

# UMM MEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men



# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

# A letter from the General Secretary

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Once again, I am very pleased with the content of this edition of our magazine.

The theme of many of the articles is restorative justice. For a quick understanding of the difference between restorative and criminal justice, review the sidebar article by Bishop Ken Carder on page 12.

I place great value on that rather troubling part of Matthew 25, you know the “When did we see you...” part that ends with gnashing of teeth.

I don't think Jesus listed those areas of ministry by accident, nor was it a list from which we get to select one item and we are off the hook.

I do believe that he listed the hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison as directions for ongoing ministry.

Many of us would like to address these needs indirectly, from a distance. Some want to find a more academic manner to address these needs.

While I'm sure Jesus encourages us to study justice ministries, I am equally certain that Matthew quoted Jesus accurately as he asked us to actually feed the hungry, give clean water to those who are thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe those who need clothes, take care of the sick, and be in community with those who are incarcerated. All of these should be ongoing ministries of our churches and our families.

Yes, we can pray for them, yes, we can be educated about the root causes of these justice issues, but Jesus wants us to act.

As many of you know I am a lay member of the Texas Annual Conference. In the bounds of our conference, there are as many men, women and youth in prison as there are in worship at United Methodist churches.

I have been in prisons in both Texas and Tennessee on Kairos weekends and helping with DISCIPLE Bible Study classes. Here, as well as in other attempts I have made to serve others, I think I got the greater blessing.

You will learn in this issue about our partnership with DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministry and Amachi, both ministries that address the Matthew text.

United Methodist Men is the only organization in the denomination specifically charged with responsibility to provide resources for men engaged in restorative justice and prison ministries (2008 *Discipline* ¶12303.4h).

Open your heart as you read these articles, and resolve to get involved wherever God leads you. Stay in touch; let me know how I and this great staff can serve you and your local congregation.

Striving to be His servant,

*Gilbert C. Hanke*  
General Secretary  
General Commission on United Methodist Men



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



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Editorial Assistant: Martha Davis  
Nan Self

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Nashville, TN 37203-0006  
(615) 620-7264  
e-mail: [rpeck@gcummm.org](mailto:rpeck@gcummm.org)

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**UM Men**

**Winter 2012**

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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.*



## Nightmare on Home Street

I had a nightmare last night.

I died, and I was taking a final entrance exam with 20 other candidates.

After filling out several questionnaires, Jesus invited me to the front desk.

"I see you fed me through potato drops, gleanings, and contributions to the Society of St. Andrew and Stop Hunger Now," he began. "I will give you full credit."

"Full credit," I was surprised and happy.

"Well, I guess I can give you full credit for providing clothes for me through your church's clothes closet and Salvation Army," Jesus said. "I'm feeling generous today.

"I remember you took me in when you provided a place to sleep at your church's Room at the Inn and you cooked pretty darn good breakfasts," he continued.

I should have felt pretty good, but his responses reminded me of the conclusion of Matthew 25.

I got nervous.

"I was in the River Bend Maximum Prison," Jesus said, in a sad voice. "I don't recall ever seeing you there in spite of several invitations."

I could see him enter a zero at the end of that line.

I woke up before Jesus handed me his final report.

Mark Hicks, director of the DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries, told me that Matthew 25 was not a multiple-choice question. I dismissed the thought prior to the dream.

Now I'm signing up.

Jesus, I'll see you at River Bend.

This is one exam I don't want to fail.

*Rich Peck, editor*

## Letter to the editor

### A joyful clergywoman

I just had a surprise visit to my office at the church from the president of our United Methodist Men. I opened the door and he handed me the Fall 2011 UM MEN magazine, paper-clipped open to the story on page 38, "UM Men support women clergy." He said, "You need to read this."

So, I read the article with joy, and my joy grew as I read. I have joy because of a church that welcomes me into the pulpit every Sunday. I have joy because of men who love and serve the Lord with gladness. I have joy when our men look for ways to live out their faith in our community meeting needs that others may ignore.

I have joy because our men not only include me in their studies and activities (as the article challenges), but expect me to be at their meetings, meals, studies and ministries.

Thank you UM Men for seeking to help the units of the United Methodist Men throughout our connection "discover the joy of having women lead their congregations and participate in their units." You have filled this clergywoman with joy today.

*The Rev. Kathy C. Fitzhugh, pastor  
Welsh Memorial United Methodist Church  
Vinton, La.*

# THE JOURNEY OF A TRIAL LAWYER

by the Rev. Tom Porter

**O**n my first day of practice as a trial lawyer the partner for whom I was working had just started a long trial.

He left me a tape describing the work that he wanted me to do. He also took the time to give me advice about trying cases. He concluded by giving me descriptions of the other partners in the firm.

The first partner was a deeply religious Roman Catholic who attended mass every morning. When cross-examining adverse witnesses, he was described as a pugilist who would come out swinging. The witnesses would see the figurative blows coming, but there was nothing they could do about it. He left them a bloody pulp.

The second was a soft-spoken Quaker. In cross-examining opposing witnesses, this gentle man used a different approach. He used a figurative stiletto. The witnesses would generally never see it coming. Sometimes they would not feel it going between the ribs, but the result was the same, a pool of blood under the witness chair.

As a minister/lawyer I wanted to be like Atticus Finch, the gentleman lawyer in *To Kill a Mockingbird*<sup>1</sup>. But, as I began to try cases, I found that I became skilled with a stiletto.

As I continued to try cases over the course of 25 years, I became increasingly troubled by the adversarial-retributive system of justice.

Everyone is familiar with the adversarial approach to justice. We see it in television dramas and movies that depict lawyers as combatants fighting it out in the courtroom. Retributive justice is the justice that asks two questions:

“Did you do it?” and, if so, “How should you be punished?” This is eye-for-eye justice.

This system of court-room justice influences the way we deal with conflict and harm in other arenas.

As the lawyer for the United Methodist churches in New England for 23 years, I saw it in the way we dealt with grievances against ministers in our church trials.

As a mediator working for the JustPeace Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation in the United Methodist Church, I saw it in church disputes, which are often adversarial and retributive.

As a citizen and teacher of conflict transformation and peace building, I saw it in the way groups of people dealt with each other, for example, the Israelis and Palestinians.

As a theologian I saw it even in one’s understanding of the atonement.

## Problems with the Adversarial-Retributive System

**1) *An increase in animosity and estrangement:*** Having tried many cases over 25 years, I do not remember a case where the parties left the courtroom feeling closer to each other. I believe that relational healing in this world is what ideally God wants and what we need. Such relational healing involves a journey of apology/making things right for offenders and forgiveness for victims and reconciliation for both in the creation of a new relation. The adversarial-retributive system does not open space for such a journey.

2) **Lack of care for victims:** The criminal justice system in the United States is offender focused. The question is whether the defendant broke the law, and, if so, what the punishment should be. The victim is often victimized twice, once by the crime and then by the process, including cross-examination. The state is seen in this system as the party who has been harmed, but the state is not the primary victim. The harm inflicted on the primary victim should be personally addressed, as well as the harm to society as a whole.

3) **Lack of real accountability for offenders:** Conrad Brunk, a philosopher of law, says, "But retributive theory has never been able to give a plausible account of how the infliction of harm or deprivation of liberty amounts to taking responsibility. Even less has it been able to explain how it rights the wrong or restores justice, which it claims to do."<sup>2</sup> Coerced accountability is not real accountability. Real accountability is where the offender personally takes responsibility for the harm and does something to make things right. This is the accountability that can make a difference to the victim and to the offender, as well as to society as a whole.

4) **Failure to see the individual in context:** The adversarial-retributive system in general sees the alleged offender as an isolated unit in society and solely in terms of personal free will. Life is more complex and relational. Life is interconnected and interdependent. Most offenders have been victims in one way or another. For the offender's sake and possible

transformation into a good citizen, and for our sake in trying to create a safer, less harmful community, we need to provide a space and a system where we can more fully understand the context of the offender.

5) **Barriers to truth-telling:** Truth often loses in this system. The emphasis on winning, with painful consequences for losing, creates an atmosphere for lying, denial and self-justification.

6) **No real engagement of the parties:** The adversarial-retributive system does not allow the parties to talk with each other. Christopher Marshall articulates well the need for engagement of the parties: "Because they are bound together to the event, both victim and offender need each other to experience the liberation and healing from the continuing thrall of the offense. The offender needs the victim to trigger or sharpen his contrition, to hear his confession, remit his guilt, and to affirm his ability to start fresh. The victim needs the offender to hear her pain, answer her questions, absorb her resentment, and affirm her dignity. Each holds the key to the other's liberation."<sup>3</sup> The system, as we know it, does not create space and a forum for such engagement.

### **A search for an alternative**

My quarrel with the adversarial-retributive system led me to search for a better way. This journey first led me from the courtroom to tables of conversation, dialogue, and mediation. As a mediator, I learned to engage conflict and address harm by working toward restructuring relationships, and empowering participants to solve their own problems and transform their conflicts.

In mediation I found an alternative to the adversarial nature of the system, but I was still searching for an alternative to retributive justice.

My search took me to South Africa, where I studied the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In South Africa, I felt as if I had “come home.” Here an understanding of the relational nature of life came alive through the African concept of ubuntu: “We are who we are because of our relationships. When I dehumanize you, I dehumanize myself.”

We are interconnected and interdependent with one another and with the whole web of life. Life is about relationships! I saw the power in telling and hearing each other’s stories. I witnessed the essential practice of forgiveness. I also discovered a new understanding of justice, restorative justice.

Upon my return from South Africa, I studied with Howard Zehr at Eastern Mennonite University. He taught me that this justice moves us from a narrow focus on punishing offenders to “a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible.”<sup>4</sup> Since the late 1990s I have been trying to practice restorative justice, primarily in grievance procedures in the United Methodist Church, dealing with cases such as embezzlement and sexual abuse.

### **The principles of restorative justice**

#### 1. *Crime is a violation of people and interpersonal relations*

Restorative justice is an attempt to ground justice in the reality described by ubuntu. We are

interconnected and interdependent. As modern science, especially the field of neuroscience, is discovering, we are “hardwired” for relationship. As human beings, we do want to be connected in a good way. Crime is seen “as a wound in the community, a tear in the web of relationships.”<sup>5</sup> Restorative justice calls us to focus on the relationships between victims, offenders and the community.

