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The magazine of United Methodist Men

50th Anniversary
of the death of
Martin Luther King

April 4, 1968

A letter from the General Secretary

1968

At a recent meeting of the general secretaries of the UMC, a friend of mine showed me a copy of a special edition of *TIME* magazine titled, "1968, The year that shaped a generation."

I bought a copy the first chance I had. Some of you are of the age that you remember personally that year; younger readers may have heard from parents or older brothers and sisters about that year.

For our church, it marks the beginning steps to become the United Methodist Church. For me, 1968 was a year of some wonder and of great challenge.

That year, I graduated from George Mason High School, in Falls Church, Virginia.

That year, my brother Jay got married.

That year, I selected a college.

That year, assassins killed two national leaders of hope.

That year, my dad went to work at his Navy Department office in DC with riots just blocks away.

That year, I saw people I admired weep for this country.

That year was as scary as the Cuban Missile Crisis, but the threat was internal.



That year, my generation found its voice.

I remember coming home from choir practice at church and my dad telling me of the assassination of Dr. King; he had difficulty getting the words out. Dad had held nearly all the leadership positions at Dulin Methodist Church, where my mom was the director of music.

I recall a conversation following a board meeting where an usher asked,

"What should we do if a black person shows up for worship?" Dad's answer as the chair was simply "give them a bulletin and show them to their seat."

So, we have come far, but not far enough. I am pleased to attend a local church that is multi-racial.

I am pleased that our scouting program welcomes families from many different places.

This is good, but still not good enough.

I hope with all the noise in social and network media that we again find the voice where we become a country "with liberty and justice for all."

Gilbert C. Hanke

United Methodist Men exists to declare the centrality of Christ in every man's life.



contents

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UM Men

Spring 2018

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Editor's note: This magazine includes articles from individuals who hold diverse opinions. We hope all articles are thought provoking; they are not necessarily the opinions of the General Commission on UM Men.



On April 4, we will mark the 50th anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Several UM clergymen stood by the civil rights leader during demonstrations,

in a jail cell, and at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis.

The Rev. James Lawson

In 1959, Lawson began leading workshops on nonviolence, which led to the successful campaign to desegregate lunch counters in downtown Nashville.

Lawson was with King on the day he was killed at the Lorraine Motel. The UM clergyman then participated in the investigation into the assassination, and, in the spirit of his friend, Lawson had several conversations with James Earl Ray, the accused killer, and even performed his jail-cell marriage and later conducted his funeral service.

The Rev. Joseph Lowery

Lowery was a pastor at Warren Street UMC in Mobile, Ala., when he met King in the mid-1950s.

As president of the ministerial alliance in Mobile, Lowery received an offering from all the churches in the city to support the Montgomery bus boycott that began in December 1955, under King's leadership. In 1957, Lowery and King co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Lowery served as president and chief executive officer from 1977 to 1998.

"I consider myself having been blessed to have known him so well and for so long, and yet I wish it could have been longer," said Lowery. "He used to say to me, 'Joe, I'll never live to be 40.' I was

all, 'Come on, man, you goin' live to be old, like Ol' Rip Van Winkle.' But he was right. He died at 39."

Bishop Melvin Talbert

Talbert says he was "privileged" to be in the same jail cell with King for three days and three nights in 1960. "I was very radical at that time," says Talbert. He says his experience with King taught him "There is another way and the other way is the way of love, the way of justice."

Bishop James S. Thomas

Thomas met King in 1955 on his way to speak to at Tennessee State University in Nashville. Later, both men addressed the 1965 Methodist Youth Conference in Lincoln, Neb. "Martin was about much more than race," said Thomas (1919-2010), the first black bishop in the North Central Jurisdiction. "Dr. King was about poor people. He was about Vietnam. He was about anywhere that people suffered injustices."

The Rev. Dr. Gilbert H. Caldwell

Caldwell was a student at Boston University School of Theology when he met King, and he had the honor of introducing the civil rights leader to 20,000 people gathered on Boston Common. "One can never be at rest when one knew Martin King," said Caldwell. "One of his statements, that I use repeatedly, is, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' When there is institutionalized prejudice against persons for one reason or another, how can we be at ease in Zion? The job of the church is to address these injustices."

Cover stories celebrate the life of Dr. King and Dr. Caldwell writes about "racial TIAs" that reveal continuing injustices that need to be addressed by UM Men.

—Rich Peck

The 50th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The night before his death, 50 years ago, on April 4, 1968, an exhausted Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at the Masonic Temple in Memphis.

King arrived at the Lorraine Motel that afternoon so tired that he asked Ralph Abernathy, to speak in his place. The night was stormy, tornado warnings had been issued, and the crowd in the giant hall was small. From a pay phone in the vestibule, Abernathy implored King to come out and keep faith with the sanitation workers who had braved the elements.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Taylor Branch describes what happened:

"King's entrance caused an eerie bedlam. Cheers from the floor echoed around the thousands of empty seats above, and the whole structure rattled from the pounding elements of wind, thunder, and rain. King came to the microphone at about 9:30, just as the storm was cresting, and launched into a rambling, rather unremarkable speech, until he came to the ending. 'But it doesn't matter now...because I've been to the mountaintop,' he declared in a trembling voice. Cheers and applause erupted. 'Like anybody I would like to live a long life — longevity has its place.' The whole building suddenly hushed, which let sounds of thunder and rain fall from the roof. 'But I'm



not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will.' There was a subdued call of 'Yes!' in the crowd.

"And he's allowed me to go to the mountain," King cried, building intensity. "And I've looked over. And I have seen the Promised Land."

"King's eyes were brimming now, and a trace of a smile crossed his face. 'And I may not get there with you,' he shouted, 'but I want you to know tonight, that we as a people will get to the Promised Land.'

"By now the crowd was clapping and crying and the other preachers were closing in behind him. King rushed into his close and stumbled sideways into a hug from Abernathy. The preachers helped him to



a chair, some crying, and tumult washed through the Masonic Temple.”

In an unforgettable way, Martin Luther King Jr. reminded the American people with his last words, “though a man may die, a dream does not.” And it is no happenstance that King was referencing Moses, the greatest of the Hebrew prophets. Time and again King drew inspiration from the prophets of old.


In his famous Letter from Birmingham City Jail, in 1963, King wrote, “I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their ‘thus saith the Lord’ far beyond the boundaries of their home towns...so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town.”

In his “I Have A Dream” speech at the March on Washington that year, King quotes the prophet Amos: “No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.” He quoted Isaiah: “I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.”

While we hail MLK as a prophet today, on the 50th anniversary of his death, it is helpful to remember that in 1966 two years after

he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, 63 percent of Americans viewed him unfavorably; only 33 percent viewed him favorably.

In 1965 and 1966, King started working on housing in northern states, and he had begun his anti-Vietnam war activism. Also, he had moved on from the southern integration and voting rights to the volcanic issues of housing and red-lining and economic redistribution.

Prophets may be popular when they are critical of the actions of others but they become less so when they address beliefs and practices in our own communities. 



The U.S. has a racial TIA

An article on the 50th anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by one of his colleagues

By Gil Caldwell

A personal experience

Eighteen years ago, I was sitting in a meeting at Park Hill UMC in Denver when I had a TIA (a transient ischemic attack sometimes described as a mini-stroke).

An MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) discovered a brain tumor caused the TIA.

After two operations and rehabilitation, I was left with nerve damage that does not allow me to move my toes or use the ankle of my right foot to walk. Since 2000, I drive with a left foot accelerator pedal and walk with a cane. I have periodic MRIs to determine how much of the tumor is left and whether it is growing.

The U.S. experience

Since the forced arrival of people of African descent, the U.S. has had racial strokes. The TIAs affect Blacks, not only because of their personal mistreatment, but because of a culture that encourages attitudes and actions designed to dehumanize Blacks.

That legacy of dehumanization is alive and well in 2018.

The USA engages in policies, programs and practices that reduce some of the symptoms, but it is reluctant to have an MRI that will reveal the racial tumor causing its racial TIA.

Need for racial MRI

Periodic MRIs would reveal that despite the racial progress manifest in former President Obama, Oprah Winfrey, and a multitude of other individual Black leaders, the racial tumor, created by the forced importation of Blacks from Africa to provide the free slave labor, continues to grow.

The political right and left assume that “a rising tide lifts all boats,” but from the beginning, Blacks had no boats, were not allowed to get in boats, or sat in the back of boats that went under.

A national MRI will reveal a racial tumor that is larger, deeper and more dangerous than we imagined.

TIAs continue

Daily TIAs are expressed in nonviolent (at times violent) acts of disobedience and



Gil Caldwell with Martin Luther King Jr.

resistance; they are caused by a racial tumor that has been present from the beginnings of black presence in the U.S.

Some people believe the end of legal racial segregation removed the tumor, and some are certain the election of a black president would eliminate all TIAs.

However, an MRI would reveal we are not in a post-racism era; it would reveal the need for a series of rational, ethical, political, cultural, religious and structural operations to eliminate future TIAs.

A racial MRI would discover the anti-black racial tumor that contradicts our democratic beginnings.

It is time to tell the truth about the cause of TIAs, so we can begin racial healing.

Black, white and Hispanic groups of UM Men can provide the MRI that examines

continuing racist policies and practices. Black, White, Asian and Hispanic groups of UM Men can initiate steps to remove the malignant racist tumors. 



The Rev. Dr. Gil Caldwell has served as senior pastor of five predominantly black membership churches, and four mostly white churches. In the 1950s he attended Boston University School of Theology where he met the Rev. Martin Luther

King Jr. Gil participated in the 1963 March on Washington, the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer, the 1965 Selma to Montgomery March, the March in Boston protesting public school segregation, and the 1968 Poor People's Campaign.

The Holy Spirit is like monkeys in the wild

By Moses Kumar



We have all had road to Emmaus moments. Those times when what God was doing is right in front of us but we don't recognize God's presence in our living.


It's easy not to see the Holy Spirit moving among us. It is by its very nature difficult to detect.

Like monkeys in the wild.

How do you catch sight of a wild monkey? By their movements in the trees.

First you see branches and leaves moving and then as you stare at a certain point, monkeys come into your view, generally as a flash of fur and faces. Sometimes you are blessed to have one or two stand still for you. But like the Spirit, they are always on the move.

Even knowing it is there does not make the Spirit's movement easier to see. Whether flitting to and fro or vibrating as it hovers over the deep, the Holy Spirit is elusive but not unknowable.

