



Connection

California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

Annual
Conference
draws on imagi-
nation, creativity
and spirituality



Bishop Beverly J. Shamana and retired Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly presided over a service of celebration for the 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women in the United Methodist Church at the 158th California-Nevada Annual Conference session, held in Sacramento June 14-17.



The two African-American bishops beamed as a chorus of over 140 clergy-women processed into the worship hall. The procession included five 14-foot puppets

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Also Inside

- Harvest Fair in Nevada
- Clergy health report
- September is "Open House Month"
- Mission Study to Palestine/Israel



Walking in
the Spirit
Bishop Beverly J.
Shamana

Where's the Bishop this month?

Cabinet
Sept. 5-8

First UMC, *Santa Rosa*
Sept. 10

Order of Deacons
Sept. 14

North San Juan
UMC, 150th
Anniversary
Sept. 17

Order of Elders
Sept. 19

Ca-Nv Foundation
Executive
Committee
Sept. 21

Spiritual Leaders
Summit,
Mt. Hermon
Sept. 26-29

Conference on
Theology of War &
Peace,
Temple UMC, San Francisco
Sept. 28

1956 - Another Look Behind Bars

*While there is a lower class, I am in it;
While there is a criminal element, I am of it;
While there is a soul in prison, I am not free.*

Debs 1983
Magnani & Wray

1956 was a banner year for setting things right in the United Methodist Church. In addition to granting justice to women by assuring their appointment along with their ordination, the church also took an unprecedented stand against the death penalty the same year. General Conference delegates approved the resolution that read "*We stand for the application of the redemptive principle to the treatment of offenders against the law, the reform of penal and correctional methods, and to criminal court procedures. We deplore the use of capital punishment.*" (Social Principles, 164G) The United Methodist Church has continued to pass resolutions against the death penalty since 1976 and has formed a broad based advocacy group against capital punishment.

On this 50th anniversary year of the United Methodist stance against the death penalty and retributive justice, the church is called to take steps that recognize and work against the systems that perpetrate legalized killing by the state.

The recent 3-day vigil against the death penalty sponsored by the Board of Church and Society and Amnesty International marked our continuing commitment to abolish the death penalty and its cruel application that is rooted in the racism and classism of our society. This gathering in July on the steps of the Supreme Court cited the historic inequities of our justice system and the biblical foundation that form our beliefs.

In support of our 50 year position, The Council of Bishops has asked every active Bishop to visit death row within the coming year. At this writing I am still waiting for clearance to visit an inmate of San Quentin for conversation and prayer and hope to be granted visiting rights soon. If any reader knows how to expedite clearance please contact my office. (See contact information at close of article.)

Even as we speak and act against legalized killing by the state, we stand with families and individuals who have lost loved ones at the hand of another and are deeply outraged and wounded by these terrible acts. Yet we are committed to seek alternative methods to restoration, accountability, and healing.

This year as we celebrate full clergy rights for ordained women gained in 1956, I would call us to remember women in prison who were included in our 1956 declaration against the death penalty. Most incarcerated women are low-income mothers of more than one child, and most are convicted of drug

addiction or of aiding in the support of a male drug offender. Drug addiction is a significant problem that disproportionately effects the poor and working class in this country. When the poor, ill, and addicted are criminalized, our networks of support and rehabilitation are severely strained and entire communities suffer.

The ills of the prison industry are not a myth or exaggeration. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics Report for 2005, the incarcerated population has increased at an average rate of 3.4 percent annually in the decade between 1995 and 2005. During this period, despite a drop in violent crime, the prison industry ballooned into a \$40 billion a year system that brings the maximum security prison industry to poor regions often with the promise of increasing their economic base. On the contrary, community health and vitality is fundamentally diseased. Fear and isolation, misunderstanding, and miseducation of the prison population becomes a silent and invisible staple of the community environment despite the promised benefits.

I give thanks for the many churches and individuals in our California-Nevada conference that are doing exceptional ministries of mercy and justice to address the plight of prisoners and their families through your efforts to make right some piece of the justice system. For your work, we say thank you and praise God. I believe that we as people of faith want to act on behalf of justice that restores and cares for victims and for wrongdoers. We are called by scripture: "*I was in prison and you came to me,*" Matthew 25. The words of Christ call us to become involved in creating alternatives to a prison justice system that scars and wounds the souls of God's beloved.

I commend to you the recent book *Beyond Prisons*, by Laura Magnani and Harmon L. Wray. Magnani is the Assistant Regional Director for Justice for the American Friends Service Committee in Oakland and Wray is the author of *Restorative Justice: Moving Beyond Punishment*, published by our General Board of Global Ministries. This book is both disturbing and challenging as it grows out of their years of advocacy, organizing, and deep concern for our flawed criminal justice system and the imperative to the faith community to show a better way.

"You have sent me to proclaim release to the captives.....to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

- Isaiah 61

Email response welcomed: bishop@calnevumc.org

YOUR SISTER IN CHRIST,

Beverly J. Shamana

Study says UM clergy among the country's least healthy

(UMNS) A UM physician who believes the denomination's clergy are among the least-healthy professional groups in the US is featured on a Web-log on Time magazine's global health update site.