2. *Focus on the victims:* If crime is a violation of people, not just the state, then we must look at who has been harmed and how they have been harmed. For restorative justice, we must start with the direct victims of the wrongful act. This means hearing from the victims how they have been harmed and what they feel needs to be done to redress the harm. These needs are those expressed by the victims, not some script for victims. Restorative justice is victim oriented, but not victim controlled as the redress is determined through a process of dialogue with the offender and other important stakeholders.
3. *Real accountability:* Restorative justice agrees with the moral principle behind retributive justice. Offenders need to be treated as morally responsible citizens and be held accountable for their wrongdoing. For restorative justice, this means that the offender must address the needs of the person who was harmed. Offenders must attempt to make things right, to repair the harm. This includes restitution, but also other actions of taking responsibility such as remorse and apology. Real


accountability addresses the harm done to the community as well. Taking accountability for one's actions is an important step in being reintegrated into the community. Addressing the needs of the victim by taking responsibility for one's actions can be a much harder journey than receiving the punishment of the state. It can involve pain and suffering, but it is pain that can transform a person. A restorative justice process can also, at the same time, understand and address the fuller context of the offender, including unresolved trauma, shame or harm, and the offender's need to be reintegrated into the life of the community. This journey will often involve treatment, and sometimes restraint.

4. *Engagement*: Restorative justice attempts to engage all the parties in the process. This is a collaborative engagement. This is where the principles of the mediation movement come together with the principles of restorative justice. Here all the parties share their stories, listen to each other, seek to understand each other and work to come to consensus on what should be done. My experience in such engagements is that there is much more truth telling, as the parties speak directly to each other as well as to others from their families and communities who are significant to

them.

5. *The Community is Involved*: People from the community are often involved to help provide a space safe enough where victims and offenders can come together and tell their stories. They can help victims to express their needs and offenders to meet their obligations, as well as work toward the healing and reintegration of both. They can also, unlike a jury, work to discern the root causes of the wrongdoing and express ideas on how the community might respond. Victims find it helpful, in my experience, to hear that something is being done to make it less likely that anyone else will be injured as they were.

## Conclusion

In *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, we read that "United Methodist Men...shall be a resource for men engaged in restorative justice and prison ministries." I commend you for your commitment and rejoice in having you as a companion on this journey to restorative justice. 



*The Rev. Tom Porter is co-executive director of JustPeace Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation.*

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<sup>1</sup> This is a book by Harper Lee about Atticus Finch defending an African American unjustly accused of a murder. Atticus Finch has been the subject of books written about the gentleman lawyer.

<sup>2</sup> Conrad Brunk, "Restorative Justice and the Philosophical Theories of Criminal Punishment," in *The Spiritual Roots of Restorative Justice*, edited by Michael L. Hadley (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2001) 48.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime and Punishment* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001) 277

<sup>4</sup> Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (Intercourse, Pa: Good Books, 2002) 37. Ibid. 20

<sup>5</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 2302. 4h.



# Recovering our Methodist heritage in prisons

*By Bishop Kenneth L. Carder*

**M**ethodists point to Aldersgate Street as the location of the igniting spark of the Wesleyan revival in eighteenth century England. There John Wesley felt his “heart strangely warmed” with an assurance of his own salvation and a renewed awareness of grace as the presence and power of God to forgive, reconcile, and transform human hearts. Indeed, that experience on May 24, 1738, marked a pivotal turning point in Wesley’s spiritual journey.

Less familiar to Methodists is the role that English prisons played in John’s and Charles’ faith formation and the shaping of the Methodist movement. Visiting the imprisoned was an integral and indispensable practice of “the people called Methodists” in the eighteenth century; and recovery of that part of our heritage is essential if we are to live the United Methodist way in the twenty-first century.

## Prison visitation

It was as Oxford students that Charles and John Wesley made their first visit in prison. They, along with a few other students, committed to live more holy lives by engaging in disciplined acts of piety and mercy. In the summer of 1730, one of the students, William Morgan, stopped by the Castle Prison at

Oxford to visit a prisoner who had been convicted of killing his wife. He struck up a conversation with another prisoner who was incarcerated for debts. He convinced Morgan that the prisoners needed regular visits.<sup>i</sup> Morgan then persuaded John and Charles Wesley

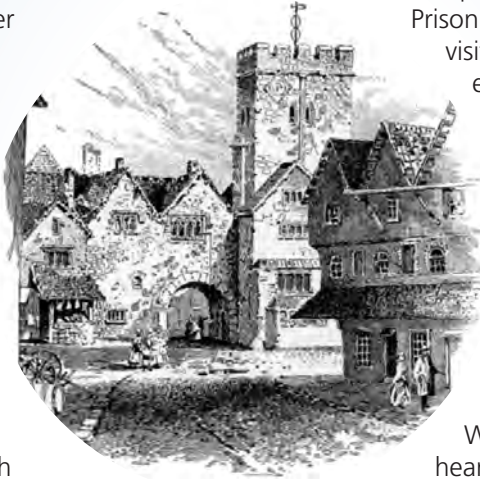
to accompany him to the Castle Prison. Soon, they began

visiting once or twice each week. Before the year was out, they added the city prison, Bocardo, on their itinerary. Thereby, the seeds for acts of mercy as indispensable means of grace were sown!

When Samuel Wesley, John’s father, heard about his sons’ visits at the Castle Prison, he wrote words of

encouragement. He indicated that he visited the same prison when he was an Oxford student. He added, “. . . and [I] reflect on it with great satisfaction to this day.”<sup>ii</sup> It is well to remember that Samuel had personal experience as a prisoner, having served three or four months in Lincoln Castle Prison in 1705 for unpaid debts.

Soon someone from the group was visiting Castle and Bocardo prisons every day. Their ministry included conversation, reading to the prisoners, praying with them, instructing them in Christian practices, conducting prayer services, and presiding over the Eucharist every Sunday. The work in the prisons grew and continued during the Wesley



*Castle Prison*

brothers' tenure in Georgia.

When Charles returned from Georgia, he added Newgate and Marshalsea prisons in London, Newgate in Bristol, and Cardiff prison in Wales.<sup>iv</sup> Eventually, John and Charles recruited several friends and followers for prison ministry. Most notable were Sarah Peters and Silas Told.

Wesley became a friend of John Howard, one of the outspoken reformers of the prison system in England and Wesley openly challenged the inhumane conditions in many of the prisons.<sup>v</sup>

February through May, 1738, was a critical period in the Methodist movement. John Wesley returned from Georgia in late January, 1738, dispirited, discouraged, and confronting a spiritual and vocational crisis. He lacked the assurance of his own salvation, and his confidence in the power of the gospel to transform lives was diminished by the absence of results in Georgia. He returned to Oxford and there follows in early March the pivotal encounter with Peter Böhler. His Journal entry for Saturday, March 4, reads:

Immediately it stuck in my mind, 'Leave off preaching. How can you preach to others, who have not faith yourself?' I asked Böhler whether he thought I should leave it off or not. He answered, 'By no means.' I asked, 'But what can I preach?' He said, 'Preach faith till you have it, and then, because you have it, you will preach faith.'<sup>vi</sup>

The entry for March 6, 1738, is equally crucial, although largely ignored by interpreters of Wesley:

"Accordingly, Monday 6, I began preaching this new doctrine, though my soul started back from the work. The first person to whom I offered salvation

by faith alone was a prisoner under the sentence of death. His name was [William] Clifford. Peter Böhler had many times desired me to speak to him before. But I could not prevail on myself so to do, being still (as I had been for years) a zealous asserter of the impossibility of a death-bed repentance.<sup>vii</sup>

It was the witness of the power of God to transform William Clifford, a death row inmate convicted of assault, burglary, and desertion that confirmed the validity of Böhler's advice and offered promise to the restless Wesley that he might know this inner assurance of salvation, to which he gave personal witness, May 24, 1738.

Charles Wesley's Journal for July, 1738, documents his ministry in Bristol. On the night before the execution of nine prisoners, he writes, "We wrestled in mighty prayer . . . Joy was visible in all their faces. We sang 'Behold the Savior of Mankind: Nailed to the shameful tree. How vast the love that him inclined, To bleed and die for thee.' It was one of the most triumphant hours I have known." The next morning Charles accompanied them to the gallows: "They were all cheerful, full of comfort, peace and triumph, assuredly persuaded that Christ had died for them and waited to receive them into paradise . . . I never saw such calm triumph, such incredible indifference to dying."<sup>viii</sup>

The Wesleys were convinced that faithful Christian discipleship required regularly visiting those in the prisons as an expression of love for God and love for neighbor. Christ's admonition to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison was not a list of optional multiple choices. The Methodists were to visit the imprisoned

because Jesus said to visit them, and Jesus promised to meet us in the prison! In other words, the Wesleyan way of Christian discipleship includes a pathway to the prisons where God's grace meets both the inmate and the visitor.

The visits in the prisons permeated everything the Wesleys did. In the prisons they experienced their own salvation and the salvation of the most marginalized in England. In the prisons they had confirmed that God's grace can transform persons. In the prisons they forged an understanding of the *imago Dei* which God's prevenient grace preserved even in the most wretched of persons. In the prisons, acts of piety and acts of mercy converged as means of grace. In the prisons, the Methodist revival was birthed! This is our heritage! This is the Wesleyan model of discipleship!

### **Recovering a heritage**

American prisons and jails represent a promising pathway to recovery of the evangelical zeal and missional engagement that characterized the Methodist revival of the eighteenth century England. The prisons and jails also represent the most dramatic test of our commitment to the gospel and the mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world. No other population challenges our claim that The United Methodist Church is a people of "Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors."

Each year approximately ten million people go through the doors of our jails and prisons. Today 2.3 million people are incarcerated in this country, one in every one hundred adults. We have the highest rate of incarceration of any nation in the world, 751 per 100,000 population, compared with Russia's 627, South Africa at 344, China at 118, and India at 31. China, with a population four times that of the U.S., has 1.5 million

in prisons, or 800,000 fewer inmates!<sup>ix</sup> Approximately eight million people are under supervision of the criminal justice system. Add to the number of those who are incarcerated their families and we have as many as a third to forty percent of our population directly impacted by incarceration.


Prisons are costly in dollars, human relationships, and societal health. The financial cost is estimated at sixty billion dollars each year. The toll taken on victims, perpetrators, families, and friends is immeasurable. The great tragedy is that prisons simply do not work to reduce crime or restore persons and relationships. Approximately sixty percent of those who are released from prison will return within five years. We need alternatives!

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we offer an alternative vision to the retribution, vengeance, and isolation which the jails and prisons represent. We live toward a vision of a New Creation brought near in Jesus Christ who has broken down the dividing walls of hostility and reconciled all things in heaven and on earth. Our congregations are called to be signs, foretastes, and instruments of that New Creation. The prisons and jails represent a test of our commitment to the New Creation and the power of the gospel to transform the world.

The United Methodist Church is uniquely situated to meet the test! We have an historical model, the theological framework, evangelical motivation, and holistic mission for the transformation of the prison-industrial complex and the persons affected by it; and we have congregations located near almost every jail and prison within the U.S.

