin Cabinet Builds a Connection with India on Recent Mission Trip

By Gordon Lind

Bishop Linda Lee, Clergy Assistant Steve Polster, and the four district superintendents—Gordon Lind, Ann Spindt-Henschel, Jorge Mayorga Solis and Sam Royappa—returned from South India on October 21st, completing a thirteen-day mission trip. Over the last two years, the Extended Cabinet completed mission trips to the Native American Ministry at Odanah and United Methodist Children's Services in Milwaukee. These mission trips have been insightful, inspiring and educational to all participants.

The purpose of the recent trip was to teach, preach, learn, and to work at an orphanage, while building relationships with church leaders of the Methodist Church in India (which was a Central Conference within the United Methodist Church until 1981, known as the Methodist Church in Southern Asia), currently an autonomous affiliated church with the UMC. A bonus was time spent with family members and friends of Superintendent Sam Royappa.

All six Cabinet team members taught a series of subjects to pastors and church leaders: Sabbath, Wesleyan Theology, Visionary Leadership, and Ministry Planning. Teaching occurred in large group presentations and in small group settings, sometimes requiring translation from English into Tamil. A total of 156 pastors, mostly from the Methodist Church in India, participated in the Leadership Training events. Pastors from the Church of South India, institutional leaders, and native missionaries also attended the teaching sessions. Communications Director Michele Virnig designed a booklet containing outlines of these presentations, which, in India, will hopefully be translated into Tamil and Kannada.

The teaching, coupled with Cabinet visits to Methodist institutions and churches, took place

in three urban areas—Chennai, Bangalore, and Madurai—part of the Bangalore Episcopal Area of The Methodist Church in India, consisting of two Conferences—Madras Regional Conference and South India Regional Conference. Sam Royappa grew up in the Madurai area, where his brother David serves as director of the Philip and Timothy Stains Memorial Children's Homes/Orphanage, at which the Cabinet worked and visited with children. Sam served for 10 years as pastor of a Tamil Methodist Church in Chennai before becoming superintendent in that area. Our host bishop, Bishop Taranath Sagar, lives and serves in the Bangalore episcopal area, where the Cabinet preached in various local Methodist churches (English, Tamil and Kannada). Both Bishop Sagar and his wife Padma Sagar were helpful in providing hospitality to our team. Rev. Andrew Natarajan and Rev. Hosea Matthew, district superintendents of Chennai and Bangalore districts, were also helpful during our stay.

In every locale, Sam Royappa's family and many friends in India made the Cabinet feel welcome. We met Sam's parents and spent time with his three brothers who live in South India. One highlight of the trip was when Bishop Lee dedicated the family house for Brother Solomon Rajan in Madurai, where the Cabinet also toured the Gandhi Museum and Hindu Temples.

If you would like to know more about the Cabinet's Mission trip to South India, ask any of the six who made the journey. The team is grateful to God for the people we met, and the many and varied ministries in motion that we witnessed. One-third of the total cost of the India trip came from the Cabinet continuing education budget, and the remainder was raised through other sources, not Apportionment money.

## The United Methodist Hospitals Ministry Provides a Loving Presence to Patients

A person is at their most physically and spiritually vulnerable when they are sick. When one's own body becomes foreign and every day is filled with uncertainties, a hand to hold, comforting words, and even just the presence of someone who cares can be saving graces.

The United Methodist Hospitals Ministry provides these things and much more for patients in the Madison area. The ministry began in the 1950s, growing from a need for healing ministry within Madison area hospitals. It consists of two parts: the chaplain and the chaplaincy committee.

The chaplain, Jane Follmer Zekoff, visits pa-

tients and families at Madison's three major hospitals: University, St. Mary's and Meriter. She provides comfort and spiritual guidance when a patient's local pastor is unable to visit due to distance or other factors. She is the hands, words and presence that the patient needs, and she provides a connection between the patient and their local pastor and congregation.

The chaplaincy committee consists of clergy and laity. The committee manages the ministry through planning, fundraising, and communicating information about the ministry throughout the Wisconsin Conference.

The United Methodist Hospitals Ministry is an Annual Conference Advance ministry program through the Health and Welfare Committee and the General Board of Global Ministries. It touches the lives of so many who have been affected by illness, whether they are patients, families or friends. Through this ministry, patients have a hand to hold, words of comfort to hear, and a loving presence, even when their pastor cannot be with them.

To support this ministry, send your check to the Wisconsin Conference UMC Treasurer for United Methodist Hospitals Ministry, Conference Fund number 7630.



**[On the Right]: Reverend Jane Follmer Zekoff, chaplain for the Wisconsin Conference UMC, prays for healing.**

# REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

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## Big decision

U.S. Supreme Court issues major church-state ruling | 3B



## Faith on display

Drew, Bridwell exhibits feature Civil War, kids' religious books | 4B



## Guaranteed appointment

If clergy job security goes, make bishops sweat too | 6B

Section B

January 27, 2012



UMNS FILE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

Pierre Michel repairs a wall outside the Methodist Guest House in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in this November 2010 file photo.

## Two years after quake, Methodists see progress

BY LINDA BLOOM  
United Methodist News Service

For Methodists, the recovery process since the Jan. 12, 2010, Haiti earthquake can easily be measured by statistics: dollars raised, churches and schools repaired, volunteer teams sent.

What is less measurable—but ultimately more important—are the new or renewed relationships forged among Haitian Methodists, Haitian communities, the United Methodist Church and other global partners, both large and small.

“Generally speaking, it’s a positive cooperation,” said the Rev. Marco Depestre, secretary of the Methodist Church of Haiti.

Much more needs to be accom-

plished, he stressed, to help Haiti recover from the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that took at least 220,000 lives and affected 3.5 million people. But, when Mr. Depestre considers “how far we are coming from, it [the progress] is very moving.”

The relationships driving the Methodist contributions to Haiti’s recovery are highlighted in “Haiti Progress Report: Two Years Later,” a summary compiled by the United Methodist Committee on Relief, which has raised nearly \$46 million for its long-term recovery work there.

The core partnerships revolve around UMCOR, the Methodist Church of Haiti—known in Haiti as the Eglise Méthodiste D’Haiti or EMH—and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission. A long list of other

partners includes Church World Service, IMA World Health, GlobalMedic, several U.N.-related groups and British and Irish Methodists.

A joint comprehensive recovery strategy focuses on shelter and reconstruction, education, health and hygiene, livelihoods and capacity building.

### Committed survivor

If any one person can symbolize this collaborative effort, it is the Rev. James Gulley, a retired missionary and agricultural and development specialist, who was part of a group meeting with the Rev. Gesner Paul, president of the Methodist Church of Haiti, shortly before the earthquake struck.

Mr. Gulley and two of his colleagues from the United Methodist

General Board of Global Ministries, the Rev. Sam Dixon and the Rev. Clinton Rabb, were trapped beneath the rubble of the Hotel Montana.

