

"Write the vision clearly on the tablets, that one may read it on the run." – Habakkuk

THE VISION

The Newspaper
of the New York
Annual Conference
of The United
Methodist Church

March 19, 2010



The Youth Ambassadors in Mission pose with the baskets and shovels used in their work to set up a playground in Kratie, Cambodia. The team was comprised of Tatyanna Jack and Kareem Clarke, Fenimore UMC; Samantha Oyidelemi, Westchester UMC; Griffin Burr and Collis Gittens, Babylon UMC; Alison Peraza, Port Washington UMC; Lily Garcia, Simsbury UMC; Alexandra Wood, St. James UMC, Kingston, N.Y.; Carla Phillips, Pleasantville UMC; Joshua Poku, Wakefield Grace UMC; and Anthony Naranjo-Buck, Grace UMC, Manhattan.

Youthful Hearts Are Warmed

Please welcome the 2010 Youth Ambassadors in Mission—11 young people who have just returned from a mission trip to Kratie, Cambodia. They are available to share their inspiring stories with youth groups and congregations. Each day of the trip brought new experiences for them. Here are some of their expressions from the trip journal:

■ "Today was one of the most amazing experiences of our lives."

■ "Today was by far the best day of my 15-year-old life"

■ "Today was ravishing! We became the luckiest people in the world to visit the world's oldest and largest religious temple, Angkor Wat."

■ "Today was absolutely an amazing day! Just when I'm convinced that this trip couldn't get any better, somehow it managed to."



A pair of Cambodian children are delighted by new coloring books.

■ "It seems that every day that passes, more acute become my senses."

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Conference Festival To Celebrate Newest Members

Bishop Jeremiah J. Park has been making the rounds in all the districts to meet with clergy and drum up enthusiasm for the "Momentum in Ministry" event on Saturday, June 12, the final day of annual conference.

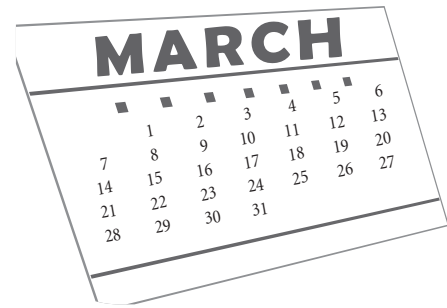
His mission is to fill Hofstra Arena with 5,000 United Methodists, most of who will have become members since Bishop Park assumed leadership of the New York area. But the bishop's invitation doesn't stop there, it also includes those who regularly attend our churches and have not yet made the decision to join. In a letter to clergy, Bishop Park said:

As has been our custom, the Saturday of our conference will be a joyous time of celebrating the mission of the United Methodist people in the world. This year, though, promises to be the best ever! I am inviting all the persons who have joined since 2004 or will join our churches by annual conference to come to Hofstra on Saturday and bring with them family members, sponsors and others instrumental to their journey of faith. I am also inviting all who want to be a part of the witness to building up a healthy Body of Christ.

On Saturday, we are putting together a spectacular outdoor "Festival of Ministries in Action" highlighting all the ways the New York Conference serves God's world. This day, 5,000 United Methodists will be in one place in witness to

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SAVE THE DATE



Clergy & Spouse Tax Seminars

“Compensation and the IRS,” sponsored by the UM Frontier Foundation and the Office of Connectional Ministries, at the following sites from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Register with: Lynda Gomi, at Learningcenter@nyac.com, or 1-888-696-6922, ext. 219.

March 18: North Shore UMC, Wading River, N.Y.

March 24: Grace UMC, 21 South Franklin Ave., Valley Stream, N.Y.

March 25: Reservoir UMC, 3056 State Route 28, Shokan, N.Y.

Biblical Storytelling Workshop

March 20: Learn about, and discuss, the power and purpose of biblical storytelling with Rev. Richard Rice, former Long Island East district superintendent. The program runs from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Union UMC, 1018 Pulaski Road, East Northport, NY 11731. Please call the church office at 631-261-1303 to register, or contact Pastor Gertude Nation with questions. Cost per church is \$25. Refreshments will be served.

UMM Luncheon With Bishop

March 20: Join the UM Men of the conference and Bishop Park in celebrating 100 years of boy scouting at Memorial UMC, 250 Bryant Avenue, White Plains, NY. The cost is \$30; All Scouts attending the 12-2:30 p.m. luncheon in uniform will pay half price. The Bishop's Award for Excellence will be presented and Torch Award winners will be recognized. Before March 16, send your registration information (church name, address, phone, church contact and list of attendees) and a check made payable to “NYAC UMM,” to John Lemon, Financial Secretary, 645 Westchester Ave., Apt. 17C, Bronx, NY 10455. For questions or further information, contact Lemon at 917-365-7850.

Paul Nixon is Back!

April 15–16: Author of “I Refuse to Lead A Dying Church,” Pastor Paul Nixon is back for an overnight seminar to dig a little deeper and continue the conversation about our ministries began last fall at the Bishop's retreats. The event at Stony Point Retreat Center, Stony Point, N.Y., begins at 10 a.m. Thursday and ends at 2 p.m. Friday. Rates are \$150, single occupancy; \$110, double occupancy; and \$81 for commuters. Please indicate your roommate during registration. For additional information about Nixon and to register online by April 8, go to <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2725>.

