



California-Nevada Annual
Conference website:

www.cnumc.org



Watch videos at
www.ourchurchvideos.com/95691/cnumc

**Subscribe to receive
Instant Connection**
(Electronic Version)
at
comm@calnevumc.org

Follow us:



www.facebook.com



www.twitter.com/cnumc

Submit news item by 5
p.m. Tuesday of desired
week of publication to
the Instant Connection
Editor at
catem@calnevumc.org

Contact us:

comm@calnevumc.org
(916) 374-1518

Instant Connection

California-Nevada Annual Conference



December 4, 2009

December 4, 2009

Bishop Brown to Lead Trip to Cambodia in February



Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr. will lead a California-Nevada Annual Conference leadership delegation in a visit to Cambodia February 20-27. The trip stems from a resolution passed at the last Annual Conference Session to explore a Conference mission emphasis on Cambodia.

The delegation will visit General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) missionaries and Advance projects in Cambodia, and

seek to identify needs and priorities that match interests and resources of the Conference. The group will consider, in the words of Dr. James Gulley, senior GBGM Cambodia consultant, three doors to mission: Personnel (GBGM missionaries); Programs (designated by The Advance), and Participation (United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, or UVMIM, trips). Dr. Gulley will be present in Cambodia to assist the delegation during its visit.

Three of the nine GBGM missionaries in Cambodia are from California-Nevada: the Rev. Joseph Chan, Marilyn Chan, and Katherine Parker. Rev. Chan works in church planting, Marilyn Chan in women's empowerment, and Katherine Parker in community health and agricultural development. The Rev. Samuel Vorn, who is the national head of the Cambodian-American caucus, also is from of the California-Nevada Annual Conference.

The delegation has room for a few more people to join. If you're interested in being a part of it, contact [Laddie Perez-Galang](#) or [Howard Parker](#), UVMIM co-leaders for the visit. The cost currently is estimated at \$1839, double occupancy.

Cambodia Consultation held in Louisiana in September

At a GBGM-sponsored Cambodia Consultation, September 17-19 at St. Matthew's United Methodist Church in Metairie, Louisiana (which Cal-Neve representatives attended), the Rev. Dr. Romeo del Rosario, GBGM's country director for Cambodia, reported that the Cambodian church held its first Annual Conference Session in August. He highlighted statistics which indicate growth and progress toward the church's anticipated autonomy in 2016. By then, it's hoped the church no longer will be a mission conference, and will have its own indigenous bishop.

"Of the 10 district superintendents serving in Cambodia, six are now Khmer (ethnic natives)," he said. There are currently 12 elders and 19 deacons serving the Cambodian church, and a "long line of pastors in training," according to del Rosario, who said that candidates must be at least 18 years old and have finished high school.

"Something's astir in the field. The church in Cambodia has a distinctive witness to bear to the world," Bishop Roy Sano, the United Methodist bishop with responsibility for Cambodia, said during the Cambodia Consultation. "In August, after Cambodia's first annual conference as a mission conference, I kept thinking of the apostles. I imagined them going back to Jerusalem after the first council, celebrating the great things God was doing through them," he added.

"Of the 16 million people in Cambodia, 70 percent are under 30. Worship services are led primarily by young people, and the churches are filled with young people," del Rosario said, lifting up the need for continued leadership development for these passionate United Methodists. He explained that the scarcity of older Cambodians today is due to the practices of the Pol Pot regime during the 1970s, when murder and privation nearly wiped out an entire generation. "Anyone wearing glasses was at risk, because if you had glasses that meant you were educated. Lawyers, doctors, teachers ... they were murdered. The regime wanted these people eliminated because they were seen as a threat to those in power," he said.

Restoration began in late 1970s

In 1979, humanitarian efforts began to aid in restoration of the devastated country. "The United Methodist Committee on Relief began reconstruction work in 1980, and the Women's Division began its support of mission work in Cambodia in 1983," del Rosario said.

At the Consultation, the Rev. Jong Sung Kim, director of the Office of Mission Initiatives for GBGM, gave a brief history of GBGM's involvement in Cambodia, explaining the work done through the Evangelism and Church Growth arm of the Office of Mission Initiatives.

"In the 1990s, Global Ministries, through mission initiatives, began the process of being present in countries where no United Methodist ministry existed. The initiatives were designed to be proactive in making disciples of Jesus Christ throughout the world," he said.

To date, there are officially 13 mission initiatives in 18 countries across the globe, and Cambodia is one of them. Kim said it also is among the earliest and the largest of these initiatives, with, currently, 143 United Methodist churches.

Every local church must meet certain criteria, Kim said, noting that there must be at least 30 members to achieve church status.

The next Cambodia Consultation is scheduled for spring 2011. It will be hosted by the California-Nevada Annual Conference.

Israel-Palestine Task Force, Jewish Organizations Work Together for Peace With Justice in the Holy Land

By Doug Smith

Cal-NeV Israel-Palestine Task Force

Sitting in the ballroom of the Grand Hyatt hotel in Washington, D.C., I stood and applauded with 1500 others as the speaker at the podium passionately called for an end to the occupation of the West Bank by Israel, a freeze of settlement building, and a peace that will provide for the security of Israel and the creation of a Palestinian state. With a voice filled with passion, Jeremy Ben-Ami, Executive Director of the organization J Street, made his position very clear.

