



Connection

California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church



Photo of UMC protestors at KOVR in West Sacramento by Jeneane Jones.

UMs protest racial divide on “Survivor”

By Jeneane Jones

Director of Communications

By Chuck Myer

Connection editor

In four cities around the California-Nevada Annual Conference, United Methodists turned out Sept. 10, 2006 to send a message to CBS—that race-baiting for TV ratings could not be tolerated.

Aware of the CBS network’s decision to start its new *Survivor* season with a plan to segregate contestants by race and pit them against each other, Bishop Shamana put a call out to churches around the conference to protest *Survivor: Cook Island*. In San Francisco, Fresno, Reno and Sacramento,

United Methodists representing the ethnic diversity of the conference gathered outside the offices of CBS affiliates KPIX-TV, KOVR, KTVN and KJEO. Cal-Nevada Conference represents more than 24 different ethnic groups and many responded to the call. In San Francisco a crowd of more than 100, from Glide Memorial, Epworth, Temple UMC, Downs Memorial and Taylor UMC, and as far away as San Jose Calvary, carried signs in Spanish, Tongan, and English with slogans including “God made us one – why let CBS divide us.” They were joined by Presbyterians, UCC, Catholics and other

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Walking in the Spirit

Bishop Beverly J. Shamana

Bishop's Itinerary

Ministry Staff and Cabinet
Oct. 3-6

Pine UMC 120th Anniversary
San Francisco
Oct. 8

General Board of Church and Society
Washington, D.C.
Oct. 11-15

CA-NV Foundation
Oct. 17

Day With Clergy
San Jose District
Oct. 19

Santa Clara UMC
160th Anniversary
Oct. 21

"Outward Bound"
Bay View District
Oct. 24-27

Council of Bishops
Mozambique
Oct. 28-Nov. 10

Ministry Staff and Cabinet
Nov. 14-17

Wesley UMC
San Jose
Nov. 19

Day With Clergy
Delta District
Nov. 28

Clergy and Congregational
Development Summit
Nov. 29-30

We Are the World

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN CHRIST:

Two events in the life of our United Methodist Church are compelling testimonies that the world is as close as our seat mate in church or our grandchild on the phone.

We are painfully aware of the atrocities that have taken the lives of United Methodist pastors and workers in the Philippines in recent months. Since May 2001, there have been more than 20 church workers killed, the latest being one of our United Methodist local pastors, Isaias Santa Rosa. Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, president of the Council of Bishops, writes, "United Methodists in the Philippines and the United States are deeply troubled by the growing violence of the military."

I know that you have already responded in compassionate and caring ways. Let us continue to undergird the churches and people in the Manila and the provinces with a concert of prayer during the Sundays in October. I invite you to select a Sunday for your church to remember the people of the Philippine Islands, lifting them to God in prayer that they might receive added strength and courage as they persevere for peace and stability in the wake of violence and horrific murders.

On another continent of our world, the Council of Bishops will meet in Maputo, Mozambique, Africa from November 1 to 6. This is the first time the Council will have met outside of the Continental U.S. We are committed to the global nature of our denomination and are holding

this meeting within the episcopal area to participate first-hand in the tremendous vitality and opportunity of our colleagues and to strengthen the connections between Annual Conferences of Africa, Europe and the United States in shared witness, service, and building effective models.

Some of us will extend our travel to mission sites and other places. My husband Walter and I will join the group going to Cape Town, South Africa to experience the realities of community life since the dismantling of apartheid. I will return prior to our Ministry Staff meeting in mid-November. I solicit your prayers for our meeting and travel as we continue our work on behalf of Christ's church in the world at such a time as this.

Finally, we continue in prayer for the islands of Tonga, the loss and mourning since the death of King Siaosi Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, and the hopes for his successor, King Siaosi Tupou V. Please see my letter in the Instant Connection of September 14, 2006.

Let us continue to be God's people who live our vision of *passion in Jesus Christ and compassion for all*.

YOUR SISTER IN CHRIST,

Beverly J. Shamana

Bishop Beverly J. Shamana

Clergywomen sign peace declaration, call for end to Iraq war

By Linda Green

United Methodist News Service

(UMNS) - United Methodist clergywomen signed on to a declaration of peace that encourages the United States to bring its troops home from Iraq by Sept. 21.

The Declaration of Peace—endorsed by numerous civic, nonviolent, faith and interfaith peace groups, including Methodist Federation for Social Action—is a call for nonviolent action to end the U.S. war in Iraq.

The declaration calls for people to “engage in peaceful protests” if there is not a plan for troop withdrawal established and begun by Sept. 21, just days before Congress adjourns for the fall elections.