Dr. Scott Morris, a physician, UMC pastor and executive director of the Church Health Center in Memphis, Tenn., said pastors and church members need to realize "that the least healthy meal you eat every week is usually at your church" when it should be the other way around.

"The church ought to lead the way, not bring up the rear. If the church has to serve fried chicken in order to draw a crowd, then there is something wrong with the message," Morris said.

Clergy health has declined to a point where attention is needed, Morris said. Fifty years ago, Methodist clergy were in the top five healthiest professions in America, and now they are in the bottom five least healthy. "We cannot have a healthy church if we don't have healthy leadership."

Noting that America has an obesity crisis, Morris said if an adjustment is made for age and gender, UMC clergy are 20 percent heavier than the general population. "That cannot be something that we are proud of; it has to be something that we do something about."

Anne Borish of the UM Board of Pension and Health Benefits said the denomination is engaging in a health and wholeness emphasis because the role of complete health - body, mind, spirit - is an important part of the ability of both clergy and lay to serve the church.

Although both groups have different stress indicators, it is harder to be a role model and serve the church if you do not have complete health, said Borish, manager of research and information for the board.

In an interview with United Methodist News Service, Morris elaborated on the piece in the Time magazine blog, titled "God Does Not Want You to Be Sick" written by Christine Gorman at http://time.blogs.com/global_health/2006/06/scottmorris.html. She describes

Morris' work with individuals who believe that sickness is a part of God's will and others who resist treatment because of the belief that God will take care of them.

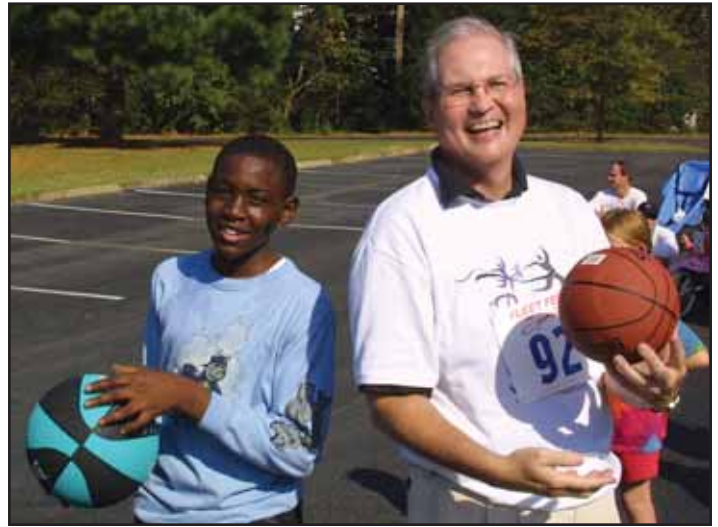
Morris said American churches today have forgotten that healing was an important part of Jesus' ministry and the ministry of the disciples. Every church needs to have a health care ministry as it has a choir and Sunday school, he said.

The Book of Acts records 19 instances of healing by the Apostles, and churches have an obligation to have a healing ministry, he said. "If a church ignores having a healing ministry, then it is really not following through with the gospel." He said each time the disciples came together, they were expected to preach, teach and heal.

The Church Health Center was founded in 1987 to "reclaim the church's biblical and historical commitment to care for our bodies as well as our spirits," Morris said.

"What we do is take care of the poor and uninsured. Our mission is all about the church and trying to get the church reconnected with what John Wesley wanted us to be connected with," a call to discipleship and healing, Morris said. The founder of Methodism called himself a physician, practiced medicine, and believed that every Methodist society should be involved in direct, hands-on health care.

The center, which also contains a clinic and a wellness center, provides low-income people with health care and encourages healthy living through a holistic ministry called the Hope Healing Center. The center receives support from the faith community and volunteer help from doctors, nurses, dentists and others. It also works with churches, especially African-American congregations, to help



Dr. Scott Morris (right) and Mathis Ellis play basketball before the annual fund-raising race for the Church Health Center.

them create health care ministries.

"We are the largest faith-based primary care clinic in the country," said Morris, who is also associate pastor at St. John's UMC, Memphis. For every dollar spent on treatment, a dollar is spent on prevention, he said, but the center is not a free clinic.

In the blog, Gorman notes that fatalism is an important issue in Morris' practice. Morris told United Methodist News Service that all too often he and other doctors at the health center see patients who think illness is God's will.

"I spend a lot of time trying to convince people that it is not (God's) will," he says. "God wants us to be healthy and to live long and vital lives."

As long as the "as long as I got King Jesus, everything is OK" mentality exists, Morris said, there are going to be problems in taking care of people. Churches, he said, need to be involved in health care domestically and globally and "in taking care of the body wherever they are." Morris said Christians have difficulty connecting the mind, body and spirit.

The General Conference has passed a number of health-related resolutions on the importance of health care for all and on some of the issues that keep people from realizing this principle. A health and wholeness committee is working to build awareness, action and advocacy for the health-related ministries across the denomination. Emphasis is on clergy wellness, malaria education, AIDS orphans and health care access.

158th session of the California-Nevada Annual Conference

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representing women in various ministries. The clergywomen joined their voices together in song for a special anthem, "Steppin' Out."