Long Island East Youth Retreat

April 16–18: “So You Think You Can Praise?” Annual youth retreat at Camp Quinipet, Shelter Island. Open to all youth in 6th grade and up; each group must provide their own adult chaperones—one adult per six youth. From 7 p.m. through 1 p.m. Sunday. Cost is \$75 per person, and includes housing, meals, snacks, and activities. The schedule includes a walkathon to benefit Habitat for Humanity and a Saturday night talent show. Space is limited; register by March 31 to Pam Wilson, at 631-269-1091, or pam0201@optonline.net.

Far Rockaway Center Dedication

April 25: The United Methodist Center of Far Rockaway has a new home and the dedication of the facility is planned for 3 p.m., at 1032 Beach 19th Street, Far Rockaway, N.Y. 11691, store 3. Bishop Park and others will participate in the dedication service and open house.

Ethnic Clergywomen Prayer Conference

May 21–22: “Fresh Fire,” a prayer conference for women in the NYAC is planned at Stony Point Conference Center, Stony Point, N.Y. Space is limited to 50. The fee is \$150. Register by April 30, by sending a check payable to Fenimore Street UMC with Ethnic Clergywomen's Conference in the memo line. Send a check and your contact information to: Andrea Smith, Fenimore Street UMC, 266 Fenimore St., Brooklyn, NY 11225-5311. For questions, contact Smith at 718-469-8816. Rev. Dr. Maxine Nixon is the convener.

“Building Up a Healthy Body of Christ”

June 9–12: The packets containing the call to annual conference have been mailed out with information about registering online, at <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2714>. Register by May 1 for the lowest fees. See the related story on Pages 1 and 3.

Cooperative School of Christian Mission



July 22–24: See story and details on Page 6.

Fall Clergy Day Apart

October 14: Clergy Day Apart at the Memorial/Central Korean UMC in White Plains.

2011 Order of Elders' Retreat

May 3–6, 2011: The retreat is scheduled for Mount St. Alphonsus in Esopus, N.Y. To suggest or recommend a speaker, contact Rev. Constance Pak at, pastorconstance@msn.com.

The News of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church

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Conference Festival To Celebrate Newest Members

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God's momentum in and through our conference.

The bishop has extended a special invitation to those new and prospective members to come to the "Parking Lot Festival," which will go on under three big tents outside the arena from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Two outdoor stages will offer live music throughout the festival. Here's what will be happening under the tents:

Tent 1: Experience Global Mission

In the mission tent, visitors will be able to taste cultural tidbits from our global villages, enjoy dancing from Ecuador, stretch out on the cot in the Haiti clinic, shop for handmade items from Ghana, Mozambique and Cambodia, and travel the obstacle course on a Personal Energy Transportation (PET) vehicle.

Tent 2: Engage in Advocacy Ministries

Ever taken a privilege walk? How is your personal income ranked globally? Try the photo ops with John Wesley or be a circuit rider on a horse!! What is Permaculture and why is the world so interested? Experience the shower of stoles or pray in a prison cell.

Tent 3: Youth & Children in Action

Build a handicapped ramp with UM ARMY to be installed at a local residence. Learn why more than 200 of our youth give their time and energy to the Appalachian Service Project each summer.

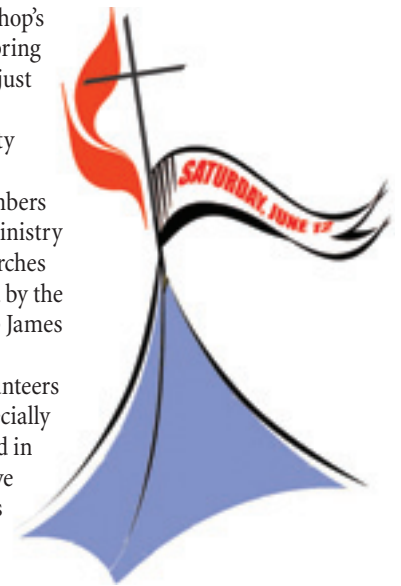
Children's activities will also be scattered throughout the festival including the Noah's Ark inflatable, a climbing wall and the Learning Center Putt-Putt Golf Course.

After a free boxed lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., the activities will move into the arena at 1 p.m., beginning with a parade of church

banners, accompanied by the bishop's hymn sing. Each church should bring an existing banner or create one just for this special event.

During the afternoon the party continues, and we'll:

- Recognize all our new members
- Catch the momentum in ministry and get it rolling in our local churches
- Be inspired and challenged by the preaching of the dynamic Bishop James Swanson
- Honor the work of our Volunteers in Mission in global service, especially the more than 100 teams involved in the work in Biloxi over the last five years. We'll even meet the owners of some of the homes we have renovated.



Health Kits for the World

The children and youth of the conference have also been challenged to fund, assemble and pack 10,000 health kits for UMCOR to distribute to families around world.

Children and youth can start now to raise money to purchase the supplies for the kits. The donations should be sent to the conference office where the supplies will be purchased in bulk and then brought to Hofstra, where they will be assembled during the Park Lot Festival. Send checks payable to NYAC, with Kits for Kids on the memo line, to: New York Annual Conference, 20 Soundview Ave., White Plains, NY 10606.