United Methodist clergywomen attending the 2006 International Clergywomen’s Consultation in Chicago signed the declaration to “call to end this war—and a commitment to take action to translate this call into a concrete plan for peace.”

The Rev. Kathryn Johnson, director of the Methodist Federation for Social Action, said the idea to gather signatures arose after a group of the women talked on Aug. 15 about what they could do related to peace in the world. Clergywomen participating in MFSA’s resource table the next day also shared ideas about what to do in local churches and as people of faith “to create a culture of peace.”

As clergywomen exited the convention hall, they were met by two lines of women singing songs about peace and spirit, and holding posters proclaiming an end to the war and calling for the troops to be brought home. The singers encouraged the clergywomen to sign the document and join policymakers and citizens, people of faith and people of conscience to “take tangible, nonviolent action to end this war and to declare a new era of peace and justice.”

The declaration calls the situation in Iraq “the U.S. war in Iraq” and describes it as “an endless fire consuming lives, resources and the fragile possibilities of peace.”

According to the flier announcing the declaration and encouraging action, nearly 70 percent of people in the United States oppose the war in Iraq and want a concrete plan that includes withdrawal of U.S. troops, the closure of U.S. bases in Iraq, support for a peace process in the post-occupation transition, and reconstruction and reparations in Iraq. In the declaration’s goals, the “comprehensive and concrete plan” must be completed no later than March 19, 2007.



Bishop Susan Morrison (right), who leads the UMC’s Albany (N.Y.) Area, joins Rev. Barbara Troxell (second from right) and other clergywomen in asking participants at the 2006 International Clergywomen’s Consultation in Chicago to sign a “declaration of peace.” UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilbert.

Some signers of the declaration planned to participate in a “peaceful action” at the Congressional offices in Washington Sept. 21-28 “if a comprehensive, concrete, and rapid plan for an end to the U.S. war in Iraq is not established and begun by Sept. 21.”

The peaceful engagements will include rallies, marches, vigils and demonstrations.

“The declaration calls on the United States to support the Iraqi people in rebuilding their society and creating the country that they need,” Johnson said. “We believe that our military forces are currently fueling the fighting in Iraq. We believe that we need to withdraw our military presence and we need to support efforts of the people of Iraq to continue to rebuild their own country, and we need to support that.”

Nonviolence, she added, is one of the core commitments of MFSA, an unofficial social justice network. “Our peace work is an expression of our faith.”

More information about the declaration can be found at www.declarationofpeace.org online.

Adopt an Apportionment!

By **Debra L. Brady**

CFA Chairperson

As I assume a new leadership role in the Conference Council of Finance and Administration, I am challenging this team to find ways to lead us from paying 60% of our General Church Apportionments to 100% by 2008. (I am embarrassed and perplexed to know that we rank dead last among all conferences in our denomination in terms of our connectional giving covenant!) To that end, I am looking for churches that are already providing leadership toward this goal. One church that caught my eye was Wesley UMC in Bakersfield. I called Pastor Kimberly Willis to find out what Wesley had done to achieve their goal of paying 100% of their apportionments.

DB: Your church has made a sudden and positive turn-around in paying your apportionments. What did you do?

KW: The key thing was to first collectively decide that paying 100% of our apportionments was something that should be a priority for Wesley. We engaged in discussions around our feelings about apportionments, the significance of our connection as United Methodists, and the purpose of each apportionment. But everything that followed emerged from these preliminary discussions. After we agreed that we wanted to move to paying 100%, we set out to brainstorm about creative ways we could achieve this goal.

From a practical perspective, we made some budgetary shifts. We integrated apportionments into our overall church budget and committed to making monthly payments. When some staff members moved on to new adventures we decided to look within Wesley and see who has the gifts to fill those positions. This worked out really well. That money was then re-directed toward apportionments. We also evaluated our overall spending and looked at ways that we could potentially free up more money to pay apportionments.

DB: Is that all you did?



Rev. Kimberly Willis (third from right) and her congregants celebrate their apportionment success.

KW: No. We did—and continue to do—a lot of education about apportionments. People aren't going to give and support apportionments when they are viewed as an endless abyss rather than active and vital ministry for the sake of the Gospel in our world. People need to understand what apportionments are and what they support. I believe that until this happens people are not going to actively participate. I personally don't give to things I don't understand—and I don't expect anyone at Wesley to do so either. We have to help make that connection. I contacted United Methodist Communications and had a long conversation with one of their great reps and ordered all kinds of information that explains about the individual apportionments. It's very good—and free!

After doing a lot of education, engaging in discussions and preaching that addressed apportionments, we then invited people to “adopt” an apportionment—or part of an apportionment.