It is generally after the fact that we see how God moved in a situation in order to save us, to bring us to enlightenment. It may entail tough and hard circumstances but even in these moments, God is with us. 



Moses Kumar is general secretary of the General Council on Finance and Administration

United Methodist chaplain played in NFL

By Sam Hodges

DALLAS (UMNS)—

When football season arrives, the Rev. Caesar Rentie gets restless.

He remembers working himself into top shape so he could knock other large men around as an offensive tackle.

"It's always in my blood," Rentie said of football.

These days, he does very different work, serving as vice president for pastoral services at Dallas-based Methodist Health System and associate pastor at First UMC in Mansfield, Texas.

Child of deaf parents

While there are a few former NFL players in ministry, Rentie knows of no others in hospital chaplaincy. If this weren't distinction enough, he's also a child of deaf adults.

Football gave Rentie a college education and helped move him out of poverty. Growing up with deaf parents taught him to read body language closely.

That's a plus for a chaplain.

"You learn nuances," he said. "When I walk in the room ... I get a sense of what this person is feeling."

At the hospital, Rentie stands out for his size (6 feet 2 and ½ inches tall, and 275 lbs.) — and for his character.

"We feel like Caesar Rentie is one of God's many blessings on Methodist Health System," said Stephen Mansfield, president and CEO. "He is humble, gentle, kind and reflects our Christian values in his walk among us."

Rentie, 52, grew up in Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma, and, like his siblings, can hear. But with deaf parents, he learned American Sign Language as a toddler. Even now, his hand gestures involuntarily form signs.

At a school for the deaf, his father trained to be a cook and his mother, a seamstress. But when his father lost a leg



The Rev. Caesar Rentie, who once played offensive tackle for the Chicago Bears, now serves as vice president for pastoral services at Methodist Health System in Dallas. He's also an associate pastor at First UMC in Mansfield, Texas.

Photo by Carter Rose, for First Mansfield United Methodist.

to diabetes and couldn't work, the family's finances collapsed.

More month than money

Rentie recalls times when the lights and water at their Hartshorne, Okla., home would get turned off.

"There was always more month than there was money," he said.

Dr. Brad Luckett, a dentist and Fellowship of Christian Athletes leader in the town, remembers how little the Rentie family had.

"Their food was beans and cornbread," he said. "Their roof leaked so bad that Mrs. Rentie didn't have enough pots and pans to catch the water."

But in Hartshorne, Texas, Luckett and others took an interest in Rentie, who was notable for his athletic ability and light-up-a-room smile. He was a big kid with a big appetite, too.

"My wife baked pies, and Caesar would eat a whole pie," Luckett said.



The Rev. Caesar Rentie, vice president for pastoral services at Methodist Health System in Dallas, holds a helmet from his days as an offensive tackle for the Oklahoma Sooners. Rentie likes to say he's available for counseling to University of Texas fans whenever their school has to play Oklahoma.
Photo by Sam Hodges, UMNS.

First college grad

Though at a tiny high school, Rentie made national football recruiting lists. He signed with Oklahoma University, playing four years under Coach Barry Switzer, including on the 1985 national championship team.

Rentie was unprepared for college studies. But he followed Lockett's advice to go to every class, pay attention and befriend whichever student seemed to be taking the best notes.

He became his family's first college graduate.

"When I think about college and what makes me proudest, it's not the national

championship. It's the day I graduated," Rentie said, choking up. "My parents were in the stands."

In 1988, Rentie was a seventh round draft choice of the Chicago Bears, and made the team. He weighed about 290 pounds, but in practice lined up against 350-pound William "The Refrigerator" Perry.

Rentie saw action in five games that season. The next season, he signed with the Buffalo Bills, but got cut. His other efforts to play for an NFL team failed, so he moved to the World League of American Football. He made a name there.

"Steady, consistent, productive, and a fantastic teammate," said Joe D'Alessandris, his line coach with that league's Birmingham Fire, and now a coach with the Baltimore Ravens.

After playing football, Rentie became a graduate assistant coach at Texas Christian University. He also joined Dallas' St. Luke Community UMC.

The church's famed pastor at that time, the Rev. Zan Holmes Jr., heard Rentie speak at a Men's Day service and encouraged him to consider ministry.

"God is certainly not calling me," Rentie recalled thinking.

But after a year, he decided otherwise and entered TCU's Brite Divinity School. There, in a basic pastoral care course, a professor saw in Rentie the makings of a good chaplain. The professor urged him to take clinical pastoral education.

Rentie signed up, doing his internship at Methodist Health System's Dallas hospital.

"I remember meeting my first patient," he said. "I knew that's where I needed to be. It was kind of like I found home, and I've been here ever since."

Rentie is endorsed by the United Methodist Endorsing Agency, which supports chaplains and pastoral counselors serving beyond the local church. A

longtime fellow chaplain at Methodist Health System, the Rev. Mary Stewart Hall, remembered concluding early that Rentie was in the right line of work.

She said a young male patient had both serious medical issues and deep anger that caused him to reject help from chaplains. Rentie wouldn't quit.

"Caesar in his quiet, persistent way built a relationship with this young man, as only Caesar could," she said.

Rentie spent much of his early chaplaincy working long weekend shifts, including many visits to the emergency room. He acknowledges being shaken by the suffering he saw.

One evening about 2 a.m., a young man was brought in with a gunshot wound to the head. Rentie had to call the mother, who drove through the night from Arkansas. He stayed at the hospital to meet her, and was with her when her son was declared dead.

Rentie also stood by as an organ donation representative talked to the mother. She chose to donate all possible organs from her son.

Soon Rentie was watching as doctors removed the organs, the last being the heart. Rentie released the body to the medical examiner.

"I felt like the guardian," he said. But he also recalled feeling heartbroken and questioning both his faith and vocation.

A few months later, Rentie was asked to offer a prayer at an organ donor-recipient luncheon. He heard a recipient speak on what a difference his new heart had made. The man shared about meeting the donor's mother, and how she asked to put her head to his chest, so she could hear her son's heart keeping someone else alive.

Then the mother in question stood at the luncheon, and Rentie realized that she was the woman he'd counseled at Methodist.

Rentie felt confirmed in his faith and work.

"The message that came to me and helped me reconcile with the suffering was that it was my role to be here, to be a presence, to offer care, spiritual and emotional, not only to patients, but to staff and families," he said.

For 25 years, Rentie has done that. He's climbed the ladder at Methodist, and now supervises pastoral care at three Dallas-area hospitals.

He's also a licensed local pastor and at First United Methodist in Mansfield oversees the Celebrate Recovery ministry for people with addictions.


Community outreach is part of Rentie's work, and he's a popular speaker. He has preached at Highland Park UMC — one of the denomination's largest churches — and recently addressed the Global Methodist Missions Conference of the Deaf.

His sign language was rusty, but he was a hit, with many of those attending wanting to have their pictures taken with the former NFL player.

"I told Caesar he'll always have a deaf family," said the Rev. Tom Hudspeth, organizer of the conference.

Rentie recalls that even as a boy he felt protective of his parents. Later, he would block for running backs and quarterbacks, trying to keep them out of harm's way.

Chaplaincy, he's come to understand, is another unspooling of a long thread.

"This may have always been inside of me," he said, "that need to serve and protect." 



Sam Hodges, a UM News Service writer, lives in Dallas.

United Methodists demonstrated God's love to my family

By the Rev. Kent Millard

When I grew up, my family was totally unchurched because my father was a practicing alcoholic. We moved frequently because my dad would get drunk, get fired from his job and we would pack up and move again.

We wound up in a little town in western South Dakota where my mom ran a café and my dad drank up the profits. There was only a municipal bar in that little town and there was also only one employee; he was the bartender and also the sheriff. He would sell alcohol to someone until they got drunk and then arrest them for public intoxication and put them in the jail, which was attached to the bar. It was the town's fund-raising system.

Unfortunately, my dad was caught in that system. He would get drunk, be put in jail and the next day my mother would send me to the jail with money to bail him out. He was always apologetic and promised it would never happen again, but within a few weeks, the pattern repeated itself.

One night the bartender/sheriff took my intoxicated father to a barber shop where there were three men meeting in a group called Alcoholics Anonymous. They took my dad to a ranch 20 miles from town where he had to dry out and learn the steps of AA.

Dad was walking across the prairie memorizing the steps of AA. The first step is "Come to believe I am powerless over alcohol." Dad said to himself, "I believe this. I am powerless over alcohol; I have stopped hundreds of times but I always go back."

The second step is "Come to believe there is a power that can save me from this addiction." Dad said to himself, "I wish that were true. I wish there was a power that could save me from this addiction."


Then he felt it. He felt a powerful, bright presence around him so he fell to his knees, started



crying and said, "God if you are real, save me because I can't save myself." Then he felt the bright presence enter into him and give him deep peace at the center of his soul. When he got up he knew he would never drink again, and he never took another drink of alcohol for the rest of his life.

When Dad returned to town, he told us about his experience with God in the prairie and said, "Now we have to go to church to thank God." We started attending the little Methodist church in town and I came to believe that God must have done something for everyone there because they were always singing songs of thanksgiving and praise to God. I figured that people came to church to thank God for what God had already done in their lives, just as God had done something that changed our lives.

Eventually, our family went forward one Sunday to join the church. After we took the vows of membership, the pastor asked us to face the congregation and invited everyone to come forward and welcome us. All 25 people came forward, hugged us, and welcomed us into the congregation. I was 11 years old and remember crying because it felt so good to be hugged and accepted.

I didn't know much about God or Jesus but I loved Methodist church people because they welcomed an alcoholic and his family into Christ's loving arms. They modeled a church with open hearts, open minds and open doors. I came to love the God who first loved us and fell in love with the Methodist church for demonstrating God's love to us. This why I will always be a United Methodist. 



The Rev. Kent Millard is president of United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

Can doctrines/beliefs become idols?

By Bishop Kenneth Carder

Our Sunday school class had just concluded a session on idolatry. Martin Luther's statement had launched our conversation: "Whatever your heart clings to and trusts in is your god."

We defined idolatry as making ultimate that which is finite and intermediate, elevating the finite to the infinite; or mistaking symbols for the reality to which they point.

We proceeded to name values, practices, and realities which shape our decisions, priorities, and character. We named: consumerism, sports, politics, the media, success, and productivity.

When creeds become more important than God

After the class dismissed, a member approached with a question. "Can Christian doctrines and beliefs themselves be idols? Can creeds become more important than God?"