“Sam and Clinton, like hundreds of thousands of Haitians, died of their wounds; Jim emerged with his life and a commitment to walk with the Haitian survivors, which he does to this day with UMCOR,” noted the Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey, UMCOR’s top executive, in her letter introducing the Haiti Progress Report.

The first six months after the earthquake were the toughest for Haiti, Mr. Gulley told United Methodist News Service. Nearly all of the country’s federal buildings had collapsed, causing a loss of records, infrastructure capacity and human

■ See ‘Haiti’ page 8B

## Q&A: Bishop shares upbeat view of Liberia

Bishop John Innis oversees the Liberia Area of the United Methodist Church, with its roughly 150,000 members. During one particularly difficult phase of civil war in Liberia, he directed a mission station that took in thousands of refugees. In 1993, rebels raided the center, and he was severely beaten.

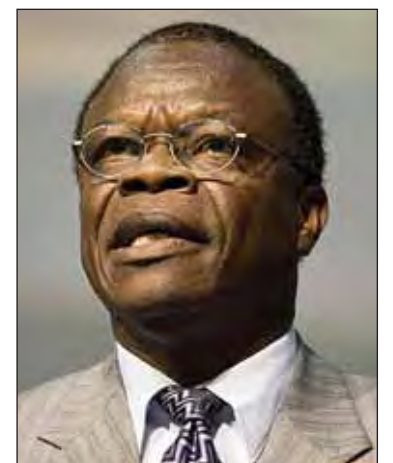
Bishop Innis served as executive secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries, and was elected to the episcopacy in 2000. He’s been on various panels of the UMC, including the Committee to Study the Worldwide Nature of the United Methodist Church.

He spoke to *Reporter* managing editor Sam Hodges at the Council of Bishops’ meeting last fall at Lake Junaluska, N.C.

What did you think of (fellow Liberian and United Methodist) Ellen Johnson Sirleaf sharing in the Nobel Peace Prize?

We’re very proud. It gives credit once again to the rebuilding of Liberia. It demonstrates that she’s a vision-driven leader. She is a leader whose heart is centered in peace-making. The world has been watching her, and the folks who are

■ See ‘Liberia’ page 2B



Bishop John Innis

## FAITH WATCH

**Ocean Grove loses in discrimination case**

A New Jersey judge recently ruled that Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association, long associated with the United Methodist Church, violated a state discrimination law when it refused in 2007 to let a same-sex couple use its boardwalk pavilion for a civil union ceremony. Reuters reported that Judge Solomon Metzger held the association had gone against its promise to keep the property open in exchange for a tax exemption.

**Catholic leaders decry Venezuelan violence**

Roman Catholic leaders in Venezuela are urging President Hugo Chavez's government to attack the problem of violent crime, the Associated Press reported. "The grave danger is that many crimes go unpunished in Venezuela," said Bishop Diego Padron. The Venezuelan Violence Observatory, a non-governmental group, said 19,336 Venezuelans were killed during the first 10 months of 2011.

**Denomination starts church a day in 2011**

The Pentecostal denomination Assemblies of God opened 368 churches in 2011, its second highest number since reliable record-keeping of its church starts began in 1965. "Our goal was to plant a church a day," said Assemblies of God General Superintendent George O. Wood. "It was exciting to see how God helped us meet, and then exceed, that goal."

**Rob Bell leaves church he started**

Rob Bell ended his tenure at Mars Hill Bible Church, the Grandville, Mich., megachurch he founded. Mr. Bell made the bestseller list and generated much controversy with his book *Love Wins*, which challenged the idea of hell. He remains a popular speaker and plans to continue writing books. Religion News Service reported that he's moving to Los Angeles to help create an ABC television drama loosely based on his life.

—Compiled by Sam Hodges

**LIBERIA Continued from page 1B**

responsible for giving these prizes, especially the Nobel Peace Prize, made no mistake to have her as the recipient.

**Has it been helpful to the United Methodist Church in Liberia to have her as president?**

Oh, yeah. But she cares for every religion. She is not one-sided, even though she is a bona fide United Methodist and supports the United Methodist Church. She pays attention to every denomination. When she's invited and has the time, by the Seventh-day Adventists or Catholics, she goes to their events.

She also has a sincere interest in education. You have now community colleges and universities in almost all of the counties—which you might refer to as states here.

Her interest is also in the education of girls. So scholarships have been made available. Even in our own United Methodist university in Liberia, you have a higher percentage of female than male attending.

**What is your brief assessment of the situation in Liberia, in terms of stability?**

Things have turned around in the best interest of every Liberian. People go to bed sleeping peacefully. They're not being harassed. You can travel from any part of the country, be it early in the morning, midnight, any time of the day—no one is going to harass you. There are no more checkpoints, as there used to be in the early days of the war, and even up to the end of the war in 2003. All attempts have been made to build roads, to make travel throughout the country much easier. And a lot of investors are now entering Liberia. That means the economy of the country will have a dramatic turnaround, in the best interest of the people.

The capital city of Monrovia has been transformed. Great and wonderful things are happening.

**The common wisdom in the United States is that the church is growing rapidly in Africa. What would you say about the growth of Christianity and United Methodism within Africa generally? Is it for real, and what accounts for it?**

It's for real. People believe very strongly that it is Jesus who has given them life. They believe that when you accept Christ, you become a new person. All old habits are thrown away.

So people are just excited, including children, men and women. They go to church, they learn about God, they learn about Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior. Evangelism is not only done by the pastor, but by everyone who is part of the congregation. They go and tell the story of the love of Christ.

In addition, for us in Africa, for us in Liberia in particular, the church is being looked at as a caring committee, holistically. Anything that happens to anybody, the church is there. During the [Liberian] civil war, it was the church that stood up on behalf of the oppressed, of the hopeless people.

**So much of the discussion here and throughout the UMC in the United States has been about the Call to Action reform initiative, and so much of that seems focused on the U.S. church. Are you supportive of that, and is there anything in it for the African church?**

The book of James talks about [how] love must be matched by action. We're all called to action, wherever we are, to be evangelists, to be spokespersons of the marginalized people. We're called to be action-oriented, to do good, to stay in love with God, to stay in love with Jesus Christ. All of the other things will come together. A lot of the [UMC reform] debate was on money and all of that. Christ says, "If you ask me, I will provide for you. If you look for me, you will find me. And if you knock at the door, I will enter." So for me, these are all means of the call to action. All



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

**United Methodist Bishop John Innis escorts Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of Liberia, after her address to the 2008 United Methodist General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.**

other things, I just leave it for God.

I want us to do what God wants us to do—to preach Christ; to teach Christ. Through Christ our people will be educated, through Christ our people who are sick with malaria will be healed, through Christ there will be justice for all, not a few. Through Christ we will be perfected, in terms of government operation.

