



# Connection

California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church



September is Open House Month for the United Methodist Church and a time for Sunday school classes to reach out for new members. The United Methodist Board of Discipleship has prepared a list of ideas to help plan for this fall using the theme of Open House to generate enthusiasm for Christian education in congregations. UMNS file photo by Mike DuBose.

## Spruce up for “open house” during September

(UMNS)- Spruce up the place and put out the welcome mat - the United Methodist Church is having an “open house” during the month of September.

Igniting Ministry, the denomination’s national television and welcoming campaign, works with bishops to encourage congregations to celebrate United Methodist Open House Month each September. This year, Sunday school is joining the welcoming wagon.

“Sunday School continues to be a fruitful and powerful time of forming faith and building friendships,” said

Harriett Olson, senior vice president with the United Methodist Publishing House. “It’s easy to forget that we need to offer regular invitations to children, youth and adults who are not already part of a class.”

September is Open House Month for the United Methodist Church and a time for Sunday school classes to

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## Walking in the Spirit

Bishop Beverly J. Shamana

## Where's the Bishop this month?

Ministry Staff  
Oct. 3

Cabinet  
Oct. 4-6

Pine UMC 120th  
Anniversary  
San Francisco  
Oct. 8

CA-NV Foundation  
Full Board  
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Santa Clara UMC  
160th Anniversary  
Oct. 21

Bay View Outward  
Bound  
Oct. 24-27

Council of Bishops  
Mozambique  
Oct. 29-Nov. 10

# Pressing Toward the Goal

## DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN CHRIST:

It seems only a few days ago that I wrote about our financial giving and the “easy” button (April '06). The July apportionment report from the General Council on Finance and Administration prompts me to speak with you again about our giving.

The good news is that United Methodists are very generous people. The Annual Conference Mission Safari was a celebration of that generous spirit. Flood Relief Directors from the Louisiana and Mississippi Conferences thanked us for sending a total of 847,916 in 2005 and 2006 for Katrina relief. This is over and above our apportionment giving.

If we use the example of Paul in Philippians 3: “Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own.”

I am convinced that we can go beyond last year's total of 60.65% and reach the higher goal.

## Bishop speaks to clergywomen gathering in Chicago

(UMNS) - Over 1,500 United Methodist clergywomen from around the globe went to Chicago Aug. 13-17 to hear sermons from bishops, participate in a banquet celebrating the 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women, and purchase books by women who've written about women in ministry.

Each participant in the 2006 International United Methodist Clergywomen's Consultation, including at least 25 from California-Nevada, attended four of 42 workshops on a host of topics, including building relationships between lay and clergywomen; peacemaking in a multi-faith world; balancing parenthood and pastoral ministry; and learning how to bring passion, purpose, prayer and play into church.

A keynote speech was followed by remarks from Bishop Beverly Shamana, who urged the women to use the power of love to build “path-

ways of peace” in the world. Using the image of shoes to respond to Ross' message about love and how it should be used to help others, Bishop Beverly Shamana said women of color are called to be trailblazers. She urged them to put on whatever shoes are necessary to assist them in preparing pathways of peace.

Let's take a spiritual leap of faith as each church sends in DOUBLE its normal giving for September, October, November, and December. We will know God's blessing in a powerful way as we touch countless lives with the good news of Jesus through our apportionment giving.

The books for 2006 will close on January 16, 2007. Let us reach for this higher calling like our brother Paul who reminds us with these words “...but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.”

YOUR SISTER IN CHRIST,

*Beverly J. Shamana*

Citing Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the bishop urged the women “to pay attention to our feet because we are going to be called to walk in places where we never thought we would walk before.” Those places, she said, might not “smell too sweet,” but she encouraged the women to be alert, spiritually discerning and ready to act in preparing those peaceful pathways.

*(Watch for more coverage in next month's issue.)*

# African American United Methodist leaders head to hurricane region to work and be a presence of healing

By Jeneane Jones

Director of Communications

*Note: Communications Director Jeneane Jones traveled to New Orleans July 20-26 with National Black Staff Forum of the United Methodist Church to take part in the post hurricane volunteer effort in Louisiana and Mississippi.*

"If you have it in your church, we will need it in our churches to be vital." The Rev. Martha Orphe, a dark brown skinned, lithe woman, with Egyptian-style, shoulder-length braids, stands behind a conference room podium at the Intercontinental Hotel. She is trying to convey the wish lists the United Methodist Churches in the South Gulf region of the U.S. are cataloging, on the long journey to regain life after Katrina and Rita. The needs cover everything from bibles and hymnals, computers and printers, to refrigerators, furniture, silverware and drywall.

Orphe is the mission zone director for the greater New Orleans area. She is in charge of helping some 45 churches in the parishes surrounding the levees to redefine ministry in a post hurricane world where 80% of the citizens have lost homes, where 11 months after Katrina and Rita churches still sit mired in muck and mold, and where pastors are relearning that the church is about community building.