"Yes, it is a voice that loves Israel as the state of our people, but one that expresses love not in unquestioning embrace, but in caring partnership ... a voice that cares not simply about our people, but about the future of the Palestinian people - not just because it is in our interests, but because Palestinian children deserve a future and freedom, hope, and happiness every bit as much as Jewish children.

"This majority will be silenced no more. Our voice will help guide the way to a safe and secure future for the state of Israel, the creation of a Palestinian state beside it, and to American policies that help secure a better future not only for the children of the region but for our children here at home."

The J-Street website at www.jstreet.org publishes the following statement on the purpose of the organization"

"J Street was founded to promote meaningful American leadership to end the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts peacefully and diplomatically. We support a new direction for American policy in the Middle East and a broad public and policy debate about the U.S. role in the region.

"J Street represents Americans, primarily but not exclusively Jewish, who support Israel and its desire for security as the Jewish homeland, as well as the right of the Palestinians to a sovereign state of their own - two states living side-by-side in peace and security. We believe ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is in the best interests of Israel, the United States, the Palestinians, and the region as a whole."

In 2004 and again in 2008 our United Methodist General Conference affirmed a position on the Israel-Palestine conflict which calls for an end to the occupation.

"The United Methodist Church opposes continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and any vision of a 'Greater Israel' that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings." (*The Book of Resolutions*, 2004, ¶ 312.)

This position is well aligned with that of J Street. During my chairmanship of the Conference Israel-Palestine Task Force from 2008 to 2009, a significant part of our work was developing interfaith dialogue to find common ground with the Jewish community. And we have found that common ground to be significant.

In the fall of 2008, our Israel-Palestine Task Force sponsored a series of three events in Contra Costa County that brought together up to 50 Christians, Jews, and Muslims to listen with respect and without debate, to the various perspectives on peace in the Holy Land. New hope and new connections emerged as we found common ground even in the presence of many differences.

In the spring of 2009, we worked with Jewish Voice for Peace and American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in the East Bay on two events in response to the Gaza War: a presentation by Dr. Abuelaish - a witness from Gaza - and a citizens' hearing.

Our Task Force co-sponsored a dialog of Presbyterians, Jewish leaders, and Methodists in the East Bay Area. We had more than 30 participants, including Rabbi Michael Lerner and other Rabbis.

At Annual Conference Session in June, a Rabbi co-presented a luncheon session for the Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (CCUIC) focusing on "Finding the Common Ground." Conference attendees and representatives from the Jewish Community Relations Council of Sacramento participated in the session.

And the work continues this year as we participate in J Street; lobby on "the Hill" in teams that include Jewish and Methodist lobbyists; enter into dialogue with Brit Tzedik v'Shalom; and continue ongoing relationships with Interfaith Peace Builders, Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, B'tselem, and of course Sindyanna - a Jewish and Palestinian Women's agricultural cooperative in Israel. The Israel-Palestine Task Force is committed to reaching out to Jewish groups interested in finding common ground so that we may work together towards peace with justice for Israel and Palestine.

Shalom, Salaam, Peace.

Church Split on Afghan Strategy, United in Prayer

By Kathy L. Gilbert*

As the world moves into Advent and Christmas, there is vigorous debate over whether President Obama's decision to deploy more U.S. troops to Afghanistan will lead to greater peace on Earth.

Even as they disagree on military strategy, however, the one area faithful United Methodists have no trouble reaching consensus on is that Obama, and the soldiers and their families, need prayers and support.

More than 70 United Methodist bishops signed a letter on Nov. 10 asking the president to withdraw troops by the end of 2010. On Dec. 1, Obama announced he was sending 30,000 additional troops to "accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011."

Bishop Marshall L. Meadors, one of three retired United Methodist bishops who drafted the letter, said the president's decision was "disappointing."

Meadors said the goal of getting troops out by 2011 seems unrealistic.

"I realize that the president and his war cabinet know a great deal more about the situation than I do, but based on the fact that we have been involved in military action in Afghanistan for seven years now it is difficult to conceive how the new strategy is going to bring a victory," the bishop said.

Other church members back the president.

The Rev. Walter Fenton, chief operations officer for Good News magazine, said he supports sending more troops to build up the Afghan Army and police and to "degrade and weaken the brutal and violent Taliban and al-Qaeda forces."

"We recognize that faithful United Methodists and reasonable people can disagree on various military strategies, but in light of the drastic reduction in the number of military and civilian deaths after the surge in Iraq, we support President Obama's decision to send 30,000 troops to Afghanistan to defend the defenseless," he said.

Meadors emphasized he was speaking for himself and not for the Council of Bishops.

"I'm just one human being, but I am committed to being a follower of Jesus, who was a peacemaker," he said. "The question is not, what would Jesus do? But what would Jesus have us do?"

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

Church Leaders Condemn Political Massacre in Philippines

A UMNS Report

By Kathy L. Gilbert*

MANILA, Philippines (UMNS)

Religious leaders, including The United Methodist Church, are calling for an end to private armies and are reaching out to the victims of a political massacre that left 57 people dead.

