

## 2007 RETIREES' REFLECTIONS ON MINISTRY

Dorothy E. Baker

Shortly after my husband passed away, I decided to carry out some of the plans he and I had made. The first one was to take an early retirement from my teaching career. I did that. The second one was to travel. I did that. The third one was to purchase a home on Lake Catherine or one of the other lakes in Hot Springs, Arkansas and retire there in the fall and winter months of each year and return to our home in Berkeley for the spring and summer months. We would have been living the easy life.

Eight months prior to my husband's death, we became first time grandparents of a grandson and a granddaughter. Two years later, I took early retirement. Adjusting to being a grandmother brought me great joy in the midst of my great loss.

I no longer wanted to live in a lakeside home by myself in Hot Springs. I had an elderly mother living in Arkansas whose health was declining rapidly but who did not want me to come and live with her nor did she want to come to California and live with me. I became a long distance care provider until she was given an ultimatum; go and live with your daughter or go to the convalescent home. In 1992, she chose to come to California and live the last six years of her life surrounded by her grandchildren and three great grandchildren whom she cherished and adored. I was still trying to carry on with my church activities and involve my family members as much as possible.

It was in the midst of this activity, caring for my mother, the doctor appointments, administering the meds, the rearing of a grandson, watching for the school bus, looking for the lost jackets and backpacks, that God revealed another plan for my life at the 1996 annual conference.

The set-apart ministry! I was like Jesus' mother Mary, "How can this be?" I was shown that God was not playing and that I needed to be obedient and that I needed to have faith and step out on it.

The Lord made a way for me to return to school and complete the BOOM Conference requirements from two seminaries, Claremont School of Theology in Claremont and the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley.

I was consecrated as a Diaconal Minister in 1999 and Ordained as a Permanent Deacon in Full Connection in the Cal-Nevada Annual Conference in 2002. I have served at Downs Memorial United Methodist Church as both Minister of Congregational Development and Associate Pastor since 1999.

My family has been at Downs since moving to California in 1959. The years between 1959 - 1999 were spent actively raising our family and participating fully in the ministry areas of the church. The majority of my lay ministry was focused on education and

membership care serving as Sunday school teacher, superintendent, class leader, and Lay Member to Annual Conference. I went to Conference trainings and to Nashville for National Rallies. I remember the years of using all of the learning modalities to reach, teach and hold the interest of children and adults. I remember with joy also the years of going into Emeryville and West Oakland picking up children in our church van because they had no other way to come to Sunday School and church. My husband and I both enjoyed the interaction and learning in bible study classes.

I realize that it is highly unusual to move from Laity to Clergy and remain in the same church for forty eight years. Because the majority of the members of Downs thought that I had something of value to offer, I was afforded this opportunity and I am grateful. Because I entered the set-apart ministry late, I have served in that capacity for only seven years. However, those seven years have been packed with memories of moving from strength to strength. I am now able to view spiritual leadership and church growth from the lay and clergy point of view.

As Minister of Congregational Development and Associate Pastor, I have worked closely with two Senior Pastors to build up the ministry areas of the church providing opportunities for nurture, spiritual growth and outreach to members and the community at large.

The first year we held a year long confirmation class and were able to confirm 27 young people. For the next 4 years we confirmed from 10 to 12 young people with the help of Christian mentors before moving to the every other year schedule. All of the confirmed youth participated in the Bishop's Confirmation retreat.

We received a request to help host a German Gospel Choir visiting the U.S. This was the beginning of our Ministry of Hospitality. It was exciting and enjoyable. Some of us are still in touch with some of those young people. After this experience, we hosted the I-Themba Youth Ministry Team from South Africa each time that they came. They ministered to us and brought a powerful message through their artistry of dance, drama, and songs for our worship service on Sunday. We hosted them in our homes and attended their performances as they toured the Bay Area and brought awareness to the Aids crisis and raised funds for HIV/AIDS treatment and research. We also participated in hosting the Africa University Choir when they visited our conference and our UMC Payne College Choir on their spring tour.

In response to the violence in Oakland the church participated in peace marches and rallies with the community. Downs hosted an ecumenical service around "Waking up from the Nightmare" and a "Healing Service" to deal with the trauma of 911. This was followed by Downs pastors and some of the members teaching the Peace Empowerment process to our adopted Golden Gate Elementary School third and fourth grade classes. The next year we went to our adopted High School, McClymonds, where young people had been victims of violence and taught this peace process to the entire 9<sup>th</sup> grade multicultural classes. This process culminated in the installation of a Peace Wall in South Africa. The McClymonds students selected seven of their classmates to

take 100 peace tiles that they had painted to South Africa, to teach the Ennerdale High School students the Peace Empowerment process, and to exchange their tiles for 100 peace tiles from Ennerdale to bring back to the U.S. The multicultural experience was highlighted by the wonderful hospitality that the students and chaperones received as we were hosted in home stays with the South African families. We were also able to see all of the places that we had only read about in books and in the newspapers.