Nearly three dozen African American staff representing national boards, agencies, commissions and conferences from around the United

Methodist connection gathered in New Orleans under the auspices of National Black Staff Forum July 20-22 to hear from Orphe and others who have been in the trenches since August 29, 2005. Some were emotionally spent though spiritually strong, "We can't do this kind of living without God." Others spoke about the loss of homes, church members and belongings with the rhythmic repetition of a sad song, sung too often.

A question was asked, "What is the state of United Methodist ministry in New Orleans?" The answer, "Like everything else it is hurt, broken, and rebuilding," says Orphe.

Andrew J. Douglas, a towering, silver haired pastor working with the St Matthews, Algiers and Boise United Methodist Churches answered another way. Rising, he spoke about losing two of his best members, of living 19 days in a shelter to escape the hurricane's violence, and traveling to Texas with a borrowed shirt and tie to deliver their eulogies. He lightly touched the shoulder of one from his congregation and added, "The District Superintendent offered me a church in Shreveport, but I wasn't going anywhere," His bass voice effortlessly changes to a preacher-timbre, recalling the 14 members he had in church after the evacuation ended. "I told them to start calling. We would have church on that next Sunday. We had 300 when I got back. Nurture, outreach and worship are vital. When our churches are back, the people will come back."

Across town in mission zone 6,

## McGuire resigns

J. P. McGuire, Conference Coordinator of Volunteers in Mission, has resigned his position effective October 15. McGuire's family lives in South Carolina,

and he has expressed a desire to return there to be with his wife and family after managing the distance since 2001 when he joined the Conference Council on Ministries program staff.



J.P. McGuire

In a July 14 announcement, Bishop Shamana called McGuire "a vital, visionary leader."

"Our Conference vision, 'Passion in Jesus Christ and Compassion for all,'" stated the bishop, "has been clearly embodied through the efforts of J.P.'s witness and work to strengthen the ministries of our UMVIM partnership with West Angola Annual Conference and other significant outreach efforts. Of particular note is the tremendous response of relief effort teams to the Gulf States which have been so strongly championed by J.P. and the UMVIM Committee. By your participation and support, many of you have been transformed in your discipleship."

Rev. Linda Wiberg, Director of Connectional Ministries and supervisor to program staff, along with the Conference Council on Ministries Personnel Committee, will address matters related to transition and succession.

McGuire says, "I believe these next few months can be a time of exciting exploration, and that we can all work together to make this transition the smoothest possible."

## UMC membership continues decline

(UMNS) - For the first time since the 1930s, the U.S. membership of the United Methodist Church has dropped to just under 8 million.

A preliminary report from the denomination's General Council on Finance and Administration, released June 21, shows that total U.S. membership dropped to 7,989,875 in 2005. The final statistical report will be completed in the fall.

Membership decreased 1.05 percent in 2005. Earlier this spring, a GCFA report released in April, "The State of Our Connection," noted that U.S. membership had decreased by 0.81 percent, to about 8.07 million in 2004. Membership had declined annually since the formation of the denomination in 1968.

Church attendance in 2005 was 3.34 million, the lowest level in reported history, according to GCFA. Attendance had decreased by 1.63 percent from 2004 to 2005.

The trend is different for member-

ship outside the United States.

According to information released by GCFA in April, lay membership in the central conferences - regions of the church in Africa, Asia and Europe - increased more than 68 percent between 1995 to 2004. As of 2004, the non-U.S. membership stood at 1.88 million.

According to Scott Brewer, GCFA Office of Analysis and Research, the initial data for 2005 is incomplete, but "in past years these reports have provided a relatively accurate prediction of the final statistical totals."

Although some of the denomination's annual (regional) conferences are still meeting, GCFA had set an earlier deadline this year for preliminary statistical reports from the conferences. The information was then shared with the leadership of the United Methodist Council of Bishops.

Bishop Scott Jones of Wichita, Kan., told United Methodist News Service that the council already has

significant initiatives under way to reverse the membership decline. "The council has been aware of the decline for some time," he said. "We take this news very seriously."

Jones is a member of the council's plan team for implementation of its focus on "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."

A major emphasis has been placed on starting new congregations in the United States, allocating resources at both the annual conference and national levels, according to Jones. Pastors and district superintendents also are being trained "to strengthen our existing churches."

Outreach to Hispanics and immigrant groups in America is a focus, and the Council of Bishops recently held a summit on new church starts for general agency and some conference church development staff members.

## September is open house month

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reach out for new members. The United Methodist Board of Discipleship has prepared a list of ideas to help plan for this fall using the theme of Open House to generate enthusiasm for Christian education in congregations.

"An Open House can remind the congregations to do just that. It can also be a platform for starting new classes and building on the congregation's work in on-going faith formation," she added.

According to the Igniting Ministry Web site, "Hosting special events, worship festivals or making other efforts to welcome those in your community present perfect opportunities to intentionally recognize Christ in everyone — and to remember that guests may look for Christ in us."

Carol Krau, a director at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship, has prepared some planning ideas for celebrating open houses for Sunday school:

- \* Select a date in September to celebrate Open House Month and get the date on the church calendar.