New Appointments

Rev. Melissa Boyer
Katonah/New York-Connecticut

Rev. Dr. Jae Woong Chan
Long Island Korean/LIE
(Effective Jan. 31, 2010)

Rev. Janet Hodge
Tremont/Metropolitan

Rev. Dr. Glyger Beach
St. Marks, Brooklyn/LIW

Rev. In Koo Chung
North Canton & Washington Hill/
Connecticut

Rev. Kristina Hansen
St. Paul's (Northport, NY)/LIE

Pastor Juhye Hahn
Kings Park (part-time)/LIE

Youthful Hearts Are Changed

Continued from page 1

- "I can't explain how this trip is changing me."

Yes it was a life changing experience. It was a ravishing experience. Why is it ravishing? Please ask one of the young people for a better explanation. Alexandra Wood of St. James UMC in Kingston, N.Y., captured her experience in this poetic language:

GOD'S PEOPLE

*Gazing, looking down around me
Really, how different can this world be?
The ground, filled with filth
Houses are built on stilts.
People with dirt on their skin
Children on the street selling and lying
It's a sin to see them trying,
So hard.
Dirt roads and smoggy air
Babies reaching out for care
They are all alone.
Then I stop thinking of all of this
A realization, this place is its own beautiful bliss.
Because those people with dirt on their skin
Are so happy I cannot even begin*

To explain.

*Their joy radiates though my heart
And they have changed my mind from finish to start*

*They can change the world with their smiles
And, oh, the SON can be seen for miles.
Each half of the rainbow shown in the Mekong
Seems so wrong, to feel at home
But I know it's so, so right.
This place, is my light
And it always will be
Because you see,
They are the ones who hold the world
Right in the palm of their hand
They play the biggest role in God's plan.*

The teens were accompanied by Gillian Prince of Fenimore UMC; and Donna and Rev. David Jolly from St. James UMC. To view more photos and read the blog postings about the trip, check out the mission section of the NYAC website, <http://www.nyac.com/blogs/author/5>. To arrange for one of the youth to speak to your church or group, contact Director of Mission Outreach, Joseph Ewoodzie by email at jedwoodzie@nyac.com.

UMC Aid Flowing To Haiti, Chile

As donations from the United Methodist Church have climbed to more than \$13 million for Haiti, Volunteers in Mission teams are awaiting word when they can travel to the country to help. That may happen as early as April 1.

A plan for VIM team response to the devastation has been designed in consultation with President Gesner Paul and other leaders of the Eglise Methodiste d'Haiti (EMH). Due to the earthquake and changes in the Haiti church's leadership, a new list of priority projects and needs have been identified. The plan includes a U.S.-based scheduling office along with staffing in Haiti to assist in the site planning and hosting of teams.

Rev. Tom Vencuss, of the Wethersfield, Conn., UMC and one of the leaders of the "Mountains of Hope for Haiti" mission, will be back in the Caribbean country in mid-March to determine how the NYAC efforts will move forward.

In the meantime, the jurisdictional coordinators for UMVIM are encouraging teams to raise funds and consider when they would be ready to volunteer. They recommend that teams meet the following criteria:

- No more than 8 to 12 members per team.



PHOTO BY MELISSA HINNEN/UMCOR

Attorney Thomas J. Mills (left) helps Haitian clients at one of the Justice For Our Neighbors' legal clinics in New York.

- Team leader has prior experience in Haiti and has completed UMVIM team leader training.
- Necessary immunizations are up to date. Teams should regularly check the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control.
- Early response training is not necessary, but would be helpful.
- Skills/supplies for medical, construction/deconstruction, and education components.

UMCOR is also responding to the needs of people affected by the 8.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Chile. They are working with Iglesia Metodista de Chile, Ministerio Social Metodista and Equipo Metodista de Acción Humanitaria to respond with

resources and support.

You may donate to UMCOR's efforts in Haiti or Chile in several ways; the Haiti Advance is #418325 and the Chile Advance is #3021178:

Through your church: Make your check payable to your local church, and write the Advance number on the check. Drop your gift in the offering plate or give it to your church treasurer, so that your church and annual conference will get credit.

By phone: Credit card gifts can be accepted by phone; call 888-252-6174.

Online: Go to <http://secure.gbgm-umc.org/donations/umcor/index.cfm> and click on the "Make a Gift Online" button and follow the prompts. A credit card is needed.

New Doctorates Offered at Drew

Drew Theological School is offering three Doctor of Ministry programs that will begin in Fall 2010. The new programs are in Congregational Growth and Community Development; Mind-Body-Spirit-Healing for Congregations and Clergy; and Global Online. Applications may be submitted online by July 1 at www.drew.edu/theo/apply, or learn more at www.drew.edu/theo/newyork.

The Madison, N.J., school also awards 100 percent tuition scholarships for United Methodists who are admitted to the Master of Divinity program with undergraduate GPAs of 3.5 or above. For information, go to www.drew.edu/theo/umscholarship.

Students may also earn a Certification in Spiritual Formation at Drew. The certification program will develop the skills to provide spiritual leadership to individuals and in within the local church. Classes are available online and in an intensive format. Learn more at www.drew.edu/theo/certification.

Apply Now for Current Award

Applications are being accepted for the Gloster B. Current B. Current, Sr. Scholarship. The award, established in 2003, encourages students of African descent to pursue careers in the ministry, social work, health care or government service.