DB: Adopt an apportionment? How does that work?

KW: The idea is to not have any “orphaned” apportionments. We offer all of the apportionments for “adoption” and include a bulletin insert with the names and amounts of each apportionment. We also make available the information from United Methodist Communications. We

do this for several weeks. At the bottom of the insert there is an “adoption” form. People can either adopt the entire apportionment or part of it. Some of them are just too much for one family to handle alone. For instance, our apportionment for World Service is \$4,668. Right now six families have adopted parts of this apportionment and contributed \$1520—33% of the total amount.

We emphasize the adoption process a few different times throughout the year to keep it in front of folks. And the emphasis is then always followed by an invitation to respond. When we receive an “adoption” form, we immediately send a packet to the adopting family that includes a cover letter, an adoption certificate, and additional information about their “adopted” apportionment.

DB: And people are responding? Don't they think you're crazy?

KW: We currently have 19 families that have already adopted apportionments totaling over \$7,000. And there's still time left in 2006! It's a new thing so it does take time to for the congregation to develop ownership of the idea. But I'm really encouraged by our results so far.

Sure, some people probably think it's a crazy idea. But isn't that always true? I prefer to think of it as creative! It's

Churches with 100% on shared giving

Congratulations and a huge "Thank you" to the following churches for contributing 100% of their Shared Giving (Apportionments) through August. They are demonstrating excellent leadership in extending the gracious invitation and compassionate heart of Christ to people around the world.

If you are struggling with keeping your Shared Giving commitment, call one of these churches and learn their success strategies!

Bayview District (16.1% of Churches at 100%)

Berkeley Trinity
Fairfield Community
Livermore Asbury
Oakland Lake Park
Oakland Laurel
Pleasanton Lynnewood
Richmond Easter Hill
Richmond First
Walnut Creek Tice Valley

Delta District (32.3% of Churches at 100%)

Citrus Heights
Elk Grove Point Pleasant
Elk Grove
Elverta
Farmington
Hughson
Ione
Isleton
Jamestown
Modesto First
Riverbank
Sacramento Emanuel
Sacramento Faith
Sacramento Wesley
Soulsbyville
Stockton Central
Stockton Holy Cross
Tuolumne
Valley Springs Community
Woodland

Fresno District (23.6% of Churches at 100%)

Atwater
Caruthers
Fresno Calwa
Fresno St. Mark's
Fresno Wesley
Kerman
Livingston
New Cuyama
Oakhurst New Community
Reedley Fellowship
Shafter
Tehachapi Valley
Wasco

Golden Gate District (34.8% of churches at 100%)

Anderson Valley Booneville
Daly City
First Tongan of San Bruno
Half Moon Bay
Mill Valley Mt. Tamalpais
Novato
Philo
Point Arena St. Paul's
Potter Valley
San Francisco Calvary
San Francisco Chinese
San Francisco Park Presidio
San Mateo Hillsdale
San Mateo Shoreview
Sonoma
Willits

Nevada-Sierra District (43.2% of Churches at 100%)

Battle Mountain
Coleville Antelope Valley
Dutch Flat
Ely
Georgetown
Greenville
Kings Beach
Newcastle
North San Juan
Reno St. Paul's
Schurz
Smith Valley
South Reno
Taylorsville



Truckee Church of the Mountains
Yerington Community

San Jose District (20.4% of Churches at 100%)

Aptos
Campbell
Fremont First
Fremont St. Paul
Milpitas Sunnyhills
Pacific Grove Forest Hill
Palo Alto Aldersgate
Palo Alto First
Prunedale
San Jose Wesley

Shasta District (44 % of Churches at 100%)

Anderson Trinity
Arcata First
Chico Trinity
Church of the Joyful Healer
Corning
Dunsmuir
El Camino
Fall River Mills Community
Fort Jones
Guinda
Los Molinos Community
Los Molinos Cone Community
Maxwell
Meridian
Montague
Orland Federated
Red Bluff First
Shasta Lake Community
Smith River
Sutter
Yreka
Yuba City Love Korean

Hills of Schurz: Alive with sound of music

By Areta Frost-Martin

Schurz, NV UMC

The Walker River Paiute Reservation and the Schurz United Methodist Church are located on the crossroads of two highways serving the west, the northeast, and the states to the southwest. Native drums and pipes are the pulsing ambience of celebrations, funerals, and the Pine Nut Festival of the September harvest.

Many travelers, some of Native American origin, and other seekers find the church. Voices and a 1900s church bell resound in the calico hills and this ancient, fertile valley the rest of the year.

Inuit/ Athabascan pastor Michael Kirby discovered the church one day in his travels as music filled the valley like a siren song. He has returned several times to preach, encourage native pride, and to express his belief from visions that somehow Schurz is destined to become a holy place and a beacon for Indian Nations.