- \* Plan the open house to introduce members of the congregation and community to the Sunday school classes and small groups available to them.

- \* Encourage members of the congregation to invite friends to the open house celebration and to Sunday school.

- \* Identify one or more new classes that can begin in September.

- \* Celebrate the ministry of Christian education with resources

available at [www.gbod.org/education](http://www.gbod.org/education).

- \* Remember that Christian education happens in many settings on any day of the week.

"Open House may be on Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon, Wednesday evening or another time when congregations gather for worship and study," Krau said. "Consider scheduling some classes at more than one time so more people can participate. Schedule some classes or small groups in homes or other community locations."

September is not the only time to provide entry points to Sunday school, Olson pointed out. Some other ideas are to provide opportunities during Lent, Advent or as a New Year's resolution.

## Out-of-court agreement reached in Carson-Hull suit

*A UMNS Report by Larry Hygh, Jr. Communications Director, California-Pacific Annual Conference.*

LOS ANGELES— California United Methodists have reached an out-of-court agreement to resolve a sexual abuse lawsuit stemming from the actions of a former pastor during the 1970s.

The denomination's two regional bodies in California, joined by two congregations, have agreed to pay plaintiffs \$6.7 million to end the suit. It was brought by three men who claimed their former pastor, Gary Carson-Hull, abused them in the 1970s when he was associate pastor at Los Altos UMC in Long Beach.

Carson-Hull was immediately dismissed from the ministry when the parents of one of the plaintiffs complained to the church's senior pastor

in 1979. The suits were brought after the California legislature reopened the state's statute of limitations for these kinds of cases in 2003.



**Bishop Mary Ann Swenson**

According to officials of the conferences, insurance will pay most of the \$6.7 million settlement costs.

"We hope resolution of this lawsuit brings healing to the victims who have suffered since the 1970s," said Bishops Beverly Shamana and Mary Ann Swenson, leader of the Pasadena-based California-Pacific Conference in a joint statement issuing a public apology on behalf of the conferences

and churches.

"In the decades since the incidents in this case occurred, we have implemented a number of policies and procedures designed to safeguard those who come into our churches," the bishops said. "We are continually looking for ways to create a safer environment in all of our church programs and facilities."

In addition to our Conference and the California-Pacific Annual Conference, the other defendants in the case include Los Altos UMC in Long Beach, and Walnut Creek UMC.

Carson-Hull was employed as a youth leader at Walnut Creek in a work-study capacity while attending seminary at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, in the early 1970s. After seminary, he was appointed to the California-Pacific position in Long Beach.

## United Methodist event encourages dialogue on sexual ethics

**By Marta W. Aldrich**

*United Methodist News Service*

It's been called the problem that's hard to name and the sin that pastors don't like to discuss.

But clergy sexual misconduct does happen, as does inappropriate sexual behavior by staff and lay persons within the church, its agencies and seminaries.

When hidden under shrouds of secrecy and shame, such sins can destroy lives, tear apart families, split churches, bankrupt denominations and undermine the work of the church.

During a July 26-29 United Methodist sexual ethics conference, more than 250 clergy and lay people spoke openly and honestly about "sex in the church" in an effort to help the church prevent sexual misconduct and



**Clergy and lay people gather to speak about "sex in the church" at the "Do No Harm" conference. Dr. Karen McClintock is at left.** *A UMNS photo by Larry Nelson.*

to intervene and offer healing and "justice love" when it occurs.

Called "Do No Harm," the event focused on encouraging more dialogue within the church about both healthy and unhealthy sexual behavior, resisting the temptation to become secretive when sexual misconduct by pastors and church staff occurs, and

extending God's grace-with accountability-to all sexual sinners, even those who have been called and set apart for ministry and licensed by the church as clergy.

"We are working together to make our church a safer place, a more comfortable place, a holy place," said Garlinda Burton, chief executive of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, which sponsored the event along with the denomination's Board of Discipleship, Board of Higher Education and

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## Drama in ACS Worship Enters New Realm

By Bruce Pettit

*Conference Communications Commission*

One of the biggest hits of the California-Nevada Annual Conference Session (ACS) in 2006 was the three one-act plays during worship services, performed by the Rev. Scott Wylie of Aldersgate UMC in San Rafael and the chair of Aldersgate's worship committee, Joan Solana.

The writer and director was the Rev. Pamela Abbey, a clergy member of the conference who wrote the three plays exclusively for this ACS. She borrowed from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians. Wylie and Solana performed the three plays again for the Aldersgate worship service on Sunday, August 13.

Aldersgate had informed Abbey that it has long been interested in

"spicing worship with dramas."

Abbey had known Solana through the conference network of drama people. Solana wanted to be part of anything Abbey did at ACS. Solana, who would play St. Paul's scribe Tertius, needed a Paul in close proximity to rehearse.

"Joan simply informed me that I was it. End of discussion," said Wylie. "I was glad to say yes." He said he was only leery of the time commitment. Wylie says he spent "countless hours" learning his lines — right up to going on stage at ACS. He had taped his lines on a cassette and then listened to the tape, and repeated, while driving.