### **Conclusion**

There are many signs of hope that "the people called Methodists" will meet the test! A growing number

of United Methodists are involved in such ministries as Kairos, Prison Fellowship, and Yokefellow. Several seminaries now offer courses in prison ministry and restorative justice, and many congregations see the local jails and prisons as part of their parish. One of the most promising developments is the newly formed partnership between Disciple Bible Outreach and the General Commission on United Methodist Men. Building upon the experience of Disciple Bible Outreach of North Carolina which has initiated Disciple Bible study in 72 prisons within that state, United Methodist Men and DBOM are joining forces to recover our Methodist heritage making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by visiting those who are in prison. 



*Bishop Kenneth L. Carder is the Williams Professor Emeritus at Duke Divinity School*

<sup>1</sup> Richard P. Heitzenrater, "Prison Ministry in the Wesleyan Tradition," in James M. Shopshire, Mark C. Hicks, and Richmond Stogin (editors), *I Was in Prison: United Methodist Perspectives on Prison Ministry* (Nashville: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, 2008), p. 67f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> Journal, Works, V. I, page 228.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 228.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Journal of Charles Wesley and P. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1991), pp. 214-215.

<sup>9</sup> Helpful statistical information is available from the U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics and The Sentencing Project, 514 Tenth Street, N. W., Suite 1000, Washington, D. C. 2004. See, Bureau of Prison Statistics

# Restorative Justice

Kenneth L. Carder

**A** holistic approach to prison ministry involves more than concern for incarcerated persons and their families. It requires an alternative to the prevailing underlying philosophy and practices of the current criminal justice system. The church, with its message of reconciliation and transformation through the grace of God in Jesus Christ, offers an alternative vision to the over reliance on incarceration, retribution, and "tough on crime" notions that characterize our society.


The restorative justice movement is an organized effort to develop and implement an approach to crime which incorporates core values of people of faith. The focus shifts from merely punishing the offender to restoring victims, reconciling victims and offenders, and healing the community. The following contrasts the two approaches:<sup>1</sup>

## Criminal Justice

- Crime is a violation of the law and the state.
- Violations create guilt.
- Justice requires the state to determine blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment).
- Central focus: offenders getting what they deserve.

## Restorative Justice

- Crime is a violation of people and relationships.
- Violations create obligations.
- Justice involves victims, offenders, and community members in an effort to put things right.
- Central focus: victims' needs and offenders' responsibility for repairing harm.

The primary questions asked by the criminal justice system are these: What laws have been broken? Who did it? What do they deserve? The three basic questions restorative justice asks are: Who has been injured? What are their needs? Whose obligations are these? In the criminal justice system, the crime is against the state and the state becomes responsible for determining guilt and assessing penalty. In restorative justice, the crime is a violation of persons and relationships and the offender is obligated to repair the damage and the community seeks to restore both victim and offender. 

<sup>[1]</sup> See Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice: Interchange*, PA: Good Books, 2002, p. 21.

# Living restorative justice

*By the Rev. Stan Basler*

**Restorative justice is more than a theory in Oklahoma. The director of the Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries of the Oklahoma Annual Conference leads three congregations and Exodus Houses that practice restorative justice.**

Oklahoma has a number of community correction centers, work centers and halfway houses. Residents are permitted to leave these centers to attend church.

We recognized the reality of genuine faith born or nurtured in a penal setting, but also observed that few of those people integrated into a local church upon their release.

With guidance from the Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries, three declining congregations in Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawson decided to become Redemption Churches. In obedience to the gospel, they opened their churches to prisoners, their families, formerly incarcerated and never incarcerated.

The decision regenerated their churches.

## **Invitation to all**

Redemption churches issue an invitation: "Your experiences are common here. Let's understand the Bible and the faith in light of where your life has gone. We are indebted to 12-step theory in that we believe people who have traveled a difficult journey together, who are sick and tired of being sick and tired, can support and help one another in transcending the past. Theologically, the model is I Corinthians 12, the body of Christ. We preach and teach that everyone belongs, everyone has a purpose, we all hurt together and sometimes the less honorable are the more honorable."

Redemption Churches provide a combination of support and accountability in accordance with traditional Wesleyan thinking. We welcome everyone and invite them to make this their faith

family; nevertheless, we announce that every family has expectations and so does the church. When prisoners engage in unacceptable behavior, we confront it, lovingly. We learned that agape love includes accountability, a belief that people are capable of self-improvement and movement away from destructive behaviors.

One of the exceptional ministries of the Oklahoma City congregation is the United Methodist Men's group. We have also started a similar ministry with men in Lawton.

Incarcerated males, formerly incarcerated males and never incarcerated males not only eat and pray together, but they also work together on various projects for the church and also for needy in the community. There is also a United Methodist Women's group in the Oklahoma City church.

Members of Redemption Churches worship twice weekly, Thursday evening and Sunday. There are also Thursday evening classes including confirmation, faith-based 12-step groups, relapse prevention classes, anger management and various Bible studies. Completion of a confirmation class is a prerequisite for church membership. We believe that faith disciplines provide a skeleton upon which people can build other life disciplines.

Self discipline is frequently a shortcoming with our people.

## **Exodus Houses**

In Tulsa and Oklahoma City, we have Exodus Houses. These are programmed residential reentry ministries. A released prisoner is given a furnished apartment

rent-free, typically for six months. There are two full-time staff who live at the center; one is a case manager and the other is a facility manager and donation person.

People must fill out an extensive application for Exodus House while still in prison. There is a personal interview. A drug/alcohol assessment is also done, and, if need be, a treatment program becomes part of the case plan.

Exodus Houses are supportive and accountable communities. Architecturally, they are U-shaped buildings with each apartment opening on a common courtyard. There are weekly community meetings, meals and Bible studies. Every resident is required to attend Redemption Church twice weekly. Residents never pay rent. After they gain employment, they are required to save a certain amount of their income. At that point, they also pay utilities. The apartment furnishings include towels, wall hangings and table settings, virtually everything a person needs in a home.

The case manager works with each resident to develop a case plan. She meets weekly with each resident and monitors the progress on the plan. The plan may include strategies for finding future housing, employment, transportation, needs of children, child support/visitation, arranging payment plans on court costs and fines, efforts to regain driver's licenses, recovery services, medical and psychiatric treatment.

The usual graduation time is six months. This can be extended upon request. Requests usually involve mothers with young children. Upon graduation the residents may take with them the entire contents of the apartment, their savings and they have a church home if they desire that.

Priority for Exodus House acceptance is granted to those offenders who have a relationship with minor children, visitation or custodial. If there are vacancies beyond

those persons, two single persons share an apartment. Because of the presence of children on the premises, sex offenders are not accepted.

For many people the transition from even low security to complete freedom is overwhelming. Therefore, Exodus House residency begins with curfews and a need to apply for weekend passes. These procedures are gradually relaxed as people adjust to freedom.

Sunday school classes and local churches have adopted all of the Tulsa apartments and most of the Oklahoma City apartments. When a resident leaves, the sponsoring group returns and cleans, paints, furnishes in anticipation of the new resident. Many individuals and groups also donate furniture as well as money.

### **Children – the forgotten victims**

Children of incarcerated parents are the forgotten victims. Their stories seldom appear on the front pages of newspapers; yet they are afflicted with many problems.

Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries has been conducting annual New Day Camps for these youngsters since 1995. One camp is for children ages 8-11 and another is for youth ages 12-14.

Most of the children live in economic poverty. They move often. They change schools often. The older children are sometimes responsible for the maintenance of the home and care of younger children. There are often addiction issues in their homes.

The children are typically behind in socialization and the older ones may already be somewhat anti-social. Sometimes they are angry with the incarcerated parent and feel abandoned. Sometimes they blame society for their situation.

If they visit the incarcerated parent they are treated with suspicion since contraband is often planted by adults on the children. They are about six times more likely to go to prison as adults than other children.

Sometimes they are their parent's victim. Sometimes the arrest of the parent occurs at home in front of them and accomplished in a very adversarial manner.


Many times these families fly under the radar. The children don't get all the government benefits to which they are entitled. The caregivers have not had good experiences with government and try to avoid contact with the authorities.

We recruit the children primarily from the database of Project Angel Tree of Prison Fellowship. Some of the children come all six years they are eligible. For many it is meaningful awakening to know that there are other children in the same life situation. For those who are the primary caregiver, camp is a week of childhood.

Some campers want to be a part of the camp after they are too old. We utilize them as part of the staff. This becomes a secondary restorative appendage to the ministry.

The children have elevated needs for attention. For that reason we attempt to have one volunteer for every two children in a small group plus support staff as nurses, deans, group counselors, recreation leaders, a chaplain, worship leaders and craft leaders.

The children are transported to camp by local church volunteers in church vehicles. All toiletry and hygiene items are furnished, mostly by UM Women groups. A university professor and students provide team-building games for the children's camp. The youth utilize a ropes challenge course which helps them learn to work together and trust each other.

New Day Camps are an especially important forum for men to be in ministry. Our children have had little or no positive interaction with men. Both girls and boys benefit from the presence of adult male role models. 

*The Rev. Stan Basler, director of Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministries in the*



*Oklahoma Annual Conference, teaches "American Criminal Law and Restorative Justice" at the Oklahoma City School of Law and three*

*courses leading to a Master of Divinity degree specialization in prison ministry and restorative justice at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City.*

## **Dr. Stan Basler received the 2011 Distinguished Graduate Award from Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Mo.**

**H**e earned his doctorate at the UM seminary in 2000.

"Stan Basler is a constant reminder of the difference between retributive justice and restorative justice," said Susan Southall, associate pastor of Enid-First and president of the seminary's Graduate Association. "He merges his background in the legal profession with his Christian faith and seminary education. He also was recognized for teaching classes at Saint Paul.



*From left, Stan Basler receives congratulations from Susan Southall of Enid and Dean Elaine Robinson of Saint Paul at OCU.*

# How I learned about restorative justice

*By the Rev. Walter Everett*

**V**ery early in my ministry, the choir at the church I served was ready for practice one Thursday evening, but when the organist turned on the organ and pressed the keys, there was absolute silence. Upon investigation, he discovered that the amplifier was missing.

We reported the theft to the police, and then called our insurance company; they told us the amplifier was not covered. We bit the bullet and paid for an expensive new amplifier, a financial hardship for a small semi-rural church.

We thought that was the end of it.

Six months later, however, a student from our church overheard a conversation in the school cafeteria, and later told his father, "I think I know who took the amplifier."

I confronted the alleged offender, and we finally worked out an 18-month plan whereby he would reimburse us for the cost of the amplifier out of his salary from a part-time job.

The only ones in the church who knew the identity of the offender were the "eavesdropper," his father, and me. Others in the church pressed us to take the offender to court. "What would be gained?" I asked. "If he were to be convicted, he would have a record, and we would very likely never get our money back." As it was, it was a win-win situation.