Back at home we held our Senior Day for Diamond Circle Members, annexed a "Get Your House in Order" workshop to it for seniors and their adult children, held our Spring Revival, hosted the Alzheimer Association sponsored workshop for the African America community, held the bible study group for the Older Adult Living In Faith Everyday class and opened up the Older Adult Activity Center. There were many walks for causes and cures like the heart association walk etc. organized by our Walking Ministry. Also, our Health Ministry united with the Alameda County Health Department and added a strong educational component on healthy eating and healthy living in general.

There were ski weekends for the children and youth, VBS, Kamp Kuumba, and camping in Yosemite National Park. The Girl Scouts mini quilt display and fund raiser along with the Girl Scout cookie and nut sales paid for their bridging-over ceremony on the beach in Hawaii. DeAnza College invited the youth to participate in a National Video Conference with students of the African Diaspora around the theme "What Can We Do?" This lead to a follow up invitation to nine of our youth to fly to New York and participate in the International Video Conference with four other countries and the U.S.

The Adults participated in whole church book studies which lead to the formation of many small discipleship and spiritual formation groups.

At the District level of the Annual Conference, I have served as the Bay View Director of Lay Speaking Ministry for almost seven years. During most of those years, we have provided five training opportunities a year serving our district and the adjoining districts. We have sponsored a Lay Speaking Rally and made an effort to provide periodic training for Local Lay Speakers.

## Douglass E. Fitch

Growing up in St. Louis, Missouri I never saw myself as a Preacher, Pastor or any kind of Minister. It is also true until now I did not see myself retiring from the profession I never saw myself a part of while growing up in St. Louis, Mo. O how time changes things! This is not an opening anti-retirement statement but an affirmation of ministry that does not end with the Disciplinary mandatory retirement age.

Whether other children experienced church life and preaching as I did, I will probably never know. What I know is this. When I reflect over my history of church life something positive stirs in my soul. I liked church life and I also liked hearing people preach and sing. But I never saw myself doing it. O I was told by my early Sunday School teachers, Annabelle Slater and Cicelia and later by my High School Speech Teacher, Mr. Cousins and others that one day I would be a preacher. It scared me rather than inspired me. I did not consciously run from it. I just thought it was not for me.

The year I graduated from High School a woman preacher in front of my mother's home congregation said that I would be a leader of and among Anglo, Asian, Latino, Native Americans and African Americans. This was in 1954 the year of integration officially in our nation. But again I never connected her so-called prophesy to me preaching.

I entered college on scholarships to become a medical doctor. But under the powerful preaching of Rev. Mrs. Kresge I was converted in my sophomore year at school. In addition one night during her preaching she called for those who felt called to do full-time service for God. I responded under the influence of an internal oughtness. This I ought to do! At the end of my sophomore year I changed my major to Philosophy and Religion and minors to Greek and Speech. Because of the Methodist Church's emphasis on loving God with one's mind, heart, soul and strength I became a Methodist.

Three people are responsible for my formation as a professional minister: my mother, one of my pastors (Rev. Joseph Henderson) and Bishop Gerald Kennedy.

It was my mother who affirmed my change from medicine to ministry with these words: "I knew one of my children would be a preacher and I am glad it is you. Your grandfather whom you never knew was a Baptist preacher." I experienced her as a woman of solid faith, very practical common sense wisdom and very open to people. Again her words to me "do not believe everything you hear from preachers, learn and study so you can know for yourself." When I integrated Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky racists from the community made an unsuccessful attempt on my life. National Guards were called to the campus and I returned home to St. Louis, Missouri. She sat we down with these words of challenge: "If you run away from this situation when will you ever stop running? If God called you to preach God will protect you and care for you." As I connect the dots of my life, that was undoubtedly the most defining moment in my history. Her words are alive inside of me like she said them just before I walked to

this stage. I returned to Asbury Seminary and I have never doubted God's call to this glorious ministry.

The pastor of my home church was my mentor - Rev. Joseph Henderson. More than any one he influenced my preaching style and my general approach to pastoral ministry. He was very accessible and approachable not only to me but to parishioners in general. Although this was a very large church you would never guess that to be the case because of how he gave time to calling at the hospital, counseling and his general care for his work. I found him to be intellectually fresh and exciting: a compassionate pastor and one whom I experienced as preaching from his heart. I felt him when he preached. To me he was a pastoral preacher. He did not dumb down his message yet he was very loving, prophetic and challenging. Once I said yes to my call I remember praying to God to let me be as good a model for others as Pastor Henderson was to me. He truly had a shepherd's heart.