Steve Schlichter, the lay member to ACS from Crystal Springs UMC in San Mateo, called the presentation at



Scott Wylie and Joan Solana appear as Tertius and Paul.

ACS impressive with its high quality — adding that usually drama in worship has a "vague message and actors are under-rehearsed. Such was not the case this time." (Schlichter has been the production manager of the Crystal Springs Players. Founded in 1993, its productions, with largely secular themes, have received rave reviews in the secular press.)

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## Ordination a meaningful ceremony for participants

By Chuck Myer

*Connection editor*

It's no coincidence that the ordination service is often scheduled to be the climactic moment of Annual Conference. Its traditional pageantry and reverence becomes a focal point for the week's activities by spotlighting ministry "where the rubber meets the road."

This year's ordination service included 29 participants. One new elder in full connection, Florante "Dante" Tangonan, says, "As a newly ordained pastor of multiple careers, this was my one-in-a-lifetime moment. I just wished my parents were still alive to witness a 'fruit of their faith.'"

"The service of ordination was quite different for me," adds Tangonan, "being an active participant instead a spectator in the congrega-

tion. It will be something I will cherish all my life. The worship planners used their creative energies 'to the max,' including the dramatized scripture and the 'sermon-through-painting' from the initial stroke of the brush on canvas to the completed project." (This year's service included the artistic talents of Rev. Donna Fado Ivery.)

Rev. Tangonan adds that he thinks the change in day and time was a significant factor in the success of the event. "The DVD has captured the highlights for posterity, which I joyously shared with my family."

Mary Lee Sheffer, who was commissioned towards Elder's Orders, says, "I was nervous about it beforehand. It felt like a big step, like getting married. The Bishop had preached about our call as Christians to empty ourselves to make room, make way for Christ. And at the

commissioning/ordination rehearsal Dave Bunje reminded us that ministry is on-going opportunity to empty ourselves for Christ. That was, for me, God's voice inviting me to continue to follow Jesus. I don't have to have it all figured out, I just need to follow.

"The service was very beautiful. Several of my friends were there to support me; my husband stood behind me as the Bishop commissioned me; I was moved to tears. Our daughter said later, 'Mom, I could hear you sniffing into the Bishop's microphone.'"

"I feel more confident now," adds Sheffer. Every step of confirmation by the Body of Christ blesses and strengthens my sense of call."

Changes in categories of membership have recently been put in place. This year, 11 new elders were ordained, and 15 were commissioned toward Elders' Orders.

## A presence of healing in hurricane region

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the Rev. James Haynes believes the floodwaters brought a sense of renewal to his community. He speaks with pride of the former white and black churches, once separated in worship, now post-Katrina, a symbol of connectionalism. “[With several of our churches damaged], we indicated we wanted our churches to worship together. Now it’s one of the strengths we have, that we all worship at the same time.” In addition, Haynes’ mission zone has decided to set aside Arabi UMC for housing for work team volunteers. The church, nicknamed the Arabi Hilton, can house 85 people. At neighboring Hartzell UMC in the lower 9th ward, serious flood damage has prevented worship services, but people want to maintain the UMC presence in the community. Soon it will be available to host up to 125 volunteers who come to rebuild.

“This is our new frontier of mission. We are rebuilding from the ground up,” says the Rev. Orphe. “And it is not just the structures that need rebuilding. We need help bringing our people back. We need churches to partner with us. We need people to come down to do Vacation Bible School, Discipleship training.” For Orphe and others, the list of needs is as vast as the waters that enveloped the Louisiana region.

Orphe pointed out that damaged churches in the hurricane hit areas cannot look towards United Methodist Committee on Relief for assistance with rebuilding. “UMCOR funds can’t help us,” said Orphe. UMCOR’s Katrina Aid Today initiative delivers services to Katrina survivors using federal funds which cannot be used for church recovery. In response, the United Methodist Council of Bishops has launched a special church-wide appeal to help rebuild the churches lost to the storms—Katrina Church Recovery Appeal (#818-001). But,

with a disaster so far-reaching, it is imperative that an effective response have varied resources.

Participants at the two day session divided their time between strategizing in small groups, and hearing the testimony of pastors and lay persons from around the state. They discussed ways to reconnect churches in the region with the denomination’s resources. They listened as pastors shared, “We don’t need clothes. We need expertise to help find ways to strengthen our congregations. We need help finding where our people have gone.”

The Summit grew out of a compelling challenge made at last February’s national meeting of Black Methodists for Church Renewal, according to Diane Johnson, executive secretary for the Office of Urban Ministries at the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries and president of the National Black Staff Forum. “We wanted to encourage African Americans to be a more visible presence among the countless volunteers that are helping rebuild the region.”