The United Methodist **California-Nevada Annual (regional) Conference** has sent three teams to the Philippines to hear stories of abductions, torture and killings.

"Even as we grieve and mourn, we are outraged," the National Council of Churches in the Philippines said in a statement after the Nov. 23 killings.

"Disarming the private armies of warlords is of paramount import in the course of the coming elections," Bishop Felixberto Calang of the Philippine Independent Church told Ecumenical News International from the southern Philippine city of Cagayan de Oro. "Let us call for the repudiation of private armies and work for a people-friendly and just environment so that we can have fair, free and honest elections."

Andal Ampatuan Jr., the heir of a powerful clan and an ally of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, was charged Dec. 1 in connection with the attack on a caravan of journalists, lawyers, and the wife, relatives and several supporters of Ampatuan's rival, Vice Mayor Esmael Mangudadatu of Maguindanao's Buluan township. Mangudadatu's supporters had intended to file for his candidacy for governor in elections scheduled for next May.

"This massacre is a grim reminder of the pervading culture of impunity and the lack of respect for human rights that has been in our midst and that has turned for the worse since 2001," said the statement signed by the Rev. Rex Reyes Jr., top executive of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

Conscience of the nation

The United Methodist Church in the Philippines has been active in working with the council to shine the spotlight on extrajudicial killings, which have escalated since Arroyo was elected in 2001. Arroyo has denied any military role in the killings and declared a national day of mourning after the recent massacre.

"If you are against the government ... you're an enemy of the government," said Bishop Leo A. Soriano, Davao Area.

Soriano was in the United States recently for a Council of Bishops meeting and spoke about the ongoing violence in his country. "If you try to raise some issues and questions about corruption and about how things are being done, then you are an enemy of the government. And you will simply be eliminated."

Justice Reynato Puno, a United Methodist who is chief justice of the Philippine Supreme Court, has questioned the roles of the government and military in hundreds of deaths and abductions in the Philippines. "Telling the truth requires courage," he said.

Many of the victims have been church workers who support the poor. The Rev. Isaias St. Rosa, a United Methodist local pastor, was shot by gunmen outside his home in 2006.

Soriano said the church is the conscience of the nation. "We have to speak all these things in spite of death threats. We have so many victims who died doing these things, and this is their Christian faith."

Praying for peace

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines called the incident "a massacre most foul, gross and utterly repugnant."

"The gruesome massacre of unarmed civilians is also a painful reminder that government statements to the dismantling of political warlordism have been mere rhetoric," the council said. "Government has either turned a blind eye or entered into alliances with these warlords for political expediency at the expense of creating democratic space. Political warlordism is a manifestation of a feudal social order, and we join the call that it should now be outdated.

"To our partners around the world, our deep gratitude for upholding us in your supplication and affirming our calls," the churches said. "We pray that peace and justice be given a chance in Mindanao and elsewhere in this country." The province where the massacre took place is on the island of Mindanao.

"We pray that all the resources that have been poured in Mindanao bail the people out from the mire of poverty, neglect and human indignity," the council said. "We pray that we all rise from this blasphemy for the sake of the God who loves us all and calls us to be one people, and for the sake of our children and the children yet unborn."

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

Africa University to Inaugurate New Leaders

MUTARE, Zimbabwe (UMNS) - United Methodist-related Africa University will inaugurate its third chancellor and vice chancellor Dec. 5.

Bishop David Kekumba Yemba, 66, of the Democratic Republic of Congo, will be officially installed as chancellor. Fanuel Tagwira, a pioneer staff member of the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources, will be inaugurated as vice chancellor.

Other activities at the inauguration include the dedication of the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance building Dec. 3 and a seminar on "Financing Institutions of Higher Learning in the 21st century" Dec. 4.

2009 World AIDS Day Worship Resources Available

WASHINGTON (UMNS)--Resources, including a 2009 sample [worship](#) service, are available for churches to use on or around World AIDS Day, Dec. 1. Congregations are urged to lift up the power of prayer and worship in the battle to eradicate AIDS, said Linda Bales Todd, executive with the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. HIV-prevention programs and ministries are making a difference in the rate of infections worldwide, she said.

Visit [UNAIDS](#) to access the latest global AIDS data.

Temple UMC Hosts Photo Exhibit, Book Signing Fundraiser This Sunday

Temple United Methodist Church invites you to a "photo exhibit and book signing" fundraiser **this Sunday, December 6, 1-1:45 p.m.**, in honor of World AIDS Day.

The book Face to Face, which is about hope and finding "room at the inn" for children who ordinarily "wouldn't have a prayer," will be available for sale and signing.

Profits from book sales will help buy dairy goats for families in Kenya supported by G.R.A.C.E. USA. Temple pastor, the Rev. Schuyler Rhodes, says, "If we sell 15 books we've bought a whole goat!"

A small exhibit of photos of schoolchildren from Tala, Kenya will be available to view, as well.

Temple UMC is located at 1111 Junipero Serra Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94132.

Commentary: Thandi's Story Shows Toll of AIDS

A UMNS Commentary

By Nancy Neelley*

Thandiwe is a quiet girl who has experienced the kind of loss that no 12-year-old child should have to bear.