Good questions.

If the answer is "yes," the follow-up question is when do creeds/beliefs become idols?

No doctrinal formulation or theological affirmation totally captures the essence and reality of God. The Infinite cannot be compressed to fit into the finite. The best our language can do is point toward God. There is always more to God than can be confined to human understanding and experience.

Therefore, creeds and beliefs become idols when no room is left for mystery and further theological exploration. If no questions remain, growth ceases and dogmatism becomes god. Airtight certainty that we know God fully means we have the wrong god.

When doctrines/beliefs are locked in rigid intellectual compartments with little or no impact on our character, actions, and relationships, they have become idolatrous.

Religious beliefs and affirmations can function similarly to the notion of life on other planets. Such life may exist but it has no impact on our daily living. That's what John

Wesley referred to as "practical atheism"—intellectually acknowledging the existence of God but the affirmation has no influence on behavior.

Doctrines/beliefs can become weapons of coercion, manipulation, and domination of others. In so doing, they become idols. The history of Christianity is replete with illustrations of such idolatry.

The Crusades were fought in the name of evangelism. Slavery was defended by idolatrous interpretations of Scripture. Women were denied equality and subjected to abuse by religious doctrines/beliefs. Scientists were burned at the stake in defense of an idolatrous doctrine of creation.

Persons of differing sexual orientations and identities have been treated with cruelty, violence, and rejection in the name of faithfulness to the Bible.

When doctrines and beliefs motivate hatred, disrespect, and violence toward others, those doctrines and beliefs are idols. Any belief that denies the inherent worth and dignity of every person as made in the image of God fails the test of true orthodoxy.

The true test

Here is the test of all Christian doctrine and belief: "Does it promote love for God and neighbor?"

Any theological affirmation that promotes and motivates hate becomes a form of blasphemy against God made known in Jesus Christ.


The real test of doctrine is the character it produces in individuals and communities. Sound doctrine and strong character are integral to one another.

Christian doctrines and affirmations in the hands of persons with malformed character become distorted and dangerous. And doctrines/beliefs that sanction hate, superiority, and exploitation form persons and communities that hate, exclude, and exploit.

Gore Vidal's historical novel, *Julian*, captures the essence of beliefs that become idols. Following a scene in which a violent argument breaks out over the doctrine of the Trinity, the author proclaims:

"Even a child could see the division between what the Galileans (i.e., Christians) say they believe and what, in fact, they do believe, as demonstrated by their actions. A religion of brotherhood and mildness which daily murders those who disagree with its doctrines

can only be thought hypocrite, or worse."

Yes, doctrines and beliefs can become idols. We would all do well to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1John 4:1). 



Bishop Kenneth Carder was elected to the episcopacy in 1992 while serving as pastor of Church Street UMC in Knoxville, Tenn. He served the Nashville and Mississippi Areas. Upon retiring in 2004, he joined the faculty of Duke Divinity School.

Living in a culture of 'snark'

By Bishop Gary Mueller

It is an understatement of "ginormous" proportions to say we are living in "interesting times." Social media outbursts are the norm. Shaming others has become an art form. Personal attacks are increasing in intensity. And the media and the U.S. president are engaging in an increasingly hostile dance that seems oddly mutually beneficial.

But there is a great deal more going on than individual tweets, posts and jabs. These individual acts have become pervasive. This behavior has created a pattern. The pattern has become the norm. Suddenly this new norm has created a culture that is divisive, hostile and negative. And sadly in such a culture, anything seems to go.

So how are you going to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ in a culture of snark?


Recognize reality for what it is. Get honest, and confess how you may have been swept up by the world around you without even knowing it has happened. You can't do this alone. You need God's help to engage in an honest assessment of your world and yourself.

Embrace how your relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord changes you. What Jesus does for you fundamentally changes your life. So much so that even when it seems most difficult you are not throwing shade, snarking others or adding to the flood of hate. Rather, you are sharing Jesus' unconditional love that

he already shared with you. Quite simply, you live an alternate fact in a world desperately in need of it.

Focus less on snarking and a more on praying.

Frankly, it can be a real challenge to do all of this when people hurt you deeply, try to sabotage you, and do things that make you righteously—as well as rightly—angry. So start praying. Pray to understand what's going on with others. Pray that they will not poison you. Pray that you will not respond in kind. Pray that you will cling to God. And pray for them, even if it's hard. While your prayers may make a difference for them, they definitely will make a difference for you.

Our current culture of snark began with individual tweets, posts and jabs. God's promise of a new world begins with individual prayers, conversations, acts of mercy and relationships. I pray that you will become excited about all the ways you can help God transform the world by starting in your small corner of it right now. 



Bishop Mueller is bishop of the Arkansas Area and vice president of the General Commission on UM Men.



Wet wood won't burn

By Hank Dozier

"Without wood, a fire goes out."

Proverbs 26:20a (NIV)

There is a basic principle at work in this verse: Fire needs fuel.

This is the basic principle of the science of combustion. Where there is no fuel, there can be no fire.

The same is true in the spiritual realm. The spiritual fuel that comes from the Holy Spirit is what drives us toward perfection. Remove this Spirit of God from us, and our fire goes out.

When John the Baptist preached in the wilderness of the coming of Christ, he baptized with water.

But, John said, "...but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to wear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, **and with fire:** (Matthew 3:11). Christ's baptism not only washes away our sins, but it replaces our sinful nature with His authentic Spirit to ensure that our fire will not go out.

His fire does what water cannot do.

Let me explain how this fiery Spirit works. You confess your sins, but your verbal confession is not enough. Many a person has gone back on his word. What has to follow is a heart transplant—a complete transformation, as the Spirit of Christ takes up residence in your body and makes the mind, body and spirit one. Without the Holy Spirit, we are nothing but wet wood.

How many people do you know who were baptized with water and went right back into the world? That's because they did not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- Maybe they were baptized because Grandma or Momma or Daddy said it was time.
- Maybe they had to be baptized in order to sing in the choir.
- Maybe as a young adult, they wanted to join some of the festivities offered to baptized believers in their age group.
- Maybe they were baptized as an adult because they wanted to be sure they had a church home for their funeral.

The question is, "Can a Christian's fire go out?"

The answer is, "Yes."

Fire needs fuel. If a Christian hardens his heart toward the Holy Spirit, the fire burns so low that it can burn out.

So how can you tell that a Christian's fire is still burning?

Christ's fire produces fruit. If a Christian has been fire-baptized, his life will produce fruit. If there is no fire, there is no fruit. Jesus said, "...the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine; no more can ye unless ye abide in me." (John 15:4)

Discipleship has a cost. You can't claim to be a Christian and live a fruitless life. Jesus said, "*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples*" (John 15:8). Christianity is not a spectator sport. Every member of the church family has an active role to play in winning souls to Christ. The church is like a book of matches. Each match lights some part of the community for Christ.

And when all the matches are lit, the church burns brightly.

Christ's fire produces faithfulness. The Christian who lives his life as a follower of Christ shows himself to be faithful in all things. He doesn't try to balance a dual commitment between Christ and the world.


I call those who wander in and out of the church "driftwood." They don't hang around long enough to become fuel for Christ's church. Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6:24).

When faithfulness takes a back seat, the church suffers. We only have to compare baptism records to attendance records to know this is true. Too many Christians move from the front row to the middle row, and finally to the back row, before finding that invisible revolving door in the back of the church.

Four ways to keep the fire burning

1. Gather regularly for corporate study and worship. Both are like food for

the Spirit, to nurture us and keep us fed. Hebrews 10:25 says "...and forsaking not the assembling of ourselves together."

2. Spend time in private devotion and prayer. Keep your lines of communication with Christ open and unrestricted
3. Use the gifts God has given you. These gifts are neither earned nor merited. They are given to us to grow His kingdom.
4. Be joyful and patient. James 1:4 says, "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Fortitude is what keeps you pressing forward in the face of tribulation. It turns a quitter into a winner. James says that the fuel for this fortitude is joy. The joy of the Lord burns its way through every obstacle thrown in its path. 



Hank Dozier is president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of UM Men.

HUMOR

Show him your card

A U.S. Department of Agriculture representative stopped at a ranch and talked with an old rancher.

He told the rancher, "I need to inspect your ranch for your water allocation."

The old rancher said, "OK, but don't go in that field over there."

The government official said, "Mister, I have the authority of the federal government with me.

"See this card? This card

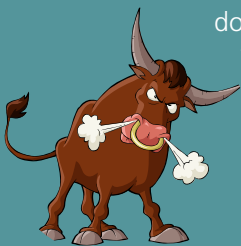
means I am allowed to go wherever I wish on any agricultural land. No questions asked or answered. Have I made myself clear? Do you understand?"

The old rancher nodded politely and went about his chores.

Later, the rancher heard loud screams and saw the representative running for the fence and close behind was the rancher's bull.

The bull was gaining.

The official was terrified, so the rancher ran to the fence and shouted . . .
"Your card! Your card! Show him your card!"



The unlisted ear

By Tom Tozer and Bill Black

Question: I keep getting a ringing in my ears. What should I do?

Answer: Get an unlisted ear!

There was a recent powerful TV movie about teenage suicide, which conveyed the idea that there are too many “unlisted ears” all around us—in school, church, our social circles, even in our own families.

The sad refrain from a friend or teacher or parent often is, “Why didn’t I listen? Why didn’t I notice—there were so many signals. Why didn’t I ask questions? Why didn’t I stick my nose in a little?” Often, however, the reasons remain inexplicable.

Lending only half an ear


At the end of every day, don’t we all regretfully recall moments when we failed to stop and really listen to someone about whom we cared? Think back. Did you quickly dismiss someone in the family this morning because you were running late and you hardly heard what they were telling you? Were you irritated about something to the point that you mentally blocked out everyone around you? Were you so focused on the big meeting or the job evaluation or the client luncheon that everything that happened or was said earlier that day is a blur? It’s easy to do, and we’re all—young and older—guilty of it.

Test yourself

Try this little exercise. Think back to this morning between getting out of bed and walking out the door of your house. Replay any conversation that you had during that time. What did you say to someone? Who was that someone and what did he or she say back to you? Okay, this morning could be hours

ago. Let’s make it easier. Play back in your mind a two-way conversation you’ve had within the last hour. What was the subject, and what was the outcome? Matter of fact, who was the last person you talked to just before you started reading this column?