The applicant must attend an accredited institution of higher education for undergraduate study, have leadership potential, financial need and be recommended by a UMC pastor.

For an application, go to the NYAC website, <http://www.nyac.com/news/detail/84>. Rev. Dr. John E. Carrington may be contacted with questions at 917-617-4360, or johnecarrington@aol.com. Deadline is April 20.

Creation Study Guide Available

A study guide is now available for the pastoral letter from the Council of Bishops entitled, "God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action," that was released in November 2009. Copies of the letter and the guide may be downloaded at www.hopeandaction.org. It is ideally suited for a six-week study for adults and youth and/or three activity sessions for children.

If preferred, an all-in-one resource is available from Cokesbury that includes the pastoral letter, foundation document and both study guides for \$7.50. Orders can be placed at www.cokesbury.com.

The bishops' letter states, "This beautiful natural world is a loving gift from God, the Creator of all things seen and unseen. God has entrusted its care to all of us, but we have turned our backs on God and on our responsibilities. Our neglect, selfishness, and pride have fostered: pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons and violence." The letter also affirms, "We must begin the work of renewing creation by being renewed in our own hearts and minds. We cannot help the world until we change our way of being in it."

Care, Knowledge Can Limit Concussion Risk

The Sports Legacy Institute (SLI) was founded in 2007 to help solve the sports concussion crisis." SLI is primarily focused on the study of the degenerative brain disease chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a condition caused by repetitive concussive and sub-concussive brain injuries.



The sports concussion issue involves everyone involved with the games, from team doctors and athletic trainers, to coaches, athletes and their parents. SLI offers a voluntary national concussion education program called Coaches Concussion Clinic for coaches of youth sports, and other adults responsible for the health and safety of young athletes. This course has been developed by the top experts in sports concussion, with the input of the SLI Medical Advisory Board, Athlete Advisory Board and coaches.

To help keep children safe from the effects of brain trauma in all contact sports:

- Re-evaluate how the game is practiced to minimize risk of injury. Youth teams should only be allowed to have full contact once a week. Dangerous drills should be banned or used less frequently.

- Encourage mandatory brain trauma and concussion education for coaches, athletic trainers, parents, and athletes. Coaches, athletic trainers, and athletes can't report possible concussions if they aren't trained to look for them or to recognize the symptoms. Coaches, athletic trainers, and athletes need to understand why resting a concussion and/or reducing overall brain trauma is good for the athlete's short and long-term health.

- Re-evaluate protective equipment. Investigate changes to helmets, shoulder pads, and other types of protective equipment that may reduce brain trauma.

- Develop better methods of concussion detection and diagnosis. The Centers for Disease Control provide free clipboards with concussions diagnosis protocols on the back. Coaches should be required to carry them.

- Develop better methods of concussion management. Returning to play too soon after a concussion can result in more extensive brain damage, and possible death. It is now law in Washington state that players are required to see a medical professional with brain trauma expertise before resuming play. Minimum return-to-play standards should be enforced at



all levels.

- Re-evaluate rule enforcement and the role of referees. Consider suspending players for intentional bad hits. Referees should eject players for illegal hits to the head. Referees should be trained to identify concussed players on the field.

- Reconsider the culture of the game. Announcers could stop glorifying illegal hits. Children could stop being pressured to play through concussions.

For more information on the Sports Legacy Institute, go to their web site, www.sportslegacy.org. For information on the Children's Home, visit our web site at www.chowc.org.

“Turn Aside and See” for Study, Reflection

Rev. Dr. Kwasi Kena and Rev. Betsey Heavner, both from the General Board of Discipleship, will offer a day of transformational study and reflection for pastors and congregational leaders on March 27. Offered through the board's Discipleship University, “Turn Aside and See” invites individuals and church teams to:

- Identify God's call through scripture
- Note excuses that hinder their congregation from answering God's call
- Determine assets for responding to God's call
- Commit to disciple-making in their congregation

Kena, who was a speaker during the 2009 New York Annual Conference, is director of Evangelism Ministries and Heavner is the director of Congregational Leader Formation, both for the GBOD.

The program will run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Registration and refreshments begin at 8:30 a.m. at the Renaissance Hotel Westchester, 80 West Red Oak Lane, West Harrison, N.Y. Cost is \$35 per person, or \$30 per person for a team of four or more, and includes lunch and materials. Send checks to NYAC, 20 Soundview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606. You may register online at: <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2693>. For more information about the program, call (877) 899-2780, ext. 1760, or email Mary McDonald at, mmcdonald@gbod.org.

The Renaissance Hotel Westchester has rooms available for \$99 on March 26 for participants. If you would like to reserve a room, please call the hotel at 914-694-5400, and use the reservation code NEWNEWA.

WWII Veteran Named Life Member of UMM

Roger Eastman, who has been a member of Hempstead UMC for 58 years, received an honorary life membership in United Methodist Men for his service as president of the UMM, a lay member of New York Annual Conference and chairperson of the Hempstead administrative council.

He has also served on the Board of Trustees and the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. He co-chairs the Ushers Committee.

A Navy veteran of World War II, Eastman served on anti-submarine ship in the Atlantic. The ship was later converted to for troop transport and transferred to the Pacific, where Eastman served in the Philippines, Okinawa and China.