Speakers included the

Rev. Dr. Barbara

Troxell (right) ordained in 1961, who became the Conference's first female district superintendent, and the Rev. John Moore, who personally knew each of the three pioneering clergywomen first ordained in 1958. A compilation of the stories of California-Nevada clergywomen, entitled "Recollections on the Way," was published and distributed.



The conference worship services were punctuated by serialized original drama presentations. Under the direction of the Rev. Pam Abbey, **actors recreated the debate and discussion of the ordination of women during the 1956 General Conference** (bottom left). Actors portraying Paul and his scribe also portrayed some of the pitfalls that may have occurred during the writing of Philippians. A stunning **altarpiece, "Blessed Are the Peacemakers"** designed by the Rev. Don Baldwin, graced the stage of the worship space (opposite page, top left). Twenty-one pastors and spouses were memorialized beneath it.

For the first time, a special "Mission Safari"

was held off-site at the Sacramento Zoo, replacing the usual district dinners at the Conference site, and affording conferees the chance to peruse over **80 mission exhibit booths** (top and middle right) while strolling among **flamingoes** (bottom right), giraffes, lions and jaguars. At a picnic dinner at the zoo facility, representatives from the Mississippi and Louisiana Conferences were on hand to thank California-Nevada Volunteers in Mission for their work in relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina. The California-Nevada Conference has developed a special relationship with the St. Mark's UMC church in New Orleans. UVMIM Coordinator J.P. McGuire introduced two staff persons from the General Board of Global Ministries: The Revs. Paul Dirdak, Deputy General Secretary for United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and UMCOR Assistant General Secretary Kristen Sachse, both Cal-Nevada clergy now working in New York.

During plenary sessions, a controversial proposal to bill pension costs directly to the local churches was soundly defeated. A number of conferences have switched to direct billing in light of the church's new retirement system. A five-year phasing plan was also presented to ease in the transition. But instead, 60% of the conference voted to retain the current system of including pensions in the apportionments.

There were 57 resolutions considered by the Conference. Nine will be sent on to the 2008 General Conference. These resolutions would change *The Book of Discipline* sections dealing with marriage, human sexuality and sexual ori-

By Chuck Myer, with photos by Spud Hilton & Katherine Parker



Actors Robin Watson, Yreka UMC, (l) and Doris Evans, First UMC, Santa Rosa (r) recreate the debate and discussion of the ordination of women during the 1956 General Conference.



entation, and would remove current restrictions on ordaining gay clergy, celebrating homosexual unions, and funding gay caucuses. The Conference also voted to seek to prohibit discrimination in receiving members into UMC congregations, and voted to oppose controversial Judicial Council decision 1032. The complete list of recommendations and the voting results are available on the conference website at www.cnumc.org/acs/2006/recommendations.php

Bishop's Awards were presented to **Cleophas Williams** of Oakland (middle right), and **Ron and Leona Dameron** (bottom middle) of Galt.

There was also a posthumous award to lesbian activist Mary Gaddis, who died this year following an auto accident. The 5th annual Bishop Melvin Talbert Award was presented to **Rev. Philip Lawson** (bottom right). Retiring District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Suk-Chong Yu was honored with the creation of a scholarship for religious studies. Eleven other pastors retired during the Conference ceremonies.

Rather than read the list of pastoral appointments from the stage, Bishop Beverly J. Shamana joined individual district superintend-

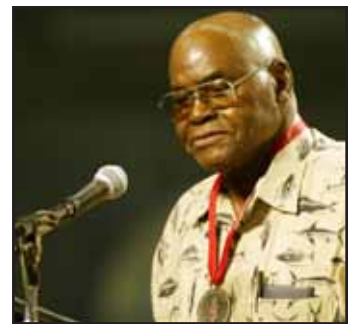


ents on a raised platform in the center of the plenary area (right). The fixing of the appointments for each district was followed by the laying on of hands upon clergy leaders.

At the closing ordination service, **pastor/artist Donna Fado-Ivery presented the message in art form** (above), creating paintings on three large silk canvasses as the audience watched. There was an audible gasp as the eyes of the "Weeping Christ" suddenly came alive under her paintbrush. **The Princess of Tonga** (top left) was also present to witness the historic ordination of three Tongan pastors (bottom left).

Membership stands at 85,925, down 1822 from the previous year. Worship attendance stands at 40,745, down 992. Church school attendance stands at 44,651, up 9755.

This year's special services – the 50th Anniversary of Full Clergy Rights for Women; Bishop Beverly Shamana's State of the conference Address and the Service of Ordination are all available as DVDs. You can purchase a DVD or download the video to your computer from the conference website. The cost for each service is 19.99 or \$35 for all three. Shipping and handling charge is \$10.50.



Bush, Sirleaf invited to address 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas

(UMNS) - The Commission on the General Conference is inviting the president of the United States and the president of Liberia - both United Methodists - to address the denomination's 2008 General Conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

"It would be an honor to hear from United Methodist heads of state," said Rev. Gail Murphy-Geiss, chairwoman of the commission. "It would be fitting to hear from President Bush as we are meeting in his native Texas. President Johnson Sirleaf is an extraordinary woman leading the effort to rebuild a country ravaged by war."

The 2008 General Conference meets April 23-May 2. About 1,000 delegates from the United States, Europe, Africa and Asia meet every four years to decide issues of church law and polity.