A year ago an aspiring pastor-in-training was brought in by former Nevada-Sierra D.S., Rev. Suk-Chong Yu. That's when Smith Valley's Jim Euler came into the lives of the people of the church.

Jim was, however, not without "baggage." The sanctuary's lone musical instrument, a tired piano by the altar, visibly seemed to perk up. Jim's accordion arrived first. A guitar followed. Then came a ukulele and finally the smallest case, containing a harmonica. Instrument cases now covering the dais, Jim Euler lifted his eyes, saying, "Wouldn't it be wonderful to have an organ here in this church?" A beautiful organ was donated and delivered by the Yerington UMC the very next week.

The congregation was most impressed. Most had never seen such quick response, nor had they seen

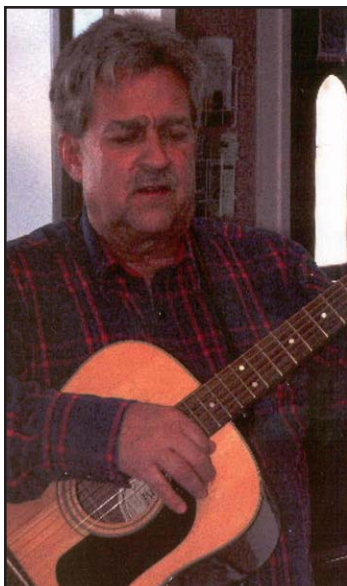


On Schurz' Native American Sunday in June, Priscilla Carrera offered the words for "Amazing Grace" in Paiute—an ancient, almost forgotten, tongue. Left to right: Karin Young, Denise Rienstra, John Smith (Maidu/Wintun/Pit River heritage), Priscilla Carrera, Vernadine Smith, and pastor-in-training Jim Euler.

this ilk of pastor before. This one could preach, and then play the guitar, pray and then provide hymns on the piano, share while playing the organ, complete the service plucking the ukulele, say "God Speed" with a harmonica, or provide a rousing exit march with the accordion. He would feature two or three instruments in each service, and never drop a syllable. A Paiute Bible became available again for those who could read the ancient language.

Musical talent began to emerge from the congregation. Voices are now raised in all genres of song each Sunday. New guitars have joined the service. Voices, long reserved, have responded boldly in our group singing. Indian drums occasionally participate. We never know what traveler, tourist, or seeker will show up at our crossroads...but the beat is sweet.

Please join us any Sunday at 10:30.



Schurz UMC's Jim Euler with one of his many instruments.

Temple: Extravaganza of ministries, outreach

Temple UMC in San Francisco has launched several new ministries this year.

A new food pantry of canned goods is serving an average of 75 families a week, a sizable portion of them being new Asian families in the Sunset District. In addition Temple takes 150 brown bag lunches to the Tenderloin two Sundays a month.

A Horace Mann Middle School counselor has joined Temple's tutorial program, helping 25 kids with homework and the arts. A mariachi band will instruct a new Youth Mariachi Band at the church, and a new youth gospel chorus this fall will be a community outreach.

Long-time member Martha Milk is a new CLayM (confer-

ence lay minister) and is coordinating curricula for the growing number of small groups at Temple. The church is planning a series of faith-deepening, one-day retreats on Saturdays at nearby retreat centers, and has started a gardening camaraderie to upkeep its grounds.

The Rev. Brenda Vaca is Temple's new associate pastor for Hispanic outreach. Temple is exploring being the United Methodist anchor in the area, with the guidance of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), for legal and social assistance to immigrants. Finally, Temple is hosting a national peace with justice conference in late September that will include active and retired bishops and theologians.

Hayward church helps keep Tongan tradition alive

By Martin Ricard

Oakland Tribune

HAYWARD — About 5 p.m., as people trickle into the sanctuary at First United Methodist Church, Ha'unga Fetu'u belts out a sonorous note in his native language, followed by a hymn so harmonious it tells a story about an often-untold journey from miles away.

As the hymn echoes, the notes begin to take on a different language before the service begins—one that evokes the spirit of Tonga.

Since World War II, Tongans have been coming to California in droves, drawn mostly to the Peninsula for its better opportunities and churches, which are based on the legacy of Christian missionaries in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

But over the years, many have moved across the Bay and found a home at this Hayward church. And it has served not only as a cultural center for local Tongans but also as the only place in southern Alameda County that provides a worship service in the Tongan language.

Stanley Fa'asisila, a setuata—or lay leader—in the church, said the church's cultural presence has played an integral role in building a stronger Tongan community in the Hayward area.