After the war, he married his wife Ruth, whom he met when they were both members of the Epworth League. The couple joined the Hempstead congregation, where Mr. Eastman took part in



PHOTO BY ROYSTON BAILEY

Roger Eastman, center, is congratulated by Rev. Barbara J. Mungin, pastor of Hempstead UMC, and Rev. Richard Hayes, guest preacher for Men's Ministries Day.

the Everymans' Bible class and the UMM. In the 1990s, Eastman led the men's group to charter with the national organization.

Eastman, who retired after 43 years with Bell Telephone, is a past commander and life member of the American Legion.

Cathedral Service Brings UMC First

St. Patrick's Cathedral was the site of a historic ecumenical service on January 25, celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Under the theme of "You Are Witnesses of These Things," Bishop Jeremiah J. Park, took part in the celebration at the invitation of the newly appointed archbishop of New York, the Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan. It is the first time in the history of the cathedral that a UMC bishop had participated in such a service.

According to Catholic New York online, Archbishop Dolan told those gathered that the event was an occasion of great joy, as well as an opportunity to reflect on the progress that has been made through mutual dialogue and study.

Then he reminded the congregation that Christ's Church, like his resurrected body, is wounded. "We are wounded by our divisions, by our memories, by scars of pride and misjudgment and prejudice," Archbishop Dolan said. "We as a Church are wounded, but we have a God who was wounded and whose sacred heart was broken."

The service brought together religious leaders, laity and choirs from seven Christian denominations. The participating clergy led the gathering in readings, prayers and hymns. The Archdiocese of New York and the Council of Churches of the City of New York sponsored the celebration.

Besides Bishop Park, some of the other New York religious leaders who took part in the service were: Bishop Robert Alan Rimbo,



Bishop Jeremiah Park joined other New York religious leaders in a worship service celebrating Christian unity at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan. Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan and Cardinal Edward Egan stand behind the bishop.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; Greek Orthodox Bishop Andonios of Phasiane; Dr. A. R. Bernard, president, NYC Council of Churches; Armenian Apostolic Bishop Anoushavan Tanelian; and Episcopal Bishop

Catherine Roskam.

Among the UMC delegation were Rev. Dr. Bill Shillady, United Methodist City Society; Rev. Stephen Bauman, Christ Church; and Rev. Nathaniel T. Grady Sr., St. Mark's, Brooklyn.

Faith, Hope, Love Abide at Mission School

With a theme of "Faith, Hope, Love in Action," the 2010 Cooperative School of Christian Mission is scheduled for July 22–24 at Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, Conn.

This year, participants will need to make their own arrangements for housing. A block of rooms have been reserved at the Ethan Allen Hotel in Danbury. The choices of study are:

For the Love of God: John's Letters: This study offers in-depth study of John's letters, answering questions about authorship, target audience and relevance for today. The course will also examine some of the polarities employed by John: life and death, light and darkness, truth and lies. The text is, "For the Love of God, John's Letters," by Justo L. and Catherine Gunsalus Gonzalez.

Sudan: This African country is one of the most diverse countries on the continent, home to deserts, mountain ranges, swamps and rain forests. It emerged from a two-decade civil war between the mainly Muslim north and the Animist and Christian south, only to see fighting break out in the western region of Darfur in 2003. The north-south civil war is said to have cost the lives of 1.5 million people. The United Nations reports that more than two million people have fled their homes in Darfur and more than 200,000 have been killed. The text is, "The Beauty and Courage of Sudan."

Mission & Evangelism: "Joy to the World: Mission in the Age of Global Christianity," explores the theology of mission and evangelism in the 21st century context of Christianity as a worldwide religion. The study looks at mission involvement and how the Good News in Jesus Christ is proclaimed. The text is written by Dana L. Robert, with a study guide by Toby Gould.

The children's study is "Hugging the World;" and the youth study is "Embracing the World—Love, Joy, Hope in Action." The books can be ordered from: Mission Resource Center by calling 1-800-305-9857, or online at <http://www.missionresourcecenter.org/wdstore/default.asp>.

Registration: The three-day program is \$180 for adults, \$150 for teens age 13–17; \$60 for first child under age 13 and \$40 for each additional child. Registration information is available at: <http://www.gbgm-umc.org/NYACCSOCM/index.htm>. The reservation deadline for both the program and your hotel accommodations is June 23.

Housing: You may book a room online at www.ethanallenhotel.com, or by calling 1-800-742-1776. Mention that you are part of the UMC Women's group. The double occupancy rate per night is \$109, plus tax.

Questions? Contact cooperative school registrar Doug Nicholson at somdoug@optonline.net.

Christ Church Partners With Colombia in Mission

UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE

A 600-member United Methodist congregation in Manhattan—no strangers to outreach at home and beyond—is discovering anew what the church is all about.

And they are discovering it in Colombia, South America, where civil war and violence related to drug trafficking have slashed deep fissures in the social fabric. Three million people are displaced; another 2 million have fled to other countries. Poverty is a way of life for many people.

But in Colombia, according to Rev. Javier Viera, “the whole concept of church is all the ways the church is reaching people.”

Viera, minister for outreach at Christ Church United Methodist since 1996, said his congregation “had a long-term goal to establish a presence in Latin America.”