The Rev. Connie Thomas heads up the Louisiana Conference volunteer effort. “We need partnership churches of color to be on the list. We are grateful to all who come to work with us. But we need to see the faces that look like us too. They represent our strength and a unique understanding of what we are going through.” Volunteer work teams can partner with the mission zone churches and learn more about the relief effort by visiting [www.laumcstormrelief.com](http://www.laumcstormrelief.com). You may also sign up to partner by calling (877) 345-5193. Thomas says it is important to note that the Conference’s volunteer effort focuses on the people and the churches. “There are less than 50 churches that need to be rebuilt and repaired. We

have more than 200,000 families that need our help. They need a home to come back to before they can go to church. We need volunteers who can rebuild homes, as well as help to rebuild lives.”

At the start of the two day “Rebuild Our Churches” summit, the Rev. Kelvin Sauls told participants “we’re here to listen, and take action.” The former pastor of Downs Memorial UMC in Oakland, California and newly appointed national director of congregational development at the General Board of Discipleship, Sauls led two work groups to the Gulf Region earlier in the year and helped facilitate the gathering of pastors and agency leaders at the Summit. “We want to see how it is that God can continue to be present in the city. As we look at this, we know...nothing can separate us from the love of God, not even hurricanes Katrina and Rita. God’s love is inescapable.”

By the end of the Summit, the power of water, its capability for destruction, also came to symbolize the power of unity and rebirth. Rev. Sauls recalled a South African proverb in urging participants to share the information learned in as many places as possible. “‘Any waterfall starts with one drop.’ Our work is but one drop in a waterfall for justice and God’s righteousness.”

National Black Staff Forum comprises 208 black and African people who serve in executive and professional positions on the denomination’s boards, agencies, commissions, annual conferences and districts, as well as 25 bishops and four top agency executives. Its mission is to serve professional staff members at all stages of their careers through networking, education and career development.

## Conference News Briefs

### Uniting United Methodists

Plan to attend the “Uniting United Methodists” event Saturday, October 7 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at William Land Park in Sacramento, organized by the Delta District as a benefit for Side-by-Side Spiritual Companions, Rev. Linda Kelly’s ministry with the homeless. There’ll be a variety of entertainment and lots of activities for children, with a program at 12:30. Watch for further details about this great family event, benefiting a great ministry!

### Son going to Iraq

Anne Dilenschneider of Half Moon Bay, a clergy member within the California-Nevada Conference, is requesting prayers for her son, Jim Holtsnider, who has been assigned to Iraq as a Foreign Service Officer.

Jim was in Ankara on Embassy Duty with the Marines when the war began,” says Dilenschneider. “The U.S. Embassy there was dealing with suicide bombers on a regular basis at that point. He’s since earned his college degree, and is now in Washington, D.C. preparing to leave for Iraq.” His new assignment is effective September 1st.

### Burlingame Backpackalooza Catches On

Burlingame UMC gave away 500 free backpacks with school supplies inside to San Mateo County children on Saturday, August 5 at Central Park in the city of San Mateo. Coordinators Jessica Lack and Ursula Morgenstern conceived of the idea that all children deserve that basic school item, but the “Backpackalooza” is also an outreach to families. The Police

Activities League of the county has become a co-sponsor, and several corporations have given to the effort since it was conceived in May. One Burlingame member donated 200 backpacks. The church held a car wash, a cake walk, and a “Sweet Tooth Sunday” bake sale to fundraise over \$2,000 for additional purchases. Community organizations were enlisted to pre-register children to receive the gift. The giveaway, intended as the “first annual,” has become a “happening” — with county agencies coming in for the day with information stations to add to Burlingame UMC’s music, barbeque, raffle prizes, face-painting, and games.

### San Rafael Church Fights for Cell Antennas

Aldersgate UMC in San Rafael has been popular for cell phone antennas since Sprint installed some in 1997, and T-Mobile added more in 2004. Now Cingular Wireless wants to double the number of antennas there. The city of San Rafael refuses cell phone “towers,” so the antennas have to appear to be part of the Aldersgate building — what the city calls “stealth” appearance. Some are at the base of the high cross, which would be fitted at Cingular’s expense for more antennas. Neighbors, having petitioned against the initial antennas in 1997, are again petitioning — objecting to what they feel would be dangerous levels of radiation and the possibility of declining property values. The church maintains that radiation is well under the national safety limit of 2%. It reports that, since 1997, there is no evidence that real estate values near the church have declined because of the antennas. The Rev. Scott Wylie says Aldersgate gets \$2,350 a month income from the

antennas it accommodates now — an amount in a month that is the typical *annual* pledge of a member. The additional antennas, which would have been installed in March except for the protests, would bring in \$1,500 more a month.

### Faith Habitat House in Sebastopol

Sebastopol UMC has pledged to raise \$5,000 next year to help Habitat for Humanity build a Faith House in Sebastopol. A Faith House is one in which at least \$60,000 for construction costs (of an estimated \$175,000 total) comes from area churches. Sebastopol UMC plans to raise the money as part of its \$35,000 campaign to renovate its building. “Many congregations decide, when they raise capital funds,” said the Rev. Judith Stone, “to add a tithe onto the total to help others as they help themselves.” So the fundraising goal is now \$40,000.

