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# Instant Connection

California-Nevada Annual Conference



December 11, 2009



## **Send a Net. Save a Life. See a Game.**

Now through January 31, *Nothing But Nets* supporters can donate \$10 or more and get two complimentary tickets to an NBA game, subject to availability and participating teams.

The National Basketball Association (NBA) and the United Nations Foundation's *Nothing But Nets* tipped off the promotion, **Send a Net. Save a Life.**

**See a Game.** on Monday, December 14. Presented by Hewlett-Packard, the promotion aims to send anti-malaria bed nets to refugees in 11 African countries, as part of the *NBA Cares* Season of Giving - while rewarding participants with the opportunity to catch an NBA game.

**Send a Net. Save a Life. See a Game.** encourages NBA fans and *Nothing But Nets* supporters to send the life-saving bed nets to displaced families in Africa to help protect them from malaria - the number one killer of refugees on the continent. ESPN sportswriter Rick Reilly, who inspired the United Nations Foundation to create the *Nothing But Nets* campaign through his May 2006 *Sports Illustrated* column, will match fan donations, net for net, up to a total of \$25,000.

"This tremendous effort aligns with the NBA's long tradition of addressing important health and wellness issues worldwide," says the NBA Executive Vice President for Social Responsibility and Player Programs, Kathy Behrens. "We know our fans care about these causes as passionately as the NBA, and we are proud to provide them the opportunity to make a life-saving donation as part of the *NBA Cares* Season of Giving."

Long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets are one of the easiest and most cost-effective methods of preventing the spread of malaria. They create a protective barrier against mosquitoes at night, when the vast majority of malaria transmissions occur. One bed net can protect a family of four, and lasts three to five years. It costs just \$10 to purchase and deliver the net, along with educating the recipient on its proper use.

To date, *Nothing But Nets* has raised close to \$30 million and has sent nearly three million nets to children, pregnant women, and refugees throughout Africa.

Click here to [send a net, save a life, and see a game](#).

To help The United Methodist Church meet its giving goals, **please be sure to designate yourself as a United Methodist** when making a *Nothing But Nets* gift online. (Open the dropdown menu beside "NBN how did you hear?" - located immediately above the Credit Card Information section - and click on "United Methodist Church.")

### **About *Nothing But Nets***

*Nothing But Nets* is a global, grassroots campaign to save lives by preventing malaria, a leading killer of children in Africa. Hundreds of thousands of people have joined the campaign that was inspired by sports columnist Rick Reilly, and created by the United Nations Foundation in 2006. Founding campaign partners include the National Basketball Association's *NBA Cares*, **the people of The United Methodist Church**, and *Sports Illustrated*. It only costs \$10 to provide an insecticide-treated bed net that can prevent this deadly disease from claiming another victim. Visit [www.NothingButNets.net](http://www.NothingButNets.net) to send a net and save a life.

### **Seminary Reaches out to Heal Others**

**By Vicki Brown**

**GBHEM**

Despite devastation from civil war on the campus of the Gbarnga School of Theology in Monrovia, Liberia, the faculty immediately added counseling to its class offerings after peace was restored.

"This is what sacred theology is all about. We are equipping church workers with clinical pastoral education to let them be able to assist their traumatized members. Graduates from this discipline are working in churches and schools and communities," said the Rev. Yatta Roslyn Young, dean of the seminary.

The seminary, with about 100 students, is at the center of the religious community that trains ministers and Christian educators of the United Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Pentecostal churches in Liberia, Young said.

"The cross-and-flame logo of The United Methodist Church can be found in every village, hamlet, town, and city in the country," Young said. The United Methodist connection is strong in Liberia, where President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is a United Methodist.

### **School's needs are many**

While seminary graduates try to help the country heal the wounds from a long civil war that left hundreds of thousands of people dead and devastated the country's economy, the theological school itself has many needs.

The Rev. Ken Carter Jr., senior pastor of Providence United Methodist Church in Charlotte, N.C., and chair of the General Board of Higher Education's Division of Ordained Ministry, said he was stunned by the condition of the school when he visited in 2009. The campus was occupied by rebel forces during the war.