I met her recently while on a mission trip to Zimbabwe for Project Tariro, a ministry that addresses the needs of Zimbabweans living with HIV/AIDS. "Tariro" means hope in Shona, and meeting Thandi gave me a new understanding of the need for hope.

In Zimbabwe, an estimated one in four adults is living with HIV/AIDS. Thandi's mother, Nora, was one of them.

When she was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, Nora was rejected by her family, and sought refuge in Project Tariro's "positive-living" community. There, Thandi and her mom discovered a new family, meeting people who were receiving treatment and becoming well enough to work and even help others living with the disease.

But last March, something went terribly wrong. Nora had been doing well on the antiretroviral drugs, which are free at the United Methodist clinic at Old Mutare Mission, but she developed an infection and needed another prescription filled. The hospital dispensary didn't have the drugs, and Nora didn't have the transportation nor the money to purchase them elsewhere. Her health worsened.

One morning, Nora was found lying outside the clinic on the pavement with Thandi at her side. Her support group and the clinic staff pooled their money to purchase the medication and find transportation.

They were too late. When they returned with the medicine, they found that Nora had died.

A tender embrace

Thandi's life was at a standstill. No family members were there to help her mourn the loss, feed and clothe her or take her to school. Nora's family abandoned her, and Nora's body was left in the morgue for four weeks before her friends could raise enough money for a burial.

During my visit in October, the clinic staff - Joyce Makoni and Evelyn Mashonganyika - told me what had happened. I asked to meet Thandi, so she walked the dirt road from her home to talk with me. When she arrived, I was touched by her beauty, her quiet nature, and how the depth of her grief was so acutely visible.

I began by telling her that I heard how wonderful her mom was and asked if she could tell me more about her. Big teardrops almost immediately began to fall off her cheeks. She said her mom always took care of her, giving her food and clothes and teaching her to cook and do crafts.

Thandi said that her mom read to her and that they often laughed together. She spoke about her mom teaching her to love God.

I was deeply moved. Not knowing what else to do, I asked her if I could hold her.

As we embraced, I thought about Nora, and I could only imagine how desperate she must have felt for her child in those last hours of life.

With Nora's death, Thandi has now become the one - the one in four children under the age of 15 who is orphaned by AIDS in Zimbabwe. Can you imagine if this situation were all around us in the United States, and we had to live with this as a common occurrence?

Thandi's wish

Project Tariro's goal is to lessen the occurrence of AIDS orphans by providing treatment to those living with HIV/AIDS and prevention education to surrounding communities. Its ministries include treatment, support groups, income-generating projects and a nutritional garden. The ministry draws support from the Faculty of Health Sciences at United Methodist-related Africa University, the Zimbabwe United Methodist Church and U.S.-based Friends of Project Tariro.

Funding is desperately needed for Project Tariro to continue beyond October 2010. Funds may be designated for "AIDS Project Tariro, c/o AU" and mailed to the Africa University Development Office, P.O. Box 34000, Nashville, TN 37203. The program is also an Advance Special of the church, so checks can be designated for "Project Tariro, Advance #982345" and placed in offering plates.

Thandi is now living with a local pastor and six other orphans who love and support her. Her life is going on, although her mom's death is something that will affect her entire life.

I can't take her pain away. I can't make everything all right for her. But what I can do is remember what she said to me before I left her.

I asked Thandi if there was anything that she wanted me to tell others. She looked out the window, then quietly said that she hopes "all people who are living positively can get treatment, so they won't die like my mother did."

Thandi's story inspires me to work for Project Tariro - to raise money and awareness - so that one day, by God's grace, her wish will come true.

*Neelley is a program manager with United Methodist Communications and a deacon with Sixty-First Avenue United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tenn. UMNS is a unit of United Methodist Communications.

'Simple Church' Workshop at San Ramon Valley UMC in February

Tired of juggling a seemingly never-ending stream of ministry programs? Confused by the challenge of "making disciples" in a 21st century culture? Looking for a better way to do ministry? SIMPLIFY...

San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church announces a February workshop for clergy and laity who are looking for ways to shift their disciple-making focus from "program" to "process."

Eric Geiger, Executive Pastor at Christ Fellowship in Miami and co-author of the book *Simple Church*, will lead the workshop, sharing what his extensive research has taught him: that vibrant churches are those which have chosen to focus on a simple process for making disciples of Jesus Christ. He will guide participants in practical ways to develop a process that is faithful to that purpose.

Don't miss "SIMPLE CHURCH: The Process of Making Disciples," Thursday, February 4, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Wesley Center at San Ramon Valley UMC.

The workshop is open to both clergy and laity. Clergy Continuing Education Credit of .5 units is available.

Registration is \$35/person (includes lunch); \$25/person for teams of three or more. Registration deadline is January 15.

Download [brochure](#) and [registration form](#) (both in PDF format).

Call the church at 925.837.5243 for more information.

San Ramon Valley UMC is located at 902 Danville Blvd., Alamo, CA 94507.

'Keys to Leading in Our Shifting Culture' Is in Phoenix in February

Do you ever feel as though you're getting lost in a storm of changes swirling around you? Many clergy and other church leaders do feel that way, and want to come out of that "storm of changes" heading in the right direction, able to successfully lead their churches to their destination in the kingdom of God.