Living in a haze

We are often so busy that we function in a haze. Today did anyone try to get your full attention but only get a fraction of it? If your answer is no, are you sure? How often do you have an unlisted ear, at work or at home? Or do you even know? Dad, make a conscious effort to listen intently to your kids. Test yourself often. Rewind a conversation and see if you can recall the details of what was exchanged or decided or solved. Turn your unlisted ears into help hotlines. Keep them open and receptive. 

Tom Tozer and Bill Black write a syndicated column on fatherhood and are authors of Dads2Dads: Tools for Raising Teenagers. They are available for workshops. Contact them at tomandbill@Dads2Dadsllc.com. Like them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at Dads2Dadsllc.

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Will you help us share our Dads2Dads column with more dads across the country?

E-mail us the name of your local newspaper, the editor, and a contact e-mail or phone #. Send your information to Tomandbill@dads2dadsllc.com.

We will make contact. If that newspaper agrees to run our column—thanks to you—we will send you a copy of our book or a Dads2Dads T-shirt. It’s that simple.

Thank you and God bless!

Tom and Bill

The risks and benefits of being a weekend warrior

By Dr. Bryant Stamford

A recent study touted the benefits of weekend exercise and claimed this approach was just as good as exercising more frequently throughout the week. I agree that in some ways a weekend of exercise can be as effective as a more frequent approach, but there can be a downside.

In the past, the term weekend warrior was derogatory and was used to describe someone who was sedentary all week, then went out and overdid exercise on the weekend with flag football, singles tennis or dashing about on a soccer field, which often resulted in muscle soreness and orthopedic injury.

The recent study took a more measured approach to exercise on weekends. A prudent exercise routine was imposed and found to be effective in increasing physical fitness. What's more, the degree of improvement in fitness was comparable to exercising several days a week.

Frequency as a stimulus variable

In order to improve fitness, it's necessary to address the so-called stimulus variables that include intensity (how hard you exercise), duration (how long), mode (type of exercise – large muscle and rhythmic in nature – walking, jogging, swimming, etc.) and frequency (how often).

Many years ago one of my graduate students investigated the impact of frequency on fitness as part of his master's degree thesis. His results showed that as long as the same total amount of exercise per week is performed at the same intensity, frequency can vary from two to four days per week and produce similar results.

The new study adds an important piece of missing information. Since the intent of the thesis was not to study the weekend warrior issue, the two days of exercise were spread out symmetrically on a Monday and a Thursday. That's





quite different from performing two big workouts back to back on consecutive weekend days.

Results from the new study suggest that “spacing” of the two exercise days is not important, adding more credence to the potential advantages of the weekend warrior approach.

The good news

A series of recent studies indicate that your current level of physical fitness is a good predictor of heart health, and poor fitness increases the potential for future heart disease. In addition, physicians are encouraged to include physical fitness and exercise patterns along with blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, etc. in assessing overall health.

Since we now know you can achieve a similar level of fitness from weekend exercise versus exercising more often, this helps doctors respond to the “too busy to exercise” excuse.

And if you do the same total amount of exercise (at the same intensity) crammed into two days as you normally would spread out over the week, the number of calories expended will be the same. If so, the impact on weight management will be the same as well.

The downside


There are obvious advantages for busy folks who can cram 75 minutes of vigorous exercise, or 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week (the recommended minimum from the World

Health Organization) into a weekend and achieve the same level of physical fitness. However, this equates to two big back to back workouts, and older folks, in particular, may require more recovering time between workouts.

In addition, for many folks, it’s much better to exercise more often, and every day if possible. The reason is, a bout of exercise acts to promote insulin sensitivity.

At present, about 35 percent of American adults suffer from pre-diabetes (insulin resistance which prevents removal of glucose from the bloodstream where it accumulates and causes severe damage to the body). Exercise promotes insulin sensitivity which counteracts insulin resistance, but the effect is short-lived and must be renewed daily, just like taking a pill. Obviously, getting a good daily dose is much better than only twice a week.

The bottom line

Exercising responsibly on weekends can be an effective approach for increasing fitness, especially for the majority of Americans who believe they are too busy during the week to squeeze in a workout. It’s far better than doing nothing, but for many Americans, it’s not as good as exercising more frequently, and daily, if possible. This is especially the case for those suffering from pre-diabetes. If you are uncertain how you are doing when it comes to pre-diabetes, ask your doctor to conduct a simple blood test for hemoglobin A1C. 



Dr. Bryant Stamford is professor and chair of the department of exercise science at Hanover (Ind.) College. This article is courtesy of the Courier Journal in Louisville, Ky.

Concerns about pornography

By Jane P. Ives

New research about the impact of pornography challenges UM Men organizations to provide up-to-date information about its potential harm.

“Pornography is a social toxin that destroys relationships, steals innocence, erodes compassion, breeds violence, and kills love,” says a 2017 statement by the National Center on Sexual Exploitation. A “Pornography & Public Health Research Summary” released by the center calls pornography “ground zero for all those concerned for the sexual health and wellbeing of our loved ones, communities, and society as a whole.”

At the same time, other research indicates there is increasing public acceptance of pornography, especially among younger generations. For example, a 2014 study by the Public Religion Research Institute found that 45 percent of millennials, the first generation to grow up with unlimited exposure to pornography through the internet, said viewing pornography is “morally acceptable,” compared to 9 percent of Americans ages 68 and older.

Pornography “poses a serious threat to couple intimacy and relationship harmony,” say Drs. John and Julie Gottman. “Pornography can lead to a decrease in relationship trust and a higher likelihood of affairs,” they wrote on their website. The couple note that porn sites subtly or directly encourage sexual activity outside of marriage.

The use of pornography is closely linked to infidelity and which is a common reason given for divorce.


The Journal of Family Theory and Review reported on a study by Kyler Rasmussen. That study found people exposed to large amounts of pornography are likely to feel less satisfied with their real-life partners.

They feel less committed to existing relationships, and accept promiscuity as natural and marriage as less desirable.

Pornography is an addiction that hijacks the pleasure centers of the brain, especially when viewed by the young. Brain scans of addicted users show alarming changes.

Adding to the problem, “soft-porn” publications such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Penthouse*, and *Playboy* frequently present sexual activity as part of casual dating behavior that is divorced from love and commitment.

If we want a society in which marriages and families thrive, we need to teach about commitment, self-discipline, and effective relationship skills, while talking openly about the damaging effects of pornography.

Resources for teaching about the dangers of pornography and for ways to limit access to it may be found at www.UMCDiscipleship.org (enter “Pornography” in the search bar). 



Jane P. Ives is a UM marriage and family ministries consultant. This article is adapted with permission from an article on the Discipleship Ministries website.



Across the Nation

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla.—

Coppock gives devotional books to fire chaplains

Fire chaplains from across the nation annually gather to discuss ways to minister to firefighters and victims of devastating fires. Last October, they gathered for their 39th conference.

Larry Coppock, executive director of Strength for Service, Inc., told the chaplains about the availability of devotional books for first responders.

One hundred of the 200 chaplains attending the event had already distributed *Strength for Service to God and Community* books to their fire fighters. Larry gave copies to the remaining 100 chaplains.

The Steward Family Foundation provided the books.

The non-denominational Federation of Fire Chaplains ministers to the “world’s most dangerous profession, and fire victims, whose suffering is beyond description.”



Larry Coppock (left) joins Chaplain James Burns at the 39th meeting of the National Federation of Fire Chaplains. Burns is the command chaplain and executive secretary of the Louisiana Fire Service Chaplaincy, based in Ruston. “I keep a copy on my desk. I can’t say that I use it daily in my devotionals, but when I’ve had an unusually trying day I reach for Strength for Service,” says Burns. “In my business I see more than my share of heartache and troubles. The encouraging words of others who are going through the same kinds of stuff, gives me courage to get up and do it all over again.”

COLUMBIA, S.C.—

Real men read

College Place UMC and a United Way organization hosted its second annual “Real Men Read” event. The church donated books and nine UM men read books to grade-school children.



Sergeant Jason Zike, a member of the Columbia College Police Department, reads to children and their parents.

JACKSON, La.—

Men give devotional books to VA hospital

UM Men of First UMC, Denham Springs presented 110 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to patients at the Louisiana War Veterans Home.

“The administrative assistant guided us through the facility as we distributed SFS books,” said Barney Babin. “She said if a person had visual problems either another resident or a staff person would read the daily devotions to them. The presenters were veterans and we paired a presenter of the same branch of service as the resident. We always asked about their service, which elicited many stories in the several hours of distribution.”



SHREVEPORT, La.—

Men give 300 books to VA hospital patients

Larry Coppock, top staff executive of Strength for Service Inc., and Andy Adger, a member of Vivian (La.) UMC men's group, distributed 300 copies of *Strength for Service to God & Country* devotional books to patients at Overton Brooks VA Medical Center. “It was a great experience,” said Larry. “We went room by room and floor by floor to visit with each patient and provide the books.”

Worldwide Technology provided the books.



Larry Coppock (left) and Andy Adger prepare to distribute books to patients in the Overton Brooks VA Medical Center.

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—

Men replace deck

Men from the Elizabeth and York River districts teamed up to replace an aging deck on the MacLeigh-Holland Home of Heart Havens.



Dick Garriott, a member of Community UMC in Virginia Beach, saws a board for the deck of a Heart Havens group home.

Heart Havens is a ministry that empowers adults with developmental disabilities to live full and vibrant lives with as much independence as possible.

Virginia Conference UM Men endorsed the ministry in 1999.

SANTA BARBARA, Calif.—

Troop receives award from bishop

Leaders of Troop 1 received the Bishop's Award of Excellence during the 150th anniversary celebration of First UMC.

Established in 1910, Troop 1 is the oldest troop west of the Mississippi River.

"Earning this award was a big accomplishment for our Scouts, and we are proud so many are committed to their faith and the community," said Douglas Scott, a volunteer leader.

Eleven Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts received PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) awards.



Bishop Grant J. Hagiya (left) gives the Bishop's Award of Excellence to Troop 1 Scoutmaster Bobby Blessing. Dr. Mark Richardson, pastor at First UMC, Santa Barbara, and Life Scout Austin Fouse look on.

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii— Troops receive devotional books

Captain Nicholas (Nick) Wright, chaplain of the 25th Infantry Division, distributed 48 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to his battalion.

"My unit was training during this Veterans Day weekend at the Pohakuloa Training Area in Hawaii," said Wright. "I led a devotion utilizing *Strength for Service*

and I passed out several books to soldiers looking for ways to stay in the Word while out in the field."