"We are happy to have a service here," he said, explaining the community's appreciation for the church's established history in the city. "For most

Tongans, if we didn't have this, they don't go to church. And now, most people who live here come here."

First United Methodist's Tongan service started in 1988 with 13 families, totaling 73 members. Since then it has grown to 39 families and 187 members, Fa'asisila said.

Primarily, those figures represent the growing Pacific Islander migration that stemmed from World War II, in which Hawaiians and Samoans came over mainly because of ties to many of the California military bases.

Tongans also constituted a large group of Pacific Islanders during that migration, and many began settling in the Bay Area. They remained mostly spread throughout San Mateo County, but began moving over to Hayward during the 1970s.

In 2001, the San Francisco Chronicle reported that Hayward ranked among the top five U.S. cities with the highest population of residents from Pacific Islander backgrounds.

Despite the growing numbers, local Tongans often go unnoticed, although not intentionally, said the Rev. Randy Smith, pastor of the church.

"People might meet people of Pacific Islander heritage but don't necessarily know they're Tongan," said Smith, noting that some Tongans can pass for other races just based on their similar ethnic features. "People aren't used to thinking of Pacific Islanders, but most Tongans are active in Hayward.

And it's happening here at the church."

The Tongan service, although similar to the church's earlier Sunday services in English, is steeped in tradition.

For example, when Fetu'u or any other song leader lines up a hymn, members usually sing along holding the hymnal book in front of them, although many already know the words.

Fa'asisila said most of them learn the notes by listening, a practice carried over from the island. While growing up, Tongans learn to listen to the hymns sung each Sunday at surrounding church services. Holding up the hymnal book is done out of habit because many don't read the words while singing anyway, he added.

But one challenge the church is having to overcome is keeping the culture and language alive through the youth, who often understand English and are more accustomed than their parents to American culture. Smith hopes to mesh the Tongan and American cultures into some type of class where both cultures can be embraced while keeping the tradition alive.

But while the church is very much a part of the Tongan community, what has kept the congregation strong and growing all these years is rekindling the spirit of Tonga every time they meet, which always helps them find a common ground.

Viet Vet finds healing in church honoring diversity

By Bruce Pettit

Conference Communications Commission

Fred Ptucha, a member of Christ Church UM in Santa Rosa since 1978, was on a local radio talk show Nov. 14 with Daniel Ellsberg—the whistle-blower in 1971 of Pentagon secrets about Vietnam War mishandling. Ptucha told of the guilt he still carries from having had information about some of the cover-up. He was a Navy top-secret control officer when he served in Vietnam, but he kept things to himself.

He now foresees soldiers coming back from the war in Iraq who will experience the same type of guilt for devastating a country for nothing more than what he sees as a U.S. reach for hegemony—and it will take years for them to divest themselves of it.

Ptucha still isn't over his Vietnam guilt, though he feels he is making progress. In 2002 he and seven comrades in a Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project went back to some of the very areas they had “destroyed to save”—bringing funds to start 12 new homes, and helping in some of the construction. The homes were for former Viet Cong—the U.S. enemy in the Vietnam War.

“Every one had suffered a major wound, some without arms, yet they were gracious to us,” he observed. “I can't help but think that if the reverse were true—if anyone who had destroyed my country were to come back 30 years later—I couldn't be as

gracious and forgiving.”

Ptucha said he volunteered to go to Vietnam in the 1960s, accepting the U.S. government contention that countries in Asia were likely to fall like dominos to communism, and he had to help stop it. “It didn't dawn on me that our government would lie.”

In 1965 he was stationed in the Gulf of Tonkin. His destroyer, the *Joseph Strauss*, had replaced the *Maddox*, the destroyer attacked on August 2, 1964. He proceeded to read secret files about the CIA having planted detonating devices along the coast of North Vietnam prior to that attack. He then immediately knew that President Johnson's claim of the preceding year—that an attack on the *Maddox* was unprovoked—was a lie. Further reading revealed that an alleged second attack on August 4 never occurred, although Johnson insisted it did. The *Maddox* incident is historically accepted as the



Christ Church member Fred Ptucha (beard) poses in 2002 with Vietnamese children while working with the Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project.

reason Congress escalated the Vietnam War, from which the U.S. did not extricate itself until 1975.

Ptucha said he wanted to blow the whistle in 1965, but that he was threatened by superiors with the brig and court martial if he did. That he did not reveal the truth haunts him to this day—as he contemplates the 58,000 American names on the Wall in Washington D.C., and the many thousands more Vietnamese dead. Being part of Christ Church, where the United Methodist congregation shares its sanctuary with a Reformed Jewish congregation, has been part of his healing, Ptucha affirmed. “I like the diversity message of a cross on one side of a tower and a Star of David on the other.”