Bishop Gerald Kennedy was known as a popular preacher nationally and perhaps internationally. I remember when he appeared on the cover of Time magazine. He was short, dynamic, humorous, biblical and generally speaking brief. I was taken by the fact that he did not preach long sermons. They were tight, inspiring, very human and he made you laugh. I admired his courage to tackle difficult issues and stand tall with regard to issues of justice.

If over my ministry I have been effective I attribute much of it to these persons who influenced my formation. My family has been supportive and unconditionally loving throughout my professional career. They helped make church life enjoyable because they were all Christians before I became a Christian. The death of my wife after 32 years of marriage served to bring my immediate family closer. To this day my son comes regularly to hear his father preach, he volunteers and responds to requests we make at Glide. He sends his sister CDs of my sermons and we all stay in touch. We are a close family. What more could a father ask of his son and daughter than their unconditional love!

In every parish I have served, the congregation has been involved in community change, young men and women have entered the ministry-some as priest, one as a rabbi but others as United Methodist ministers. Some are Buddhist priests and some desire to be Roman Catholic priests. The little lady who read me when I was ready to graduate from High School really knew what she was talking about. I suspect there are people like her in every church but unless we are at a particular spiritual consciousness we can never experience their gifts. I was very fortunate to see her vision for me early enough in my career to experience the ecstasy and exultation of spirit to know I was doing God's will for life as best I could discern that will. It was possible because of others who shaped and formed my ministerial existence.

The United Methodist Church has been the institution where "place" has enabled me to fulfill my call. Although I have been privileged to serve a very broad population of people, positions and projects the local congregation has been my greatest fulfillment.

So many members have been more spiritual than this pastor. They have understood the pain and agony in their lives in ways that have brought blessings and power that we could only wish for. They have it. Many more see injustice in our world and do not wait for the church to get them involved in the struggle. They initiate the action with or without Annual Conference sanctions. I believe congregations are prepared to do far more than we imagine as leaders. I think they need to know how greatly they are loved. I think dogma will not do it but unconditional love and finding common ground for hands on experiences will.

I believe the 21st Century is the century of light. Light comes from every corner of the globe and core values such as standing with the disenfranchised, honoring and respecting diversity and difference and practicing unconditional love and forgiveness are common ground for all communities. We are spiritual beings on a human journey. No one community or Church, Temple, Mosque or spiritual house can bring or generate enough light to change our planet. We are all needed to share what light we have. So I may be retiring but I am not quitting. I am in a new phase of ministry. It was prophesied so let it be.

Douglass E. Fitch, Senior Pastor  
Glide Memorial Church/Glide Foundation

(none submitted)

Paul Giddings

## Sandra Hammett

Having started the process late in life, I feel like such a 'short-timer' in pastoral ministry and in this Conference. And yet here I am writing a Retirement Reflection on my ministry with you all. It happened much too quickly.

Even though I don't remember a time in my life that I wasn't aware of being a Christian, it still totally amazes me that I became a Pastor. God's grace and call is truly a mystery. That very realization is probably one of the best gifts I've been able to bring to ministry. I've seen God work so many miracles in my own life, that I have no doubt about the great possibilities waiting for others, even in the darkest of times.

After graduating from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1995, I served one year in New Jersey. But all my children and grandchildren lived in California and I wanted to be a part of their lives. I am so grateful to Ardith Allread who was D.S. for San Jose District at the time. She took a chance on an unknown and slightly 'iffy' candidate and found an appointment for me at Boulder Creek where I happily served for 3 years. Boulder Creek is a nurturing congregation, so I couldn't have had a better beginning here.

I have served the other 8 years in Santa Clara, where I first became a United Methodist. It certainly feels like the circle is complete.

Probably the most challenging thing for me personally in my eleven years in this Conference, was coming to terms with being a Centrist. Being a theological moderate isn't as easy as it sounds. There was often an expectation that I must be either 'reconciling' or 'renewal' and I don't fit comfortably into either category. It took me a while to realize that I didn't have to 'choose' and I certainly wasn't 'lacking commitment'. I was just a minority. Needless to say that insight gave me more compassion, a stronger concern for justice and a greater love for our diversity.