### Mahogany Sculpture available

Retired pastor/sculptor Allen Bryan has finished work on a large wood panel of “The Preacher.” It is a 50 lb. piece of African Mahogany, 4 inches thick, 34” wide and 23” high. It is a high relief depicting the figure of a young African preacher gesturing between a fearful pleading and an anxious invitation to the Gospel.

The scene was taken from a painting of George Gittoes who photographed this in a village in Rwanda as a member of an Australian contingent of United Nations peacekeepers. As a helpless bystander, he witnessed the ensuing slaughter of this young preacher and all the nervous crowd of elderly men, women and children who were fenced in like cattle, aware of

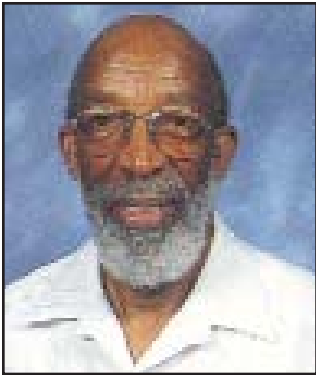
## Conference News Briefs

their impending deaths.

The sculptor is looking for any church that would find such a panel to be inspirational while set in one of their walls. The cost would be minimal, since it was sculpted "To the Glory of God." Contact Allen Bryan at [allen381b@netscape.net](mailto:allen381b@netscape.net).

### Fitch to Speak At Claremont Founders' Day

Rev. Douglass Fitch will preach and speak during the two-day Founders' Day + Ministry



Rev. Douglass Fitch

Convocation on September 26-27, 2006, at Claremont School of Theology. The event will feature Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor, who will preach in a special service with the Holman UMC Gospel Choir on Tuesday, September 26, at Claremont United Church of Christ, 233 W. Harrison Ave.

"The 2006 Founders' Day promises to be a special event for those that Claremont School of Theology serves," said Rev. Karen Dalton, director of church relations for the School. "The combination of Barbara Brown Taylor and Doug Fitch will be a blessing for all those who attend."

Rev. Douglass Fitch is pastor at the historic Glide Memorial United Methodist Church in San Francisco. Perhaps best known for his work as a

much-loved leader in parishes throughout California, Rev. Fitch has worked tirelessly to ensure that minority voices are heard and encouraged in the church and in colleges and universities across the nation.

For more information on the event schedule and registration fees, go to [www.cst.edu](http://www.cst.edu) or call (909) 447-6350.

### Empowering Ministries of Health: Transform, Mobilize, Advocate

The General Board of Global Ministries Health and Welfare division will present the second national conference on Congregation Health Ministries. This year's conference, which will be held October 8 – 11 at the St. Columba Conference Center in Memphis, TN, will focus on the "how to's" of developing and carrying out a Health Ministries program at the Conference and parish level. At least one representative from each Annual Conference is expected for this gathering of like minded individuals who are serious about improving the health and welfare of their fellow United Methodists.

Registration is limited to the first 75 applicants on a first-come-first served basis. GBGM will fund tuition, meals and on-site accommodations for one representative from the first 50 Annual Conferences that register. Additional attendees may register on a space available basis at a cost of \$285 for on-site accommodations and \$115 with off site accommodations. Travel is at the Conference or attendee's expense.

For more information, contact: Jim Truitt, Registrar  
23441 147th Ave SE  
Kent, WA 98042-3827  
[jftruitt@comcast.net](mailto:jftruitt@comcast.net) or

### Drama in ACS worship

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St. Paul, in the plays, agonized on the exact wording for what he wanted to tell the Philippians, and his scribe Tertia gave great, if sometimes sarcastic, suggestions for which Paul took total credit. The first play was based on Philippians 2:5-11 ("Every knee should bend...every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord"). The second was based on Philippians 1:27 ("Your conduct should be the same whether I come in person or hear of it from a distance"). The third was based on Philippians 1:6 ("God who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus"). The verses were the themes of the ACS worship services this year.

Not all church worship committees, however, have actors with experience. Wylie says he has had occasional parts in community theater since the age of 30. He was on stage as a chorus member in four operas when he lived in San Antonio, Texas. Solana has had extensive musical comedy and other acting involvement as an amateur since age 5. She was a professional at 14 — with roles in *The Sound of Music* and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* at a theater company in San Juan. She has done radio and television commercials in both Spanish and English.

As for Abbey's writing, she said, "I tried to do good exegetical work in writing the scripts, although I obviously took a lot of dramatic license. I doubt that Paul's scribe was ever female, but wealthy Roman women would have been literate, so it's possible. In the book of Romans, the scribe actually identified himself as Tertius, so I just turned that into the female form, Tertia." Abbey gives workshops on developing drama for worship ([www.actinginfaith.com](http://www.actinginfaith.com)).