Adopt an Apportoinment

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intended to be an engaging and educational way to encourage people to celebrate this connectional ministry we have as United Methodists. None of our individual churches can go and build Africa University by themselves—but working together we did it. That's awesome! And we should celebrate that and work together to help people find creative ways to participate in our connectional giving. It's important and with some prioritizing, education and creativity, it's possible!

Congratulations to this very creative bunch of United Methodists! I hope other churches will consider this innovative approach and develop their own!

For resources that might be helpful to your congregation:

UM Communications: 1-615-742-5400

www.UMCGiving.org

www.cnumc.org/resources/bulletinInserts.php

Betsy Schwarzentraub, Director of
Stewardship Development: 916-374-1580

Pastor retraces steps of Civil Rights milestones

The Rev. Dale Weatherspoon of First UMC of Redwood City was part of a study trip to Alabama sites of the civil rights movement as part of his doctoral program at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC. Eighteen doctoral candidates, among 22 who made the trip, shed “lots of tears and prayed” July 31 to August 4.

In Birmingham, they visited Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, where four girls were killed by a bomb during Sunday School in September 1963, and went across the street to Kelly Ingram Park, where children were hosed down in a children’s march.

In Selma they visited the Voting Rights Museum and walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where marchers to Montgomery for voting rights were beaten back one Sunday in March 1965, only to rouse national conscience for a successful march two weeks later.

UMs protest racial divide

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faith groups.

“It was something to see so many different ethnic groups take part in the protest,” said a member from Downs Memorial UMC. “We may have been from different ethnic groups but we were all in agreement. We just wanted CBS to know that their show sends the wrong message.”

In Sacramento, Bishop Shamana and Delta District Superintendent Ted Virts were among the approximately 100 protestors who held their vigil on the streets leading to KOVR studios in West Sacramento.

A member of St. Mark’s UMC in Sacramento said, “This is a busy weekend for our church, but this is an important statement to be made. I had to be here.” Bishop Shamana, interviewed live for the evening news, called the *Survivor: Cook Island* an affront because it sought to make money from pitting ethnic groups against each other under the guise of entertainment.

“Race-baiting for commercial ratings and profit is unacceptable,” she said.

Other vigils took place in Reno and Fresno, at the CBS affiliates there. No protest was too small to go unnoticed. In the tiny community of Chester, California, in the shadows of Mount Lassen, the youth group of Chester Community UMC, unable to make the trip to neighboring Reno, NV decided to make their stand on

the downtown streets.

“There were only eight of us, not including their pastor, but I was really proud to see them put their faith into action,” said the Rev. Norma Powell.

In her letter calling churches to be aware of the program, Bishop Shamana stated, “As God’s people of the California-Nevada Annual Conference we have declared we are one in Christ—people of diverse cultures, diverse geography and one in Christ. It is time for us to provide visual proof that we will not tolerate television programming in our communities that places our human race on the commercial auction block, to be divided and sold for the profit of a 60 second commercial.”

KOVR General Manager Bruno Cohen came out to meet with protestors following the vigil and, talking with Bishop Shamana, agreed to include her in an upcoming dialogue with other members of the community on issues relating to faith and culture.

“I see this as an opportunity we can use to offer a faith perspective on issues that are impacting our culture in many different ways,” said Bishop Shamana.

Earlier, in a news interview responding to the vigil, Mr. Cohen said, “CBS is absolutely confident that the producers will handle the program appropriately and sensitively, and we think it will be an interesting, provocative and worthwhile

In Montgomery they visited the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church where Martin Luther King gave stirring civil rights speeches, and the Rosa Parks Museum beside the road where the seamstress was arrested for refusing the move to the back of a bus in December 1955.

They also went to the Southern Poverty Law Center to see the Civil Rights Memorial, a tribute to 40 people who sacrificed their lives for the movement from 1954 to 1968.

The experience was centering, he said, for determining “where the church is called in our day to continue the dream.”



Rev. Dale Weatherspoon

viewing experience.”

When asked whether he thought CBS would stand down on the *Survivor* episodes, Cohen said it was not likely. Despite losing some long-time sponsors to the 13-year-old show—GM, Coca Cola, Proctor and Gamble and Home Depot have all pulled their sponsorship—CBS had sponsors ready to roll for the show’s Sept. 14 premiere. In addition, CBS refused to release the list of current sponsors.

Bishop Shamana has urged churches to send letters of protest to CBS New York and says that targeting the sponsors will be the next step in making CBS aware that the show’s premise is unacceptable.