I wouldn't want go into the whole nitty-gritty of the whole issue of the Call to Action. There are a lot of things they're trying to line up. They're all good. But the thing is to make disciples effectively.

**In other words, you would rather not comment specifically on guaranteed appointment, consolidating agencies, so forth?**

If we say it comes from the depth of our heart, if this is something that we do in the best interest of the church, that would be all right. That would be very fine. But all of these will come together when we give our hearts, our heads and our hands to Christ.

**Looking forward to General Conference 2012, is there one thing you would hope that would come out of it that would be helpful to the church in Africa?**

We want General Conference to be very peaceful. We want to practice love that will receive and embrace one another. Anything contrary to that will not go well for the life of the church. We must be one in the spirit, one in the Lord, so that those who do not know us will get to know the savior.

That conference should be surrounded by peace, by love, by understanding, by laughter and embracing

one another.

**Can that happen with the conflict over homosexuality?**

It can be discussed, but I don't think it should be central to the discussion of General Conference. . . . For me, I have nothing against people who practice that. They're my friends, they're my brothers and sisters in Christ, and so forth. We should love them.

**But would you favor changing the Book of Discipline?**

For me, I'm going to abide by what the *Book of Discipline* says, that practice [of homosexuality] is incompatible to Christian living. That's what the church has said to us over the years.

**It would be accurate that that's the prevailing view in Africa?**

There is a prevailing view in this country as well. You've got thousands of people, maybe millions of people, who believe that practice is incompatible to Christian living. . . . People say it is the Africans who are responsible for [the failure of efforts to change the *Book of Discipline* regarding to homosexuality]. It is not true. It is not fair to Africa. Before the majority of Africans decided to come to General Conference, [the current position on homosexuality] was already written in that book. It was not an African who put it there. It came from this side.

**Last question. Do you feel African representation is fair, in terms of General Conference?**

I feel we're getting closer. It's step by step. The participation is getting to be very wonderful.

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## UM CONNECTIONS

**Trilli appointed to global health post**

The United Methodist Committee on Relief announced Jan. 10 that Shannon Trilli, a staff executive at UMCOR since 2007, will serve as its new director of global health programs. She will be the agency's key liaison to all international, regional and national collaborating health partners. Before this appointment, Ms. Trilli designed and directed UMCOR's Imagine No Malaria program, which has distributed more than 600,000 mosquito nets in sub-Saharan Africa. She also developed a grant and program system for the UM Global AIDS Fund.

**UM agency honored as 'Green Power' leader**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently recognized the UM General Board of Church and Society for "exemplary environmental leadership" and awarded the agency membership to the 2012 Green Power Leadership Club. Qualifying organizations help support the development of renewable generation capacity nationwide while also helping protect the environment. The Green Power Partnership is a voluntary program that encourages organizations to buy green power as a way to reduce environmental impacts associated with purchased electricity use.

**Four online courses begin at Claremont**

Registration deadline is Jan. 30 for online courses in personal and professional development taught by UM-affiliated Claremont (Calif.) School of Theology. The classes—set to begin Feb. 6—include "Evangelism in a Plural World," "Prayer from a Process Perspective," "Interfaith Lessons from Medieval Spain" and "Missional and Spiritual Partnership." Learning resources and questions for online conversation will be posted weekly, with weekly participation expected for a time commitment of approximately five hours per week for four weeks. For information, visit [www.cst.edu/claremont-extension/online-intensives/](http://www.cst.edu/claremont-extension/online-intensives/).

—Compiled by Bill Fentum

# Court makes major religious freedom ruling

BY SAM HODGES  
Managing Editor

The U.S. Supreme Court has for the first time recognized a "ministerial exception" to employment laws, a decision that legal analysts say is one of the most important in many years regarding religious freedom or separation of church and state.

The United Methodist Church joined in a friend of the court brief on the prevailing side, and one UMC leader said the decision could have implications for the 2012 General Conference, where delegates will grapple with whether to end guaranteed appointment for clergy.

"This decision will make it very clear that the church writes its own rules on these matters and is free to change the rules," said the Rev. William Lawrence, dean of the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

The case before the Supreme Court—Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School vs. Equal Employment Commission—dealt with a Lutheran school teacher who claimed she had been fired in retaliation for asserting her rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In a unanimous ruling handed down Jan. 11, the court found that the teacher—who taught religion courses, and led students in prayer and daily devotional—qualified as a minister and as such could not sue under anti-discrimination employment laws.

"The interest of society in the enforcement of employment discrimination is undoubtedly important," Chief Justice John Roberts Jr. wrote for the court. "But so too is the interest of re-

ligious groups in choosing who will preach their beliefs, teach their faith, and carry out their mission."

Michael McConnell, director of the Constitutional Law Center at Stanford University and former federal appellate court judge, wrote the friend of the court brief joined in by the UMC's General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA).

He said that the near-term impact of the decision would be minimal, given that all the federal appellate court circuits had recognized the ministerial exception.

But by joining in unanimously, the Supreme Court has made a clear statement about how the Constitution protects religious freedom, Mr. McConnell said.

Rick Rettberg, general counsel for GCFA, agreed.

"The decision was a rare 9-0," he said. "This is indicative of how clear the conclusion is on the issues."

Mr. McConnell said it's the first Supreme Court case to establish that separation of church and state is a "two-way street," offering as much protection to the independence and autonomy of organized religion as it does protection from government support of religious activity.

But while the court decided that Lutheran school teacher was a minister, it did not establish a test for settling the question in all such cases.

"The decision is a narrow one," said Mr. Rettberg. "The issue of who qualifies as a 'minister' will need further refinement."

Mr. McConnell noted that the Supreme Court decision incorporated some of the historical background he included in the brief he wrote for the



PHOTO FROM WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

**The U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously in a recent case that legal analysts say ranks among the most important in the area of religious freedom.**

UMC and the other groups, namely the Evangelical Covenant Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Seventh-day Adventists, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Salvation Army.

"It was not just a 'me too' brief, but actually contributed to the ultimate decision," said Mr. McConnell.

The 35-page brief concludes by saying, "Disputes over who should fill religiously significant offices within religious institutions are precisely the kinds of subjects that the Religion Clauses place beyond the scope of governmental inquiry. Such matters are fundamentally internal to the operations of the church and are constitutive of its identity."

The Supreme Court decision was criticized by the *New York Times* and Americans United for Separation of Church and State as leaving employees

of religious institutions vulnerable.

But the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty applauded the ruling.

"It is a helpful decision explaining the important and unique way that the Constitution protects religious organizations in matters of internal governance," said K. Hollyn Hollman, general counsel.

Frederick Slabach, president of Texas Wesleyan University and a lawyer, said it's too early to tell whether the case will have practical consequences for UMC-affiliated schools.