One of the most rewarding things for me was actually our Clergy Clusters. I have been part of several clusters that were really committed to our time together and several that were lucky to have 2 people show up for a meeting. Either way, I got to know my colleagues on a more personal level than is possible otherwise. We've had many good 'living, learning, loving and laughing' times together.

My life scripture has been Philippians 3:10 & 11

*10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

Probably nothing encompasses the "the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings" quite like pastoral ministry. As all of you know, being a Pastor is sometimes marvelous, miraculous and amazing. And sometimes you are barely hanging on. My ministry, like yours, has been full of both. It's been a time of great blessing by so many messengers of Christ's love along the way. As I already said I'm here because Ardith Allread took a risk and brought me back to my home Conference. Nymphas Edwards has been a great D.S. for me (plus he's the only other PTS alum I know of in our

Conference!). And what a privilege to have a 'sister in Christ' for my Bishop. Thank you Bishop Shamana for your gentle hand laid firmly upon a hurting Conference.

Working on several District Committees and now the Conference Board of Pensions has given me even more opportunity to know that we are in the hands of many caring and competent people, both clergy and lay. What a Conference! What a magnificent eleven years! Are we Yet Alive? You bet. Thank you all.

## Nobuaki Hanaoka “Gratitude”

As I look back on my thirty-five-year journey in ministry, I realize how profoundly my ministry was shaped and sustained by so many people I met along the way. My heart is filled with gratitude to them all.

The journey began in 1972 when I was called to serve a church of another denomination in Seattle, Washington. I had just finished a seminary in Rochester, New York and had been admitted to the doctoral program at the Union Theological Seminary in New York, but when I received the call, I agreed to delay my doctoral program for a year to help the church in Seattle as an interim associate pastor. It was there in Seattle that I found a call to serve the people called Issei, the first generation Japanese immigrants, as their pastor. The memory of their ordeal in the concentration camps during the World War II was still fresh in their hearts and minds. In spite of my young age, they were eager to share with me the endless stories of their sufferings and hardships and how they were sustained by faith. Although I did not experience the injustice and humiliation of the wartime hysteria myself, it brought back the memory of my own childhood and how, by the grace of God, my life had been spared from the destructive power of the nuclear explosion in Nagasaki and sustained through the most difficult time in my life, and how the church had instilled and nurtured in me the love of God and a sense of call to serve God and work toward justice and peace in the world. My sense of call was strengthened by those elderly Issei women and men who witnessed the power of faith that helped them survive the prejudices, injustices, poverty and hardships in the hostile environment, but continued to live in dignity with faith and hope in God. I owe those wonderful people a debt of gratitude.

After a few years of interim pastorate in Seattle, I decided to resume my study at the G.T.U. in Berkeley. I relocated to the Bay Area and also received my first part-time appointment in the California-Nevada Annual Conference. The appointment was to Buena Vista United Methodist Church in Alameda as bilingual pastor. In the front row of the church was often found an elderly gentleman by the name of Dr. John Cobb, Sr. I later learned that he was not only the father of my theological hero, John Cobb, Jr., but also my father's English teacher back in Kobe, Japan. I saw in the coincidence the continuity of God's invisible hand guiding me to fulfill God's purpose in me. I quickly found the United Methodist Church theologically more compatible with mine, and I felt as though I finally found a home. I decided to transfer my membership to the United Methodist Church and I became a full member of the Conference through the Recognition of Order. I am forever grateful to my District Superintendent at the time, Dr. John Moore, who gave me the opportunity to serve in the United Methodist Church and guided me through the first few years of ministry in the Conference. A few years later, I was appointed to Pine United Methodist Church in San Francisco, where I stayed the next twelve years. To serve a church in the predominantly secular city posed a challenge, but I worked very hard and devised a few innovative ministries to grow the church. I remember conducting a weekly Bible class in a thirty-first floor office space in

the Financial District of the city. I called it “Brown Bag Bible” and it attracted quite a few people who worked in the area during their lunch break.

I also found in the Bay Area a group of Japanese people who survived the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Like me, many of them had various health issues, yet they were committed to keeping the issue of nuclear threat alive. I joined their effort and became active in the nuclear freeze movement. With some of my friends, I founded the National Congress of Radiation Survivors. I considered involvement in the so-called social ministry a natural extension of my pastoral ministry. If you truly love the people you serve, you naturally work toward protecting their human rights and dignity from the society that denigrates them. We also need to make the world just and peaceful for them. It was my goal, therefore, to make the social and pastoral ministries a seamless continuum.