"They are really rebuilding the school; it was decimated by the war, and there is a need for infrastructure and housing for faculty. The library looks like the worst church library you've ever seen. No one on the faculty has a laptop, and the building of a new lecture hall is the first priority," Carter said. He said the faculty is trying to identify what books are needed, and his personal project - with the help of his church - is going to be to try and help rebuild the library.

The Rev. Isaac Dowah's studies were interrupted by the war, but he is now completing his final year of study in the Basic Theology program, though he earned degrees in Ghana and was ordained in 1998.

But he said study is difficult at Gbarnga because everything was looted.

"All our books and computers were taken away .... Moreover, students have to go on a book hunt if they have a little assignment to do. Before the war, this was not the case. Students got all their major books on the first day of school."

Lack of electricity creates problems, too, he said. "The majority of students cannot afford a personal power generator, so they are studying by candlelight, which is to the detriment of their eyesight," he said.

### **U.S. helped establish modern-day Liberia**

Carter said Liberians he spoke with had always expected the United States to intervene in their civil war because of the U.S. role in founding Liberia. Modern-day Liberia was founded by the American Colonization Society in 1821-22 as a place for slaves freed in the U.S. to emigrate to Africa, where it was believed they would have greater freedom and equality.

"I never met anyone in Liberia who wanted to leave. They just want to have peace," Carter said, adding that he believes The United Methodist Church and the seminary can have an important role in the healing process.

"A lot of young people in Liberia have been child soldiers. They have to be reintegrated into society," Carter said.

Young said the needs of the school are great. She was among 23 United Methodist theologians, seminary representatives, and leaders from across Africa, as well as representatives from general church boards and agencies in the U.S., who gathered last August in Kampala, Uganda, for an assessment of United Methodist theological education in Africa.

"We need textbooks for the disciplines we have at Gbarnga School of Theology - general theology, religious education, sacred theology, and basic agriculture," she said.

"I use a manual typewriter, and I just recently received a gift of a used computer from a friend - praise the Lord for small favors! That is the only computer on the campus. We need computers for office use as well as for the students to prepare their assignments and papers. Our library has a few obsolete books that cannot support research work, and we need Internet connections," she said.

### **No sister relationships**

Apart from a few individuals, and one or two churches that have opted to assist with textbooks, the school has not established any sister relationship with any church or conference in the U.S. - or anywhere else, for that matter, Young said.

"This is my desire, and I will appreciate all the assistance in that direction. The devastation on the campus is of monumental proportions and The United Methodist Church in Liberia cannot rebuild it on its own," she said.

Carter said the Gbarnga School of Theology is a part of the maturing of theological education in Africa. "We need to develop a collective effort," Carter said.

He noted that while there are 700 churches in the Liberian Annual Conference with two pastors each, many of those are local pastors. One district superintendent told him no pastor in his district even makes \$1 a day.

That need for effective, sustainable theological training, and formation of church leaders was the focus of the August consultation in Uganda.

### **Advance giving**

The 2008 General Conference approved "Support of Theological Education in Africa" (petition 81160), which directed \$2 million over the next four years to expand and strengthen theological facilities beyond Africa University, as well as library development, scholarships, publications, and logistical support of theological education. More than 25 percent of United Methodists worldwide live in Africa.

The Revitalization of the Gbarnga Mission and School of Theology/United Methodist University is a designated Advance Special Giving project, Advance #3020679, and you may [donate online](#).

Donations of books, computers, or other specific items may be sent to: the Rev. Yatta Roslyn Young, DEAN, Gbarnga School of Theology/United Methodist University, Liberia Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church, 13th Street, Sinkor, P.O. Box 1010, 1000 Monrovia 10 Liberia. Dean Young said monetary donations may also be sent to the same address - to Bishop John G. Innis, Liberia Area/The UMC.

\*Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

### **ABC to Air United Methodist Christmas Eve Service**

NASHVILLE, TENN. - ABC television affiliates nationwide will broadcast a United Methodist-produced Christmas Eve candlelight service on December 24 and 25.