“Unfortunately, we must assume that CBS will continue to allow profit gain to take priority over the well being of the community it serves. But we must remain vigilant in our plans to hold the network accountable for the impact poor programming choices have on those who tune them in.”

Letters of protest can be downloaded from the cnumc.org website (Instant Connection – Sept. 18) and can be sent to:

**CBS Television
51 West 52nd Street
New York, NY 10019
Attn: Programming/ re: SURVIVOR**

**A
Missionary's
Notebook**

is taking time off for rest, retreat and reflection. Back next month.

Thoughts from Ted *Survivor?*

By Ted Virts

Reprinted from The Delta District Current

United Methodists in our conference staged a vigil on Sunday, September 10 about a TV show. The CBS affiliates in San Francisco, Sacramento, Reno and Fresno were the focus of this vigil. The producers of the next Survivor series decided to divide the "tribes" by race. Our action made the news in all but Fresno.

One of the earliest visions of what the church is about is that of "witness." We are to witness to the realm and reign of God, made known to us in Christ. It is our calling to point out glimpses of the reign of heaven, and to point out when we have strayed from the path.

It is witnessing that was done at the TV stations. Racism is still a primary problem in our nation and in the human family. It is still too easy to resort to thought and action about "them" and "those people." In day to day life discomfort and worry about the "other" are all too prevalent. On the world stage, human resources are squandered in violence and militarism that has race and religion at its roots.

The vigil at CBS was a witness to the truth that God offers a better way for humanity to treat each other than to encourage racial war and racial competition.

Our conference celebrates the diversity of its members. We struggle with the meaning of that

diversity, of course. Diversity means that we really *are* different. The struggle is to learn to know each other enough, and to know ourselves

enough, that we can work through our differing values and world views. One person's common sense is another's life long study. Politeness for one person is rudeness for another.

If we are to be "survivors" (though I would hope we'd be looking for more than mere survival), it is not through hiding in our affinity groups seeking to get the best of "those people." It is through doing something truly bold: working together. Working together is always easier to say than to do.

One of the signs in Sacramento said it best:
Real Survivors Cooperate!

God's invitation is to more than survival, it is to life in abundance. When we are at our best, we offer the witness of that life to the world in the lives that we live and the faith communities that we build.



Photo of UMC protestors at KOVR in West Sacramento by Jeneane Jones.

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Other Voices

UMs ask themselves, "Me? An organ donor?"

By Rev. Bill Sanford

Merced Sun-Star

July 8, 2006

The subject is one most people would prefer not to engage. We don't want to think about death, especially our own or that of someone we hold dear. We muse: "Maybe I can slip through life and never have to agonize over the question of organ donation." Maybe so, but then again, maybe not.

I have friends [John and Sylvia Corson] of 50 years standing. I'm not sure how much thought they had given the matter, but on the night of Wednesday, March 31, 2004, at 1:30 a.m. the phone rang in their Bakersfield home and a doctor told them their son Steve was in critical condition in a Santa Rosa hospital and they should come immediately. Even before they arrived, a further cell phone conversation with the doctor confronted them with the question of organ donation. After due deliberation, and with the knowledge that their son had expressed an interest in organ donation, they gave their consent. Steve was pronounced dead at 11:58 a.m. Months later Steve's dad wrote a fine connected account of largely their whole experience. Using that document, I am undertaking here to write for Steve what I believe he would have said to his parents if he could.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm so sorry. I thought I had many years of life before me, and there's so much I wanted to do. It also saddens me to think of your deep grief and lasting sense of loss. Who could have imagined that within hours of doing a day's work I would be dead of a massive cerebral hemorrhage? And at only 38! Unlikely and incredible!

But awful realities confront us in life and we must engage them as best we can. I want to say to you that you were the greatest. Let me tell you why.

It's quite a list.

Thanks for hurrying to my bedside. I never doubted your love, but you demonstrated it to my last breath.

Thanks for consenting to the donations. I find great satisfaction in the gains wrested from my loss. I understand my liver has brought new life to a 70-year-old man who was thought to have only a week to live. One of my kidneys now serves a 51-year-old single mother with two children, and the other a 53-year-old married man with three children and two grandchildren. This man had endured dialysis treatments for 16 years! My heart valves have helped children born with defective hearts. My lungs have gone to a research project at a major medical center. And there were other benefits I won't take time to list. But I truly rejoice that I could be so profoundly helpful to so many.

Thank you for the loving things you said about me for inclusion in the Remembrance Book created by the California Transplant Donor Network.

I'm glad that even though you don't know the recipients, some of them have been able to write expressions of their gratitude to you through the good graces of the California Transplant Donor Network. I hope you feel heartened by what they have said.