**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@sbcglobal.net.

# Homeless But Not Helpless

## A Homeless Man Remembered

As most people know, cancer and its treatment present severe challenges to one's body, mind and spirit. Imagine going through diagnosis and chemotherapy without family support, bouncing from doctor to doctor, using public transportation and your bicycle to appointments and living in a homeless shelter. Such were the obstacles faced by Mr. "V."

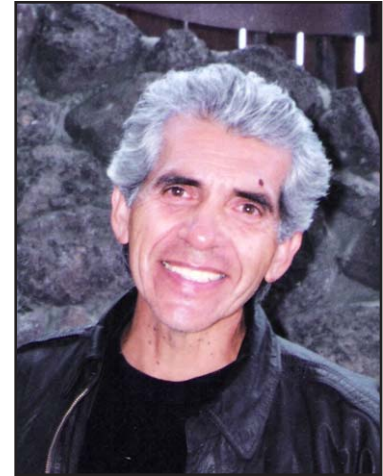
Mr. "V," as he preferred to be known, did so without complaint. He kept copies of every office visit and lab result neatly filed in folders, placed in a briefcase and stored in his locker along

with neatly folded clothes, a few cans of food, family photos, a flashlight, and a ball cap hanging on a hook. Mr. V was always immaculately dressed; hair carefully trimmed and combed back and clean shaven. Born in 1952 in Mexico, his handsome features told his Spanish ancestry.

Mr. V was known by other homeless guests for his extreme generosity. Once, when still a high school teacher, he was quite a stylish dresser, so he told us, with black and brown leather jackets and boots to match. He survived an almost always fatal cerebral vasculitis but had to learn to speak and walk again. Much of his memory was lost. His outlook on life changed too and he began to give his leather coats away to homeless men he met on the streets. Little did he know one day he would be on the receiving end of charity. Mr. V continued to give away whatever he had if someone else needed it: bus passes, food, shirts, shoes, even his extra pair of undershorts. He often went without if someone else was in need.

Mr. V studied the Bible in English and in Spanish.

*Side-By-Side* gave him several translations in both languages. Always a teacher, he wanted to understand and know so he could share his faith adequately with others, and he did by his simple acts of compassion. His dream was to be back in the classroom again in spite of a doctor's letter declaring him disabled due to his previous brain infection.



Mr. "V" - Fernando Varela

Over a year and a half ago, Mr. V's thymoma (a rare but very treatable cancer) was diagnosed. Aggressive treatment did not start until earlier this year.

He tolerated the four or five harsh chemo-treatments amazingly well, but the cancer spread and his heart began to give out. Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Mr. V helped set-up the *Side-By-Side* morning prayer circle as usual. After lunch he returned to his bunk at a nearby shelter and laid down to rest. He died soon after. Mr. V. faced a terrible disease under the worst of conditions. He had many friends and reached out to many others with whom he interacted with grace and generosity. Mr. V, Fernando Varela, was a proud, studious, amazing man who did his best to live faithfully and well. His spirit and presence are greatly missed. (Note: Mr. "V's" memorial service was held by *Side-By-Side* at Loaves & Fishes on August 9, 2006.)

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## Other Voices

# Called to Both Ministry and Motherhood

By Jennifer Irvine Goto

*Reprinted from the Circuit Rider, May/June 2006*

I'm new at this. My son, Dakota, is just a year old and my Certificate for Probationary Membership was recently hung on my office wall. My son is still of the age that I'm convinced that he doesn't do anything wrong—on purpose. And my congregation still believes that anything I do differently than they prefer is also not on purpose, but because of my inexperience.

There's a measure of grace in this newness.

Part of the grace is being able to learn from and have the way made smooth by those who went before me. It has now been generations of women who have been teaching the United Methodist Church what it means for clergy to be parents as well. I hope that the redefining of roles and expectation that has taken place has also allowed male clergy to redefine being pastor and parent.

The world has not completely changed from the expectations that motherhood is the sole calling for women. My husband and I are both in the ordination process and were serving at different local churches when I was pregnant. We faced the assumption that I would soon be leaving my appointment to stay home with my child and be a pastor's wife. Instead, he has left his appointment to care for our son during the days and to be a great pastor's husband. Other clergy moms and dads have made other choices and are just as content with theirs as we are with ours. The important thing is for each family to be able to have the encouragement to discern God's direction for their situation, rather than have one solution placed on them by the assumptions of the surrounding culture.

My son's babysitter is also the child of a United Methodist clergywoman. As a teenager, this babysitter is well seasoned in the system of itineracy and congregational expectations. She is able to model to my son the necessity of a good sense of humor, how to find your own voice in the

congregation where your mother preaches, and how to remind your parents that there is more to life than church. Because of the connectional bonds that United Methodists share, I pray that she and my son continue to nurture their relationship even when we are not in the same local congregation.