"Because the court did not provide a formal test for determining whether an employee is a minister, we will have to wait until the lower courts attempt to define and clarify the scope of the definition of 'minister,'" he said.

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## LETTERS

## Response to King letter, Occupy commentary

Dear Martin,

Please forgive Bishop Woodie White for falling into the sin of slandering those who might disagree with our current president's policies by suggesting they are racist. (Letter to Martin Luther King Jr., Jan. 13 *Reporter*). Forgive him, too, for imputing the same motive to those who think someone ought to provide proof of their right to vote in order to register that vote.

In Bishop White's zeal to defend our first black president and minority voting rights, he unfortunately digressed into *ad hominem* attacks rather than addressing the issues at hand. Martin, he means well. He just

accidentally slipped into the common habit of politicians trying to win at all costs, rather than acting like a bishop who always speaks the truth in love. Can you draw him back to your own example, Martin?

Rev. Dr. J. David Trawick  
Senior Pastor, Northwest Hills UMC  
San Antonio, Texas  
\*\*\*

Mark Smith ("UMC should avoid 'Occupy,'" Jan. 6 *Reporter*) presents a case against United Methodists supporting the Occupy movement. He makes some valid points and his piece is a reasoned contribution to the debate.

But at the same time, there is

something profound in this grassroots expression taking place in a thousand or more cities, towns and neighborhoods across our land. It is rooted in the same concerns for justice and fairness which motivated the Old Testament prophets and yes, our Lord himself. It raises searching moral questions about how we treat one another in our society.

The way we have traditionally advocated for change has been to use the political process—"Write your member of Congress." But to our dismay, Congress members have become so dependent for their survival on the largesse of the 1 percent that they appear helpless to act, even in the face of

polls showing 70 percent or more of the people in favor of tax rates closer to what we had during most of the last century.

Warren Buffett had it right: "Quit coddling us billionaires." The Occupy movement, flawed and inarticulate as it may be, is at its heart a "Jesus thing" that United Methodists ought to be grateful for.

Bishop Jack M. Tuell, retired  
Des Moines, Wash.

**The Reporter welcomes brief, civil letters, and reserves the right to edit for space and clarity. Send to [news@umr.org](mailto:news@umr.org) or The United Methodist Reporter, 1221 Profit Drive, Dallas, TX, 75247.**

# On display

## Exhibits focus on children's books, Civil War Methodism

BY SAM HODGES  
Managing Editor

When better than mid-winter to visit, or at least read about, two library exhibits that can keep attendees warm, dry and absorbed for hours?

Drew University, a United Methodist-affiliated school in Madison, N.J., debuted on Sept. 23 an exhibit on Methodists and the American Civil War. It continues through April 30.

Just opened at Bridwell Library, part of Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology, is an exhibit titled "Four Centuries of Religious Books for Children." It continues at the Dallas campus through May 12.

The Drew exhibit, timed to the 150th anniversary of the beginning of

the Civil War, houses 90 items, spread among 10 cases in two locations—the Drew library and the nearby United Methodist Archives and History Center.

The exhibit carries an intriguing title, "Gladly Laid Upon the Country's Altar," which reflects how extensively and enthusiastically Methodists participated in a war that would claim some 600,000 lives.

"The title is actually taken from a speech by [Methodist] Bishop Matthew Simpson," said the Rev. Christopher Anderson, Methodist librarian at Drew and a staff member of the UMC's General Commission on Archives & History. "It seemed to fit, Simpson being such a key player in the war and within American Methodism."



IMAGE COURTESY BRIDWELL LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

These pages in an exhibit at Perkins School of Theology's Bridwell Library—and their accompanying rhyming texts—come from *Darton's Scripture Alphabet*, published in London in 1858.

Simpson, whose life story is featured in one case of the exhibit, was born June 20, 1811, in Cadiz, Ohio, and baptized as an infant by Francis Asbury, a key early figure of Methodism in America. Simpson would go on to Allegheny College and a career as an ordained Methodist elder, becoming a bishop in 1852.

As Dr. Anderson notes, Simpson worked in Washington, D.C., during the Civil War and interacted with top administration officials, including fellow Methodist Edwin Stanton, U.S. Secretary of War. Simpson was close as well to President Abraham Lincoln,

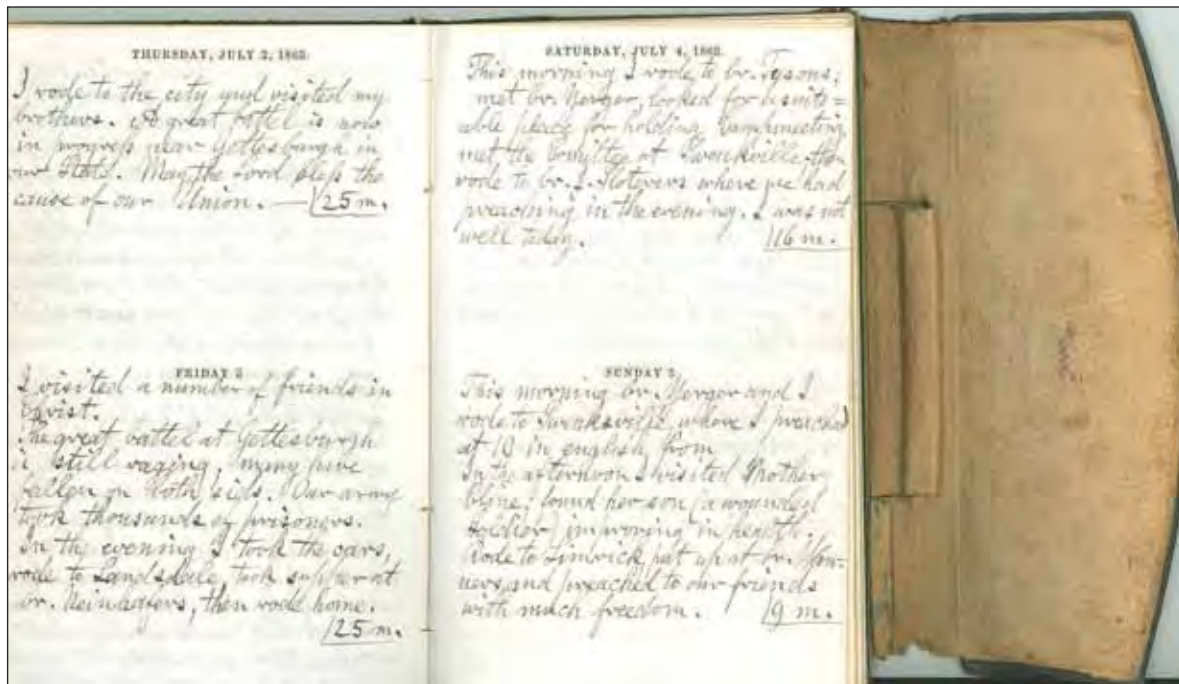
and preached the burial sermon at Lincoln's funeral in Springfield, Ill.