Invited to accompany the General Board of Global Ministries staff on a mission trip to Ecuador, Peru and Colombia a few years ago, Viera “was drawn to Colombia.” He took a small team back to Colombia, and the Christ Church partnership began.

First, he recalled, “We purchased an industrial-sized kitchen and started a feeding program for about 400 kids.” Since 2007, Christ Church has strived to “be in authentic partnership” with the people of Cartagena. Last summer, the church sent 26 volunteers, and a handful of people traveled there in the fall.

Last month, 23 more volunteers from the church went to Cartagena to help in the construction of a multipurpose building. The facility, Viera explained, will host Sunday worship, but will also serve as a community center, a vocational training/basic education school and a health clinic. With a completion target of June, Global Faith Initiative participants will continue to work on the project, which will be the first actual Methodist church structure in Colombia. Until the 1990s, churches could not own property in Colombia, so for years Methodists have gathered in homes and rented buildings.

“We heard about the need for pastoral support,” Viera said, and that led to clergy compensation and ministerial education. This year, several Colombian Methodist pastors participated in the summer course-of-study program at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. Christ Church also has funded retreats to bring renowned Latin American theologians to Colombia, primarily for pastoral continuing-education purposes.

Janet Jenkins, a member of Christ Church



PHOTO BY NAILA MEYERS

Janet Jenkins and Jerolyn Morrison from Christ Church United Methodist in Manhattan dig the foundation of what will become the first Methodist church structure in Colombia.

since 1997, works as an urban transportation planner in “real life,” but her trip to Colombia inspired her to return, perhaps later this year. “What I found most interesting,” she noted, “is that the Methodist Church in Colombia is about reaching out to the community and helping them. It’s not just about worship. It’s about social justice.

“It’s not a church [in the traditional sense]. It’s so much bigger.”

She emphasized that Christ Church doesn’t stop with supporting a project financially or participating in short-term mission trips. “We look to develop relationships.”

Colombian Methodist Bishop Juan Alberto Cardona said, “We have always believed in our Colombian Methodist Church. We are walking and sharing with our communities, with the people.” That means going to the margins of society.

Partnerships with the British Methodist Church and the United Church of Canada nurture the fledgling Methodist Church of Colombia. The Council of Evangelical Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean (CIEMAL) represents national Methodist churches of the region, including Central America, the Caribbean and South America.

“When we encountered Methodism,” Cardona added, “we understood it wasn’t just a question of faith in God or prayer or just about [ourselves], but that God should be reflected in others, in those in greatest need—the widow, the orphan and, in the case of our country, among the displaced people and the less fortunate in our communities.

“All of our efforts today are dedicated to that



PHOTO BY JEROLYN MORRISON

Gary Dunning and friends help to secure rebar columns.

effort.”

In this traditionally Roman Catholic country, Methodists try not to convert people, but to show the church in action. One new Methodist commented, “To be Methodist is also to help others. I feel good because the church has taught us to share and to live with others.” From planting a seed with about six people, the Methodist Church has grown to more than 15 worshipping congregations.

“I can’t say enough about Bishop Cardona,” Viera said of the engaging, committed episcopal leader who has begun as president of the Methodist Church of Colombia in 2000.

“What is most compelling to me personally is how intentionally and faithfully the Colombian Methodist Church is trying to develop this concept of the church being the church.”



A Century of Mission to Remember

BY REV. DR. JACOB S. DHARMARAJ
Shrub Oak UMC

A centennial celebration of the first World Missionary Conference will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland in June 2010. The initial event, Edinburgh I, grew out of the 19th century European missionary movement, spiritual revival and student volunteer movement and was organized to evangelize the world. There was a lot of euphoria, optimism and commitment. The conference also continued to work for unity and cooperation with fellow evangelists. This work eventually gave birth to the International Review of Mission and the International Missionary Council (IMC) in 1921.

Few organizations have served the global Christian community for a full century. This is therefore an occasion to recall and celebrate the history of the International Missionary Council, the predecessor of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

The 2010 celebrations will kick off June 2 and end June 6, with 175 invited "stakeholders" representing the global Christian community. A few representing world Methodism will be there. Glory Dharmaraj, my wife, is one of the stakeholders and I will attend the celebrations as her guest. [Dr. Glory Dharmaraj is director of spiritual formation and mission theology for the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries.]

A number of special events are scheduled across the world before, during and after the centennial event. The United Methodist Women are planning major celebrations, including the School of Christian Mission study entitled, *Joy to the World*, written by Dana Robert of the Boston Theological School.

The history of IMC is an interesting one. It started off a little more than a century ago as a student volunteer movement, that eventually became a force for the preparation of the first world missionary conference under the banner, "Evangelizing the World in This Generation." In 1961 IMC merged with WCC in order to create one large ecumenical body.

Today, WCC works quietly in the background, and seldom attracts public attention. But it does perform an important dual role. First, it helps to keep our mission of witness and mercy

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moving smoothly. Second, it continues to work to bring oneness and unity among the Christian communion around the world.

The world, however, has changed since Edinburgh I. When the Conference was convened, the world was divided basically into a Christian and non-Christian world. In the year 1910, for instance, nearly 85 percent of the world was under European colonization. The west had political, economic and military might with a messianic vision to redeem, civilize and christianize the world. Now, the so-called "Christian West" and its topography have changed in many ways.