After Pine UMC, I served the Japanese Church in Sacramento and four non-Japanese churches in Sacramento, Berkeley and San Francisco. Each of the churches helped me refine and redefine my theology and ministry. The experience of Japanese American churches helped me become sensitive to all other social justice and human rights issues. Serving non-Japanese congregations has expanded my vision of ministry and gave me opportunities to assimilate the people of color into mainstream church communities. The moral integrity and deep spirituality of the people of the LGBT community not only enhanced my respect for them, but also reinforced my commitment to justice for all. For all the people I was privileged to serve I give thanks to God.

Through my years of ministry, I made it my highest priority to articulate theologically the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the ways that spoke to the people I served. I also tried not to lose sight of the social implications of the Gospel I preached and the spiritual implications of the social issues I advocated. After 35 years, my poor health no longer seems to permit me to give 100% of my energy to parish ministry. As I prepare to retire from the itinerant ministry of the Church, I know that my loyalty to the Church that sustained me through the most vulnerable years in my youth and gave me the opportunity to serve God in the most meaningful ways all through my adulthood will continue to grow.

## Hope Kawashima “Journey of Hope”

May 12, 2007

I've always admired birds and butterflies that travel thousands of miles going to their ideal habitats. Perhaps its because my childhood was disrupted by having to relocate involuntarily from Loomis, CA to Japanese internment camps in desolate wastelands. My parents, whose parents had started Loomis UMC, were born, baptized, married and buried there, after having nine children. Yet our home in Loomis was burned by soldiers that forced us to evacuate, leaving us nowhere to return after WWII was over. since my parents strongly believed our government had taken away our freedom and rights, they moved us out of Tulelake camp (after losing a child at birth due to the evacuation trauma) to live in Twin Falls, Idaho where the public schools tried to charge us tuition. We then moved to topaz, Utah to another internment camp where conditions and food was terrible. Therefore, my parents moved us to Silver Creek, Nebraska, leasing a truck farm where we raised all our own food including cows, pigs, poultry, vegetables and fruits.

During those trying times our greatest comfort was to attend church services and to sing hymns. My parents wrote to the war relocation authorities to allow us to take our piano for worship and recreation into the internment camps. Amazingly, they allowed us to take our piano everywhere we went. Since my mother was a church pianist from age 12, she taught all 8 of us to play the piano besides teaching many nearby students. She said I begged for lessons from age 3 and was always sitting at the piano whenever possible. The piano made church worship services, recitals, and dances possible for the internees. Music was the healing balm to soothe our woes of confinement and hardship. We were finally able to save enough funds to return from Nebraska to Loomis before I entered high school. Our parents thought that our one room school education would retard us, but surprisingly, I made lifetime membership in Calif. Scholarship Federation, plus entered UC Davis on a scholarship. Therefore, I studied food science, but was spending more time performing for weddings, conferences and churches. I felt god calling me to use my love of music. So I switched majors and schools and became a registered music therapist working for Calif. State hospitals for a few years. But I found that music and psychology were not healing patients. I did research proving how hymn singing was more healing than other types of music. Therefore, I decided to go to SFTS to study theology and church music while continuing to work at Napa on evenings and weekends to finance my seminary education.

One week after graduation, Mas and I were married at the seminary chapel after our honeymoon in Yosemite, we moved to Pasadena to serve a Presbyterian church. Mas was ordained as assistant pastor, so we lived in 5 different homes while in the same church for 8 yrs. both our daughters were born there as I continued to serve as organist and choir director as a volunteer. We were called to Community UMC in Ontario, Oregon for 8 yrs. where I was paid \$50/mo. as a certified director of music. In 1980, we were called to New York City to the Japanese United Church in Manhattan. They gave me \$250/ mo. as organist/director of music! (Graciously, at all the churches I had many private piano and voice students who won awards in national and international events).

In NYC, I was able to study composition at Juilliard School of Music and was consecrated as a diaconal minister in 1984. I was asked to serve on the UMC hymnal committee for the new hymnal. I was shocked at the resistance to include Asian hymns which was my duty. After many trials and tribulations, I was elected as a 1988 general conference delegate! Right after Jurisdictional Conference we moved to west L.A. where Mas was appointed. I was called to La Tijera UMC as organist/director and also started a music academy for a piano store in Santa Monica, enrolling 350 students (including Alex Trebeck, Gail Getty and children of celebrities).

Upon my father's death in 1990, it became necessary for me to commute weekly to Loomis to care for my mother who had memory loss due to a head injury from a car accident. Thankfully, Mas was appointed to Lake Park UMC in Oakland in 1993, which made the commute easier. At Lake Park, I was appointed as director of music and coordinator upon ordination in 1998. When Mas retired in 2002, we moved to Fresno and I was appointed to St. Paul's in Fresno, then to UJCC in 2005 as minister of music. We have been blessed with five lively grandchildren and a beautiful home in Fresno where we watch birds nesting and raising their young in our yard. I still admire the birds and butterflies as I've learned to be grateful for each day God gives, no matter where we may journey in life and under all circumstances. Also, I don't want to break my neck trying to fly away when things get tough! Even when I retire from directing choirs for 50 years, it seems my church wants me to continue serving, but I hope to be flying here and there!