This occurred many years before I had heard about "restorative justice." It just made a lot of sense.

## **Death of Scott**

However, what if the offense is not a property crime? What if it is a violent crime that results in a death or a permanent injury, either physical or emotional? How can we get a win-win situation when a life is taken and can never be replaced?

In 1987, my son, Scott, was shot and killed in his apartment building in Bridgeport, Conn. The offender was high on cocaine and alcohol at the time.

As any father, I was enraged and wanted vengeance. My rage intensified when the prosecutor told me that, due to a shoddy investigation by the police, the evidence was poor, and so the state had agreed to a plea bargain.

I sank into a depression that was intensified by the prosecutor's statement, "You don't have any say in the matter; the state is the injured party, and the state prosecutes. *You are just a bystander.*"

That was my introduction to the concept of retributive justice. I still did not know the term: "restorative justice."

Upon encountering other family members of homicide victims, I began to discover the toll taken on their lives. Decades after the death of a loved one, they were still being ravaged by the "cancer" of anger. It was then that I decided that there had to be a better way.

## **In danger of losing my own life**

Clearly Scott's life could not be restored, but as long as I sought retribution, I was in danger of losing my own life emotionally and spiritually, and, perhaps, even physically.



I asked God for a way out of my anger, but I couldn't imagine what God's answer would be.

I attended the sentencing of Mike and heard him say, "I'm sorry I killed Scott Everett."

God prodded me to write Mike, and that began a series of letters and, in time, visits which changed my life—as well as Mike's.

Scott's life could not be restored, but I found that my life could be restored.

The purpose of restorative justice is to restore wholeness as much as possible, not only for the victim but also for the offender, as well as the wider circle of family and community.

### Restored lives

When someone takes the life of an individual, that person hurts not only the victim, but also a host of "secondary" victims—family, friends, associates, and even the offender's family. Restorative justice allows those secondary victims to regain a sense of normality. Of course, life will never again be the same, but the continuing anger and desire for vengeance tend to progressively destroy the lives of the secondary victims.

A restorative justice approach provides an opportunity to live again.

God does not want our lives destroyed. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have abundantly" (John 10:10).

Not everyone will respond to an act of violence in the same way, but for me, healing began when I was enabled by God to forgive Mike. God worked

through that act to give new life to both Mike and me.

Often I have been asked, "How do you think Scott would feel about your forgiveness of Mike?"

Each time I respond that I believe Scott does not want me to live in perpetual pain.

### A dream

Confirmation of that came in a dream I had near Easter almost two years after Scott's death (I believe God often speaks to us through dreams). Scott drove into my yard, and as he got out of the car, I ran to him and said, "This can't be happening."


"Why not?" Scott asked.

I responded, "Because you died."

"I'm not dead," said Scott, "I just don't work here any more."

It's the only dream in which I remember saying, "I must be dreaming."

To which Scott replied, "You're not dreaming; this is real."

I knew at that moment that Scott was OK, and that he was in the care of a loving God who, indeed, has given him meaningful work to do, and that a major piece of that work was to assure me that he is in God's care eternally. 



*The Rev. Walter Everett is a retired clergy member of the New York Annual Conference now living in Lewisburg, Pa.*

# Transformative Justice: Choosing life, practicing resurrection

*By the Rev. Janet Wolf*

*"In the presence of the Risen Christ, we understand that there is no wreckage so total that God cannot redeem it, there is no cause so lost that God cannot breathe new life into it."*

— Barbara Brown Taylor

*"The Church is transformed when it responds to the claims of discipleship by becoming an agent of healing and systemic change."*

*Book of Discipline, ¶1164(f)*

**M**y youngest brother is 53 years old and we just celebrated his 28th birthday. For 28 years he has been in recovery from addiction to alcohol and heroin. After 3 months of residential substance abuse treatment, he continued in recovery through the 12 step program, later working with young adults to accompany them from addiction into recovery. Had he been convicted under the current drug laws, however, he would still be in prison, most probably without access to treatment services. This is the difference between retributive justice (who broke what law and how do we punish them?) and transformative justice (what harm was done and how might it be repaired?).

The World Council of Churches uses the term "transformative justice" instead of "restorative justice," noting that some things cannot be restored and other things should not be restored – should not be put back to the way they were, but transformed.

Rooted in the communal justice processes of indigenous peoples in Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Guatemala and many other countries around the world, transformative justice invites us to reckon with the totality of harm experienced and find new paths for healing and wholeness.

**Transformative justice** argues that all human beings matter and seeks to build beloved community, enlarging the circle of love and life. It is central to our faith, clearly visible in the biblical traditions of Jubilee, in the life and ministry of Jesus, (especially in the healing stories) and in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the life of the early church.

Walter Wink and Ched Meyers argue that healings in the gospel are not only individual healings but public confrontations with systems, structures and theologies that diminish life. In the healing stories, the systems, structures and theologies that mark people and communities as unclean, that consign people to the margins, that identify

people as disposable, expendable and unworthy, are exposed and named, engaged and transformed. Through the healings, Jesus publicly challenges death-dealing theologies, systems and structures, restoring people to community and wholeness, to abundant life and “somebodiness,” in defiance of the powers and principalities at work. This is transformative justice.

Jesus was a prisoner, someone who was taken from his community to be incarcerated, battered, tortured and executed as a victim of state sanctioned murder. Jesus is clear in Matthew 25 that our presence in prison is not simply a charge to the outreach committee but a central requirement for all disciples. John Wesley agreed, arguing that partnership with those who are impoverished and imprisoned is more important for the salvation of our souls than showing up for communion on a Sunday morning. Wesley articulated clear guidelines for Methodists: “First... do no harm... Second... do good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all....” From our beginnings as Methodists, we have challenged retributive justice and moved toward transformative justice, refusing to cooperate with the way things are, for the sake of what God is already bringing about. Shalom, God’s deep and abiding peace, is the healing of shattered pieces and deep wounds, the movement toward righteousness and communal well being.

SALT, Schools for Alternative Learning and Transformation, is a think tank inside a maximum security prison with primary leadership given by people who are incarcerated. SALT focuses on transformative justice and has initiated most of the undergraduate and graduate classes offered inside prisons in Nashville, with half the students coming from colleges and the community and half

from inside the prison. The classes create astonishing learning communities through which transformation takes place for everyone involved.

SALT has also worked to redefine theological education from the inside out, partnering with people at Vanderbilt Divinity School as well as Drew, Union and New Brunswick Schools of Theology and other think tanks inside prisons. Some of the most powerful theology happening takes place behind prison walls. Topics that may seem abstract and optional to outsiders, are most often urgent and quite concrete inside the prison: sin, salvation, liberation, reconciliation, freedom, forgiveness and justice. Think tank members have trained seminary professors to not only bring their students into prisons to learn in partnership with and alongside those who are caged, but also to rethink what and how they are teaching in on campus classes.

### **Victim offender reconciliation**

Designed to mediate conflict between victims and offenders, to identify what might be done to repair harm, make amends and open the door for reconciliation, victim offender reconciliation (VOR) is one path toward transformative justice.

As someone who was incarcerated for more than 20 years remarked, “I didn’t know if it was possible, that restorative justice stuff we talked about in class. But I just kept trying – trying to make amends, trying to find a way to set right some of the stuff I did. And the day I received a letter saying the family I harmed was willing to come and sit with me, I stood tall. They came, you know. Came and listened and talked. We cried and we shared and it was something. Yeah, I stood tall that day. And I’ve been standing tall ever since.” This is transformative justice.

Cases for victim offender reconciliation are often referred by courts to organizations with trained volunteer mediators. Agreements are held binding by the court and failure to uphold the mediation agreement may result in the case being referred back to the court system.

Juvenile VOR cases range from a second grader, who poked a fellow classmate with a pencil so hard that it broke the skin, to vandalism or assault and robbery by teenagers. Adult VOR cases involve assault, robbery, theft or vandalism.

Having sat in countless courtrooms, watching the destruction inevitable in the win/lose adversarial process, I am startled by the honesty and openness that often occurs in mediation sessions.

Children as young as second grade are adept at coming up with lists of restorative consequences for the violations. They want to make amends, to set things right. They are creative in identifying what they might do differently next time.

Teenagers, all too often labeled difficult, moody, uncooperative, sort through the pieces of a conflict to find agreement on reparations and a mediation settlement.

Adults are grateful for a non-adversarial process and often go far beyond the reason for the arrest, to deal with underlying issues that created ongoing conflict. This is transformative justice.

### **Mediation as Transformative Justice**

Victims note the dramatic difference between participating in a mediated conversation and sitting in courtrooms listening to others talk *about* you and *for* you, often hearing them offer words that conflict with your experience, emotions and hoped for outcomes. Mediation opens new pathways for collaboration and transformative justice.

For example, our congregation hired a youth staff person to work with Youth Empowered for Service, Survival and Self-Esteem, our after-school program. While he would technically be excluded from employment under United Methodist provisions that bar people with felony convictions from working with our youth, he was the best resource person possible.

As a former gang member who grew up on the streets and viewed violence as an unavoidable part of life, and as someone who served time in prison, he had more credibility with the young folks in our impoverished, often violent, neighborhood than other leaders. He had seen the power and death-dealing force of violence and, during his time in prison, he had deliberately chosen non-violence and transformative justice. When he trained kids in mediation and walked with them through the neighborhood, exposing the roots of violence and the possibilities for peace, they were challenged, changed and compelled to move into action.

It wasn't long before someone in the community called the church rather than the police when her son's bike was stolen. She knew the teenager who had stolen the bike, and did not want to send the kid to jail. She just wanted the bike back — with an apology and the promise that it would not happen again. Mediation opened the possibility for conflict resolution in ways that would not have been possible through a court process. And it prevented a young person from being marked with a conviction in the juvenile justice system, an action that often propels the teenager into the adult criminal justice system. This is transformative justice.

This kind of experience is consistent with The United Methodist Book of Resolutions, 2008: "Restorative justice practices should be utilized within the community as a *first response* to any criminal behavior. Justice can only prevail

...when forgiveness and reconciliation are shared throughout the community. Victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, and various other restorative justice techniques are urged to be considered as an alternative to the criminal courts." (page 666, emphasis added)

### **"Changing Lenses"**

Rev. James Forbes talks about transformative justice and forgiveness, urging us to remember how many times all of us need to make "withdrawals from the bank of grace." When we remember this, we change lenses, putting on the glasses of grace and moving from retributive to transformative justice.