After the war, Simpson would serve as trustee of the new Drew Theological Seminary. Two of the exhibit's cases—the ones in the Drew library—hold items that illustrate connections between Drew and the Civil War.

Other early Drew trustees included John T. Martin, a major supplier of clothing and financing to the Union war effort, and Theodore Runyon, a Union brigadier general who also was a mayor of Newark, N.J., and served as U.S. ambassador to Germany.

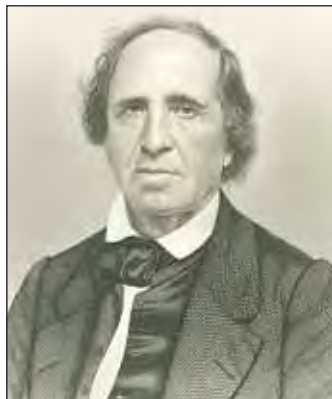
The main part of the exhibit deals more generally with the Methodist response to the war and its tortured prelude. John Wesley's staunch opposition to slavery is highlighted in one case, which includes a copy of Wesley's death mask and a letter he wrote, six days before his death, to anti-slavery activist William Wilberforce. In it, he describes slavery as "execrable villainy."

But in America, Methodism would eventually fracture over the slavery issue, with several thousand anti-slavery advocates pulling out of the Methodist Episcopal Church to form



IMAGES COURTESY CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON, DREW UNIVERSITY

The story and photo of Bishop James O. Andrew (left) are part of the Drew University exhibit. Controversy over his ownership of slaves led to the withdrawal of Southern Methodists into the Methodist Episcopal Church South in 1844—a foreshadowing of secession. Bishop Matthew Simpson (right) of the Methodist Episcopal Church was a confidant of Abraham Lincoln's and vocal supporter of the Union cause. The exhibit includes diaries of Methodist ministers, missionaries and soldiers, including the one above, kept by the Rev. Frederick Kreckler from July 3, 1863 to May 18, 1864.



the Wesleyan Methodist Connection in 1842 and 1843. The exhibit explains this move, as well the Methodist Episcopal Church's 1844 General Conference. That event resulted in a split over slavery, with Southerners withdrawing into the Methodist Episcopal Church South—a move that foreshadowed the national crisis of secession.

Bishop James O. Andrew, the slave-owning Georgia cleric who was at the center of the controversy, is represented in the exhibit with a photograph and letter.

The exhibit also includes diaries kept by Methodists during the war, and one of Dr. Anderson's favorites is that of Amanda Johnson, a Methodist Episcopal missionary in India.

"She had heard news about Lincoln's assassination and wrote her response to that, her shock," Dr. Anderson said. "That was kind of an interesting perspective on that moment."

### Just for kids

One might assume that religious books for children came into play in the 20th century. But the tradition is much older, reports Daniel Slive, head

of Bridwell Library Special Collections and curator for the library's new exhibit.

"The exhibition's focus on religious books created for children between 1500 and 1900 provides a long historical perspective on how texts were abridged, adapted and illustrated so that the young readers could begin their religious education," he said.

The exhibit includes 77 items, all drawn from the library's collection. They include Bibles, catechisms, instructional works, moral stories, devotional literature, psalms and spiritual songs.

"Throughout the exhibition, viewers can see how authors, editors and publishers utilized numerous strategies involving the choice of text, image and physical format to engage young readers," Mr. Slive said.

As early as the 18th century, Bible abridgements and adaptations for children were popular in England. "Thumb Bibles" were named for their small size, and offered condensed versions of Scripture.

Both Protestant and Catholic authors used catechisms to impart basic religious teachings, often posing ques-

tions and providing answers that the young readers were expected to memorize.

The Bridwell exhibit includes one of the earliest Lutheran catechisms, done by German Protestant Johann Agricola and printed in Wittenberg in 1527. Mr. Slive noted that this was two years before the publication of Martin Luther's catechism for students.

Another item that Mr. Slive considers a standout is *The 104th Psalm*, a 12-foot-long panorama of 24 connected leaves that illustrate the verses of that psalm. Published in 1870 in London, the work features hand-colored lithographs designed by Susan Maria Ffarington, who illustrated devotional books for children and also designed windows for parish

churches. "The work begins with an image of the psalmist, King David, covering his head in reverence to the Lord," Mr. Slive said. "At the end, he appears again, wearing a crown and playing his harp within his palace in Jerusalem."

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IMAGES COURTESY BRIDWELL LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

LEFT: This image in the Bridwell exhibit comes from a religious book for children printed in Grenoble, France, in 1834. The caption reads: "... and if he hits me or pushes me, let me not respond in kind, but say to him don't behave like that, my little brother." RIGHT: Another image comes from *The Lyre*, an engraved and hand-colored psalm and hymn book, published in London about 1821.



*Die Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen*, part of the Bridwell exhibit, is a German hieroglyphic Bible with hand-colored images, printed in Augsburg about 1730. The passage, from 3 John 1:4, reads: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."



# Job security shouldn't just be for UM bishops

BY JOSEPH R. STAINS  
Special Contributor

The Call to Action Report asks the UMC to terminate guaranteed appointment to ordained pastors, effectively leaving appointive status in the hands of the appointers, the bishops. In this way, the rationale goes, ineffective pastors may be more quickly weeded out, and effective service affirmed. Underlying assumptions seem to include:

1) Ineffective clergy in the parish are a/the major reason for malaise in our denomination.

2) There is not currently a sound way of addressing clergy ineffectiveness.

3) Our bishops are better-suited than any other available entity to assume the right/responsibility of deciding who among our clergy merit continued active service.

This approach deserves very serious scrutiny. It seems, as do many reports from our church's general bodies, to derive its inspiration from the collective wisdom of the corporate world, with an emphasis on the point of view of secular, upper-level management, whose track record in the last half decade of American business is not consistently reassuring, nor famous for its Christian view of justice or concern for the dignity of the less endowed. It is, after all, the upper management of our church, the Council of Bishops, which has led bringing this striking report to the table. The present essay questions the validity of all three of the above assumptions.

## None above scrutiny

No doubt some clergy are more gifted, dedicated, resourceful—even faithful—than others. So are many officers, agencies, laity and yes, episcopal leaders. The malaise is American mainline, however. It cuts across denominational lines, hierarchies and politics. Meanwhile, the same *Book of Discipline* guides the United Methodist Church in parts of the world where there is no malaise. Whatever is wrong with clergy in America may be just as wrong with episcopal leaders, boards, agencies, officers and laity. None are above binding scrutiny, and none has earned the right to decide by itself the validity of ministry among the others.