George W. Bush and his wife, Laura, are members of Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas, where both taught Sunday school prior to his election. He is the third Methodist to serve as U.S.

president. The others were William McKinley (1897-1901) and Rutherford Hayes (1877-1881).

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is an active member of First United Methodist Church in Monrovia, Liberia. Before her inauguration in January, she participated in a worship service led by Liberian United Methodist Bishop John Innis and Bishop Peter Weaver of Boston, who was then president of the Council of Bishops. The United Methodist Church has been active in Liberia since 1822 and is the largest Protestant denomination in the West African nation. In 1977, Liberian Bishop Bennie D. Warner was chosen to be vice president of the country.

While the Commission on the General Conference traditionally invites the president of the United States to address the assembly, this will be the second consecutive conference where two United Methodist heads of state will be invited to speak.

In 2004, President Bush and



President Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia (l) and President George W. Bush (r)

Macedonia President Boris Trajkovski were invited to address the conference. Bush did not appear, though Laura Bush sent personal greetings to the assembly. Trajkovski, who had been scheduled to address the delegates, was killed in a plane crash that February. In 1996, United Methodist Hillary Rodham Clinton, wife of then-U.S. President Bill Clinton, addressed the General Conference in Denver.



I believe when you truly embrace diversity, you embrace God.

Prepare now to welcome your September Open House Month guests.

Free downloadable resources help you reach your welcoming potential with seekers in your community. Customizable newspaper ads, door hangers, direct mail and bulletin covers are available in a variety of designs, colors and vendor formats.

All "I Believe" resources from www.MediaWarehouse.org tie-in with the "I Believe" national television messages that start airing August 28.

For questions or assistance, call Igniting Ministry toll-free at (877) 281-6535.



A Ministry of United Methodist Communications

There Is Gold.....In Old

By Areta Frost-Martin

Schurz UMC

Smith Valley Community UMC Church in Nevada shows us all that a money maker to support programs can also be ecumenical. Their proven success is golden for rural or urban churches.

Can you hold a pitchfork like Grant Wood's farmer and wife in American Gothic?

Can you carry home a pumpkin weighing 150 pounds?

Can you really find a 1938 dresser in good shape?

Can other churches match the success of the annual Harvest Auction in Smith Valley -- now 30 years old, which raises approximately \$10,000 in conjunction with the local Catholic Church? Can we have as much fun in the process which includes ecumenical contacts and is visibly expanding their congregation?

With community spirit and hard work.....I think each of our churches could have a Harvest Auction, Christmas Cupboard, or an Autumn Attic and raise awareness as well as money. Antiquities and interesting acquisitions seem to have a special place in our hearts.

And they open the doors to further communion with the donors.

Although Smith Valley UMC has 30 years of successful auctions, my first Harvest Auction was 8 years ago. Now, it is an event I never miss---- always held the third Sunday in October. Doors open at 10, after an i church service is held for the workers and early-birds.

The auctioneer is rocking and rolling by 11 a.m. In the early 1900s clapboard Community Hall, serving Smith Valley and Wellington, I have already stepped back into Norman Rockwell's Americana. I am in a time warp, somewhere in the nostalgia of the 1940's or 1950's. "How things used to be..."

I find myself in a tight knit farming community, surrounded by shocks of wheat, hay bales, wagons, old farm implements, red-cheeked children running, laughing, tagging one another, and families joshing each other while members roll up their sleeves to help -- whether 8, 18, or 80.

The zither tongued auctioneer takes

the mike and begins to extol features of hundreds of antiques and collectibles as well as commercial contributions. There are favorites of the crowd: old fashioned stoves, saddles, artwork, gilt mirrors, steamer trunks, double trees, spittoons, and vacations or donated gasoline.

Spectators (who will amble in and out for the next few hours but manage to keep 200 chairs full with latecomers around the edges of the room) must sign in for their bidding paddle. Cacophony fills the room; the auctioneer -- a human didgeridoo who never takes a breath; wives regaling recalcitrant husbands, babbling babies, booths doing brisk business around the perimeter, laughter, happy greetings between friends..... Music creates breaks for the auctioneer ---- the keyboard of Patrick Mulraney, or the accordion, piano, harmonica, or guitar of Schurz pastor- in -training, Jim Euler.

The carnival atmosphere of expectancy is maintained throughout. The atmosphere is country-lovin'....

In her sixth year of heading up the event, Chairman Helen Sturtevant (3rd generation of a local farming family) directs quietly from center stage. Helen happily predicts she will continue for 9 more years to be equal with Cousin Nancy's commitment of 15 years. Nancy is part of the St. John's Catholic Church Family. Both churches have worked in concert since the Harvest Fair's inception in 1975. Cooperation is exhibited as members join together to solicit antiques, collectibles, produce, and handicrafts. Some call on businesses for prizes or contributions. All talk to others about the church programs and objectives. Members say they have a wonderful ecumenical opportunity calling on families, as their search allows them to be welcome in households and open to sharing. Smith Valley UMC Pastor Tom Walburn beams like a proud patriarch from the gallery. He knows the proceeds will create new programs for the coming year. He greets and hugs many of his 120 parishioners who are working the room.