As a community organizer working with impoverished communities and as a pastor, I witness the relentless, systemic targeting of people of color and people living in impoverished communities by the criminal justice system. As Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, writes:

"Incarceration is becoming the new American apartheid and poor children of color are the fodder....Child poverty and neglect, racial disparities in systems that serve children, and the cradle to prison pipeline are not acts of God. They are America's immoral political and economic choices that can and must be changed."

Much of the international community defines violence, mental illness and addiction as public health issues. In doing so, they move from retributive to transformative justice, asking not how we should punish someone but what went wrong, how we might hold people accountable and involve everyone in the repairing of harm. Prisons are the number one mental health institution in the country because those without access to private

mental health treatment are often consigned to the streets and ultimately, incarceration.

In this country, if you are privileged, if you have personal or family wealth and good health insurance, addiction is defined as a disease and treatment is available. However, if you are poor, addiction is all too often a crime and instead of treatment, people are locked up for long, harsh sentences for first time nonviolent drug convictions. Making matters worse, the punishment is permanent as those with felony drug convictions are ineligible for public housing, food stamps, educational grants or loans, and a range of licenses and jobs. Those with felony records are legally discriminated against in housing, employment, education and financial assistance and many are no longer allowed to vote. This is retributive justice.

Dr John Rich, a surgeon working in a downtown hospital emergency room in Boston, remembers how quickly he labeled those who came in with gun or stab wounds from street conflict, as thugs who would simply be back soon. However, when he began listening to those who had been shot or stabbed, learning about the trauma they experienced long before the eruption of conflict, he uncovered the depth of brokenness and harm experienced and the urgent need to address violence and addiction as public health and social justice issues. He identified concrete alternatives, creating partnerships with young people on the streets, affirming the dignity and worth of all those involved, not just some. This is transformative justice.

### **Restorative justice in clergy trial**

During a recent United Methodist Church trial of a clergy person, it became clear that the jury did not want

to inflict punishment. While a church law had indeed been broken, no one was harmed by the violation. In fact, the clergy person identified the harm done by the church law and resulting prosecution. Many on the jury felt stuck, not wanting to add to the harm but not sure what else was possible.

When the issue of restorative justice was raised during the penalty phase of the trial, the jury saw it as a practical alternative to intensifying the harm and way to address the wounds of the community. The jury defined their "sentence" through a restorative justice lens, requiring that the clergy person explore and write about all of the harm experienced and then offer possible pathways for healing and transformation for the community and annual conference.

This is transformative justice and a clear example of ¶1361 in the Discipline: "A just resolution is one that focuses on repairing any harm to people and communities, achieving real accountability by making things right in so far as possible and bringing healing to all the parties."

### **Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

Methodists have always had the tools for transformative justice embedded deeply in our fellowship and have participated in a wide range of public applications. Methodists, including former South African Bishop Peter Storey, were a part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Greensboro, N.C. Responding more than 20 years after an event in which five protestors were shot and killed by white supremacists, the Greensboro TRC invested more than two years in community organizing and research,

later holding three hearings before a diverse commission created by the larger community.

The hearings asked hard questions: What created the conditions for the killings? What actually happened on that day in 1979? and What has been the impact on our community from this traumatic event that was never addressed effectively? The intent was not on punishing those who shot and killed the protestors, or on those in power who colluded with the shooters, but on repairing the deep wounds of an entire community so that healing might happen and new possibilities for life together would exist. This is transformative justice.

### **Redefining prison ministry**

The United Methodist Women's 2002 mission study on restorative justice expanded local congregational engagement in the practices of transformative justice. Much of this work was focused on the harm intensified by the criminal justice system and the creation of alternatives to the current system.

The use of limited public resources on the ever-growing cost of incarceration (averaging more than \$80/day according to the Pew Center on the States) deprives our communities of resources needed to create positive opportunities. And once people are on the path toward incarceration, it is difficult for them to recover and move in new directions. "Imprisonization" has proven to be neither just, cost-efficient nor effective in deterring crime.

If we follow Jesus's life and teachings, we must define prison ministry as not only accompanying and supporting people who are incarcerated and those who are returning citizens,


but also working to challenge the theologies, systems and structures that have labeled all too many people disposable. While many churches have been willing to offer church services and Bible study inside jails and prisons, sometimes even working to support and mentor those returning from prison, we have all too often understood prison ministry as the good people from the outside coming inside to minister to, save or evangelize the lost and not yet good people behind prison bars. This turns prisoners into objects of charity instead of human beings and often leads us to feel good while at the same time we prop up the very system perpetuating the problems.

In addition, this form of prison ministry focuses on the individual who is incarcerated without confronting the theology that has distanced most church folks from prisons and jails, and the systems and structures that have pushed a larger percentage of people from impoverished communities, especially communities of color, into the criminal justice system.

A prison ministry committed to transformative justice focuses on ministry *with* instead of *to* or *for*; on partnership and proximity as a priority, not a program; and on those who are incarcerated as agents of change and partners in the repair of the world. Redefining prison ministry through the

lens of transformative justice requires educating the public and mobilizing the resources of the entire community to address harm and create possibilities for reconciliation as well as engagement with and dismantling of the systems and structures that diminish life.

### Choosing life, practicing resurrection

Transformative justice calls us to be God's contrast community, God's demonstration plot, or, as Anne LaMott writes, God's sign language in a world gone deaf. In a world where retributive justice continues to be the norm, United Methodists are called to give flesh to transformative justice, becoming the body of Christ, in and for the world. 



*Janet Wolf is a clergy member of the Tennessee Annual Conference appointed to the faculty of American Baptist College where she serves as the Professor of*

*Church and Society. She is a partner with several think tanks inside prisons and currently working to design a D.Min. in Prisons, Public Policy and Transformative Justice.*

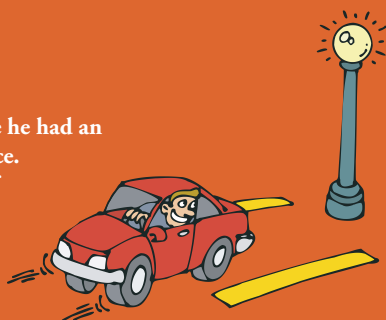
## Never mind

**H**enry was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place.

Looking up to heaven, he said, "Lord take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to church every Sunday for the rest of my life and give up whiskey.

Miraculously, a parking place appeared.

Henry looked up again and said, "Never mind, I found one."



# DISCIPLE Bible prison ministry expands to five states

By Dr. Mark Hick

**R**esponding to God's call and bolstered by support from the Connectional Table and the General Commission on UM Men, DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) has expanded to five states: Virginia, Tennessee, Kansas, Delaware and Louisiana.

DBOM of North Carolina has established a parent organization called "DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries National." A five person body comprises the founding board: Bishop Richard Wilke, author of the DISCIPLE Bible Study series; Bishop Kenneth Carder, professor of the practice of ministry at Duke Divinity School; Gilbert Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men; and Ernie Pearson, partner with NexsenPruett Law Firm of Raleigh.

I am honored to also serve as a member of this dream team. Their vast experience and dedication to the work of the Lord is exceptional.

Ten years ago, Pearson stepped forward to teach DISCIPLE in prison, and he continues to do so. As an attorney, he also created documents to form the partnership between the parent organization and the affiliate conferences.

Each affiliate is accountable to the parent organization while operating with its own board of directors.

*Mark Hicks, president of Disciple Outreach Ministries National, speaks to a 2011 gathering of presidents of United Methodist Men.*



DBOM National provides all training and resources.

## Support from UM Men

The support and encouragement of the UM Men's leadership is invaluable. I am working with the UM Men presidents in Virginia, Kansas, Tennessee, Delaware and Louisiana. In addition, UM Men presidents of the two annual conferences in North Carolina have joined the ministry in that state.

Gil Hanke and I share similar views on ministry; we jokingly call it "Nike Theology"—Just do it!

"This is a great place for men to plug into a structured ministry that makes a difference in men's lives," said Hanke. "In addition, it brings us in line with our Wesleyan roots. Our growth in this area has been rapid, but we are selective in the areas of the country we begin. There has to be a viable leadership from the conference office and the UM Men. We began this to be a blessing to brothers in prison, and we became blessed beyond measure."

"Wilke designed DISCIPLE to be a transformational study which identifies participant's spiritual gifts for ministry and then challenges them to go out and make a difference for Jesus Christ," continued Hanke. "The application of DISCIPLE in the prison setting has been tremendous."

While Hanke is enthusiastic about using DISCIPLE in prison, Bishop Wilke, the author of the study series, is equally enthusiastic about the chief executive officer of United Methodist Men: "Hanke is a dynamic, passionate leader who is moving the organization forward





*Members of Tennessee and Memphis Annual Conferences participate in a Disciple Bible Outreach training course in Franklin, Tenn. Completion of the course enabled participants to lead Disciple Bible study in Tennessee state prisons.*

in new and exciting ways," said the bishop.

### **State leaders**

The Virginia affiliate is led by Gene Mims, lay delegate to General Conference and a capable, dedicated servant of the Lord.

The Tennessee ministry is led by Jerry Nail, a member of Christ UMC in Franklin with 10 years of experience leading DISCIPLE Bible study groups in prison.

The Kansas affiliate is led by Brain Buffum, an engineer with Western Electric who has led DISCIPLE studies at a prison in Winfield. One of his partners is Bishop Wilke—a pretty good assistant teacher.

Buffman developed an after-care program called "Path to New Life," and he was recognized by the Governor of Kansas for his prison ministry.

DBOM National hopes to learn from Buffum's after-care model so that affiliates can help facilitate the difficult transition between the prison and the outside world.

Prison ministry in Delaware is led by David Bontz, who is working with Bishop Peggy Johnson and Sandra Steiner-Ball, director of connectional

ministries of the Pennsylvania-Delaware Conference.


Gard Wyatt, president of Louisiana Conference UM Men, leads the ministry in that state. Not only are the local chapters strong, but the largest UM Men group in the state is in the Louisiana State Prison.

Last August, we started training events for the new affiliates. Each training weekend included both prison training and certification on Saturday and DISCIPLE facilitator's training on Sunday.

Matthew 25 says: "I was in prison and you visited me."

When we go to prison and visit the inmate, it is as if we are visiting the Lord himself.

Christ reminds us, "When you have done it unto the least of these who are children of mine, you have done it for me."

There are many reasons to do prison ministry, but the reality that we are doing this for the Lord is enough for me. Will you go to prison with me? 



*Dr. Mark Hicks, is president of DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries National.*

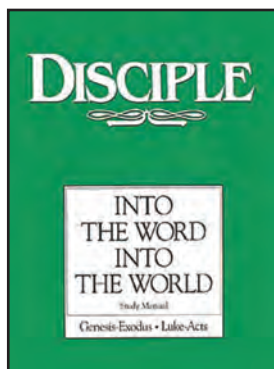
# Kansas ministry aids former inmates

by *Bishop Richard B. Wilke*

**W**ith prison recidivism rates above 70 percent, it is not a new insight to observe that a crisis arrives when inmates are released from prison.