The *Discipline* does provide means

for weeding out ineffectiveness. Every year, the Clergy Session at Annual Conference receives the recommendations of its Board of Ordained Ministry, including candidates for administrative location, involuntary retirement and involuntary leave. Presumably all considered for such status have been under review by the board of their peers for at least a year, by recommendation of any of an assortment of eligible folk, including those in superintendency. Resident bishops can make their own recommendations for the board's agenda, and those concerns are received seriously.

What the bishops do not currently have is the authority to override the wisdom of the board, and that seems an appropriate check on concentrated power in our church. It provides a healthy tension, and a scope of peer review that most consider vital to reaching difficult decisions with due process.

A mechanism is in place which, astutely applied, has served conferences well, and which keeps the power to suspend clergy service spread among more than one entity. There is plenty of room for discretionary use of these

willingness to be subjected to the same fragile status they wish to exercise on others. When did anyone last hear of an American bishop willing to lay his/her instant life tenure on the line for any call to action, or cause of principle?

And yet that very culture of episcopal privilege distinguishes the UMC in America from its colleagues in the rest of the world. By a turn in its development in 1968, the newly-emerging UMC drew in its constitution a status of instant lifetime tenure for all elected bishops in the United States, and an option for any model of term or life tenure for bishops everywhere else. **That constitutional double standard remains to this day.**

Interestingly, no jurisdiction or central conference outside the U.S.—anywhere—practices instant lifetime tenure for bishops. The minority who offer life tenure do so only through election after at least one term of service, which provides for either relief after time away from the parish, or an implicit vetting process for longer-term leadership.

If there is any anomaly in the U.S. model for clergy privilege in the UMC,

'Whatever is wrong with clergy in America may be just as wrong with episcopal leaders, boards, agencies, officers and laity.'

tools by the bishop and cabinet without restructuring discretionary power into their hands alone.

## Bishops' role

What after all makes bishops better-suited than another group to decide which of their peers remain in service? Objectivity? Greater theological wisdom? Authority of the office? Divine right?

It is difficult to name a credential for this kind of authority change in our church, given our heritage of shared dignity. Neither are we quickly reassured that this shift in bishops' authority simply eases a change that we all would agree on in practice. (Consider for example the Virginia case from the mid-2000s and the ongoing tension between the bishops and Judicial Council over Judicial Decision 1032.)

Harder to explain is a rationale for concentrating authority for deciding who is appointable into the hands of episcopal leaders who show no sign of

vis-à-vis our more vibrant regions of world witness, instant life tenure for bishops actually stands out more than guaranteed appointment for elders.

At the very least, in the interest of shared dignity and fair play, clergy tenure at large should be as secure as that of the resident bishop, and evaluation tools regarding each role should bear comparable risk and accountability. At the most, the UMC in America may in this season of urgency take a cue from our fruitful, non-corporate peers worldwide, regarding creative ways of cultivating effective leaders at every level of our church—including our episcopal leaders.

Those who offer to lay their own security of status on the line, demonstrating how deeply we are "in it together" facing the future crisis, will comprise a Call to Action that truly inspires us all.

The Rev. Stains is pastor of Homer City United Methodist Church, in Homer City, Pa.

# Tebow's not magic —but he is authentic

BY ANDREW C. THOMPSON  
UMR Columnist

He is the most polarizing figure in the National Football League.

Alternately vilified and lionized.

You'll hear it on sports talk radio and from ESPN television commentators. You'll read it in the pages of news articles and op/ed columns.

Some believe his leadership (if not always his play) is divinely inspired. Others ridicule him for his outward and unapologetic displays of faith. He seems unaffected by it all, just doing what he's been doing since he first came to national attention as a college player at Florida.

He is Tim Tebow. And he is the quarterback of the Denver Broncos.

The 2011-2012 football season has been one in which Drew Brees of the New Orleans Saints set the all-time record for passing yards. It has been a season that saw the Green Bay Packers come within a hair's breadth of finishing the regular season with a perfect 16-0 record.

Yet the media focus has been on Tebow and the Broncos, who barely squeaked into the playoffs at 8-8.

The reason for that attention has to do with Tebow's Christian faith. Or if not for his faith as such, then for the way he displays it.

Cameras often turn on Tebow to find him kneeling, with head down in prayer. (A pose that has become known as "Tebowing.") Interviewers are always met by Tebow thanking his "Lord and Savior" before he responds to their questions.

It is these simple acts that inspire adulation in some, and vitriol in others. They'd go unnoticed if done by most other people. Tebow, of course, is beamed into millions of television sets around the country. That makes him hard to ignore.

But the Tebow debates go beyond simple words and gestures.

There's the fact that Tebow was handed the reins to the Broncos' offense when the team was floundering in the early season. His play thereafter was uneven and his passing statistics were, well, something less than at an all-pro level. His accuracy, his throwing motion and even his physique—none of it seemed right for the QB position in the NFL.

Even so, Tebow remarkably guided

the Broncos to a number of fourth quarter comebacks after he became the starter. His teammates gravitated toward him as a leader. And he managed to get the Broncos into the playoffs after practically everyone had left them for dead.

In Round 1, Tebow even won an overtime victory against the fearsome Ben Roethlisberger and the Pittsburgh Steelers in stunning fashion. It was enough for some to see the hand of God at work.

Alas, the Broncos would get no further. All the "Tebow magic" (as some call it) came to a crashing halt in the Broncos' second round playoff game. Denver was overwhelmed by powerful New England, its weaknesses exposed by the clearly superior Patriots. There would be no improbable run to the Super Bowl.

And so we can only expect that the Tebow debate will continue next season.

Whether Tebow will succeed as a quarterback in the NFL is an open question. There is some reason to think that he will not. His skill set is

'There can be no reason to question his sincerity. . . .'

not what you'd call tailored to the conventional NFL game.

On the other hand, there can be no reason to question his sincerity as a Christian and as an example to others.

Tebow's typical pre-game preparation is taken up with visiting desperately ill youth and young adults, whom he flies to Denver and entertains at his own expense.

His off-season is spent doing mission work in the Philippines, where he has preached the gospel and is currently building a hospital for the poor.

And the public displays of faith? Here's the thing: Tebow would be doing those things whether there were cameras pointed at him or not. He's not ostentatious. But he is authentic.

For that, we can see in him an example for the rest of us. And you can bet I'll be rooting for the Broncos next fall.

The Rev. Thompson is an instructor in historical theology & Wesleyan studies at Memphis Theological Seminary. Reach him at [www.andrewthompson.com](http://www.andrewthompson.com).



Joseph Stains



Andrew Thompson

REFLECTIONS

# Have we lost our commitment to inclusiveness?

BY BISHOP WOODIE W. WHITE  
*UMR Columnist*

I was first elected as a delegate to the General Conference in 1968. What a year to be a delegate. It was the Uniting General Conference, bringing together the Evangelical United Brethren and the Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church. There was great excitement as a new Protestant denomination was emerging, one that would be the largest in the nation.