The training I have received to articulate my call to ordained ministry has also helped me to articulate my vocation of mothers, I find that most do not have that language or understanding of their role as a parent. Seeing parenting as a calling from God might bring me through some bad moments, but it doesn't make me a perfect mother. Yes, my son has fallen off the bed. (And I spent the rest of the night waking every few minutes to check his breathing.) Yes, I have left the house without the supplies required for that day, leaving my son with a bare head and feet. Yes, I have even been afraid that my son's first word might not be something appropriate to shout out in worship on Sunday morning. But I have a center to come back to—that the way I parent is meant to glorify God above all else, just as the way I do ministry is. I am able to say that God has given me gifts to be a parent and that my parenting skills are not measured by my son's future job or education, but by how my parenting glorifies God. It helps me to remember that just as God will provide what is needed for me to live out my call to ordained ministry, God provides for me as a parent as well. I can turn to God for patience, for healing of my own soul as parental guilt creeps in, and for courage to ask for help. As God told Moses and Jeremiah as they faced the fears of their calls, "I will be with you," these words are also whispered into my ear by God as I face the fears of being both pastor and parent.

I must remind myself daily that I am following God's call into the dual vocation of mother and pastor, not just because being a pastor is a fun thing to do. When I leave home for the church each day, my son remains in the loving arms of his



Jennifer Irvine Goto

father, but his cries would lead you to believe that he is in the clutches of some horrible monster. It's all a big show that ends when the door closes behind me, but my heart still breaks each morning. As we all

despise the person

in the grocery store check-out who questions whether our child's clothing is appropriate for the weather, the congregational advice and criticism of our parenting skills or our children can be devastating. However, there is nothing better than having a congregation full of people telling you that you have the most beautiful baby in the world.

If I were not a pastor, my son would not know a mother who was using her gifts to follow the call of God completely. If I were not a mother, my congregation would have a pastor who felt like she had cut off a part of who God called her to be. Either way, the resentment would be palpable, and I would not fill either role well. It is in bringing my whole self to the altar of God as a living sacrifice that I have found my gifts used—both pastor and mother.

Dakota has just recently learned the gift of sharing. He grins as he hands me objects—papers, toys, socks . . . and my response is to grasp the object firmly and say, "Thank you." God also seems to enjoy this sharing of gifts, and as I hold my son in one hand and the hand of a dying parishioner in the other, my heart cries out "Thank you, thank you, thank you."

*Jennifer Irvine Goto is mom to Dakota Nobuyuki Goto and pastor to the people of Walnut Creek United Methodist Church, Walnut Creek, California. She also finds time to be "Jen" while indoor rock climbing, practicing yoga, and enjoying date nights with her husband, Shinya.*

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## Videos/DVD's for Mission Study

### GLOBALIZATION

#### For Children

**World Song** (VCM-680) is a kaleidoscope of images that celebrate the common humanity which unifies all the cultures of the world. **World Song** travels around the globe and brings back pictures of the little events that make our lives special—events we share with people everywhere.

#### For Youth

In **Get Connected: A Global Village Experience** (VCM-642) a group of teens gather to take part in a "Global Village Experience." The group learn a lot about the disparity of resources throughout the world and gain a deeper understanding of themselves in the process.

#### For Adults

**Globalization: Peace and Conflict Resolution** (VCM-709) explains the globalization controversy. Some feel that the rapid expansion of the international marketplace and the power of those who control it are the principal reasons why the gap between rich and poor is increasing, not diminishing. On the other hand some view globalization as being the only way for prosperity to spread to developing countries.

**Against the Current, Toward the Light** (VCM-707.3) features efforts of the United Church of Christ Global Ministries to bring "abundant life" to Southern Asia. Laotian children learn job skills, traditional songs and dances; youth in India receive technological training; women are empowered to pursue their dreams.

### "Do No Harm" conference

continued from page 5

Ministry, Board of Global Ministries and General Council on Finance and Administration.

"In the church, we haven't had real clear and positive adult conversation about what is appropriate and inappropriate sexual behavior between clergy and parishioners, clergy and staff, and clergy and clergy," Burton explained. "We are dedicated to helping the church continue to talk about these things, because the cost of not having these conversations is too great."

Since 2003, COSROW has fielded about 65 calls related to allegations of inappropriate sexual conduct within

United Methodist churches. Most involved clergy, but recent reports increasingly have involved lay members, according to Burton.

COSROW conducted a denomination-wide survey in 2005, and found that 67 percent of respondents said they had experienced or observed sexual harassment within the church. Seventy-two percent of clergy respondents said they had personally experienced sexual harassment, usually in the form of unsolicited sexual comments. The most common response to the harassment was to ignore it.

Conference speakers urged United Methodist clergy and leaders to be more open and honest talking about sexual issues—particularly in an MTV culture that

is bombarding our youth with destructive sexual messages—and more transparent in the way the church deals with incidents of sexual misconduct and abuse.

Just as there are sexual secrets in most families, there are sexual secrets within congregations and they always lead to shame and brokenness, according to the Rev. Dr. Karen McClintock, a member of the California-Nevada Conference and a clinical psychologist. "Jesus was a man without secrets and no shame and could talk with people about their bad behavior without shaming them," McClintock said. "We are not a people of shame; we are a people of grace."

**Job Opportunities listed on  
[www.cnumc.org](http://www.cnumc.org)**

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