I leave my chair, paddle in hand, to peruse the surrounding tables and booths (with my ear on the auctioneer, and my pencil mark next to my chosen numbered items). There is a "Country Kitchen"

with local women selling fresh, local produce (pumpkins, potatoes, onions ----all super sized) and homemade baked goods. Anything remaining will be reduced to 50 cents at the end of the auction, but the "best stuff" is usually gone.

The "Junque Boutique" has thoughtful variety, is well displayed, and includes inexpensive "treasures" and a silent auction as well. You can barter at the Junque Boutique. These are often the items that did not quite meet the standard to attract bidders in the live Auction. The "Craft Boutique" features homemade crafts and raffles a handmade quilt or baskets of treats. (A handmade quilt is also auctioned in the live auction) The "Snack Bar" remains busy serving lunches and drinks. Food is always a good money-maker and the smells from the Snack Bar are enticing. Teens work side by side with their mothers. The hall is decorated with wheat shocks, scarecrows, flowers, imaginative displays and a mélange of colorful people. When the auction ends about three p.m., happy bidders line up to pay and collect their purchases. This is the time I see the inner workings. Packing commences with laughter coming from each booth. People are inviting others to church. Local teens act as "runners" throughout the day. The primary kids eagerly help with chairs and clean-up between squeals and games of tag. Families carry, pack, and clean around guests who find it hard to exit this pastoral environment. I am one of those --- loathe to leave this Norman Rockwell setting. But I must make my way home to Schurz with my 1920 Eskimo wolf skin moccasins and 1910 toaster... and find a strong man to heft a 150 pound pumpkin into my car.



Pastor Jim Euler contributes accordion music to the proceedings.

Conference News Briefs

Communications "Workshop Blitz" planned for Fall

What do you say when the media call for a news comment? Will you be ready? Those questions, and a variety of other issues related to communications for local churches will be the focus of a Sept 9 district wide workshop being held in Bay View District.

The sessions, featuring sessions on Building Better Newsletters, Media Crisis Management, How to Communicate your Church's Story, and Website Ideas and Designs, will be lead by Communications Director Jeneane Jones and a team of Communications Commission members.

The half-day workshops will be conducted at San Ramon Valley UMC. The sessions will run from 9 am to 12 noon. To register, contact Ivania Miranda at the Bay View District office at (510) 548-4694 or e-mail: bayviewdistrict@sbcglobal.net.

Cars for Camping

The UM Shasta Camp in is need of your faithful old car as a generous gift for churches, children, youth, families who will use the retreat center under construction. Car donations for the retreat center are tax deductible gifts. Arrangements have been made with a dealer who works with non-profit organizations.

Please consider donating that old, or extra, running, "smogable" cars. Contact Dave Wolf for details - 408 268-5806, or mdwolf@comcast.net

Montclair UMC donating many items

Recently the congregation of Montclair UMC merged with Trinity UMC in Berkeley and as a result, there are now a number of items available for donation to churches in need.

Any interested churches should contact David Byrens at dave@byrens.com, or Bill Blessing at bblessing@ratcliffarch.com.

For a complete list of the available items check the Instant Connection at <http://www.cnumc.org/>

Seeking a Wesleyan Theology of Peace

Methodists United for Peace with Justice invites United Methodists to participate in a National Conference on "Building a Wesleyan Theology of Peace for the 21st Century". It will take place from September 28 to October 1, 2006 at Temple United Methodist Church, San Francisco, California. There will also be a Pre-Conference Gathering for Students and Young People on September 27-28 at San Francisco State University.

The intent of the conference is to provide the United Methodist community an opportunity to gather together to discuss and think prayerfully about a Wesleyan theology of peace that meets the challenges of this new century. The conference will follow the Wesleyan model of holy conferencing. Discussion groups will be organized according to the Wesleyan Quadrilateral of Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience.

As resource persons, the conference is assembling a talented group of scholars, bishops, clergy, and laity. They include such apostles of non-violence as Mubarak Awad, Arun Gandhi, and James Lawson. Bishop Beverly Shamana will be the opening preacher. Bishop Ruediger Minor of Germany, who served 12 years in Russia, will be the closing preacher. Bishop Sharon Rader, Bishop Joseph Sprague, Bishop Melvin Talbert, and Bishop C. Dale White are also participating. Seminarians will include Richard Hays (Duke), Albert Hernandez (Iliff) Barry Penn Hollar (Shenandoah University), Diane Lobody (Methodist Theological School in Ohio) J. Steven O'Malley (Asbury), and Douglas Powe (Saint Paul School of Theology).

The conference is sponsored by Methodists United for Peace with Justice, a national association of laity and clergy, chaired by Howard W. Hallman. Conference coordinator is Rev. Schuyler Rhodes, pastor of Temple United Methodist Church in San Francisco, the site of the conference.

For further information on the conference and to register, go to <http://www.mupwj.org/conference.htm>.

Campbells honored

Saint Paul School of Theology President Myron F. McCoy announced that the recipients of the 2006 President's Award are Reverend Travis and Peggy Campbell of Fairfield. The Campbells have been faithful supporters of the seminary. Together, they have made seminary education possible for men and women called to ministry.