**Bishop Woodie White**

There was also excitement among delegates as they anticipated a new

Church without segregated organizational structures—especially since the Central Jurisdiction, a racial jurisdiction among five geographical jurisdictions, would not be a part of the new denomination.

Racial inclusiveness would be such an essential, core value of the Church, that a statement on “Inclusiveness” would be made a part of the Constitution. But more importantly, for the next 25 years, inclusiveness remained a United Methodist characteristic.

United Methodist-related institutions and the denomination’s general agencies were intentional in their efforts, and became sensitive to assuring the broadest racial and ethnic participation in governance, staffing and programs. The denomination became increasingly aware of its di-

verse constituency—African, Asian, Hispanic, Native, and white American. In addition, there was a growing awareness of the global nature of United Methodism, as well as the denomination’s constituency outside the United States. There was pride of such diversity and inclusiveness.

Especially at the level of the general church, there was intentional effort to assure that committees and boards reflected the broadest possible inclusion of diversity. And everywhere this was done, an attempt was also made to assure organizations, staff and programs reflected the church’s diversity, too. Diversity would assure inclusiveness with intentionality.

However, though we assumed inclusiveness would follow from diversity, with the passing of time I

wonder if there has been a lapse in this sense of intentionality and this United Methodist ethos. Is inclusiveness, perhaps, not as much a core value as it was 44 years ago when the denomination was established?

In this regard, I wonder if it would not be helpful for all United Methodist organizations to make some assessments: What is the nature of the organization’s inclusiveness? How is it defined? Who is not present? Who is? How is inclusiveness reflected in organizational life?

Even as communities and neighborhoods become increasingly inclusive, is the same development no longer expected of worshipping congregations? Today, many local churches face an absence of inclusiveness, rather than its emergence. In some cases, they may now even be

the least inclusive organizations in the community.

The United Methodist Church is known for its global character, and of such we should be proud. But how inclusive are the Church’s structures and life? What difference does it make that our membership is diverse?

As United Methodists seek to increase our evangelistic efforts and reach out to the unchurched, as we engage in restructuring to be more effective and relevant, I hope we will not forget one of our core values in the process: to be an inclusive church in an inclusive community.

**Retired Bishop White is the denomination’s Endorsing Agent for Chaplain Ministries and bishop-in-residence at Candler School of Theology.**

# What the UMC can learn from ‘ugly ducklings’

BY ERIC VAN METER  
*Special Contributor*

I am an ugly duckling. Then again, so are most people.

Psychology professors refer to this as the false uniqueness effect, which causes us to see ourselves as dramatically set apart from our peers. And regardless of how self-aware or educated we Methodists are, we still fall victim to it.

I suspect this is true for everybody. I know it is true for clergy.

If we pastors are universally convinced of one thing, it is that we as individuals don’t fit in with our dominant peer culture. We constantly try to differentiate ourselves from the haggard mass trying to survive in a chronically anxious church. We don’t feel like we fit in, and we aren’t sure we want to.



**Eric Van Meter**

We find it easier to be an ugly duckling than to share in the frustrations of the church.

Every leader has to deal with this temptation to withdraw into individuality, but it’s a particularly sinister enticement for campus ministers, who are already on the fringes of most clergy circles. After all, how can those of us who watch YouTube for research and show up for work in hoodies possibly fit in with the Sunday morning preacher crowd?

Recent trends in campus ministry only make the problems worse. As annual conferences pull back on their already scant investment in college students, we feel the pressures of financial survival piled upon the inevitable stresses of leading congregations of the youngest of young adults.

It’s easy to lose focus on our connection, to label the differences between us and our peers irreconcilable. We know deep down that the divisions are neither healthy nor absolutely necessary, but we nurture them anyway.

Until we realize that even ugly ducklings need a nest to call home.

For me, this reminder came in full force at the Refresh gathering in Dallas last month. This retreat for campus ministers went beyond the normal technical workshops we church leaders get about the “how tos” of hospitality and evangelism and so forth. Instead, it operated with the understanding that tending to our souls is a prerequisite for leadership far more important than following the latest church trends.

And tending to our souls means setting aside the ugly duckling syndrome.

Not that solitude and personal responsibility are unimportant. Ruth Haley Barton, a presenter at Refresh, spoke passionately about every Christian leader’s need to withdraw to a place alone with God. She insisted that we do our work out of the security of that relationship rather than the chaos of never-ending demands.

Still, too much solitude is a recipe for burnout.

It may be true that much of church life is plagued by toxic levels of apprehension and failure. Overexposure is sure to kill us.

But it’s equally true that, within this swirl of frustration, there are untold thousands of American Methodists who feel more alone than we really are—who remain dedicated to offering the minority report within a denomination obsessed with institutional survival. We are not usually the best known (much less the best paid), but we care deeply about some of the least glamorous facets of loving God and neighbor, including ministry with college students.

No one can swim upstream like this alone for long. We ugly ducklings need to stick together if we want to fulfill our responsibilities to our faith community. The UMC needs us, even if she doesn’t always realize it.

But we need each other for far more than simple survival. If we hope to engage our contexts with anything approaching creativity, we need a community of like-minded people to encourage us to take risks, to forgive our failures, and to nudge us back into risk once more.

That creative energy is what struck me at the Refresh gathering. We did not interact as competitors jockeying for position. Rather, we approached each other as fellow scientists who had returned from the lab, sometimes as excited about what we learned from a failed experiment as

we were about a success.

The difficulty is in convincing the larger church that such experimentation is worthwhile. The more deeply her narrative of scarcity gets entrenched, the less willing she is to risk her resources on something that might not turn into more people that will provide—God help us for using the term—more “giving units” from which to sustain ourselves.

Campus ministers talk about ways to communicate the importance of our work, of course, and not just for the sake of the ministries we love. If the UMC is to have a future, it will emerge not from a vote of some governing body of longtime members, but from creative encounters with God among those most ready to act

courageously on the voice of God. And few have such a high capacity for courageous action than college students.

But that conversation was only a small part of what really went on in Dallas. We spent the bulk of our time reminding each other that we are truly alive, and that although we are unique, we are part of an amazingly long and complex story of God saving his people, renewing his church and building a new world.

Thank God we ugly ducklings have a place in it. And thank God we are not alone.

**The Rev. Van Meter is director of the Wesley Foundation at Arkansas State University. Contact him at eric@astateswesley.org.**

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## ■ HAITI Continued from page 1B

life. Up to 25 percent of Haiti's workforce was depleted by death or injury.

"I thought the conditions looked worse every time I went there," he said. "As they began to take buildings that were damaged down, the streets were filled with rubble."

Hardships for earthquake survivors continued throughout the year as tent camps were flooded by summer storms. A cholera outbreak, fueled by renewed flooding from an early November hurricane, grew into "a major health epidemic." Meanwhile, Mr. Gulley witnessed the riots triggered by the results of the November 2010 presidential election, which required a runoff election in 2011.