The Steward Family Foundation provided the books. Friends of *Strength for Service* provided transportation costs.



Men of the 25th Infantry Division read Strength for Service books on Veterans Day.

AURORA, Ill.—

Church celebrates 100th birthday

In November, Wesley UMC honored Bill Moore on his 100th birthday.

A 71-year member of the church, Bill served as the financial secretary and auditor for the Rock River Annual Conference.

The former Navy officer continues to drive his car, and he works out three times a week.

Moore came to Aurora in 1947 to work for a local CPA firm. Three years later, he opened his own company and later joined with another firm to become the largest accounting firm in Illinois. He retired at age 94.



Bill Moore (right) is honored at a November 100th birthday celebration by the Rev. John Bell, pastor of Wesley UMC. Photo by John Connell.

LANCASTER, S.C.—

Barbecues provide funds for ramps

Men of Tabernacle UMC host fund-raising barbecues in order to provide lumber for handicap ramps.

They have become quite proficient in building procedures after constructing several ramps around Lancaster.



Men of Tabernacle UMC install a ramp for a church member. Photo by Jodie Plyler.

KERRVILLE, Texas —

UM Men give 274 devotional books

UM Men of First UMC spearheaded a fund-raising drive to provide 274 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to five fire stations, two police stations, a sheriff's office and a hospital emergency room. They also provided freshly baked cookies to first responders at each site.



UM Men give fire fighters copies of Strength for Service to God and Community. UM Men from left: Dwight Goode, Allan Howard and the Rev. David Payne pastor of First UMC in Kerrville. A firefighter holds a box of books and cookies.

ALLIANCE, Ohio —

Apple Dumpling Gang strikes again

For 16 years, volunteers at Union Avenue UMC have been selling dumplings to raise funds for mission projects. UM Men began leading the effort in 2008.

In 2017, 25 volunteers produced 5,472 dumplings using 56 bushels of Empire apples, 36 gallons of milk, 550 pounds of pastry flour, 65 pounds of rolling flour, and 306 pounds of Crisco oil.

The project annually produces about \$5,000; with that money, UM Men support community dinners, a community outreach fund, Habitat for Humanity, the Salvation Army, and a community food pantry.



Union Avenue Church women use rolling pins to roll the dough and keep unruly men under control.

SILSBEE, Texas —

Firefighters cope with deaths and floods

The fire department of this 7,000-member community is coping with an automobile accident that claimed the life of Assistant Chief Jay Hinkie. The 45-member department is also reeling from the deaths of five children, ages 3-11, and their 31-year-old mother in a house fire.

A.J. Brian, a member of the Strength for



Assistant Fire Chief Jay Hinkie was struck and killed by a motorist while responding to a rollover accident.

Service Board of Directors in the nearby town of Beaumont, wanted to do something to thank firefighters for flood-relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Harvey and to provide them with

a resource that could bring comfort and strength to deal with the loss of a firefighter and fire victims

"I called the Chief Robbie Jones and shared my appreciation and concern for his department," said A.J.

She asked if she could give copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to his department."

Chief Jones invited A.J. to present the books at a Christmas party. "If this book helps just one of us, just one, it will have done its job," said Jones.

WAYNESBORO, Pa.—

Men build 20 sets of an 18th Century game

Men of Christ UMC have been building toys for 27 years.

For Christmas, they revived a 18th Century game of strategy and chance called "Shut the Box."

Lowes donated the building material for the game that teaches math and logic skills. The men gave 20 units to a Waynesboro organization.



Participants in the toy project include (front row from left): Tom Wynkoop, Bob Davis, Wayne Gunnelson, Allen Carlson, and Larry Nowack; (back row) Gregg Hershberger, Bill Short, Bill Gallentine, Justin Atkins, Garry Garling, Carl Henry, John Hartman, Christian Hartman, Bill Hovis, Bob Small, Herb Meininger, Richard Fox, Dave Souders, Howard Snyder, and George Souders.

DALLAS, Texas —

Potatoes raise \$2,000 for hunger program

For the past eight years, Dallas Indian UM Men have served a baked-potato

dinner following a church service. During that time, these men of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference have raised more than \$2,000 for the Society of St. Andrew.



From left: Rick Longfox, Daniel Martinez, Michael Tongkeamha, and Freeman Jessie are ready to serve baked potatoes.

NATCHITOCHE, La.—

Turkey deliveries

UM Men of First UMC have been delivering turkey meals to 250 people every Thanksgiving for more than 20 years. The Council on Aging selects the recipients.



Kevin Shanahan, sexton of First UMC, Natchitoches, slices a ham for meals to be delivered to 250 people. Annie L. Green, a retired nurse, stands ready to deliver the meals. Each team asks recipients if they have working smoke detectors in their homes. If not, the team returns later to install one.

SPRINGFIELD, Ind.—

Thirty boys attend BSA camp

Some 30 Scouts and leaders from all over Indiana participated in a UM Scouting Ministry Retreat at Camp Indicoso.

The Rev. Curt Hurley, conference coordinator of scouting ministry, led the retreat; he also taught a workshop and led worship. Anna Waite, president of The Indiana UM Pathfinder, taught crafts and led the campfire program. Brian Waite led games.



Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturing Scouts and leaders enjoy an abundance of food prepared by Dr. Art Collins, a veteran Scout leader.

SALEM, Va. —

Church has seven 4-Star recipients

First UMC offers four PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) courses.

"The church actually didn't start offering the PRAY program until more than 10 years after I had been involved as the cubmaster and then chartered organization representative for our church's scouting program, said Jim Gresham, a member of First UMC.

The church now offers "God & Me," "God and Family" "God & Church," and "God and Life" classes. The studies are sponsored by UM Men.

Seven Scouts completed all four courses, and received "4-Star Awards."



Seven Boy Scouts from Troop 51 receive "4-Star" awards. The Rev. Alan Combs, pastor of First UMC, Scoutmaster Scott Harless, and several counselors honor the recipients.

LEBANON, Ohio —

Men collect literature for Third World countries

In 2017, UM Men shipped 95 pallets of Christian literature from Lebanon, Ohio, to Butler, Ill., for later delivery by "Love Packages" to people in Africa and India. The 95-pallet delivery in 2017 is an increase from the 60 pallets delivered in previous years.

Love Packages ships literature in 20-ton containers at a cost of more than \$3,500 per container. Generous contributors pay shipping costs.



Indian Children proudly show the literature they received from Love Packages.

NATCHITOCHEs, La.—

Lubbock outlines ministry opportunities

Mark Lubbock, a deployed staff member of the General Commission on UM Men and president of Louisiana Conference, told men from First UMC and Asbury UMC about fighting hunger through the Society of St. Andrew, ministering to young people through Scout troops, and engaging in prison ministries.

"UM Men from First UMC raise money for missions, engage in food drops and fund prayer advocates," said Mark. "They also do a good job of recruiting and mentoring younger men."



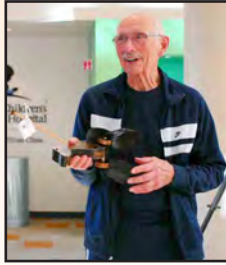
Mark Lubbock speaks to a monthly meeting of UM Men at First UMC in Natchitoches.

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn. —

Men make nearly 200 wood toys

Men of Wesley Memorial UMC spent some 3,000 hours cutting, sanding, painting, and assembling 197 wood toys for children.

They donated 110 hand-made toys to children at the Niswonger Hospital, 47 to a Boys and Girls Club, 21 to the Haven of Mercy, and 19 to a Ronald McDonald House.



Jim Stouffer, a member of the Wesley Memorial UMC, shows one of the 197 toys UM Men crafted as Christmas gifts.

All toys have moving parts. One toy is a gorilla that can be tugged along on a string and another is a duck with wings that flap when it is pulled.

KISSIMMEE, Fla.—

Churches prepare kits for Puerto Rico evacuees

Holston Conference churches prepared 1,300 school kits and 1,000 hygiene kits for evacuees from Puerto Rico now staying in Kissimmee.

“Today was indeed a blessing and a testimony that the connection works,” said the Rev. Harry Howe, who drove a trailer with supplies stored in Marion, Va., to First UMC of Kissimmee.

Jim Fetzer, Holston Conference disaster response coordinator, organized the collection of supplies after participating in a UM Committee on Relief teleconference concerning hurricane response.



The Rev. Harry Howe and students unload supplies sent by Holston Conference churches for Puerto Rico evacuees following Hurricane Maria.

SPENCER, Iowa —

Church gives 150 devotional books to first responders

Members of Grace UMC gave 150 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to first responders in Clay County, home of the “World’s Greatest County Fair.”

This project got a kick-start when the Rev. Paul Frederiksen was appointed to the church in July 2016; the new pastor was invited to serve as chaplain of the 37-member Spencer Fire Department.

“There is a significant cost for the devotionals,” said Frederiksen, “However, when the purpose for the project was explained to the men and women, the money just jumped out of their pockets and purses.”



UM Men leaders Brad Johnson and Roger Ingledue present books to Police Chief Mark Warburton and one of the new patrol members.

LOGANSPORT, Ind.—

Boy Scout provides ‘pawpacks’

Whenever Logansport firefighters respond to a house fire, there’s always a chance a family’s dog or cat could be injured by smoke and flames. Bailey Grisez, a Boy Scout in a troop chartered by Cross Wind UMC, wanted to make sure the department has what it needs to help a pet in peril.

The 16-year old created and donated four “pawpacks” to the Logansport Fire Department for his Eagle Scout project

Each pack contains vacuum-sealed towels, foil blankets, eye wash, antiseptic bandages, collars, tennis balls, pop-up water bowls, and three air masks to fit

animals of various sizes.

Bailey's father, Capt. Rob Grisez, has been a firefighter for over 20 years and has rescued many pets trapped in houses.



Bailey and Captain B.J. Cox (left) and his father replace items to aid injured pets into a pawpak. Photo by Fran Ruchalski/Pharos Tribune.

RINCON, Ga.—

Girl Scouts make dresses for East Africa girls

Eighteen Girl Scouts from Troop 30387 partnered with the "Piece Makers," a sewing group at Rincon UMC, to make pillow-case dresses for children in a village in East Africa.

The Rev. Bobbie Gale, director of "Unto the Least of These Ministries" in the South Georgia Conference, will deliver the dresses.