Rev. Travis Campbell received his Master of Divinity degree from Saint Paul School of Theology in 1964. He then moved to Fremont California where he organized a new church start. Saint Paul Methodist Church began in the storefront of a shopping center and had 175 members upon Campbell's departure. He went on to serve Lemoore, Exeter, Park Presidio, St. Luke's, Santa Cruz First, Vallejo-Wayside, and Ceres before retiring from the California-Nevada Conference. He served in both inner-city and rural churches with his longest terms of service in San Francisco and Santa Cruz. While serving in San Francisco, the couple took in two foster sons, George, 11, and Nickolas, 8, and later adopted them.



Saint Paul School of Theology President Myron F. McCoy (right) presents the 2006 President's Award to Travis and Peggy Campbell of Fairfield.

Team for Palestine event needed

The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) is seeking to build a team of six or more persons from each annual conference to join in a GBGM educational and advocacy event. They will travel in Palestine and Israel January 15-26, 2007. The price will be approximately \$1000. For a brochure, contact: Rev. Becky Goodwin of the UMC of Rancho Cordova. Phone (916) 635-4242 or e-mail begood@avantac.com.

Conference News Briefs

Tongan royal couple and UM driver killed in Bay Area

The Tongan community in the Bay Area and abroad is mourning the loss of two members of Tonga's royal family – killed July 5 in a traffic accident in Menlo Park.

According to San Bruno police the car carrying 56-year-old Prince Tu'ipelehake and his 46-year-old wife Princess Kaimana was hit by a teen driver racing his vehicle on Highway 101. The couple was returning from an evening reception when their car was clipped and rolled several times. Their driver, 36 year old Vinse Hefa, a member of San Bruno United Methodist Church, was also killed.

The Prince and Princess of Tonga had been in the Bay Area to gather feedback from Tongan communities in the U.S. to promote political reform in their country. Prince Tu'ipelehake, who was chair of the National Political Reform Committee from Tonga, is the nephew of King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV.

"This is a great loss for the Tongan people everywhere, said Kalafi Moala, publisher of the Taimi 'O Tonga (Tonga Times) newspaper and a member of Laurel UMC in Oakland. "The prince was called the people's prince. Of all the members of the royal family he was the only who could connect with the common people and their cause. That is the reason he was part of the reform movement--to give people more power in political government. They were the connection between the people and the royal family."

The Prince's eldest sister, Princess Mele Siu'ilikutapu Fotofili may be the person who could step in to her brother's shoes, according to Mr. Moala. Princess Siu'ilikutapu, a woman of faith and a strong Methodist, attended annual conference session held in Sacramento last month. She is credited with introducing her brother to Methodism and Christianity. Both the prince and his wife had been active lay preachers, speaking at churches around the Bay Area each time they visited. When Princess Siu'ilikutapu learned of the accident she was in Salt Lake City visiting family and returned immediately to the Bay Area.

Basic Lay Speaking Class - In Tongan

The Golden Gate District, in August, is offering a Basic Lay Speaking class in the Tongan language to anyone in the California-Nevada Annual Conference.

It will be taught on two successive Saturdays - August 19 and 26 - at Hayward UMC in Hayward (East Bay, southeast of San Francisco). It will be taught by the Rev. Afuhia Akolo, pastor of Fale Maama UMC of Oakland.

The class is sponsored by the Golden Gate District Committee on Lay Speaking and Leadership. There will be a modest fee (\$10 or \$15).

Taking the Basic Lay Speaking course is a prerequisite to become either a local church or a certified lay speaker. But the class is open to all lay people, whether you intend to go on to official lay speaking status or not. Youth are especially encouraged to attend. This class gives an overall view about many ways to be in service to your church. For a flyer, contact the Golden Gate District Office at goldengateumc@sbcglobal.net.

Sage-ing Circle

Beginning July 12, 2006, and continuing every second and fourth Wednesday through November, 10-12 noon, Calvary UMC, a Sage-ing Circle course will be held for any interested participants. This course, based on the From Age-ing to Sage-ing Work of Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, covers in 10 sessions many aspects of healthy and positive aging, including Spiritual Eldering, The Cycles of Our Lives, Forgiveness, Facing Our Mortality, Conscious Living, Inner Wisdom, Elders as Blessing Givers and Healers of the Earth. From 11:30-12, a speaker from a different ethnic group will give that culture's perspective on aging. This program is co-sponsored by San Jose District and Senior New Ways, and is funded by a grant from the General Board of Discipleship. For more information, contact Judith Pruess-Mellow, Executive Director, Senior New Ways at 650-209-1119, www.seniornewways.org, judith-pm@seniornewways.org, or 655 Magdalena Ave., Los Altos, CA 94024

Plan now to attend Spiritual Leaders Summit

Registration continues for the upcoming Spiritual Leaders Summit. This year the Summit will return to the beautiful Santa Cruz Mountains and the Mount Herman Christian Retreat Center. The Spiritual Leaders Summit will be Sept. 26-29, 2006. The featured speaker will be Dr. Leonard Sweet, the E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at Drew University. The Worship leader will be Rev. Robert Johnson, Associate Pastor of the Wondsor Village UMC in Houston TX.

For more information contact Jennifer McGrath at (916) 374-1506. To register, visit <http://www.cnumc.org/umNews/instantConnection/2006-03-13/SLS%20postcard.pdf>

Conference DVDs

The following DVDs from Annual Conference are available for purchase: Clergy Rights for Women, the Bishop's Message, and the Ordination Service in a 3 DVD package for only \$35.00.