Most of them have limited funds, no job, no driver's license and no place to live. Frequently they also have no family or friends. No wonder more than 70 percent return to prison.

Brian Buffum, a Winfield, Kans., layman who serves as prison ministry



coordinator for Kansas West UMC Men, has developed "Pathway to New Life," a rehabilitation program based on DISCIPLE Bible study that begins a year before an

inmate is scheduled for release.

Designed in cooperation with prison officials, the program provides prisoners with mentors, small group fellowships, counselors, and information.


When men go on "work release" in Wichita, a Sunday school class at First UMC transports them to Sunday school and church. In cooperation with mentors and friends, the class also helps



*Bishop Richard Wilke*

them find housing and jobs. If they don't live near a bus line, the class helps them purchase used cars.

"Many people coming out of prison owe back child support, they don't have an address for the parole office, they don't have money for rent, so it's very easy for them to violate their parole," says Buffum. "We help them get set up with the first month's rent, which they can pay back later, and other things to help them and support them."

The recidivism rate for those in the UM program has dropped from 70 percent to less than 3 percent. 

*Bishop Wilke is the principal author of the DISCIPLE Bible study series. The former bishop of the Arkansas Area currently serves as bishop-in-residence at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kans.*

# Denver Area launches Amachi program

DENVER, Colo. —

Leaders of the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference met last fall with leaders of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Colorado to match UM men as mentors of children of incarcerated parents.

Aimed at reducing the number of children who follow their parents to prison, the national BBBS organization formed “Amachi,” a program that has already matched 250 children with adult mentors.

“Amachi” is a Nigerian Ibo word that means “Who knows but what God has brought us through this child.”

Larry Coppock, director of scouting ministries for the General Commission on UM Men, is spearheading the Amachi effort for the denomination. He has helped launch the effort in 17 annual conferences, and he coordinated the meeting at the Denver BBBS office with Bill West, president of Rocky Mountain Conference UM Men and Denver area pastors.

Dave Stalls, a former NFL football player and top staff executive of the Denver BBBS, said the Amachi motto is “People of Faith Mentoring Children of Promise.”

“We achieved a consensus on the fundamentals of partnership operations,” said

West. “We established Denver and Colorado Springs as the target area where an estimated 41,000 children of incarcerated parents now reside.”

“The conference will enlist local church support in recruiting and providing facilities to support mentoring activities,” said West. “BBBS agreed to make their resources


available to screen mentors, arrange mentoring matchups and survey mentoring activities to achieve program objectives.”

Conference leaders and BBBS officials will meet weekly via teleconference to monitor partnership progress.

This group of young people represents the highest risk of youth in America. Without effective intervention these children are six times more likely to engage in negative behavior than kids not

affected by incarceration.

“Our country and our conference cannot stand by while this pattern continues,” said West. “We must do something to help our communities with this problem and Amachi is an excellent opportunity for people of faith to get involved.”

Each mentor commits to spending at least one hour per week engaging in a variety of positive activities with a child. 



*Officers of Big Brothers Big Sisters in the Denver area meet with United Methodist leaders. Top row (l-r): Larry Coppock, director of scouting ministries for the General Commission on UM Men; Dave Stalls, president and chief executive of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado; the Rev. William Morris, pastor of Burns Memorial UMC in Aurora; and Bill West, president of Rocky Mountain Conference UM Men. Bottom row: (l-r) the Rev. John Thompson, pastor of Park Hill UMC in Denver; Jose Hernandez, BBBS recruitment specialist; Desiree Ott, BBBS customer relations specialist; and Sandy Kerr, BBBS vice president.*

# I found redemption and reconciliation in prison

By Ricardo Carmouche

In April, 1998, I had just lost a job working for Bell South Telecommunications, and I was being investigated for bank robberies by the FBI, the Louisiana State Police and the Lafayette City Police. During that time, my ex-fiancée and I were also having trouble in our relationship.

One day I came home tired and frustrated. My ex-fiancée sat me down at the kitchen table, opened a Bible and took me on a head trip through John 3:16, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, and Romans 10:9-10. Others had attempted to do this before, but I had refused to listen. On this occasion, I felt as if the passages were personally addressed to me.

She gave me a salvation prayer and asked me to go upstairs to pray.

When I got upstairs I put the prayer aside and cried out, “God, forgive me. Wash me in the blood of Jesus and save me.”

An hour later I came downstairs a changed man.

Shortly after, I prayed, “Lord, I don’t know if I am going to get arrested, and if I do, I don’t know if I am going to have to do time, but whatever happens, I am still going to serve you.”

## Charged with armed robbery

Four months later, in August, 1998, I was arrested and charged with five counts of armed robbery.

In an instant I was torn away from my 11-year old daughter who was then visiting me in Louisiana from her home in Boston. I lost everything— my home, my possessions and my family.

I was alone with God, but I knew I was about to embark on a journey that would transform me into the man that

God had created me to be.

I found myself consuming the Word of God — reading, studying and praying throughout most of my days.

God then set me in places and with people who would help me experience Him.

God used a man who led Bible study in our living area to point out my spiritual gifts and gave me opportunities to cultivate them.

While in jail, I would sometimes cross paths with people who let the devil use them. They were used to help point out fleshly desires and evil impulses in me that I thought were gone.

I remember one such instance when a guy lashed out at me for no apparent reason. I became so upset that, in a temper tantrum, I began to shout expletives at him. As soon as this happened the Holy Spirit convicted me. I remember feeling crushed, embarrassed and ashamed. I was like, wow, I didn’t know that stuff was still in me.

The discovery of other ungodly things still in me soon became the norm.

As I humbled myself, I began to see just how much I needed Jesus. Through these experiences I’ve learned to trust in the finished work of the cross — I am redeemed. I am an overcomer and I am victorious

## A guilty verdict

I prepared myself for trial by arming myself with the scriptures.

The district attorney had decided not to prosecute me on three of the five robbery charges and I openly declared that God would enable the jury to deliver a “not guilty” verdict to the other two charges.



*Ricardo Carmouche and sons*

My heart sank when the jury returned verdicts of guilty on both charges of armed robbery.

I was disappointed, confused and engulfed with feelings of abandonment.

When I regained my composure, I told God that I thought I would get not-guilty verdicts, but evidently I did not hear him correctly.

Upon returning to my cell, I told the brothers I was found guilty, but I still believed. I then broke down and cried.

Shortly thereafter, the court sentenced me to 50 years on each count to run consecutively.

### **Angola Prison**

I came to the Louisiana State Prison in Angola in October, 2001.

Since then, I've experienced God in profound ways.

He has made changes in my life that testify to the redeeming power of the blood of Jesus.

I can hear God's voice and recognize His actions in my life and in the lives of others. As a result, I don't think in the same manner I used to think, nor do I do the same things I used to do.

In short, I am not the same person that I was prior to my incarceration

My relationship with my 24-year-old daughter has blossomed, and after eight years of not communicating with my ex-fiancée, we are now back in touch.

God has also helped me give birth to a new magazine that will impact the lives of many when I am released.

While I never received the not-guilty verdict I prayed for, I may still receive an "emergency release."

God is awesome. 

*Ricardo Carmouche is a member of the leadership team of United Methodist Men in the Louisiana State Prison in Angola.*



# Across the Nation

SIERRA VISTA, Ariz.—

## Mexican and Arizona Scouts gather

One hundred and twenty six Scouts from Northern Sonora, Mexico, gathered with Scouts from the Catalina Council in Tucson, Ariz., to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the bi-annual week-long gathering. Begun in 1961, the Annual Pimaree is held at the Huachuca Oaks Camp nestled near the foothills of the Huachuca Mountains, 12 miles south of Sierra Vista.

SEAVILLE, N.J.—

## Men offer free movie nights

Men of Seaville UMC present free family movie nights every other Saturday evening throughout the summer and into early fall. The movie and popcorn are free. Hotdogs and soda are sold for \$1.

GRAIN VALLEY, Mo.—

## Troop receives award of excellence

Troop 310, chartered by Faith UMC of Grain Valley, Mo., received the Bishop's Award of Excellence.

Scouts participated in a food drive for a local pantry and Scout Sunday services. Eleven Scouts received God & Country or God & Church Awards. The church expects six to eight Scouts will participate in the series sponsored by St. Louis-based Program of Religious Activities with Youth this year.



*Bishop Robert Schnase (left) presents the Bishop's Award of Excellence to the Rev. David Hackett, pastor of Grain Valley UMC; Richard Sanderson, charter organization representative; and Gregory Nelson, a scouting ministry specialist.*

CINNAMINSON, New Jersey —

### Men offer cooking demonstration

Men of Asbury UMC conducted their fourth annual winter cooking demonstration for some 70 church members. Each man demonstrated his favorite recipe with flair and humor. The event provided entertainment and tasty meals such as “Hot Date with a Pig.”

“We don’t know who had more fun, the laughing audience or the men doing the cooking,” said Jim Gleason.

Videos of each recipe demonstration can be seen at [MyAsburyUMC.com](http://MyAsburyUMC.com).



FULTON, N.Y.—

### Men support mission to Haiti

Five congregations in the E.J. Thomas Cluster of UM Men in the Crossroads District of the Upper New York Conference, raised \$3,500 to support a Haiti mission team. The funds enabled the team to hire local workers and purchase materials. The men sold t-shirts to support the effort.

OGDEN Utah—

### Former trekker supports Philmont Bible Project

Dick Mills, a former trekker at the Philmont Scout Ranch, sent a \$500 check to provide backpacking New Testaments to Scouts who will be visiting the ranch in the summer of 2012.

“I recognize a great value when I find one. What could be more rewarding than seeing the ideals of scouting and the messages of Jesus Christ taking root in our youth?” asked Mills.

In September Mills sent a second \$500 check for Scouts attending the 2012 camp.

OAK RIDGE, Tenn.—

### Holston Conference men give 2,300 bags of green beans to food banks

Oak Ridge District men bagged over 2,300 bags of green beans on a Saturday in July. Some 100 men bagged a 60-foot long pile of green beans that would have been used for livestock if the men had not prepared them for a food bank. At \$1.29 per pound that is about \$25,800 worth of fresh produce provided to local families at a cost of \$500 in transportation.



Mike Smith is president of Holston Conference UM Men and Joe Thompson is district president.

SHREVEPORT, La.—

### Judge swears in 20 new citizens

Judge Carl Stewart, former chairman of the UM

Scouting Ministry Committee, swore in 20 new citizens from 18 dif-



ferent nations at a naturalization service at the Federal Courthouse in Shreveport. “I reached out to my scouting friends in case some Life Scout might have benefitted from the ceremony towards their Citizenship Merit Badge,” said Judge Stewart. “Unfortunately, I had no takers today. Hopefully, I will get another chance to extend the invitation to some scoutmasters. Today was one of the most pleasant days of my judicial career.