"We are privileged to open our doors, via television, to viewers who seek a Christmas Eve worship experience," says the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "We celebrate this opportunity to express our faith within the broader culture."

The hour-long broadcast was taped at First United Methodist Church of Dallas, Texas. The traditional service includes carols and Scriptures, and features a 100-voice choir, a brass and drum ensemble, and the church's pipe organ. Dr. John Fiedler, senior minister, will deliver the message "I Am Bringing You Good News."

"We are honored to be chosen by The United Methodist Church to represent our denomination on such an important night," he says.

Airtime for the service is made possible through The United Methodist Church's participation in the National Council of Churches. The National Council of Churches is a founding member of the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission, which works with the three major networks to provide faith-based documentaries and liturgical specials.

As of now, there are no stations in California and Nevada which are planning to air this program. Contact your local station to request that the Christmas Eve service be added to the schedule.

Visit [www.interfaithbroadcasting.com/liturgical.aspx](http://www.interfaithbroadcasting.com/liturgical.aspx) for updated television listings.

### **Africa University Supporter Dies at 66**

BERLIN (UMNS) - The Rev. Heinrich Meinhardt, a key supporter and board member of Africa University, died Dec. 9 after a long battle with cancer. Meinhardt, 66, also served on the boards of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Council on Finance and Administration representing the Germany Central Conference.

His service to Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe, began before the university opened in 1992. In 1991, Meinhardt and others organized a group of singers from Berlin who traveled around the Northeastern Jurisdiction singing in German and English to raise support for the university. He also led a project that brought Africa University students to Germany for an internship program and published European editions of *AU Today* newsletters. Meinhardt served nine years on the Africa University board of directors.

The funeral service will be held Dec. 21 in the United Methodist Church Lindenkirche in Berlin. In lieu of flowers, his family is asking for donations to Africa University. Donors may give to

Africa University at [www.support-africauniversity.org](http://www.support-africauniversity.org).

## 'Looking for the Miraculous,' in Dec. 18 Reporter

So, what constitutes a miracle? Ever witnessed a miraculous event yourself? Or do you think miracles are a thing of the past? For the United Methodist *Reporter* cover story this week, Bill Fentum takes a look at [what UMs believe about miracles](#). The story includes some folks who count miracles among their life experiences.

And with the U.N. Climate Change Summit happening in Copenhagen through the end of this week, the *Reporter* also has an e-mail interview with the Rev. Ole Birch, a District Superintendent and chair of the Climate Group for the National Council of Churches in Denmark. The resulting Q&A includes some attention to climate change as a magnet for controversy.

There's also a profile of one family who has experienced open adoption through Methodist Mission Home; a pastor's sabbatical happening after 22 years of ministry; and life-giving gifts that help entire communities. For these stories and more, just click on "UMR Headlines" on the [United Methodist Reporter](#) Home Page.

Commentaries this week include Eric Van Meter offering his perspective on re-learning to [listen amid the noise](#) of our lives; Bishop Woodie White's [Christmas reflections](#), both happy and sad; Anthony Hunt on [why race still matters](#); and Tom Ehrich on [what this time of year can tell us](#) about ourselves. Don't miss Bill Fentum's film review of [The Blind Side](#), too.

## Website Designed to Help Marriages Stay Strong

### A UMNS Feature

By Kathy L. Gilbert\*

Marriage starts looking dismal if you are gazing through lenses focused on the rich and famous. Think David Letterman or South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford.

The roving eyes of the Tiger (Woods, that is) make him just the latest celebrity to fall from grace.

But if you step back and look at marriage through the lenses of faith, it can be a blessing, says one United Methodist pastor who has spent years developing an online marriage assessment designed to bring couples closer together.

The Rev. Jay Tenney, pastor of Barnesville (Georgia) First United Methodist Church, says long-lasting relationships must be created in God's image. The key to a lifetime of happiness, he points out, can be found in Galatians, Thessalonians, and Ecclesiastes.

Galatians 5:13: Serve one another in love.

1 Thessalonians 5:11: Encourage one another and build each other up.

Ecclesiastes 4:12: A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

"I think that what we see on TV is definitely playing a factor in the acceptance of infidelity. It sometimes seems that being unfaithful is glamorized, while the costs and consequences of infidelity are minimized. Divorce is often portrayed as a quick and easy option," Tenney says.