I'm pleased by the way you honored me at my memorial service. And I think it's terrific the way relatives and a host of friends rallied 'round to give you support when your grief was most acute.

I rejoice that the event sponsored by the Donor Network was so moving and memorable. Imagine! Some 950 donor family members and friends, along with 150 transplant recipients from past years. Wow! How thoughtful of them to give each donor family a rose, a bronze medallion and a Certificate of Appreciation signed by the U.S. Surgeon General. A class event for sure!

I find satisfaction in the action you took in setting up the endowment at the



Stephen Corson

University of the Pacific. So it's called "the Stephen E. Corson Award for the Distinguished Teaching of Freshmen." And it's to continue year after year. How very thoughtful! Thank you and thanks to our friends for contributing to this "good cause."

Finally, let me say how approving I am of the efforts you're making to encourage others to donate organs. It is a source of deep concern to me that about 18,000 Californians stand in urgent need of organs. Perhaps one-third will die before organs become available. I understand that every day about 17 people in the U.S. die while waiting for an organ transplant. Good for you for doing something about that!

I guess that's about it for just now, Mom and Dad. Be comforted. Keep the faith. I continue to love you.
Steve

Postscript: John and Sylvia Corson recently traveled to the University of the Pacific for the second presentation of the Stephen E. Corson Award for Distinguished Teaching of Freshmen.

Contact information:

CA Transplant Donor Network
(One of four non-profits serving California)
1611 Telegraph Ave., Ste. 600
Oakland, CA 94612-2149
(510) 444-8500

To register as an organ donor
on-line, go to:

www.donatelifeCalifornia.org

**NorCal
Ecumenical
Media
Resource
Center
Pat Strandburg**

1675 Winchester Blvd.
Campbell CA 95008
(408) 378-2532
Fax: (408) 378-2652
emrcvideos@aol.com
www.gbgm-
umc.org/emrc

New Materials About Jesus

For Children

Jesus: What He Said, What He Did (VCJ-312.2) is the second video in a series for children. This video includes the following stories: Baptism of Jesus, The Prodigal Son, The Centurion's Servant, Water into Wine, Good Samaritan, Palm Sunday, Lord's Prayer, Last Supper, Easter Story, Resurrection, and Pentecost.

For Youth/Adults

People Who Met Jesus (VCJ-524.2) is the second video in the series. The people who are included are: 1. Zacchaeus 2. The Man Born Blind 3. Annas the Priest 4. Caiaphas 5. Judas Iscariot 6. Herod Antipas 7.

Pontius Pilate and 8. Joseph of Arimathea.

All about Jesus: Who is this Jesus? What if Jesus had Never been Born? (DVJ-527)

includes two compelling presentations on the life and influence of Jesus. The program features Dean Jones and is hosted by Dr. James Kennedy, PhD. It covers a wide variety of locations and expert interviews and uncovers fascinating answers to questions about Jesus. Session 1 is a fast-paced documentary that provides explanations to some of the most important questions ever asked about Jesus Christ. It features interview segments with NASA engineers, theologians and

others. Session 2 explores Christ's positive impact on many areas of today's society. Filmed in North America, Europe, India, and South America, it features commentary from scientists, historians, philosophers, theologians, broadcasters, and others.

For Adult Study

In **Jesus and the Gospels (VCJ-825)** the approach taken is not primarily historical, but literary. History comes into play as the various Gospels are placed within the development of Christianity. The search is not for the figure behind the Gospels, but for the even more fascinating figure within them.

Strathdees to headline benefit for Side-by-Side

Internationally known concert artists and worship leaders Jim and Jean Strathdee will provide headline entertainment at the "Uniting United Methodists" potluck picnic on Saturday, October 7 at William Land Park in Sacramento. The picnic is being organized by the Delta District as a benefit for Side-by-Side Spiritual Companions, Rev. Linda Kelly's ministry with the homeless.

Everyone is invited to turn out to meet the Delta District family, pastors and friends from the community from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Area GA-13 of the park, behind Fairytale Town. Please bring a food dish to share. Beverages and tableware will be provided.

At 12:30 there will be a brief program to acquaint those attending with the Side-by-Side ministry, along with

inspirational music and song led by Jim and Jean Strathdee, whose music offers a message of unity and compassion, justice and healing. Local church entertainers will also perform at the event and there will be free Funderland tickets for children and lots of fun surprises, according to organizers.

Those attending are asked to make a donation to benefit Side-by-Side Spiritual Companions (\$5 per person or \$15 per family of three is suggested). Checks may be made payable to CA-NV Annual Conference UMC.

For more information contact Cindy Buna in the Delta District office at (916) 374-1501.

Job Opportunities listed on www.cnumc.org

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