FREDERICKTOWN, Mo.—

### **Retreat participants deliver meals to food pantry**

Men attending an annual Missouri Conference Men's Retreat at Blue Mountain Retreat Center brought canned foods and money for a local food pantry. Men attending the 63rd annual retreat brought boxes of non-perishables and \$70 in cash to the food distribution center.



Photo credit: Robert Vanderbrugen, *Democrat News*

DAVIDSONVILLE, Md.—

### **Men give \$6,000 in scholarships**

Each year, the UM Men Davidsonville UMC give \$1,000 scholarships to six students.

The funds come from a variety of fundraising activities and committees at the church, but the men hand out the checks.

The men give the scholarships to students who have been involved in their community through church-sponsored events, scouting activities, or acts of charity. Recipients do not have to be church members.

NOBLESVILLE, Ind. —

### **Indiana leaders discuss ministries over hamburgers**

Seven UM Men and scouting leaders met in July with LaNisha Sayles, a staff member of the General Commission on

UM Men, to discuss ways they could support one another. Dave Martin, president of Indiana Conference UM men, served as host of the event and displayed his master-chef skills. John Dockery, a scouting ministry specialist, used his Scout training to prepare Dutch Oven peach cobbler.



MADISONVILLE, Tenn.—

### **UM Men enable college to re-open pool**

The swimming pool at Hiwassee College has been unusable for the past five years, but after Maryville District UM Men removed framing around the pool and helped in the renovation, the pool was re-opened. The first group to dive in the renovated pool was the youth group from Cokesbury UMC.

"This would not have been possible without the help of United Methodist Men," said Robin Tricoli, president of the United Methodist college.

CLARKSTON, Mich.—

### **Men ring Salvation Army bells**

A total of 144 volunteers from Clarkston UMC rang Salvation Army bells at three grocery stores. For 25 years, UM Men have recruited volunteers to serve for one hour periods on three Saturdays in December.



"Some bring their pets and some ring as a whole family," said Jay Bleim, president of UM

Men. "The church's commitment of time



and service ringing the bells helps ensure that The Salvation Army will be able to continue to feed the hungry, shelter and clothe the homeless and offer spiritual support to those who are searching."

**HIGH RIDGE, Mo.—**

**Boys and Girls clean up meeting center**

Last fall, American Heritage Girls and Boy Scouts scrubbed and organized the Emerson Center at Camp May at the conclusion of the 2011 camping season.

The center serves as a central meeting hall for the 2,400-acre BSA Beaumont Reservation near St. Louis.

Earlier in the summer, the girls spent four days at the camp, where they engaged in archery, swimming, crafts, mud-cave exploring, shooting, and hiking. American Heritage Girls was started in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1995 to offer a faith-based leadership development program to girls ages 5-18. The organization has more than 14,000 members in 41 states.

**ANDALUSIA, Ala.—**

**Men dedicate flag to first responders**

Men of First UMC dedicated a U. S. flag to first responders in their community as part of their 9-11 observance. The flag will be among the 70 the church displays on its grounds on patriotic holidays. The group has also sold 80 additional flags to the city and other churches for display on those holidays.



*John Howard, flag chair of UM Men, holds a flag honoring representatives of the city's police and fire departments and the county sheriff's department. Last year, the unit presented copies of Strength for Service to members of the same groups.*

**CINCINNATI, Ohio—**

**Golfers raise \$1,400 for missions**

For the sixth year in a row Mt. Moriah UM Men sponsored a 2011 golf outing. Thirty two golfers and sponsoring organizations raised \$1,400 to support youth scholarships and mission programs.

**PHOENIX, Ariz.—**

**Scouting blooms in desert**

With the support of Bishop Minerva Carcaño, scouting in the Desert Southwest Annual Conference is expanding to include the Amachi program led by the Rev. Bob Holliday, and the St. Louis-based Programs of Religious Activities with Youth, led by Douglas G. Wright, a scouting ministry specialist and conference scouting coordinator.

Four other scouting ministry specialists support the effort: Paul Bridgewater, Central West District, Tom Denny, Central East District, and Jim Larson and Chuck Moyer, South District.



*Three scouting ministry specialists in the Desert Southwest Conference attend an Order of the Arrow awards dinner. From left: Chuck Moyer, Jim Larson and Doug Wright.*

Paul and Tom Denny attended the week-long training for scouting ministry specialists at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. "The experience was a great one and recharged many of our batteries," said Tom. "We can change the world in a positive way—one Scout at a time."

LAS VEGAS, Nev.—

### Children receive God and Me awards

Eight 1st through 3rd graders completed five God & Me classes and earned their religious emblems from Programs of Religious Activities with Youth, the St. Louis-based agency that administers the former God and Country awards. Topics included creation, prayer and God's gift to us in Jesus. Participants came from Cub Scout packs in University UMC, Griffith UMC, and Community Lutheran Church.



The group was led by Doug Wright, a scouting ministry specialist.

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait—

### Staging camp thanks UM Men for devotional books

Camp Buehring, located in the desert 40 miles from the Iraq border, can house up to 14,000 soldiers training for service in Iraq.

The camp, named in honor of Lt. Col. Charles Buehring, who was killed by a rocket attack in 2003, is also a hub for Army helicopters.



Soldiers training there expressed their appreciation for *Strength for Service* books.

TOLEDO, Ohio—

### Former follower of Jim Jones now a United Methodist

Earl F. Bailey was 17 years old and living in Guyana when he was introduced to the People's Temple, led by cult leader Jim Jones. Before he became fully involved with the temple, Jones orches-

trated a mass suicide of 900 followers. Earl and his wife, Yonnette, later moved to Montego, then to Brooklyn and finally to Toledo where they became members of Braden UMC. Errol is an active member of UM Men.

The family became American citizens in July and members of UM Men were present at the ceremony.

PEARL, Miss.—

### All in the family

Three Kynerd men have been inducted into the John Wesley Society. Stan was the first Kynerd to be inducted into the society; he became the 610th member in 2007. Robert was inducted as the 656th member of the society in 2008. Their father, Ira, became the final inductee as the 670th member in 2009.

Membership in the society is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon UM members.



*The Kynerd John Wesley Society is called to order by father Ira (center), Pearl, Miss. Sons Robert, Birmingham, Ala. (left) and Stan, Brandon, Miss., answer the roll call.*

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.—

### Eastern Pennsylvania Men make huge impact

Led by Ross Brightwell, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference UM Men catalogued a long list of achievements in 2010. The group sponsored a softball tournament and hosted a potato drop during the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference session.

They sold 2,650 tickets to UM members for a UM Night at the Phillies. West Lawn UMC sang the National Anthem and UM Chaplain Lt. Col. Nicolas Camacho threw out the first pitch.

A golf tournament raised \$3,200 for veterans and Nothing But Nets.

The men also purchased a golf cart for Gretna Glen UMC Retreat Center, built four new cabins at Pocono Plateau UMC Retreat Center, and donated \$1,000 to Inabah UMC Retreat Center.

In addition, conference men hosted a Southwest District Conference and planned additional district rallies, a prison ministry seminar and a Bishop's Scouting Dinner for 2011.

"We also prayed a lot," reports Brightwell.



*New Hanover UMC's softball team took home the trophy in this year's softball tournament hosted by Eastern Pennsylvania Conference UM Men.*

DENVER, Colo.—

### **Women invited**

Men of Scott UMC are studying *Why Men Hate Going to Church* by David Murrow. The men issued an invitation to the women of Scott Church to study *How Women Help Men Find God*, another book by Murrow.

"We'd love to have a second reading club in the church," said Ed Battle, president of Scott UM Men.

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—

### **UM Men honor police officers and fire fighters**

UM Men of Western North Carolina Conference partnered with Collaborative Ventures, a Charlotte business resource group, to sponsor a September 11 event to honor police officers, firefighters and first responders.

UM Men gave 50 police officers and firefighters 800 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to distribute to other departments.

Special plaques were presented to Police Chief Rodney Monroe and Fire Chief John D. Hannan.

"This event was a success not by the number of attendees alone, but by the commitment of the business community to join us in recognizing what the event meant to the spirit and heart of those who serve," said Hank Dozier, conference president of UM Men.



NATCHITOCHES, La.—

### **Men raise \$2,500 for *Strength for Service* books**

Men of First UMC of Natchitoches raised a whopping \$2,500 to provide 510 *Strength for Service to God and Country* books of daily devotions to U.S. troops.

"Our prayers for their safety and appreciation for what they are doing goes along with each book," said Harold Collier, president of First UMC UM Men.

LONGMONT, Colo.—

### **Church provides funds for Cambodian mission**



*Irene Mparutsa*

UM Men of Longs Peak UMC in Longmont held a chicken roast to provide funds for Irene Mparutsa, a missionary in Phnom Penn, Cambodia. The men raised \$500 to add to the \$3,000 collected at a Christmas service to help Mparutsa install clean water and sanitation stations in Phnom Penn.

CAMP MONTROND, Afghanistan—  
**Chaplain distributes *Strength for Service* books**



*Paul Karstendiek (center), a scouting ministry specialist from Florida, presents a sample copy of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to Captain Minietta (left), a UM chaplain from Lawton Okla. Books were presented to all members of the Special Operations Task Force-East, including Sergeant First Class Marshall (right).*

PONCHATOULA, La.—  
**Men use historic book for morning devotions**

Men of Ponchatoula UMC meet weekly at a local café for breakfast and a discussion of devotion from *Strength for Service to God and Country*. They then compile a list of people for whom prayers are offered.



SAINT FRANCISVILLE, La.—  
**Men celebrate Men Awareness Month**  
Led by Joe Kelley, men of Saint Francisville UMC celebrated November as UM Men month.

They erected signs at the church, city highways and homes and received five minutes during November services to discuss men's ministry. They also submitted articles for the conference newspaper and put up displays about their ministries.

ATLANTA, Ga.—  
**Men serve 5,000 plates of barbecued pork**

For 50 years men of Oak Grove UMC have stayed up all night to smoke 275 hams in an open-air shed. Stew paddle wielding stirrers arrive at 5 a.m. to take their positions around six 40-gallon cauldrons.

Clint Ginn and his 20-year-old son, Jason, preside over the stew crew much as Clint's father did for 31 years. Paul Taylor, chairman of the autumn rite, noted that only once in 50 years had rain marred the event. "We always joke that Jesus must love barbecue," he said.