Tenney notes that he has found that many couples want to improve their marriages, but need help finding the right resources.

"I have also found that a lot of people may not seek out counselors or pastors when they need help," he says. "However, in today's world many of them are willing to go online. With this in mind, I developed a marriage coaching website called [MyMarriageCoach.com](http://MyMarriageCoach.com)."

The free website has a quiz designed to give couples a "quick snapshot of their relationship," Tenney explains. Each person answers 100 questions that evaluate key areas of marriage, including faith, finances and communication - responding to questions and statements such as, "My husband values my opinions," or "My wife supports me spiritually."

After they complete the quiz, the couple gets a report that includes a relationship profile that points to the strengths and weakness of the marriage. They also get a targeted list of resources based on their profile.

Couples are encouraged to share what they have discovered with pastors or counselors. "It isn't intended to be a substitute for professional counseling, or for couples whose marriages are in crisis," Tenney says.

According to Tenney, response to the site has been "incredible." An article about the site was posted on the North Georgia Annual (regional) Conference website in November and two local newspapers wrote articles about it in early December. Since that time, more than 170 couples have signed up to take the assessment.

"This affirmed the tremendous need for this type of resource, and that huge numbers of couples are out there searching for help online," Tenney says. And he adds, "As a pastor, I'm also excited about how the site challenges couples to consider what role God and the church plays in their marriages."

Tenney emphasizes that the most important ingredient to a strong marriage is God:

"God unites couples in marriage. If we allow God to be the center of our relationships, God will help hold everything together."

\*Gilbert is a news writer for United Methodist News Service in Nashville, Tennessee.

### **'Love Train' Puts Relationships on Right Track in 2010**

Christmas shopping done! The perfect gift for your significant other is just a few clicks away - for what could be better than making a commitment to put your relationship on the right track

in 2010? It's as simple as signing up for "All Aboard the Love Train," the 35th Annual Marriage Enrichment Retreat, sponsored by the Silicon Valley Chapter of the Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment (ACME).

**January 15-17**, from 6 p.m. Friday to noon on Sunday, gather with other couples at the Evergreen Conference Center in Oakhurst, California, to take an honest look at your marriage, learn and develop skills for effective communication/creative conflict resolution, develop deeper intimacy and commitment, and set goals for future growth. In a relaxed, comfortable setting you'll engage in both large- and small-group activities as well as private, couple time - and you'll never be asked to share more than is comfortable for you and your spouse.

The retreat follows standards developed by ACME and is designed to make good marriages better; ACME Marriage Enrichment programs are educational in nature and not intended as therapy or counseling.

Cost is \$450/couple, with a \$30 discount for first-time participants. \$120 program fee is due with registration; remainder due January 10, 2010. Partial scholarships are available for first-time attendees. Contact Bea or Jim Strickland, [BeaStrickland@aol.com](mailto:BeaStrickland@aol.com) or 408.268.3956, for scholarship information.

Space is limited to 25 couples, so register ASAP!

Evergreen Conference Center is located between Oakhurst, California, and Yosemite, at 3,000 feet elevation. For directions and more information call 559.683.8162.

Download [flyer with interactive registration](#) form (PDF).

Visit [www.acmesv.org](http://www.acmesv.org) for more information.

### **Alternative Gifts: Presents That Make a Difference**

NEW YORK (UMNS) - Consider skipping the malls and giving a gift that will make a life-changing difference. Several websites offer ideas for gifts ranging from helping train a woman to be a midwife in Afghanistan to buying food for thousands of vulnerable families in Zimbabwe. Check out these gift catalogs: [The Advance: Alternative Gift Ideas](#); [United Methodist Committee on Relief](#); and [Best Gifts Catalog](#), sponsored by the global humanitarian agency Church World Service.

### **A Christmas Gift of Creativity ...**

The training organization Leadership Nexus reports that it received so many last-minute Early Bird registrations for its upcoming Creativity Conference that, "We began to feel the spirit of Christmas giving come over us - and decided to extend that pricing to Christmas Eve!