If you share that view, you're invited to join the training organization Leadership Nexus and **George Barna** for a relevant, much-needed, quality training event called "Keys to Leading in Our Shifting Culture," February 9-11, 2010 at Willowbrook United Methodist Church in Phoenix.

Keynote speakers, in addition to George Barna, are Phyllis Tickle and Walt Kallestad, along with John Southwick, Vance Ross, and others. This leadership team will help interpret cultural changes in a very practical way for the effectiveness of the church, guiding participants in how to respond to those changes.

In these tough economic times, get the tools and inspiration you need to lead your church - from leaders who are forging powerful understandings of our culture today.

The conference offers doctoral credit through California Graduate School of Theology, along with CEUs. Half-tuition scholarships are available.

For [more information](#) and to register on line, click here. Enrollment is limited due to the size of the church, so please register as soon as possible.

For more information about George Barna, visit www.christianpost.com.

Bishop Schnase to Lead Workshop at Nevada-Sierra District Training Day

Bishop Robert Schnase, author of *Five practices of Fruitful Congregations*, will lead a three-part workshop at the Nevada-Sierra District's 15th Annual Leadership Training Day, Saturday, March 6, at South Reno United Methodist Church.

Bishop Schnase will provide a brief overview of the Five Practices, explain how congregations move toward excellence and fruitfulness, and teach how to "practice" the Mission of the Church.

The training day carries .5 Clergy CEUs (in Spiritual Formation, Disciple Making, or Professional Competency Development), and Lay Speaker Refresher Course Credit.

Download [flyer with registration form](#) (in PDF format) here. Complete registration and return to the N-S District office with \$20 fee (\$25 after January 31) to guarantee your spot. Call the district office at 775.786.2332 with questions.

South Reno UMC is located at 200 De Spain Lane, Reno, NV 89511.

'Large Church Initiative 2010' Will Be in San Antonio in April

Make plans now to attend The United Methodist Church's 2010 national training event, the Large Church Initiative conference, April 12-15 at University United Methodist Church in San Antonio.

The goal for "Large Church Initiative 2010" is to introduce you to leading thinkers, major speakers, and cutting-edge systems both for making disciples *and* for making *decisions* that make disciples. Your team will leave San Antonio with new tools for coaching individual disciples and coordinating institutional decisions - tools which will grow your congregation in both size and significance.

Your team also will establish new contacts, friendships, and peer networks which can assist you for years to come.

LCI 2010 will help any congregation, but especially those with a weekly worship attendance of 350 and more.

For a complete list of speakers and breakout sessions, an overview of the schedule, and information about the host church, visit either the [LCI 2010](#) website or the [University UMC](#) website.

Mississippi Conference Attracts Young Elders

By Vicki Brown*

Dec. 2, 2009 | DALLAS (UMNS)

Eleven percent of elders in The United Methodist Mississippi Annual (regional) Conference are under the age of 35, more than double the percentage of young elders nationally.

The conference's success is no accident, said church leaders attending EXPLORATION 2009, a national event for young people considering a call to ordained ministry.

Officials say the state is reaping the success of efforts that include committing resources to campus ministry, holding annual calling events in the conference, having churches adopt seminarians and offering regular statewide youth events.

"Our bishop [Hope Morgan Ward] has a real heart for youth," said Kevin Murriel of Brandon, Miss., a student at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. "There's been an emphasis placed on youth involvement throughout the conference."

The conference has 41 elders under the age of 35 in 2009, or 11.11 percent of its 369 elders. In the United States, there are 906 provisional and ordained elders under the age of 35, or 5.25 percent of the total, according to the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington.

Mississippi has 27 campus ministry units across the state – one on every college campus, including community colleges, Ward said. All are Wesley Foundations, and she said many of the campus ministry boards and alumni are active in supporting those ministries.

"The Wesley Foundation at Mississippi State has more than 400 students and Wesley at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Perkinston gathers hundreds of students each week," Ward said.

Ward said United Methodists in Mississippi are conscious of supporting and staying in touch with seminarians, too, since there is not a United Methodist seminary in the state.

"When we make appointments, the young people are appointed first, and that may be helpful in keeping our seminarians in the conference," Ward said. "Many of them want to be associate pastors so they can have mentoring by a senior pastor. But if they want their own church, we try to appoint them to one that won't be so isolated."

The Rev. Lisa Garvin, director of Ministerial Services for the conference, said campus ministry is now the third largest item in the conference budget.

"I think it's paying off," she said.

The things the annual conference has done are not rocket science but a continued focus on the issue, said the Rev. Karen Koons Hayden, pastor at Centenary United Methodist Church in McComb, Miss.

"Get your Ministerial Education Fund money in, sponsor a student to an event like EXPLORATION or a statewide calling event, adopt a seminary student, have a calling service in your local church every year," Hayden said.

"Personally, I think it all comes back to mentoring and how seriously a church and pastor take their role in stewardship of the person," Hayden said. "We do keep reminding pastors that it is part of their job."

Those connections may be one reason Mississippi does not lose seminary graduates to other conferences, Hayden said. She said there are a lot of hoops to jump through in the candidacy process and that "if you've got someone loving you, and supporting you, praying for you, and listening to you, it's easier."