## John M. Kraps

Serving in the California-Nevada Conference has been one of the greatest privileges in my life. I have grown in the spirit from each parishioner, colleague, District Superintendent and Bishop during my 21 years serving in the Conference and during my six years of serving beyond Conference boundaries. Bishop Shamana has been most gracious in agreeing to appoint me to churches in the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference. I also appreciate the friendly help Grady Knowles has given me over the years.

Our children--Imy, Johnny and Rachel Rebecca--were born and grew up in the churches Rachel and I served: Soledad, Hillcrest Salinas, San Ramon Valley as youth minister, Ukiah and Good Samaritan in Cupertino. Our kids' lives are blessed today because of those wonderful ecclesiastical villages which helped us raise our children. To those communities we will always be grateful!

We have known the real presence of the Lord Jesus Christ through all of you! Thank you and God bless each of you!

## Philip M. Kim

Born at a rural town in South Korea in 1942, and raised in a Buddhist family until the family converted to the Christianity right after my father filed bankruptcy of his whole business in 1957. My family joined a Methodist church in town. Next month my mother compelled me to attend a mountain prayer retreat for ten-day camp meeting, where I was baptized with the Holy Ghost as well as with water. I saw several amazing visions and got a firm faith in God. Through this amazing experience I have been healed my long time illness and transformed totally to a Christian. My effeminate voice changed a strong male one, shyness to boldness, physical weakness to a strong health. I was discharged from Korean Army (Military Police) after three years of service.

God has blessed me a lot physically, mentally and spiritually since I became a Christian. I could finish three year Technical High School (major in electricity), graduated from Kyoung Hee University, Seoul, Korea (BA in English), earned a B.Th. from Methodist Theological Seminary, Seoul, Korea. Also I have a benefit of C.P.E training (Basic and Advanced) in Ehwa Women's University Hospital and Catholic Mental Hospital, Seoul, Korea. In the United States God has given me a chance to study at Boston University School of Theology, as well as at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, CA. As a seminarian I served as the president of the student body of Methodist Theological Seminary as well as the first president of Inter Seminary Student Association of Korea.

I have lived 38 years in Korea and 27 years in America. For 37 years of my Christian ministry I have served ten churches: five churches in Korea and five churches in the United States.

By the way I served two Christian institutions: Korea Research Center of Mission and Christian Education of the Methodist Theological Seminary, Seoul (Mission Department) and Korea Mission of the Pentecostal Holiness Church (Secretary and Treasurer) before I came to the United States in 1980.

My wife was a classmate of my seminary in Seoul, but she has never claimed any ministerial position. Always she has been a house wife and mom to my three children: Esther, John and Paul.

Esther has a family. Her husband is a tenor soloist, and their two beautiful children, David (8) and Angelina (2), are jewels to me. John is running a custom framing business in Oakland and Paul, who is still working his second medical degree at Wayne State Medical School, is enjoying his honeymoon with his beautiful wife Linda in Michigan.

Thank God for His wonderful providence and blessings to me so far. I appreciate Bishop Beverly Shamana, DS Rev. James Lockwood-Stewart, and all members of churches which I have served for 37 years.

*Amazing grace! how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.*

Philip M. Kim, His servant

## Jim Lockwood-Stewart

I was ordained a Deacon in what was then the Southern California-Arizona Annual Conference in 1966. Watts had burned the summer before, and the greatest escalation of the Vietnam War was underway. I saw the church as a place where people who loved justice and peace could gather, and witness, and make a difference for good.

Now, four decades later, another war has engulfed America and threatened, if not destroyed, any claim we might have had for moral leadership in the world. Racial disparities, including the functional re-segregation of our schools, make the social fabric once again vulnerable. In the California-Nevada Conference we talk of Passion in Jesus Christ and Compassion for all and I am reminded that still the church is about people of faith coming together to grow in spirit, and to make a difference in the world for good.

I am still haunted by the question George Bernard Shaw once posed, "Must a Christ die in every generation for the sake of those with no imagination?" I worry when it seems we have lost our moral compass, and have become hardened to the reality of human suffering and injustice. I am heartened when I see those who still understand Christian vocation as reaching out to those on the margins ... those who Eugene Peterson translates as "the overlooked and the ignored."