### Stronger ties

Melissa Crutchfield, who has been visiting Haiti every month or two in her role as UMCOR's international disaster response coordinator, has noticed visible signs of recovery upon every return. But she acknowledges that it took the denomination most of the first year "to get a solid team of people together."

The initial slow pace of the response was frustrating to some. With "massive" relief needs, many agencies were trying to do similar work and competing to get good staff, Ms. Crutchfield said. And the deaths of Dixon and Rabb, who led the relief agency and mission volunteers program, respectively, meant learning to deal with the grief and move forward.

In the end, their legacy "has really empowered us to work better together," she believes, and the denomination has made a successful transition to a long-term recovery plan. "Our strength has been in the longer-term vision," Ms. Crutchfield said. "I think we've established ourselves in a very positive way and made

some great partnerships."

One of the challenges was to strengthen the existing ties to Haitian Methodists. "The church there wasn't sure we'd stick around," she explained. "I think we've proven we really are there to work with them."

A district of the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas, the Eglise Méthodiste D'Haiti has 156 congregations led by unsalaried lay pastors, 105 schools and 10 clinics. While the church hierarchy is in charge of policy and decisions, United Methodists have encouraged the leadership to pursue a more collegial approach to gain support for the earthquake recovery programs, Mr. Gulley said.

"We need initiative, we need to broaden leadership, we need to empower others within the church," he added.

Mr. Gulley spearheaded the successful Haiti Emergency Agricultural Assistance Project formed by UMCOR and the Haitian church, which has reached more than 2,000 families in 78 communities. He also has served as the shelter coordinator and is overseeing a pilot project in Mellier and Carrefour to build 40 permanent, earthquake-resistant homes.

In addition, he is a member of an UMCOR development team—with specialists in agriculture, microcredit, literacy and health—visiting eight regions of Haiti to ask three questions of church representatives: What is your past experience? What are your current efforts? What would you like for the future? Team members then talk about what they consider sustainable development to be.

The Haitian church and its recovery partners have been at work on a plan to submit to the Haitian annual conference in late January, Mr. De-

pestre reported. The plan will not only encompass reconstruction but also promote Christian education and evangelism, general education and community development.

For Haiti at large, he believes, the recovery has been "very, very slow," but, he added, "from the church side we are not doing too bad at all," pointing to the reconstruction and building of chapels and schools and the pilot home-building project.

The earthquake's emotional toll, however, remains apparent. In early January, Mr. Depestre said, "there was an earthquake in the Dominican Republic and people felt that in Port-au-Prince. There was some panic."

Haitian Methodists are finding ways to share their losses with each other. Last November, a general assembly on women's work in the church provided "an opportunity for many of these ladies to express their feelings," he said. "Many had lost children and husbands. A lot of weeping took place there."

### 'Sense of hope'

Today, about half of Haiti's earthquake rubble has been removed, Mr. Gulley estimated, and empty spaces have become construction sites. The new president, Michel Martelly, is in place and Prime Minister Garry Conille, who has worked with the United Nations and the Clinton Foundation, is thought to be serious and capable, he said. "I think we are now in that period where we can see much more significant progress."

In the Port-au-Prince area, the Rev. Tom Vencuss is witnessing a construction boom never seen before in the nine years that he has brought mission teams to Haiti.

Mr. Vencuss, a New York Conference pastor who was in Haiti when the earthquake happened, has been serving on site as the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission coordinator since November 2010.

During the recent period of relative political stability, the Haitian government has moved some survivors out of tent camps by offering land or a year's worth of rent and has reclaimed parks occupied by those camps, he said. Buildings are going up; roadways have been built or repaired.

Haiti's president is talking about offering free education for more than 900,000 children and stressing the importance of improving rural communities. "There's a sense of hope here," Mr. Vencuss said.

### Long-term plan

At the church level, part of that hope has been delivered by a three-year Haiti Response Plan, started as a pilot project in April 2010, which supports the work of United Methodist



PHOTO COURTESY JOYLIN CLARK

Joylin Clark of Colona UMC in Colona, Ill., has led groups to Haiti to help Pastor Jean Felix Prime with repairing the earthquake-damaged Christian Church of Trouin, southwest of Port-au-Prince. Volunteers, including Ms. Clark's son Jonathan (second from right), recently painted the church's front.

Volunteer in Mission teams. Each team contributes funds for recovery and rebuilding projects, matched by an UMCOR grant.

The plan, now at its midpoint, has focused on the reconstruction of churches, clinics and schools, with teams working at 25 sites during any one period. The operation has functioned so well, Mr. Vencuss said, that "we've further developed and refined our process," adding teams to pilot projects for permanent housing, sanitation, water, hygiene and health care.

On average, 3.5 Haitians are employed at the sites for every one American volunteer, providing local jobs and bolstering the economy. "The teams come in to basically assist and resource community and local workers," he said. "We're stressing that these are really their projects, not ours."

The program placed 223 volunteer teams during 2011 and now has 130 scheduled for this year. More teams are needed—Mr. Vencuss reported a decrease in numbers that he attributed to the demand for work teams in recent U.S. disasters and an increase in airline-related expenses.

"We just had a team in and it was a thousand dollars just for their baggage there and back," he said.

But even with the construction tasks ahead, Mr. Vencuss said, the focus is shifting to how to use what has been accomplished "as a springboard for mission in the local community."

That is why Ms. Crutchfield considers the long-term plan developed for Haiti's recovery—with its focus on strengthening capacity and improving relationships—to be a model "for how we'd like to do things" in the future.

## Haiti recovery update

Since the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, a joint leadership team representing the Methodist Church of Haiti, the United Methodist Committee on Relief and UM Volunteers in Mission has met to review priorities and ensure plans are operational.

Those priorities, involving a number of partners, have focused on capacity strengthening for sustainable development, education, livelihoods, health and hygiene, and shelter and reconstruction. Examples of the results so far include:

- Construction of 3,000 shelters in Cabaret, Léogâne and Port-au-Prince, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity.
- Reconstruction of damaged, church-owned schools at Bois Gency, Hyacinthe, St. Martin, Mellier and Petit-Goâve and the historic New College Bird campus.
- Provision of seeds, tools, livestock and technical assistance through the Haiti Emergency Agricultural Assistance Project.
- Response to the cholera outbreak after the earthquake through preventative education and the distribution of health kits and water filters.

Volunteer work teams are assisting Haitians in reconstruction and recovery projects and are being scheduled for 2012 and 2013. For information, visit [www.umvimhaiti.org/](http://www.umvimhaiti.org/).



PHOTO COURTESY MATTHEW CARTER AND THE REV. BRAD MORGAN

Volunteers from St. Paul UMC in Bridge City, Texas, recently traveled to La Tremblay, Haiti, to help rebuild the UM church there, and to provide supplies and lead a Vacation Bible School.