You can also purchase Windows Media Video 320 x 240 downloads of the following from the Conference website (www.cnumc.org) for \$19.99 each:

1. Bishop's Message: Bishop Beverly Shamana at the 2006 Annual Conference Session
2. Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Full Clergy Rights for Women
3. Ordination and Worship Service taped live at the 2006 ACS
4. Stewardship for Mission taped live in Sacramento with Rev. Paul Dirdak (Feb. 2006)

Order by check to "Media in Motion" for \$19.99 per DVD (or \$35.00 for all three Annual Conference Events) plus \$10.50 S&H for orders up to \$50, and \$15.50 S&H for orders \$50-\$100. Send check care of the "Conference Office" (PO Box 980250, West Sacramento, CA 95798). Please allow 3-6 weeks for processing and shipping. For faster delivery, please order on the conference website (www.cnumc.org).

The Music Stops for Homeless Jam

At the jam session every Wednesday afternoon for four years a joyful noise emanated from the instruments of homeless musicians. Now the music is silenced. All the electric guitars, keyboards, a violin and other equipment were stolen in a burglary. The regular musicians are devastated, but none more so than Lonnie.



Lonnie Smith

I met Lonnie Smith five years ago when I first started the homeless ministry in Friendship Park, Loaves & Fishes. He was living in and out of shelters, hotel rooms, wherever he could lay his body. Lonnie, dressed in black from his cowboy boots to his black leather cap wanted desperately to play his guitar, but there was no place suitable at Loaves & Fishes. Together Lonnie and I talked to the pastor at the nearby North Sacramento United Methodist Church. It became our jam session home.

Lonnie's life turned around from that moment on.

He was baptized and joined the church attending every Sunday, often in a three piece suit and tie. He got the help he needed with his mental disabilities, went through a transitional housing program, set-up his own apartment, and took on the jam session as his job. When Lonnie received a large disability back payment,

he spent much of it on electric guitars, amplifiers and sound equipment for the jam session. Keyboards, horns, drums, and violins came as donations from people who heard about the Side-By-Side jam sessions. The weekly gathering not only provided a place for Lonnie's spirit to come alive, but it offered a healthy, stable environment for others with mental health issues, in addition to the homeless men and women transported from Friendship Park in my small car. It became a meeting place for diverse people, using the common language and love of music.

The loss of the instruments from the break-in at the church is a major set-back for the homeless jam session. But we are determined not to give up. Side-By-Side asks for donations of instruments of any type, preferably in working condition, so we can start the music again.



Smith, Paul Vercoe, member of North Sac UMC, and Paula Lomazzi from Friendship Park.

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Director of Communications Jeneane Jones

Editor Chuck Myer

Layout Katherine Parker

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Connection accepts articles and letters to the editor. We will publish items on a space-available

basis and may edit submissions for length, content and clarity. We may quote from letters or e-mails in preparing articles. Submissions must include the writer's name, city of residence, e-mail address if available, phone, UM church affiliation, and title.

CONTACT INFORMATION will be published at the discretion of the editor. Please include relevant email and website addresses.

CHECK THE CONFERENCE WEBSITE www.cnumc.org for a downloadable version of Connection.

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A Missionary's Notebook

Rev. Linda Kelly

Linda Kelly directs the Side-by-Side Spiritual Companions program as Conference Missionary to Loaves & Fishes. Her work is supported entirely by donations (Advance Special #811). Phone: (916) 443-4362; revlinda@sbglobal.net.



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Oh, those clergywomen!



Editor's
Desk
Chuck Myer

Most United Methodists are used to only seeing one of them at a time, usually as an alternative to the traditional male pastor. But when 140 of the Conference's current female clergy and diaconals all donned robes and processed in together into the worship space on June 15, filling an entire riser, the effect was stunning.

The worship service that followed will surely be an Annual Conference highlight for years to come. The women formed an awesome choir of

140 sopranos and altos and sang the special anthem, "Steppin' Out" for those in attendance. The 14-foot puppets that processed in with them were a striking metaphor for the presence of clergywomen among us. The presence of Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly on the stage, along with current Bishop Beverly J. Shamana, lent even more credence to the historic nature of the gathering.

Though in a sense it was mandated by a 2004 General Conference resolution, the special service was an uplifting moment for our Conference and it finally put the spotlight on our clergywomen, without whom we would now have a lot of trouble filling pulpits. A document called "Recollections Along the Way: Clergywomen in Full Connection in the California-Nevada Annual Conference, 1956-2006," compiled by Bob Olmstead and Odette Lockwood-Stewart, was distributed. It contains many moving personal reflections by clergywomen in our conference. The program for the special worship service at conference also includes lists of clergywomen by ordination year, as well as lists of local pastors, deacons and deaconesses who served even before the 1956 General Conference.

Clergywomen have been part of Methodism since John Wesley licensed Sarah Crosby to preach in 1761. An article in our Daily Connection reminded us that in 1889 Ella Niswonger became the first woman ordained by the United Brethren Church, one of our predecessor churches, and women were ordained in the Methodist tradition as early as the late 1800s. But it was the May 4, 1956, General Conference vote for full clergy rights that forever changed the face of ordained clergy. At that point, any woman in full connection and in good standing would receive an appointment. Nationwide, there are 16 active female bishops, and about 9,500 clergywomen. That's about 20% nationwide, and our Conference's percentage is higher than that.