Front row from left: the Rev. Bobby Gale, Brandi Weaver, Breanna, Brittany, and Monica Harris. Back row: the Rev. Michael Finn, Donna Leach, and Ty LaValley, scouting coordinator for South Georgia Conference and former missionary to Cote d'Ivoire.

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va.—

Men pack flood buckets

Men of First UMC raised \$385 to purchase supplies for six flood buckets. Buckets were delivered to West Virginia UM Conference Disaster Response Center in Beaver.



The Rev. Paul Helmick (left), pastor of First UMC, and Mike Warwick, president of UM Men, pack flood buckets.

MOORESVILLE, N.C.—

Eight Scouts achieve rank of Eagle

Eight Scouts from Troop 377, sponsored by UM Men of Rocky Mount UMC, achieved the rank of Eagle. "The Scouts all came through the ranks together and wanted to finish together," said Scoutmaster Mike Bernhardt.



You seldom see Eagles in a flock. You usually find them one at a time, but in this rare photo, you find nine. From left: Zack Noble, Drew Clancy, Zac Mazag, Evan Harris, Scoutmaster Bernhardt, Michael Raj, Carson Dagenhart, Adam Clancy and Mike Merkze.

CAMDEN, Ark.—

Scout troop sponsors a child in Peru

Each month Scout Troop 6, chartered by First UMC, raises \$38 to sponsor Braydi Rojas, a child in Peru.

The troop also cleans neighborhood streets and participates in an annual Ozark mission project rebuilding porches, building handicap ramps and painting.

The church received a Church Charter Recognition from the commission.

MARSHFIELD, Mo.—

Men create Calvary crosses

Men of Marshfield UMC created 107 Calvary cross displays, to benefit a local food pantry.

Errol Schafer, a member of UM Men, had a collection of square milled nails manufactured in the 1880s. Mike Benzen, offered his woodworking shop, and UM Men were soon selling the mounted crosses for \$20 each.



MARTINEZ, Ga.—

Pumpkin sales raise \$20,000

For 17 years, Marvin UMC men have been selling pumpkins to support a vocational training school for girls in the West African nation of Togo.

In 2017, the men's organization sold 8,000 large pumpkins and 1,000 small ones to raise \$20,000 for the Kupeke ministries.



Phil Hendrickson, chairman of Pumpkin Patch committee, loads pumpkins into a wheelbarrow.

HUMOR

Four religious truths

1. Muslims do not recognize Jews as God's Chosen People.
2. Jews do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah.
3. Protestants do not recognize the Pope as the leader of the Christian world.
4. Baptists do not recognize each other at the liquor store.

Send a text next time

Pastor Mark Johnson made the mistake of calling his secretary with the title of his sermon based on 2nd Peter 3:9

He realized his mistake when the outside bulletin board announced his sermon as "That Nun Should Perish."

My first 15 months as director of men's ministry

By the Rev. Dr. Richard Vance

I was asked to reflect on my first 15 months as the director of men's ministry at the General Commission on UM Men.

The first priority, following my appointment to this position, was to listen and to learn. I listened to the stories of men and people in ministry in local churches and leaders of general church agencies, and I found they share two feelings in common: 1) a sense of mortality and 2) a longing for connection.



Rev. Dr. Richard Vance

A sense of mortality

First, there is a sense of mortality about men's ministry and the church.

This may be found in local churches where men speak in fear about the future of their men's units and their churches.

The same concern is articulated at district and annual conference levels as reports of declining attendance are reported in meetings.

The same fear and concern can be found throughout the denomination as we draw close to the 2019 special called session of General Conference and the 2020 regular session.

I believe the sense of mortality is not so much a fear of death as it is the fear of losing significance.

Many times people refer to points in their lives as if they had "died." What they are saying is that they feel as if they have no significance.

Many men's organizations feel as if their groups and their churches no longer have any impact on the lives of the people in their communities.

Many men blame outside forces for their lack of impact:

- The absence of men in the church;
- Changes in morality;
- Millennials with wrong priorities.

Many men's expectations are tied to dreams of happier days when the church was full and the men's ministry was vibrant, forgetting that it is only in retrospect that those days were that good.

As I speak with those discouraged people, I encourage them to look at their communities and their churches through new lenses. The true reality is that those who came before them probably struggled with many of the same feelings as they do. To quote my favorite Dragnet opening, "The story ... is true, the names have been changed to protect the innocent."

Every generation seems to share the same tunnel vision, which prohibits them from seeing new models for ministry. They forget that God said; "Behold I make all things new. I am the Alpha and the Omega." And they forget Jesus said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Yearning for connection

Second, I have seen that there is a yearning of men to be connected with other men, their communities, and with God.

Research suggests that few Christian men have another man in their lives who will act as a confident and mentor. Further, Barna research suggests that millennials and Gen Z men are not as interested in meeting as they are in making their communities better places.

Finally, while research suggests that all people

are not necessarily interested in denominations, they are actively seeking a spiritual relationship with a God whom they know loves them.

Hope for the future

I find this second common thread hopeful for men's ministry and the church. The reality that most, if not all, men are looking for relationship means that the "harvest is full!" Contrary to the belief that there is no man wanting to be involved with the ministry of the church, research shows that there are many men who are searching for more than what they have in their relationships. The questions facing men in ministry and the church is how do we reach them.

This brings me to my third observation. Many churches and men's ministries still operate as if it were still in the mid-20th century. Programs, outreach, ministry and messages tend not to connect the church to the contemporary world. We invite people and expect them to conform to the "way we have always done it." Sometimes, we even give new names to old programs and call them new. New wine in old wine skins? We know how this plays out in scripture.

While these are approaches that can be used, I wonder how they connect with God's words: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." (Isa 43:19)

The observations mentioned above can stimulate positive movement toward change or they can cause paralysis, causing men's ministry to do nothing but maintain.

It has been quoted: "There are two things people hate: 1) the way things are and 2) change." Change and growth are difficult, but necessary for the church if it is to change its sense of mortality and connect to men who seek a relationship with God.

New initiatives

During the last 15 months, I have been working on several initiatives to help UM men and churches become influential presences in their communities while at the same time, helping men develop accountable relationships with other men in their churches and surrounding neighborhoods.

There are courses available for leadership development, evangelism and training in basic men's ministry. Additionally, in some areas of the U.S. men's ministry specialists (MMS) offer churches, districts and annual conferences training and information about men's ministry. The MMS training program is open to all who want to help neighboring churches expand their ministries to and with men.

Of course, I and other staff members are also always available to help by e-mail, phone or in person.

We continue to develop training programs such as "Amending through Faith," an 8-week study for "good men" to reduce domestic violence. Additionally, we work with men's groups to develop accountability groups such as the "Class Meeting."

In outreach, we continue to develop relationships with ministries that enable men's groups to connect to their communities.

Don't confine your ministry to a single meeting

For men and the church to have maximum success, in our goal to help men have an on-growing relationship with Jesus, we need to adopt a "both/and" mentality for ministry.

We cannot offer only one opportunity for men to be involved in men's ministry. This would be like a restaurant only offering one entrée on their menu and expecting everyone to eat only that one thing, while being surprised that they have no customers. We need to offer a variety of opportunities for men to be involved (study, worship, fellowship, food, and service).

I believe God continues to move us ahead in our ministry with the promise of hope and success. God has given, and will continue to give us, all we need to be successful in "Helping men grow in Christ (become disciples), so others may know Christ (make disciples)."

The church is not dying.

Men's ministry is not dying.

They both, however, are changing.

I, and the Office of Men's Ministry, are ready to be a resource for you as you engage in this life-changing ministry.

In Memoriam

Paul K. Cobb

PORTLAND, Maine—

Paul K. Cobb, 51, president of New England Annual Conference UM Men, died Jan. 8, 2018. Elected to the post in 2008, Paul served as conference president until the time of his death from cancer.

A graduate of Andover College, Paul sold Nationwide Insurance for 22 years.

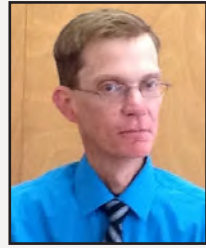
He was an active member of Clark Memorial UMC, where he served as president of UM Men and sang in the choir.

He loved going to a family camp with his dogs, and he had a passion for cooking.

He adored all things gadget or electronic related, discussing politics and working with his elaborate train set.

Paul was predeceased by his father, Arthur W. Cobb Jr.; and his brothers, Sgt. James A. Cobb and David G.

Cobb. He is survived by his mother, Alice W. Cobb; his brothers, John G. Cobb and Peter G. Cobb.



Paul K. Cobb

Seventeen churches test domestic violence curriculum

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

The General Commission is pleased to announce the publication of a new resource to aid in the reduction of domestic violence. *Amending Through Faith* developed in cooperation with “AMEND

Together,” an initiative of the YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, is a primary prevention resource designed to help “good men” understand how to change the culture, in their sphere of influence and to reduce violence against women.



When asked about the development of this curriculum, Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the men's commission, says, "One in four women in the United States will experience domestic violence in her lifetime and more than 15 million children witness that abuse in their households every year. While there are rare cases of violence against men, nearly all these cases involve actions by men, and the macho culture in America creates a climate where women are viewed as objects. Only men can change this environment and only men can end domestic violence. This is a men's issue and we have to stand up and say, "This is not acceptable. This is wrong."

Prior to the release of the training materials, group leaders from 15 congregations from across the connection participated in a Dec. 12-13 two-day webinar where they received details about the curriculum that guides eight 90-minute study sessions.

The results and comments from the participants have been incorporated into the study that will be available for purchase in mid-April.

Prior to webinar, training materials were reviewed by various people throughout the denomination.

"While advocacy is important, what makes this curriculum different than most is that it is a primary prevention tool that helps men address behaviors that objectify

women and create a climate that tolerates violence against women," said the Rev. Rick Vance, director of men's ministry for the General Commission on UM Men.