Barriers have fallen on several levels. World Wars I and II, decolonization, Cold War, global migration, religious fundamentalism, media exposure of religious communities, information technology, and the blistering globalization of commercial enterprise have reshuffled the world economy, global population and national boundaries.

They were followed by other regional and local transformations. Demographic assumptions were upended. Western society reached the end of Christendom.

The church has had to adjust to a new situation of plurality, sharing power rather than acting in privilege and prestige. Postmodern philosophies and deconstructionist theories have entered into the mainstream, which have led many to question anything authoritative or hierarchical. Nothing is taken on face value anymore. Many strive to "mix and match" their religious and spiritual beliefs in order to create their own version of truth about God, religion and faith practices. The West itself has become a mission site!

The dominance and supremacy the Western society enjoyed during the 1900s has waned. The church in the West has become a minority community and often finds itself competing with charity organizations for resources.

In this changing environment, Christian leaders have many hats to wear, more balls to juggle, and fewer certainties day-to-day. Dwindling resources force the arm of the church

and its mission agencies to function in a more limited capacity. Karl Rahner, a Roman Catholic theologian, deftly said that it is winter season for Christianity in the West. Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher, went a little farther and said that it is destitute time for the Western church. Whatever it is, these are challenging times for Christianity here.

A challenging time

What do we need to take with us for the journey? What are we being asked to leave behind? How do we as a faith community cross borders of our own making and journey freely into a new, and promised, land?

The church has operated in a chaotically spinning society since its origin. It has regularly encountered new challenges, reinventing itself many times. It has adapted itself to new situations, retrained leaders to perform fresh roles, and re-structured the mission organizations for new challenges.

When the early Christians were kicked out of synagogues they worshiped in house churches. When male apostles were imprisoned and martyred, women carried the Gospel. When established institutions failed to engage the communities, lay people stepped in the gap. The church always scanned the horizon, assessed the surroundings, understood the new environment, and developed new ways to minister.

Edinburgh I served the church faithfully in its generation. One hundred years later, we are called to do the same in ours. All the changes that technology and commerce have brought upon us to bring us closer have not taught us how to live in the spirit of mutuality, how to appreciate the strength of diversity and how to live together differently. People move at a much quicker pace, filling every moment with activity, yet wondering at the same time about the lasting value of choices they make.

The church today can engage in the ministry of mutuality in the 21st century and continue to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am confident we will come out of this season of winter into a spring and Easter that will give a bright new meaning and reason to engage in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. The form of it will truly be multiracial, multicultural and multilingual, as prophesied in the Book of Revelation 7:9.

Living “Just Now” May Ease Feelings of Loss

BY JIM STINSON

Consultant on Older Adult Ministries

In one of the meditations on aging in her book, “Living With Purpose in a Worn-Out Body,” Missy Buchanan begins with these words:

Just here. That’s how I feel today.
I’m just here. Stalled out.
Little more than taking up space.

It’s a sentiment that many of us can, at times, identify as our own. We can especially identify with it as we age and feel like we can’t do “anything,” or as we begin to recognize the limitations that often come with age. There is no denying that most of us cannot do all the things we used to do—the things we often wish we could still do. The feeling is understandable and honest. But it is not the only appropriate response to aging. In fact, it may be the least



appropriate and the least faithful response.

As I read the meditation and reflected it on, it I wondered how I might have written about the same thought. It occurred to me that I might have changed the opening words from “Just here” to “Just now.” And with that beginning, I proceeded to explore what it might mean if I truly lived in the moment, in the just now. How would my sentiment change if I let go of what I used to be able to do, if I stopped worrying

about what I might someday not be able to do, and simply reflected on what I can do just now? How would my attitude change if I did what I could in the moment and assumed that nothing else was expected of me?

What if I showed someone an unexpected kindness just now?

What if I wrote a note to someone who could use it just now?

What if I took extra time to read to a grandchild or a neighbor child whose parents are too busy just now?

What if I did the very best I could just now?

Our older adults often need to be reminded that we are called to live in the moment. What if those who minister with and to older adults consciously challenged them as a matter of faith to live just now?

St. Stephen’s Raises Funds to Begin Restoration

EXCERPTED FROM THE RIVERDALE PRESS

In the Marble Hill section of the Bronx, the church on the corner is finally getting its long-awaited exterior makeover.

For more than a year, members of St. Stephen’s United Methodist Church have been working to raise \$50,000 towards renovations to the exterior of the 111-year-old church.

They were able to meet and even exceed that goal, collecting \$52,382. The church will receive an additional \$250,000 from the Park Avenue UMC Trust and the United Methodist City Society with the expectation that St. Stephen’s will raise a total of \$100,000 toward the renovation.

“Right now people walk past the church and don’t look at it twice,” said St. Stephen’s Rev. Nathaniel Dixon. “Soon everyone will get to see how beautiful this place is.”

With stained glass windows, a bell tower and an inner sanctuary adorned with an elegant sloping wood ceiling, St. Stephen’s—located on the corner of West 228th Street and Marble Hill Avenue—is arguably one of the most beautiful buildings in the community.

Urban Ellis, 78, a member of the congregation and the chairman of the restoration committee, said that the sanctuary, designed by architect Alexander McMillan Welch, is intended to look like the interior of an inverted ship.