Ryan Parker, a Duke Divinity School student from Hattiesburg, said his pastors and district superintendent took the time to talk to him as he was thinking about vocation.

"They would call and e-mail," Parker said. "They see it as a process of helping you to see what you couldn't see."

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

Internet Church Engages in '21st Century Circuit Riding'

By Joey Butler*

Nov. 25, 2009 | NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS)

"I don't think we're in Kansas any more."

Dorothy from "The Wizard of Oz" may have said that about herself, but she could also have been talking about The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection.

While the church maintains its physical presence in three locations in Kansas, it has also gone worldwide with the launch of Resurrection Live!, an Internet-based worship experience.

The Rev. Andrew Conard is the pastor of the online campus, which began streaming services in November 2008.

"When we first launched, we didn't figure there would be a lot who would worship with us, but we found that there was significant interest among our current congregation," Conard said, adding that the online services average about 1,000 visitors.

"The Internet is a place where people feel comfortable coming to interact and find faith," he says. "One of the questions is how do we worship, give, grow in faith and serve together online?"

Increased interaction

Two of Resurrection's five Sunday services are streamed on <http://live.cor.org>. Visitors are able to register their attendance, and Conard contacts them afterward and stays in touch.

The goal is increased methods of interaction. Conard says he hopes the site will allow him to interact live with online worshippers. There are likely to be more social media outlets on the site, allowing people to take notes online and maybe share those notes. The church also may offer online classes. Ultimately, Conard hopes to find ways for people to serve.

Conard is the right man for the job, says the Rev. Adam Hamilton, Resurrection's senior pastor.

"Andrew has a passion for blogging, Twitter. ... It was something that he already loved. We felt we had IT staff who could do the technical part, but among our pastors he was really the one who was most energized about it," Hamilton says.

Hamilton says the Internet services have been especially popular of late due to H1N1 virus concerns. "School attendance has been down by 10 percent in our area because of the swine flu. Our Internet attendance has gone through the roof because people are home with sick kids. Instead of dismissing church, they're worshipping with us."

Planting churches online?

Streaming the services online has also revealed a possible new method for starting churches. Conard says an independent living facility in the area began regularly showing the services to a group of residents. This sparked the idea of the "microchurch."

"People might be able to gather and worship together in one place through an online service, be it people's homes or college dorms - wherever people might gather can be a place for worship," Conard says. "So we ask ourselves what ways we can equip the leaders of those groups and try to be the church in that way as well."

Hamilton cites the story of one member's unchurched relative in another state who is now a regular visitor to Resurrection Live!

"What would happen if he invited 12 of his friends to sit in his living room and to join us for worship that way? Maybe this guy who just six months ago was unchurched might start a congregation," he says.

Conard says he sees microchurches as a church-planting strategy. He envisions a network of microchurches with an elder appointed to a number of them to oversee and work with the local leaders. Hamilton calls it "21st century circuit-riding."

"In the long term, that could be a way of planting new faith communities in a little bit different way," Conard says.

Hamilton agrees.

"We're trying to figure out what does church look like in the next 20 or 30 years. And we feel like we're on the verge of this sort of revolution when it comes to how church looks for people in the future."

* Butler is editor of content for 18- to 34-year-olds at United Methodist Communications, Nashville, Tenn.

Wesley Ministry Network on Line Offers Solution for Busy Lives

Do you long to deepen your faith, but find you're "just too busy" to attend a class or join a small group? Get connected with Wesley Ministry Network on Line!

Wesley Ministry Network's acclaimed adult education courses bring the best of Christian scholarship to people in local churches - both laity and clergy. Starting in January, courses will be available on line through a partnership with The Institute for Discipleship, affiliated with Bishop Richard Wilke, founder of DISCIPLE Bible Study.

Courses include *Journey Through the Psalms*, *Serious Answers to Hard Questions*, *Simply Christian*, *Women Speak of God*, *Devotion to Jesus*, and *Religion and Science: Pathways to Truth*.

Each course features streaming video segments and online discussions with other students and experienced Wesley Ministry Network teachers. Courses are open to everyone, and CEUs are available for pastors.

Want to learn more? To register for a course? Visit [Wesley Ministry Network on Line](http://WesleyMinistryNetwork.com) (at beadisciple.com/wesleyministrynetwork).

UM Publishing Releases New Adam Hamilton Study Perfect for Lent

The United Methodist Publishing House has announced the release of the *24 Hours That Changed the World* products from Adam Hamilton, which it deems perfect for a Lenten study.

No single event in human history has received more attention than the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. In his "heartbreaking, inspiring book," *24 Hours That Changed the World*, Hamilton guides the reader, step by step, through the last 24 hours of Jesus' life. Each chapter is designed to help readers experience and understand the significance of Christ's suffering and death in a way they never have before.

The hardcover edition is available for \$18; the "40 Days of Reflection" companion devotional book, for \$10; companion DVD with Leader's Guide, for \$39; and all three are available as a kit for \$59.

Watch 1 min. 24 sec. [intro from the video](#) here.

For further information, chapter excerpts, and videos visit www.AdamHamilton.AbingdonPress.com.

Mentor Book Available in Spanish, English

Mentors as Instruments of God's Call has become a sought-after guide for those in the process of discerning a call to ministry or seeking to clarify their call.