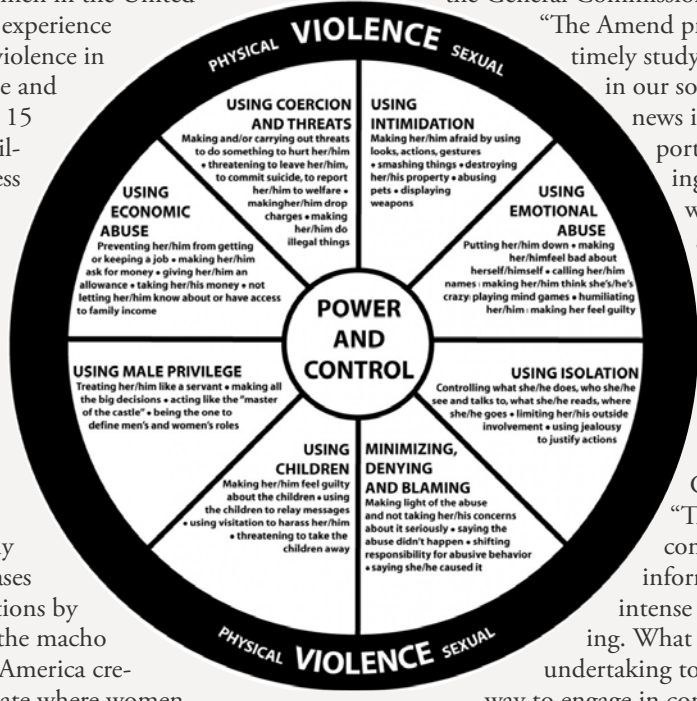
"The Amend project is a timely study for this time in our society where the news is filled with reports of men crossing boundaries with women," said the Rev. Dr. Linda D. Loud-erback, a retired district superintendent of Great Plains Annual Conference. "The content is comprehensive, informational, intense and challenging. What an amazing undertaking to provide a

way to engage in conversations in areas where most feel uncomfortable. The broad range of topics found in this resource covers current issues in our culture that lead to abuse and violence. I can imagine that if men can get involved and engaged in this conversation it could lead to transformation toward respecting all."

Since AMEND Together's work includes engaging young boys, Hanke hopes there will be a scouting tie-in down the road, adding that the program is a natural fit. The commission oversees scouting ministries and civic youth-serving agencies across the denomination.

Additional information about this study facilitator training and training materials may be found at www.gcumm.org/gender-based-violence or by calling the Rev. Dr. Rick Vance at 615-620-7277.

A \$20,000 World Service Fund contingency grant provided funds to prepare the curriculum.



UM Men Awards

David Bean

Trainer certified as men's ministry specialist

CULPEPPER, Va.—

David Bean, former Virginia Conference UM Men vice president for spiritual development and a Wesleyan Building Brothers trainer, received his certification as a men's ministry specialist.

David, the third man in the Virginia Conference to earn the certification, received the certificate only four days after suffering a mild heart attack.



Johnny Draughon (right), the first men's ministry specialist in the Virginia Conference, presents the men's ministry specialist certificate to David Bean. David's wife, Karen, watches the presentation service.

Marcus Gregg

Man of the year

FLORENCE, S.C.—

UM Men of Cumberland UMC named Marcus Gregg as their "Man of the Year."

The trophy recognizes Marcus for his "committed-, thoughtful-, unselfish-, and dedicated-service."



Marcus Gregg holds trophy presented to him by Cumberland UM Men.

Karen Amentler

Church leader receives Susanna Wesley Award

PENSACOLA, Fla.—

UM Men of Cokesbury UMC presented Karen Amentler with the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence for 41 years of service to the church.

Karen has served as coordinator of children's ministries, director of Vacation Bible School, and a teacher assistant at Pre-K class at the Children's Center.

Karen has taught both adult and children classes, and she served as a member of Cokesbury's Administrative Board, the Church Council, UM Women, and the "Singing Samaritans."

A Stephen Minister, Karen developed a "Bread of Life" team that serves Communion to people confined to their homes and hospital rooms.



Mike Moser, president of UM Men of Cokesbury UMC, presents the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence to Karen Amentler. This is the third time the men have presented this award.

Don Bowman

Founder served as first president

FRONT ROYAL, Va.—

UM men of Front Royal UMC honored Don Bowman with their first Life

Membership Award. He founded the local UM Men chapter 21 years ago, served as the first president, and as president of Winchester District UM Men.

He has been a leader of several church committees and now serves as a 3-term president of the Board of Trustees.

Don was a founder of Heart Havens Home for the handicapped in Kernstown, Va., and has been a member of the Salvation Army Board and the treasurer of the Heritage Society for many years. Now retired from a power company, he kept the lights on for the community for 40 years.



Don Bowman (left), founder of the chapter, receives a Life Member Award from UM Men President Bob Cullers.

Dick Steeves, Chuck Arbuckle, Phil Francis **Church presents three Life Membership Awards**

CHAMPAIGN, Ill.—

Mt. Vernon UMC presented Life Membership Awards to a deceased member and two veteran leaders.

The men honored Dick Steeves, a retired Army Major who died May 26, 2017. Dick served as a lay member of annual conference and lay leader of the church. He was also a member of the Board of Trustees and the Parsonage Committee. He served as president of UM Men and helped with pancake suppers, Habitat builds, and farm

sales. He attended Promise Keeper events and participated in the Million Man March on Washington.

The men also presented Life Membership Awards to Chuck Arbuckle and Phil Francis.

Chuck has served on every church committee and enjoyed flipping pancakes for UM Men breakfasts, cooking dinners for UM Women, and barbecuing chicken at church picnics.

Phil served on the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the Board of Trustees, and the Administrative Board. Now in his 90s, Phil finally retired from re-siding the church building, rehabilitating the parsonage, and remodeling the church basement.

Rief Riefkohl **Men honor 'doer'**

BELLVILLE, Texas—

Men of Bellville UMC presented Rief Riefkohl with a Life Membership Award at their annual fajita supper and fundraiser.

“He is a man who goes above and beyond in order for us to find opportunities to share the love of and be the hands and feet of Christ in our area and beyond,” said Jason Samford, president of Bellville UM Men. “Rief truly is a ‘doer of the word’ (James 1:22) and great example for all.”



Rief Riefkohl serves people attending a fajita supper.

The Rev. Amy Haralson
Men give Susanna Wesley Award to pastor

BELLVILLE, Texas—
Men of Bellville UMC presented the Rev. Amy Haralson with the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence.

“Amy has been serving as the associate pastor at the church for nine years and has touched the lives of many in the church and community,” said Jason Samford, president of Bellville UM Men. “She exemplifies a distinctive intellect, a nurturing spirit, an unwavering devotion, and a perseverance in the faith.”



Jason Samford presents a Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence to the Rev. Amy Haralson.

George Frazier
Meet Mr. Cumberland

FLORENCE, S.C.—
UM Men of Cumberland UMC named George Frazier as Mr. Cumberland.



George Frazier (left) receives the Mr. Cumberland award from Cliff Parr, president of Cumberland UM Men, and Lucius Perkins, vice president. Photo by Milton Phillips.

Kenneth Johnson
Money counter visits shut-ins

HERNANDO, Fla.—
Men of Hernando UMC presented Kenneth Johnson with a Life Membership Award for service as money counter, cook, attendance taker, bell ringer, and visitor to shut-ins.

He and wife Maxine delivered food to pantries, gave rides to others, and ran church yard sales. “There has apparently been no church activity that didn’t see the helping hands of Ken and Maxine, including Vacation Bible School,” said John Fischer, president of UM Men.



From left: John Fischer, president of UM Men; Tommy Tinker, vice president of UM Men; Kenneth Johnson; the Rev. Dave Spaulding, pastor of Hernando UMC; and Maxine Johnson.

Sylvia Shores
Rick Vance presents aunt with award

FRUITLAND, Md.—

During the Thanksgiving Sunday service at St. John’s UMC, the Rev. Dr. Rick Vance, director of men’s ministries, presented his aunt, Sylvia Shores, with the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence for mentoring and encouraging him in the faith.

At age 19, Rick’s father died, and Rick



The Rev. Rick Vance joins his aunt, Sylvia Shores, and his uncle, Murray Shores, following Rick’s presentation of a Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence.

left the church. Sylvia and her husband, Murray Shores, stepped in to support him in his journey; that support continued after Rick's mother died four years later.

During the award presentation, Rick noted that it was Aunt Sylvia, who like Susanna Wesley, challenged him to come back to faith. She told Rick, "I am not happy with the way you are turning out, and if you were truthful with me neither are you."

Rick says it was Sylvia's faith and support that led him into the ministry.

Linda Smith

Church honors Scout leader

WATSONTOWN, Pa.—

Watsonstown UMC presented a Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence to Linda Smith for her service as a former Girl Scout leader, a member of the church and bell choirs, and an organizer of the Kids Café, that provides meals and activities to children during the summer.

She also supports the Shepherd's Kitchen, a program that provides meals to low-income families, and Joseph's Closet, a program that provides clothing.



From left: Paul Huffman, Linda Smith, the Rev. Ryan Krauss, and Arion Moser.

Henry A. Santana

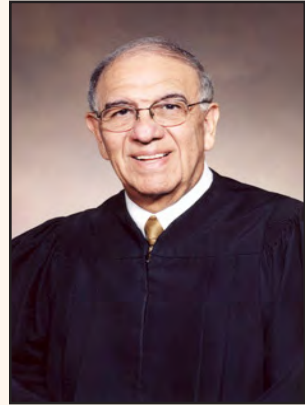
Judge provides turkeys, delivers pizza

CORPUS CHRISTI—

Men of Kelsey Memorial UMC presented a Life Membership Award to Judge Henry Santana for serving as president of UM Men for more than 10 years.

The judge for Nueces County provides turkeys for annual Thanksgiving community meals, and he delivers pizzas to the teachers and staff of a local elementary school.

He led the men's organization to support Vacation Bible School, scholarships for youth camps, toys for children, and a variety of other ministries.



Judge Henry Santana serves as lay leader of Kelsey Memorial UMC and president of UM Men.

Sam Ott

President named 'Man of the Year'

NORMAN, Okla.—

Men of McFarlin Memorial UMC presented Sam Ott with the "UM Man of the Year Award" for his many years of service. He presently serves as president of the Leadership Team.



Vice President of UM Men Glenn Keenon (left) presents Sam Ott with the award.

Pastor leads Girl Scout troop and teaches PRAY classes

BRUNSWICK, Md.—

The Rev. Katie Bishop is the pastor of New Hope UMC, and she serves as a scouting ministry specialist who leads a 32-member Brownie/Junior troop and teaches PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) classes.

“As a scouting ministry specialist, I seek to be an advocate for scouting ministry in our local churches and support local congregations in finding new and different ways to connect and support the young people in our community through Scouts,” says Katie.



The Rev. Kati Bishop leads a friendship circle at the conclusion of a camping trip.

Katie says her passion for scouting ministry began after she was appointed to New Hope UMC in 2010. The church had an active Boy Scout troop and Cub Scout pack and she volunteered to serve as their charter organization representative.