So now you have until December 24 to register for just \$185!

The Creativity Conference takes place January 12-14 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Orlando, Florida. The speakers and workshop leaders are committed Christian executives and staff at Disney and Sea World, plus four very creative pastors from around the country.

As church leaders we need all the help we can get to be creative and innovative in today's environment. Where better to develop creativity than in Orlando, Florida?

[Download brochure](#) (in PDF format) for complete details, along with pricing for spouses and additional people on your team.

And don't forget the [Keys to Leading in our Shifting Culture](#) conference, February 9-11 at Willowbrook UMC in Phoenix, also from Leadership Nexus.

Both training conferences offer tuition scholarships, Doctoral Credit through California Graduate School of Theology, and CEUs.

## **Unleash Your Creativity With Photoshop; Get Free Shipping Through End of Year**

Churches: Create professional-looking brochures and other resources with Photoshop image-editing software. Make your newsletters, advertisements, and web photos more compelling by adding professional-quality photographs.

With [Photoshop Elements 8](#), remove "red eye," correct for color, delete trees growing out of people's heads, and give your work a flawless look. Now, for only \$100 through TechShop, you can create images that take your work to a new level - without having to get a technical degree!

Need more functionality? Use [Photoshop Extended CS4](#) for video animation, mask panels, 360-degree panorama, profiles for the color blind, and more. The sky's the limit with this powerful tool - software which easily could last five years or longer, and all for around \$300. That investment makes economical sense!

To make it even better, receive **\*\*FREE shipping on your TechShop Photoshop order through December 31.** Use coupon code **TS1209WEB** during online checkout or when you order through customer service at 1.888.346.3862.\*\*

TechShop is a service of United Methodist Communications which offers discount software, hardware, and web solutions for United Methodist churches and ministries. A direct link to [TechShop](#) is located under "Resources" on the green navigation bar near the top of the Home Page of the California-Nevada Annual Conference at [cnumc.org](http://cnumc.org).

## **Start New Year Right, With Workshop From Institute for Discipleship**

Even as 2009 winds to a close, everyone is busy preparing for the new year to come. As you carry out those preparations, you're encouraged to take note of the 11 new workshops the Institute for Discipleship is launching in January through BeADisciple.com.

## **Upcoming Workshops from BeADisciple.com - January and February**

### **Preparing Conference Journals**

This is an online seminar for Conference Secretaries and Journal Editors, covering everything from gathering Journal information to production styles/ideas. It will be led by Cherrie Graham of UMR Communications in Dallas. Included will be software concerns; pros and cons of print vs. electronic journals; organizing your work flow; maintaining a schedule; working with other members of your team; and creating your final production in both print and electronic formats. This three-week course will include three live Eluminate sessions (one hour each week) and a variety of resources. Other than the three live sessions to be scheduled during the course, the participant may work according to his or her own schedule (recommended 1 hour per day).

Click here [for more information and to enroll](#).

### **New Partnership With the Wesley Ministry Network (Wesley Seminary in Washington, DC)**

BeADisciple.com and the Wesley Ministry Network have joined forces to take the wonderful WMN courses into an online setting. The first four courses to be offered, beginning January 11, are: *Journey Through the Psalms*, *Serious Answers to Hard Questions*, *Simply Christian*, and *Women Speak of God*. Bishop Richard Wilke says "I highly recommend Wesley Ministry Network courses as the perfect follow-up to DISCIPLE Bible study. The content is superb and the combination of print, video, and Internet communication is dynamic."

Click here [for details on each of the WMN courses](#).

### **Writing Your Safe Sanctuary Policy**

This six-week online workshop for United Methodist congregations, instructed by [Beth Perry](#), will help congregational teams of three participants write, approve, and implement a Safe Sanctuary policy.

Participants will learn why congregations should have a Safe Sanctuary policy; how to develop a Safe Sanctuary committee; what the Safe Sanctuary Policy and Response Plan are; how to get these approved in a local congregation; how to implement the policy once it's written; and answers to possible other issues that may arise. Participants will have access to the website throughout the entire six weeks and be able to work at a time most convenient for their daily schedules. They will receive information, read, and discuss with other participants in a discussion board format, then take what is learned back to their own congregations with an assignment. This pattern will repeat until the policy is finalized.