One of my early mentors in ministry was Melvin Wheatley, who served in this Conference in Fresno, Modesto, and Stockton before beginning an 18-year pastorate in Los Angeles prior to his election to the Episcopacy in 1972. He preached a sermon once about what he called "whole religion." He asserted that "whole religion is hard to sell because there is something in it to offend everybody." He helped kindle in me a passion for deeper truths and broader connections, for solutions that are both-and rather than either-or, for redemption that is found in wholeness and reconciliation.

In May of 1993 I was attending a meeting of the Western Jurisdiction Urban Network in Portland, Oregon. I was then in my eighth year of a pastorate at Westwood United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, and Odette was in her eighth year as Director of the Wesley Foundation serving UCLA. At that time, the Board of Directors of the campus ministry serving UC Berkeley was in search of a new Director to re-start the Wesley Foundation there. Odette was applying for the position. In Portland, I met then Golden Gate District Superintendent Chuck Cordes who told me of the recent discovery of a recurrence of cancer in the Reverend Tom McCoy that would make it necessary for Tom to take disability leave in August, thus leaving the appointment at Redwood City First. Odette was offered the Wesley Foundation position, and I was offered the Redwood City appointment, and our move to California-Nevada was set in motion.

It was my privilege to serve the English and Tongan congregations of Redwood City First for three years, the diverse reconciling congregation of Epworth in Berkeley for five, and for the past six years as Superintendent of the Bay View District.

I remember coming out of seminary how I and my fellow students hoped for a place in ministry where we would be able to function as some kind of ministry team, working with each other in common vision and effort. Most of us, however, went to places of relative isolation, remembering longingly the collegiality of seminary days, and hoping for some new collegial experience.

No one told me that one of the spiritual rewards of the District Superintendency was going to be to serve in a collegial ministry cluster ... working with varied and trusted colleagues on issues as visionary, mundane, joyful and painful as any I have experienced in my ministry.

I still believe that the essential nature of the church is people coming together to make a difference in the world for good. It is our shame that sometimes we distract ourselves with lesser questions, that we settle for a goal of signing up disciples rather than deploying disciples into the real work of healing, or at least comforting, the world's pain. When we're done, let us just hope that somehow, the world is better off because we have been at work in it, and that the spirit of Jesus has been kept alive in some discernable way through our efforts.

Early in my ministry, I wrote some words of benediction, which I have repeated through the years. This is still my prayer:

*May the God of all of Life go with us, to fill our minds with searching, to infuse our bodies with vitality, and to keep our spirits singing.*

*May the God of History keep us responsible to the part we play in the evolution of a deepening human community.*

*And may the Spirit of Openness and Love keep us responsive to the joys of a world of beauty, the support of relationships, and the depth of a world of personal wholeness, now and in all our days. Amen.*

## Gayle Pickrell

*At the end of the story,  
the person who arrives at the destination  
is not the same one who began the journey.*

--William Blake

My journey has been centered in the church. I grew up as a part of the Kingsburg Methodist Church – it was my second home. I was nurtured in that setting, confirmed in that family, and launched from that community.

School was different – it wasn't home. My first day of school was major separation from all that was familiar. As my mother started to leave me in that strange environment, I started crying – fear had gripped me. My first grade teacher, in her wisdom, took my hand as we toured the school, with the rest of the class behind us. I can still remember the firm grip of her hand as she guided me into a new journey.

*“With the Lord as my guide, we will rise up together, strengthen each other, courage regain.....” (words from a Strathdee hymn)*

I felt the same fear when being dropped off at the University of the Pacific. Though a small school, it was a big, confusing place for me at first. Through the church, though, I found a “home” in the Methodist Student Movement, and later as part of the Conference Leadership Youth Team, with Bob Cary as guide. With the religious studies, along with the humor and insight of Bob and the conference youth program, new and fresh vistas opened up. I am one of the last persons who went into ministry in part because of the faithful witness of Bob Cary – it just took me a little longer!

*“With the Lord as my guide, I will sing, sing forever, always a lover, seeking God's way.”*

My limited world expanded considerably when Paul Sweet and I had the privilege of traveling around the world. One of the highlights was being invited into the formerly-closed Tallin, Estonia Methodist Church. I can still remember their question: “What in the world are Methodists doing?” We saw many examples, particularly in India, of the work Methodists were doing, and I am truly grateful for being part of this world-wide church where faith is not just preached but lived!