“When I attended the meetings, I heard about what the Scouts were doing and asked how the church could be more involved,” she says. “Scout Sunday was nice, but not enough. We wanted a tangible connection to scouting.”



Kati with daughters Eden (left) and Bethany.

Katie began teaching PRAY classes and when her oldest daughter became interested in Girl Scouts, she agreed to serve as a troop leader while volunteering with her youngest daughter’s Daisy troop. She encourages girls to work for “My Faith” and “My Promise” patches.

A graduate of Marymount University (B.A., religious studies) and Wesley Theological Seminary (M.Div. specializing in youth ministry), Kati served churches in Myersville, Md., and Smithsburg, Md., before being appointed to New Hope.

She is married to a fellow pastor, the Rev. Chris Bishop, pastor of Faithpoint UMC in Urbana, Md. The couple have two daughters, Eden and Bethany, and they are in the process of adopting a Haitian baby.

“As a mom, I have been blessed to see the ways Girl Scouts have helped guide my own children as they learn to lead and serve,” says Katie. “As a community member, I have been touched by the power of Scouts to make a difference in the world. As a pastor, I have been humbled to see how young people have taught us all about duty to God.”

'Yatch' serves as Scout leader in two cities

PEN ARGYL, Pa.—

From 1989 to 2013 Richard “Yatch” Yatchyshyn went from serving as Cub Scout leader at Emilie UMC in Levittown, Pa., to becoming the scoutmaster of Troop 102, and finally the COR (charter organization representative).

While Yatch was scoutmaster, his son, Todd, was the first of 14 boys to attain the rank of Eagle under his guidance. After retiring as scoutmaster, he served as the COR until 2013.

In Levittown, Yatch also served in several district-level positions in the Washington.



Members of Troop and Pack 34 prepare their gear for a trip to see the November Navy football game.

Crossing Council, including district chair, and he ran 10 weekend Klondike Derbies.

Yatch accompanied Todd to the Philmont Scout Ranch in 2000 for a 10-day trek.

In 2013, Yatch and his family moved to Pen Argyl where they joined Grace UMC. Yatch became COR at Grace in 2015. At that time, the church was only sponsoring a Cub pack. In October, Yatch and other Scout leaders talked to the pastor about starting a Boy Scout troop. A year later, after many meetings with council, parents and volunteers, Troop 34 was chartered during an October 2016 service in the sanctuary. Eight boys, their leaders and parents crossed over from the Cub pack to Troop 34. Fourteen boys attended a week of summer camp at Camp Trexler. The troop recently rechartered with 21 boys.

Yatch is the third member of his family to receive the Silver Beaver Award. He followed in the steps of his father and brother. He volunteered to serve in the “Duty to God” Pavilion for UM Men at the 2017 National Jamboree in West Virginia.

Yatch currently enjoys working alongside the pack and the troop in their activities and fundraisers, and he is now in discussions about adding a Venture crew at Grace UMC.



Yatch and boys work on fusing rope in the church kitchen during a weekly troop meeting.

Scouting Awards

Paul Huffman Labor leader honored

MUNCY, Pa.—

The Central Labor Council of the AFL-CIO presented labor leader Larry Huffman with the George Meany Award for his involvement in scouting. He serves as the chief steward of a local unit of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.



Randy Beightol, president of the Northern Tier Central Labor Council, presents the George Meany Award to Paul Huffman.

A scouting ministry specialist and a trustee at Watson town UMC, Paul serves as assistant district commissioner for the Seven Bridges District of the Susquehanna BSA Council.

Kami Keeley Cross & Flame Award presented to Scout leader

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—

The Rev. John Boggs, pastor of University City UMC, presented Kami Keeley with a Cross and Flame Award during BSA Troop 13 winter Court of Honor.

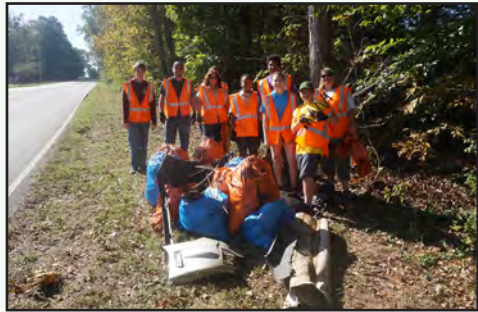


Kami and her Eagle Scout son Matthew manage the kitchen during the 20th annual barbecue for BSA Troop 13.

Kami, her husband, Richard, and her two boys, Nick and Eagle Scout Matthew, have been members of University City UMC for the last 10 years.

Kami taught Sunday school, worked on Wednesday night music programs, and led the stocking stuffers at the Christmas Store.

The Wood Badge-trained leader serves as Troop 13 advancement coordinator, plans Courts of Honor, administers the Scout shop, manages the kitchen for an annual barbecue, leads Scout trips and serves as Eagle Scout project reviewer for the Hornet's Nest District. The district named her 2017 leader of the year.



Kami (right) and members of the Troop 13 family clean up the highway near University City UMC in Charlotte.

Christopher Culp Honor student paints and supplies classroom

TROY, Mich.—

Christopher Culp, an honor student and a soccer player, repainted a classroom for pre-developmental kindergarten children for his Eagle project. He and other members of his troop also repaired a damaged desk, lowered shelving for the children, and organized a toy and supply drive to stock the room.

He also tutors students, coaches a youth soccer team, and supports St. Paul's UMC in Rochester. He will be attending University in the fall to study genetics and microbiology with the hopes of one day working in the field of forensics for a law-enforcement agency.

Bill Bryan and Terri Mincemoyer Two Scout leaders receive Cross and Flame Awards

WATSONTOWN, Pa.—

Watsonstown UMC presented Cross and Flame Awards to Bill Bryan, a Boy Scout leader, and Terri Mincemoyer, a Girl Scout leader.

Both are devoted leaders in the church, community, and scouting organizations.

Lynda Schlegel Culver, a state representative for Northumberland County presented special citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Senator John Gordner presented special citations from the Pennsylvania State Senate to each recipient.



From left: Arion Moser, Terri Mincemoyer, the Rev. Ryan Krauss, Bill Bryan, and Paul Huffman.

Rick Sprague Scoutmaster receives Cross & Flame Award

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.—

Trinity UMC presented a Cross & Flame Award to Scoutmaster Rick Sprague during their Feb. 4 Scout Sunday service.

After serving as a Cub Scout den leader and



Scoutmaster Sprague and Max Goldner help Nick Kuske with his Eagle service project.

assistant scoutmaster of BSA Troop 215, Rick was named scoutmaster three years ago.

“Despite his very busy work and family schedules, he agreed to serve as scoutmaster and has given 110 percent,” said Bonnie Czuhajewski. “His dedication and commitment to the program is evident in his work with the Scouts. His son became an Eagle Scout in 2017.”



Two historical markers at Trinity UMC mark the site of a troop where Roger Chaffee and President Gerald Ford achieved the rank of Eagle. Troop 215 (previously called Troop 15) turned 100 in February. To celebrate its centennial anniversary, the troop will participate in a May 4-6 campout at the city's historic Riverside Park. Scouts will hike three miles on the Gerald Ford Historic Trail, visit the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum and experience the Roger B. Chaffee Planetarium.

Kaleb Arnold, Duncan McLean, Edan McLean and Nicolas Tabor Boy Scouts reduce anxiety after shooting

LAWTON, Okla.—

First UMC presented Good Samaritan Awards to four Boy Scouts who helped calm youngsters after a shooting in the church parking lot.

On Dec. 12, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Cub Scouts were meeting at First UMC when someone shot a pellet gun, striking the head of a grandmother of a Cub Scout.

All children were rushed inside the church and external doors were secured.

That's when Kaleb, Duncan Edan, and Nicolas led the children in singing camp songs. The singing helped reduce the level of

anxiety and the church honored the Scouts with Good Samaritan Awards.

The Rev. Robert Rose, pastor of First UMC, drove adult family members of the injured woman to the hospital; he stayed with them until they were assured she would recover.

Andrew Orr

Birthday gift for others

FLORENCE, S.C.—

Pisgah UMC presented a Good Samaritan Award to Andrew Orr for asking children to bring food items to his 7th birthday party.

His guests responded with 519 food items that were given to “Help for Kids,” an organization that provides brown-bag meals to students in need.



Andrew show some of the food items he received on his 7th birthday.

Musician now serves as Scout leader

NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, S.C.—

Kenneth McIver got involved in scouting at a young age.

While still a Cub Scout, he wanted to hang out with the older boys in an Explorer troop led by his father. Kenneth accompanied his father's troop on hikes, on community service projects, and on annual camping trips on the Appalachian Trail.

While Kenneth had fun with the older boys, by the time he was old enough to become an Explorer Scout, his interest had turned to music and the high school band. That's where his talents soared.

Kenneth was named first chair clarinet for South Carolina All-State Bands and Orchestras each year of his high school career. He was also selected for the McDonald's All American Band and performed at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day and the Rose Bowl parades.

Fast forward a few years—Kenneth is now a college graduate in an established career.

Recalling the days he followed his father's Explorer troop, Kenneth decided to seek the training required to assume a Leadership role in scouting ministry. He received training in First Aid, outdoor skills, and other leader-specific training, including Wood Badge,

the highest training in scouting. He also received bachelor and master degrees from the Boy Scouts College of Commissioner Science.



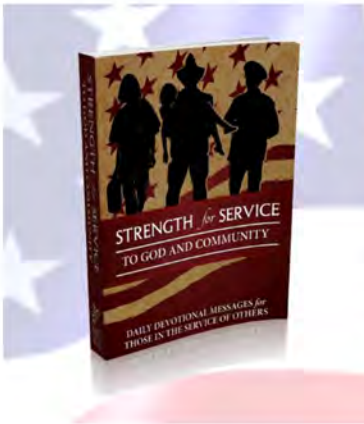
Kenneth McIver

Trinity UMC Men presented Kenneth with a Cross and Flame Award, and the Scouting Ministry Office of the General Commission on UM Men named him a scouting ministry specialist (SMS) to serve churches in the Marion District of South Carolina Annual Conference. Kenneth says he learned about the SMS program at the exhibit tent of the 2017 Boy Scout Jamboree where he took a Venturing Crew to the quadrennial event in West Virginia.

While Kenneth keeps busy as a Scout leader he also serves on the Finance Committee of Trinity UMC, and, of course, he plays the clarinet in church orchestra.



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