What is the benefit? Compliance with denominational and Annual Conference regulations, as well as protection for your children and youth, your teachers and leaders, and your congregation's reputation and resources! What better benefit to you than to know you are helping in such a great mission?

Click here [for more information and to enroll](#).

### **Online Advanced Course in Lay Speaking Ministry**

(This course has been approved by the General Board of Discipleship as an advanced course in Lay Speaking Ministries.)

Working with Sandy Jackson, BeADisciple.com is pleased to offer the first online advanced certification course in Lay Speaking Ministries, offered by instructor, Daniel Benedict. *Leading Worship 101 for Lay People* will focus on basic worship leadership skills for lay persons ("liturgists" or "lay readers") who assist the pastor in Christian worship. If you currently help lead worship in your congregation or would like to prepare for such leadership, this course is for you. Particular emphasis will be given basic skills: understanding your role in relation to other leaders and the congregation, reading Scripture, leading prayer, distribution of the elements at the Lord's Supper, taking other roles in worship, and some basic do's and don'ts of effective worship leadership. Deacons, elders/presbyters, and lay worship leader coordinators are also welcome, particularly with an eye to doing local training and providing support to lay readers/assisting ministers in their local church settings.

Click here [for more information and to enroll](#).

### **Other Online Workshops in January**

[How to Provide Your Workshop On Line](#)

[Living into the Answers: A Workshop on Personal Spiritual Discernment](#) (This workshop is supported by the Upper Room. It is close to full, but another session has been scheduled.)

[Multi-media Technology in Worship for the Church Volunteer 101](#) (This is a repeat of a very popular fall course.)

[Biblical Storytelling II](#) (This workshop is a more advanced session to one which was offered in the fall.)

[Disciple Making 101](#) (This is a repeat of a very popular workshop from one of the IFD's biggest supporters. Focus is on a system for making disciples.)

For more information visit <http://www.BeADisciple.com/workshops>

## San Jose District Announces Quarterly Conference

The San Jose District of the California-Nevada Annual Conference has announced the date for its next Quarterly Conference: February 13, 2010, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. The location is yet to be set.

The topic: As we Rethink Church, what is the role of lay leadership?

The Rev. Ted Virts, Conference Superintendent, will be the keynote speaker.

Church members, leaders, and pastors are all invited. Mark your calendars and watch for registration information, to be available soon.

For more information contact Pam McKee in the San Jose District Office, 729 Morse Street, San Jose, CA 95126; sjdist@sbcglobal.net; 408.295.5341; FAX 408.286.5889.

## Lenten Resources Encourage Congregations to Rethink Church

On January 2, 2010, United Methodist Communications will release Lenten worship resources to help congregations Rethink Church as we move toward the cross and beyond with Christ. *A Journey to Hope* provides an invitation to journey through real life circumstances such as job loss, relationship issues, low self-esteem, money problems, and even death - to see how, in this life and the next, you can be resurrected. Television, worship graphics and more will be available to help congregations connect - especially with visitors and young adults.

## Reminder: Instant Connection Takes Break for Christmas, New Year's

The *Instant Connection* will take a break from publication for the Christmas and New Year's holiday season. While stories of immediate interest will be posted to the [Conference website](#) at cnumc.org as urgency warrants, **today's edition is the last mailing for 2009.**

With the new year, a new publication schedule will go into effect. Because of the reduction in hours for some staff, the *Instant Connection* emails will be sent on Thursday of each week, rather than Friday - and **the deadline to submit items will be Tuesday at 5 p.m.**

(See Dec. 3, 2009 story, [Announcing New Schedule for Instant Connection Email in New Year.](#))

*Instant Connection* resumes publication on Thursday, January 10.

The *Instant Connection* is published each week by Jane Horstman on behalf of Cate Monaghan, Interim Director of Communications for the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The physical address for this eNewsletter is 1276 Halyard Drive, West Sacramento, CA 95691.