New editions of this book, first published in 1992, are now available in Spanish and English from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. The new editions were updated by author Justo L. González, a retired member of the Rio Grande Annual Conference and former professor at the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and Candler School of Theology.

"All the great leaders of the church have had mentors who helped form and train them. Unfortunately, there was a time when the importance of mentoring was forgotten, or simply left to the chance encounter between people who would then establish a mentoring relationship," González says. "The current emphasis on mentoring, and its inclusion in the official programs and parameters for the development of new leadership, hold great promise for the future of The United Methodist Church, as well as for others who are following similar paths."

The book is an excellent concise introduction for anyone interested in learning more about the biblical meaning of mentoring.

The Rev. Sharon Rubey, director of Candidacy and Conference Relations of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, says the book is a helpful guide for identifying and training candidacy mentors.

"This thoughtful resource augments individual candidacy journeys and Conference candidacy programs," Rubey says.

Published by GBHEM, *Mentors as Instruments of God's Call: Biblical Reflections*, ISBN 978-0-938162-80-3, is available for \$5.95 through Cokesbury at 1.800.672.1789 or online at www.cokesbury.com. The Spanish edition, *Mentores como Instrumentos del llamado de Dios*, ISBN 978-0-938162-79-7, also is available from Cokesbury and for the same price.

UMC Professional Certification Courses to Be Offered by UTS in January

United Theological Seminary (UTS) in Dayton, Ohio will begin offering United Methodist Church Professional Certification courses in January. Four courses will be taught in a hybrid, retreat setting, January 11-16.

The UMC Certification Program for church professionals is a program of the General Board of Higher Education Ministries (GBHEM) of The United Methodist Church. To enroll as a certification student, go to the [GBHEM website](#) and follow instructions. Enrolled certification students are provided scholarships through GBHEM and UTS, and are eligible to register for classes at United as "Certification" students.

Non-certification students are welcome in these classes as well, either for Master's credit or as "Visiting" students.

Classes will be taught three times a year - in January, June, and August. In January 2010, the following courses are scheduled:

- Bible Survey
- Theology for Practical Ministry
- Aging from a Theological Perspective
- Spiritual Disciplines and Prayer

Visit [UMC Certification Program](#) for details.

'Circle of Names' Campaign Raises Funds in Support of Gender Justice, Women's Ministries

Have you heard about the "Circles of Names" Campaign? It is an initiative of the National Council of Churches, USA - Women's Ministries program, the goal of which is to obtain names of 1,000 women leaders, with a corresponding \$100 donation or pledge for each (for a total of \$100,000) - within a 51-day period. As women's ministries programs are being cut back in response to economic crisis in our communities, this campaign "will witness to the strength and depth of the network that supports gender justice."

It was launched on November 11 at the Claire Randall Women's Lunch at the National Council of Churches and Church World Service General Assembly in Minneapolis. Collection of names will end on December 31, 2009.

\$100 for each name may be donated immediately, or pledged to be given within the next year (before December 31, 2010).

"We believe it is a Kairos moment in time for us to stand together in support of gender justice and women's ministries," say organizers. "We invite you to give or pledge \$100 in the name of a woman leader you wish to honor, and join this exciting campaign."

All funds raised in the Circles of Names Campaign will be deposited into the Claire Randall Sustaining Fund, designated for the support and growth of current programming and staff of NCC Women's ministries and gender justice work.

In March, 2010 (Women's History Month), an original art piece will be unveiled which will incorporate all 1,000 women named. The Circles of Names art work will be displayed in the NCC's New York office as a representation ". . . bearing witness to a broad base of support historically, currently, and into the future for gender justice work in and through the faith communities to sustain, coordinate, and extend the work of women's ministries."

For more information visit www.circlesofnames.org or download [brochure](#) (in PDF format).

Register Your Youth Group for SSP Summer Projects

Sign up your youth group for a Sierra Service Project (SSP) home repair mission trip this summer, in South Los Angeles or on one of the Native American Reservations throughout the Western United States.

Six week-long projects have been scheduled in South LA and on Reservations in California, Nevada and Arizona, beginning June 27, 2010. Cost is \$335/participant (but just \$305 for churches new to SSP).

SSP has been providing life-changing service and learning experiences to youth and young adults since 1975.

Spots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis but currently there are choices of several weeks and sites for registration of your junior- or senior-high youth group.

Visit the SSP website for current [availability and registration information](#).

Contact Meghan Waller, meghan.waller@sierraserviceproject.org or 916.488.6441, with questions.

Find out more about Sierra Service Project at www.sierraserviceproject.org.

Experience The Magnificent Pipes of Hanford!

If you lived in a city of 750,000 people, it would be a big deal for there to be *even one* pipe organ dating from the early part of the 20th Century which could still make music. But when it's a *little* city of 50,000 and there are *five* magnificent, historic pipe organs - well, that's really something to "brag" about!

That's the case for Hanford, California. And this January, Hanford will - for the first time in its history - host an event that showcases the city's treasures. "The Magnificent Pipes of Hanford" will take ticket holders on a musical experience through the historic First Christian Reformed Church, the Episcopal Church of The Saviour, The First Presbyterian Church, The United Methodist Church, and the historic Hanford Fox Theater.