*“With the Lord as my guide, I will work with my sister, care for my brother, bend with their pain.”*

When God's call nudged me into San Francisco Theological Seminary, that fear thing knocked on the door again. Just a day after moving with my children to San Anselmo, I started Intensive Hebrew and thought I had landed on another planet. What was I doing? Why in the world did I think this was a God-thing? But standing on that seminary hill with Mt. Tam in view was exhilarating; sitting under an oak tree during times of sadness was renewing; being challenged with new ideas in books and classes was stretching me— the call became clearer.

*“With the Lord as my guide, I will say yes to the calling, fear not the falling, trust in God's plan.”*

My first parish assignment was the Firebaugh-Mendota United Methodist Church. The people and issues of rural ministry became important to me. We differed on many things, but we loved each other. I still treasure wonderful memories from that first plunge into ordained ministry. The choices, however, were not always easy balancing between being a single parent and a full-time minister. Luckily my children did well surrounded by community.

*“With the Lord as my guide, I will see all my talents,  
accept the balance of who I am.”*

At St. Andrew’s UMC, Palo Alto, it was Refugee Ministry that became my focus, sharing that passion with my husband, John Davenport, and being guided by Shan McSpadden, Refugee Coordinator. While on a study leave, I was spent time in Kenya when my daughter was there, learning first-hand the process for initiating refugee status. The Bishop’s office there arranged for me to preach at the Masai Methodist Mission Church. What does an educated, wealthy, white clergywomen have to say to an illiterate tribal community? I used “The Lord is My Shepherd” theme, all the while knowing they could teach me far more than I could ever speak! I felt so limited in understanding their world of goats and cow dung, poverty and disease. But Methodists were there, and I was proud to be a part of that ministry.

*“With the Lord as my guide, I will walk thru the desert, rest by the water, run in the wind.”*

The last thirteen years at Christ Church United Methodist have been very rich. I have been stretched in wondrous ways in that community. Deaf Ministry, Reconciling Congregation, Habitat for Humanity, social justice issues, interfaith partnerships, and progressive Christianity have all engaged me. I have also been drawn to the beauty of nature, and love using my photography in worship.

*“With the Lord as my guide, I will stand on the mountain, drink from the fountain of love deep within.”*

All along the journey, I have planted and watered seeds, sometimes seeing them die on the vine; sometimes reaping the harvest. There have been times when joy so filled me, I could hardly utter the words, “You are a precious child of God” at the moment of baptism, or “I pronounce you husband and wife” when two persons stood before God and the gathered community, or “Your sins are forgiven,” after words of confession. What powerful affirmations, in the name of God, have been entrusted to me as a representative of God’s holy work in the world!

*“With the Lord as my guide, I will rise in the morning, praise for the dawning, beauty of day.”*

I am not the same person who began the journey. But I am being transformed every day. I am blessed. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of the Methodist tribe working in the world. As with Dag Hammarskjöld, I affirm:

**For all that has been, THANKS!**

**For all that will be, YES!**

## David Storppe

June 2007

I have loved being a United Methodist pastor. I'm very thankful for the privilege of serving some fantastic churches. We learned so much in each appointment and have precious memories of the people and experiences. We thank God.

I have often sought the wise counsel of other pastors whose judgment I trusted. For me, this is the connection at work. Sarge Wright and Franklin Scott have been my key mentors. I learned so much from their example and have deeply appreciated their friendship and encouragement through the years. They are both very special people.

In some of the churches I have served I had the joy of sharing in ministry with seminary interns and folks who were becoming local pastors. These people helped me be a better pastor and I hope I helped them too. These relationships have been rich for me and wonderful friendships have developed.

Here is a list: David Bunje, Carol Carter, Jaesung Choi, Ralph Clausen, Bob Collins, Dan Damon, Phil Esau, Sang Han, Judy Hull, John Jefferies, Linda Loessberg-Zahl, Cathy Morris, Kelley O'Connor, Dawn Pidlypchak, Kathy Reid, Hermen Shastri, Barbara Smith and Nick Valadez.

And in each church there were other staff persons who made tremendous contributions. I would especially lift up Joe Major who gave terrific leadership to the development of the second campus of the First United Methodist Church of Santa Rosa.

My biggest thanks I save for my spouse Jan, who has always been so supportive over the years. She was and is a teacher, yet she always made time to fully share in my ministry and help every way she could:

I will miss being a pastor very much. There is so much about it that has nurtured my spirit, yet the time has come for a new chapter. I trust that the years ahead will be 1 full of fresh challenges. In the metaphor of the wedding at Cana, perhaps God has saved the best wine for last. So we pop the cork of this next stage with all of the gusto and anticipation faith can muster. Future here we come!

We are thankful for the family of the annual conference and look forward to keeping involved.

(none submitted)

Janna Steed