Under the direction of clergywoman Pam Abbey, a group of actors recreated the debate and dialogue from the 1956 General Conference. One poignant moment came when one of the delegates "warned" that if we allow women to be ordained, we'd also eventually have to let them become district superintendents and bishops!

At dawn on the Saturday morning of each Annual Conference for the last 16 years, I've shared breakfast with a very special support group. Those of us who are married to clergywomen get together once a year to compare notes and support each other in our unique lifestyle. Special guests this year included Walter Woods, the bishop's husband, and Gene Boutilier, the newlywed husband of pioneering Cal-Nevada cler-



140 member choir of clergywomen during the celebration at Annual Conference Session.

gywoman Barbara Troxell, who spoke eloquently at the 50th anniversary service.

Although the mood of this group is always upbeat (the group's unofficial name is "the Unpaid Lays"), the real intent is to strengthen clergy marriages, an area in which many pitfalls exist and not a lot of support is available. If we truly wish to honor our clergywomen, we need to make sure they have the infrastructure necessary to support their callings and the fabric of their daily lives.

On the very next day, the Sunday after our Conference, another historic event was taking place at the Conference of the Episcopal Church in Columbus, Ohio. Katharine Jefferts Schori, 52, Episcopal bishop of Nevada, was elected Presiding Bishop, the first woman to hold the top post in the church's nearly 400-year history.

I guess you could say the Episcopal Church was 20 years behind us in that regard, since it has been just 30 years since it has allowed women to become priests and bishops. The UMC doesn't have an office corresponding to their "presiding bishop," but Bishop Janice Riggle Huie of Texas was elected last November to take office as president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops, the first woman to be so selected.

Jefferts Schori is a multilingual airplane pilot and former oceanographer who only 13 years ago was an intern at Trinity Cathedral in Sacramento. She was our guest preacher at our Annual Conference in 2002. She also preached and served as co-officiant during our ordination. So some of our clergywomen had Jefferts Schori's hands laying on their heads as they were ordained into what is becoming a new "Endless Line of Splendor"—clergywomen in the Cal-Nevada Conference.

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The UMNS and the Episcopal News Service contributed background for this report.

NorCal
Ecumenical
Media
Resource
Center
Pat Strandburg

1675 Winchester Blvd.
Campbell CA 95008
(408) 378-2532
Fax: (408) 378-2652
emrcvideos@aol.com
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Enjoy a Video/DVD summer!

For Children

The *Little Dogs on the Prairie (VCV-513)* series uses clever dialogue and cartoon animation to communicate values to children. Each session features a song and is based on a Scripture. Each of the 3 videos has 2 or 3 sessions.

- 1 In *Pride, Prejudice, Fudge* kids learn important lessons about prejudice, pride, and the folly of holding a grudge.
- 2 In *A Little Love and a Little off the Top* kids learn the dangers of vanity and that life isn't always fair.
- 3 In *Lyin', Cheatin', and a Hot Lollipop* kids learn important lessons about lying, cheating, and stealing.

For Youth and Adults

NOOMA (DVG-512) is an exciting new series with Rob Bell. Each DVD teaches on issues that we care about

and want to talk about and emphasizes some aspect of each person's relationship with God. Some of the topics presented are suffering, God's love, listening for God, trust, forgiveness, God's faith in us, and dealing with grief.

For Adult Study

From the *Listening for God series, Contemporary Literature and the Life of Faith (DVG-808)* is a collection of contemporary stories and essays which help readers to investigate how life and faith merge in new ways and places. This program includes eight selections, brief author profiles, and reflection questions. Some of the authors included are: Frederick Buechner, Alice Walker, Garrison Keillor, John Updike, Anne Tyler, and Kathleen Norris.

Mission for Young Adults

Sierra Service Project's Young Adult Mission Project is an intense and exciting service experience. It combines the power of a "traditional" SSP youth mission project, with the energies and maturity of the 18- to 30-year-old age group. The program aims to help participants grow in Christian leadership through service and offers an opportunity for young adults to explore their personal spiritual journey.

The 2006 edition of SSP's Young Adult Service Program will take place in Los Angeles from July 30 through August 5. This will be an exciting, urban immersion experience that will combine traditional SSP home repair with experiences of the diverse, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic mix of Los Angeles and bring us closer to the issues and reality of urban life today.

For more information about this summer's Young Adult Mission Project and information about how Young Adults can be in ministry in Honduras next summer, check out our website at www.sierraserviceproject.org

Job Opportunities listed on www.cnumc.org

Visit the Conference Web Calendar for information about upcoming events. Follow the link at the top of the conference homepage www.cnumc.org

We share in the joy of the election of Bishop Katharine Jefferts-Schori to her new position as the 26th presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. We remember with fondness her powerful sermon as our guest ordination preacher in 2002. Her responsibility for the Episcopal Church in Nevada brought a close ecumenical connection that we treasured through our churches in the same state.

- Bishop Beverly J. Shamana

CA-NV Annual Conference, United Methodist Connection

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