For four hours on Sunday, January 31, 2010, experience silent movies, wonderful pipe organ music, band organ and grinder organ music from a collectors' rally, bagpipes, with outstanding art, at The Kings Art Center, and entertainment by the Hanford West High School Jazz Band during a great buffet lunch. The program has been designed so that visitors can ride Amtrak from the

north and south to Hanford to attend the Sunday afternoon event - an important consideration since fog can be a concern at this time of year.

Anne Midgette wrote about the pipe organ's mystique in *The Washington Post*:

"The church organ is called the queen of instruments, the heart and soul of a church. It is also beautiful, with a warmth and range. Organ music is an old sound, magnifying the sound of humanlike breath through venerable technology in large spaces, all relics of time long past. The music is a kind of shrine to the past. It is hard to resist the instinctive pull toward preserving the organ as part of our history."

The leadership of Hanford UMC has designated any income that it derives from the event for preservation of the church's 1927 organ.

All-inclusive tickets are on sale now for \$49. Space is very limited due to the capacity of the churches, so only 525 tickets are being made available, with three rotations for each of the five organ locations.

To encourage early reservations, the Hanford Visitor Agency is offering a free DVD of the *Huell Howser Road Trip to Hanford* for all paid reservations received by December 15.

Don't miss this one-of-a-kind experience of music and history! Contact the Hanford Visitor Agency at visithanford@att.net, 559.582.5024, or 559.707.9983 for tickets and more information.

Or download [interactive reservation form](#) (in PDF format), complete it, and return it with your check to the Hanford Visitor Agency, 504 W. 7th Street, Hanford, CA 93230.

Download [poster](#) (PDF).

Read more about the instruments and the event in the October issue of [Carousel News and Trader](#) (PDF).

GBOD Advertises for 'New Church Starts' Exec

The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church is seeking an Executive Officer [for] New Church Starts. The position has been posted to the [Classifieds](#) section of the California-Nevada Annual Conference website at cnumc.org. Deadline for receiving applications is January 15, 2010. Download [job description](#) and [appendix](#) here. The General Board of Discipleship is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer.

InfoServ 'Hangs up' Its Phones

NASHVILLE: InfoServ, the official information service of The United Methodist Church, will become exclusively an email and online information service, effective April 1, 2010. At that time, telephone support services will be discontinued.

InfoServ is a ministry of United Methodist Communications, which in August announced some program and staff reductions in response to a growing budget deficit and a restructuring plan.

"In these challenging economic times, we must find ways to continue providing high quality service in a more cost effective manner," said the Rev. Larry Hollon, chief executive of United Methodist Communications. "Telephone calls to InfoServ have been decreasing over the past couple of years as more people take advantage of the Web or use email to request information. We're com

mitted to continuing to provide answers quickly and accurately, but technology allows us to do so more economically."

Customers will be able to submit questions via email at infoserv@umcom.org. Answers to the *most frequently asked* questions are also available online at www.infoserv.umc.org. In addition, other customer-friendly options - such as live chat and leaving a callback number - will be explored during the transition period. It is possible that, if there is sufficient demand, some *limited* hours for telephone availability may be offered after April 1.

Announcing New Schedule for Instant Connection Email in New Year

The "publication date" for the *Instant Connection* email will change, effective January 2010, due to a reduction in hours for some Conference Center staff.

The weekly email - which provides summaries of, and active links to, all stories uploaded to the Conference website during the week - now is sent to churches, clergy, and subscribers *on Friday*.

In January the *Instant Connection* email will be sent on Thursday of each week.

The earlier "publication date" necessitates an *earlier deadline*, too:

Effective January 1, 2010, the deadline for submitting articles for consideration for that week's *Instant Connection* will be 5 p.m. on Tuesday.

New! Video of 'Together We Serve' UM/ELCA Service Uploaded

An eight-minute [video of "Together We Serve,"](#) the November 15 service at Sacramento's First UMC, celebrating full communion between The United Methodist Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has been uploaded as a featured video in [REEL Witness](#) - the video library on the website of the California-Nevada Annual Conference of The UMC.

(A link to REEL Witness is located under "Quick Links" on the left side of the Home Page of the Conference website at cnumc.org.)

From UMNS: Five Stories on 'Soul Changing Prayer' for Advent

United Methodist News Service has five stories focusing on "[Soul Changing Prayer](#)" for Advent. Open up gifts of the Spirit this Advent to read:

"10 Ways to Improve Your Prayer Life"

"5 Ideas for Helping Your Child Talk to God"

"Revive Prayer Ministries" (churches share success stories)

"The Lord's Prayer Revisited"

"United Methodists Share Favorite Bible Passages, Books on Prayer"

And an article, "[All About Advent](#)," has been posted to the General Board of Discipleship's website.

Dean McIntyre, Director of Music Resources for GBOD, writes, "The season of Advent has been with us since the fourth century, although it has not been a part of the liturgical observance of all denominations and churches. With the mixing of Christmas and Advent during the weeks leading up to Christmas Day, there is often confusion of the two."

In addition to history, liturgical context, symbols and practices, and other such information, his article includes a list of suggested hymns and songs for Advent worship.

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.