But it’s the exterior of the church that is in dire need of restoration. Weathered shingles have rotted off of the building and the rose stained-glass windows need attention.

Rev. Dixon says that eventually, the congregation also plans to fix the lighting, repair the worn-down flooring in the sanctuary and add wheelchair accessible ramps.

The church selected a Long Island City-based contracting firm, Fifty Three Restorations Inc., to head the renovations. The repair work, which was to start this month, is expected to take no longer than four months.

Although the church has managed to raise enough to begin restorations, they are still short of the \$337,000 price tag necessary to complete the restoration on the north and west outer-walls. They are currently seeking support from



St. Stephen’s UMC in the Bronx will get some exterior restoration.

local organizations and individuals.

Rev. Dr. William Shillady, the executive director of the United Methodist City Society, called the church “a beautiful jewel” at a meeting with Dixon and the restoration committee.

“You have a unique place here. It’s worth protecting,” said Shillady.

Spring Retreat, No; Paul Nixon, Yes!

Every year, shortly after Easter, the leadership team of the Order of Elders has offered a spiritual retreat for all conference clergy. During the past nine years, the retreat has provided sacred time, both individually and communally.

But this year due to some scheduling difficulties, the spring retreat has been

cancelled. Instead the Order of Elders is encouraging all clergy to participate in the second part of Paul Nixon’s seminar, “I Refuse to Lead A Dying Church” on April 15–16 at Stony Point Conference Center.

In a letter to clergy, Rev. Constance Pak, wrote: “We are certain that all participants not only will earn the continuing education

credits from it, but also get great insights and challenges for your ministry. We strongly encourage and recommend you to attend this seminar for your spiritual nourishment this spring.”

For additional information or to register online by April 8 for the Nixon seminar, go to <http://www.nyac.com/events/detail/2725>.



PHOTOS BY JOANNE UTLEY

Camp Quinipet Director Greg Nissen, left, discusses what will be the new welcome center next to the dining hall with Bishop Jeremiah Park.

All In A Day's Work

Bishop Jeremiah J. Park recently made a whirlwind tour of the East End of Long Island, preaching at a joint worship service for three churches, visiting a fourth and ending up at Camp Quinipet. Park began by preaching at Southampton UMC for that congregation and the churches from East Hampton and Bridgehampton. Rev. Koonae Lee and pastors Juhye Hahn and Joanne Utley, and laity from all three churches participated in the service. After worship, the gathering enjoyed a luncheon prepared by the host congregation.

Then the bishop visited Pastor Tom MacLeod and the church being built by Sag Harbor UMC. Park toured the building and met members of the congregation. The bishop was greeted by laughter when he walked inside and exclaimed, "It smells just like new!" This new home comes as the church is celebrating its 200th anniversary.

The bishop's last stop required a ferry ride to Shelter Island. Quinipet Camp Director Greg Nissen showed Bishop Park the progress on the camp's welcome center, which he hopes to dedicate in early June.



PHOTO BY ALAN ALSTER

Clergy and laity gather with Bishop Park after worship at Southampton UMC. The service was co-led by Rev. Koonae Lee, Bridgehampton Pastor Joanne Utley and East Hampton Pastor Juhye Hahn, far right.



Pastor Tom MacLeod talks with Bishop Park about work on the new Sag Harbor UMC.

Retirement. If Not Now, When?

The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits is hosting a pre-retirement seminar on April 14 for clergy and spouses. The program, which is offered for all ages and stages of clergy, will provide an overview of the UMC retirement plans, and the Social Security program.

Peter Hang, a benefits educator from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, will help participants explore procedures and possibilities for retirement. He will focus on answering the following questions:

- Can I afford to retire? When should I retire?
- Am I emotionally, financially, physically, and spiritually ready to retire?
- What benefit options will work best for me?

A field representative from the Social Security Administration will also be on hand.

The seminar will be held in the conference Learning Center, 20 Soundview Ave., White Plains, N.Y., from 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided, but space is limited to 50. Register by March 29 to receive a personalized packet of information from GBOPHB; call Pat Perruccio at 888-696-6922, ext. 229, or email at pperruccio@nyac.com. For questions, contact Bill Shillady, chairman of the BOPHB, at bshillady@umcitysociety.org.

Rev. Hamilton Dies at 91

A memorial service is planned April 11 for Rev. Robert S. Hamilton, who died February 17, at age 91. He served Connecticut UM churches in East Berlin, New Haven, North Haven, Southington, and Trumbull.

Hamilton is survived by a daughter, Marion H. Sachdeva of New Haven; and a son and daughter-in-law, Robert S. and Georgianna Hamilton, Westmoreland, N.H.; two grandchildren; a sister and brother-in-law, Helen and Harold Scheid of Manchester, Conn.; and his brother and sister-in-law, David and Pat Hamilton of Marion, Mass. His wife, Doris Bell, preceded him in death in 2001.

The memorial service is at 3 pm at Faith UMC, 81 Clintonville Road, North Haven, Conn.

Expressions of sympathy can be sent to: Marion Sachdeva, 467 Whalley Ave., Unit B, New Haven, CT, 06511. Memorial gifts may be made to: Faith United Methodist Church, 81 Clintonville Road, North Haven, CT 06473, or Heifer International, 1 World Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72202.