BOONVILLE, Mo.—  
**Inmates build gazebo with UM men and baseball team**

Eight inmates from the Boonville Correctional Center worked with men from Nelson Memorial UMC and the Central Methodist University baseball team during the week of Sept. 12th to build a gazebo at the Boonville Rolling Hills Park.

The team also stained a hospital gazebo they built last year and refurbished a YMCA ramp they built in 2003. In 2006, men from the correctional center and the church built a bathroom at the New Franklin City Park, and in 2005, they built a retaining wall around the prehistoric Indian mound at Harley Park. Church members provided daily breakfasts for the team followed by devotions. At noon, the men ate lunch at area churches in the hope they would make one of them their church home upon their release.

Inmates received certificates of appreciation during a Sept. 18 dedication service at Nelson Memorial UMC. Dan Hanneken, a staff member of the Missouri Department of Corrections, presented the annual "Challenge to the Class." The service was followed by a dinner with members of the congregation.




Members of the team show the results of their work at a park in Boonville, Mo

ORANGE, Va.—

### Second Saturday group tackles long list of projects

Men of Trinity UMC work at a Community Food Pantry, sell ice cream at the Orange Street Festival, sponsor a chili-cook-off, and serve a pancake breakfast for participants in a town-wide trash pick-up contest. Young people participate in all the fund-raising events for their mission projects and out-reach programs.

The men also took over janitorial duties when the sexton position was vacant.

Darnell Elswick says an average number of 18 men meet every second Saturday for breakfast, worship and a guest speaker. They occasionally invite sons, daughters or wives to the breakfasts. 

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## Men's ministry agency celebrates achievements, views future

NASHVILLE, Tenn. —

**T**he agency responsible for expanding ministries to men within the United Methodist Church celebrated the certification of 30 men's ministry specialists and 127 scouting ministry specialists who are helping local churches increase their outreach to men and young people.

Meeting September 7-10 for the last time this quadrennium, 20 members of the General Commission on United Methodist Men celebrated their four-year accomplishments, including the election of Gil Hanke as top staff executive, the recruitment of three volunteer deployed staff persons, and an increase in the number of chartered groups of United Methodist Men in 29 annual conferences.

As they looked to the future of men's ministry, the 19 men and one woman discussed the probability of reduced funding for commission ministries and the possibility of new structure.

### Funding proposals

For the first time in the history of the denomination, delegates to the General Conference, meeting April 24-May 4, 2012, in Tampa, Fla., will consider a proposed 6.5 percent decrease in the World Service Fund.

The Connectional Table and the General Council on Finance and Administration are recommending a goal of \$241.3 million for the World Service Fund for the 2013-2016 quadrennium. United Methodist Men presently receive one-half of one percent (0.5%) of that total. There is also a possibility that the decrease could increase to 16 percent if a proposal for



*Bishop James King (left), president of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, chats with and Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the commission, following the presentation of expressions of appreciation to board members for their last four years of service to the Nashville-based commission.*

additional \$60 million for training young people and central conference clergy is approved.

The commission anticipates it will continue to receive 20 percent of its operating budget from the World Service Fund. Eighty percent of the agency's \$1.3 million annual budget will be derived from charter fees from groups of United Methodist Men and from gifts from individuals.

### Proposed structure

In a discussion of the proposed structure, Bishop James King, president of the commission, explained that Connectional Table and Call to Action groups want to create a way for the United Methodist Church to become more "nimble." "The church is dysfunctional," said King. "the General Conference meets once every four years and no one has authority to make adjustment between sessions."

The proposed structure calls for the General Commission on United Methodist Men to be continued as the Board of United Methodist Men with a governing board, reduced from the present 25 members to 20 members.

Under the proposal, the top staff executive of the Board of United Methodist Men would serve as an ex-officio member of the General Council for Strategy and Oversight with voice but without vote. The 45-member council would meet once a year to establish long-term strategies to be implemented by a 15-member board of directors of the Center for Connectional Mission and Ministry.

The center would elect an executive general secretary and staff members of nine general agencies would be organized under five offices reporting to the center.

The boards of Pension and Health Benefits, the United Methodist Publishing House, United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women would continue to be responsible to General Conference.

In earlier reports the Call to Action Committee was uncertain about where to locate United Methodist Men and United Methodist Women, but finally decided to support United Methodist Women's efforts to move from a division of the General Board of Global Ministries to a separate board. They then categorized the two agencies as membership-based boards that would report to General Conference.

Members of the commission were encouraged to carefully study the proposed new structure and to share their responses with General Conference delegates.

Hanke, top staff executive of the commission, was elected as a Texas Conference delegate to the General Conference. He will serve on the General Administration Legislative Committee, which will review and possibly revise the proposed radical changes prior to presentation to the 988-member plenary session.

In other business, the commission:

- Reviewed plans for the July 12-14, 2013, National Gathering of United Methodist Men at Belmont University in Nashville;
- Learned that 452,000 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* have been printed and distributed, mostly to deployed military personnel. The commission endorsed plans to create a 501c3 non-profit corporation to continue to receive funds for the historic devotional book and to add new publications to meet the spiritual needs of the military personnel, fire fighters, police officers and first responders. The non-profit status will encourage secular organizations to support the effort to print the books;
- Received a report on the packaging of 101,000 Stop Hunger Now packets during the World Methodist Conference sponsored by United Methodist Men, Mississippi Conference, Korean Methodist Men, and a Korean Methodist congregation. Larry Malone, former staff executive of the commission, was re-elected as president of the Men's Section of the World Methodist Conference;
- Learned there are 376,000 young people involved in Scout troops and packs meeting in United Methodist Churches. Noting that most of growth in scouting is occurring in churches, Boy Scouts of America launched a Faith-Based Initiative (F.B.I.) to retain and strengthen these organizations;
- Learned that the United Methodist Men Foundation allocated \$10,000 to provide New Testaments to 6,000 Scouts attending the Protestant worship services at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, with additional copies for Scouts attending the Minnesota-based Northern Tier High Adventure Program;
- Received a report on the Amachi program, an effort by Big Brothers and Big Sisters (BBBS) to match men and women as

mentors of children with at least one parent in prison. The commission launched the effort in 17 annual conferences with more than 40 matches. Mark Scott, a BBBS executive, noted that the first Amachi match occurred March 29, 2001, at the Philadelphia-based Eastwick United Methodist Church (now Eastwick Worship Center).

- Received a report from the Upper Room Prayer Line noting that United Methodist Men organizations contributed \$6,735 to the prayer line and 16 new volunteers added 2,256 hours of extra coverage by the daily prayer line.
- Celebrated the 13-year support of the Society of Saint Andrew Hunger Relief Advocate Initiative with advocates in 17

annual conferences. These advocates led 1,979 volunteers to pick up 1.92 million servings of fresh food for America's hungry. United Methodist Men also provided another 8.4 million servings of fresh produce through the society's potato project.

- Set plans for a paver project in which United Methodist Men are invited to place engraved bricks in front of the national office on Music Row in Nashville at \$500 for an 8x8-inch paver, or a 4x8-inch paver at \$200. The men agreed to purchase a paver in memory of Charles Steele, a Tennessee Conference leader who died in 2011 and gave a significant gift in his will to United Methodist Men ministries.

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## More than 100,000 meals for children packaged at World Methodist Conference

DURBAN, South Africa —

**P**articipants in the World Methodist Conference here packaged 101,000 dehydrated meals for distribution to local school children.

Conference participants filled and sealed Stop Hunger Now food packets with dehydrated rice, soy, vegetables, flavoring and 21 essential vitamins and minerals during six 2-hour packaging sessions held August 4, 5 and 6.

The 500-member World Methodist Council met Aug. 1-3; that legislative gathering was followed by the World Methodist Conference in which members of all churches from the Wesleyan tradition are invited. Both events are held once every five years at the same time.

Interest and participation in the food packaging event increased during the Aug. 4-8 conference. News of the packaging progress was reported daily, and in the final meal packaging session, the goal of 100,000 meals was met and applauded.

### Meals delivered

On August 5, a team of conference attendees delivered thousands of meals to Addington Primary School in Durban. Some who had helped package the meals sat down to eat with the children.

"Many children who attend this school are refugees, and have very little to eat," said Larry Malone, president of the World Methodist Council men's affiliate and a leading architect of the



packaging event. "It was heartwarming."

Local packaging operations were handled by Stop Hunger Now South Africa, under the leadership of national director Barry Mey. South Africa is the first international affiliate of Raleigh N.C.-based Stop Hunger Now.

Financial support for the packaging event was provided by United Methodist Men, Korean Methodist Men, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the Mississippi Annual Conference, and Good Samaritan Korean Methodist Church in Incheon.

### Resolution

The idea for a packaging event began in Seoul, South Korea during a 2006 gathering of the World



Methodist men's affiliate. Malone challenged the men to the mission of eliminating world hunger in partnership with Stop Hunger Now. During this conference, the men raised the bar with a call to the world Wesleyan family to commit to fast at least one meal per week, pray during that meal period for all who are hungry, and to give the cost of one meal daily in a sustained commitment to a Christian hunger-related ministry.

Malone asked the World Methodist Council to issue the same call to churches in member denominations. The Rev. Ray Buchanan, founder of Stop Hunger Now, also told the council of the ravaging effects of severe hunger and starvation contrasted with a world of abundance enjoyed by many affluent Christians.

The council responded with a resolution noting

## Jim Boesch named deployed staff member for men's ministry

NASHVILLE, Tenn —

Jim Boesch, one of the first persons to be certified as a men's ministry specialist, has been named one of four deployed staff members of the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

After completing training sessions with Orlando-based Man in the Mirror, Boesch engaged in courses in United Methodist polity and history, safe sanctuary training, and hands-on experience in men's ministry in a local church. He was certified as a men's ministry specialist in 2009.

Boesch has taught adult-education classes in local churches, and he has equipped church members to lead discipling experiences, Bible studies and Sunday school classes.

As a nationally certified trainer and facilitator of learning, he helped the commission place United Methodist History and Doctrine courses on the web so others training to become men's ministry specialists would be able to take the course on line.

In recent years, Boesch has also been active in the delivery of the "Understanding Men's Ministry" discipleship training for clergy and lay leaders in the Florida and West Ohio annual conferences.

that a person dies every 6 seconds from hunger related causes, and the earth produces enough food for everyone. Members called all churches in the Wesleyan tradition to fast, pray and give so others may live.

### Chance encounter

Special encouragement for the packaging process came through a chance encounter between Malone and Nqoba Nkabinde, an executive of South Africa-based Dee-Dee Enterprises, on the flight to Durban preceding the conference. They chatted on the flight and Malone invited Nkabinde to join the packaging event. Convinced of the importance and effectiveness of the process, Nkabinde committed a truck and crew to transport the packages and provide free storage.

"Jim is an extremely talented and gifted man," said Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on United Methodist Men. "He was instrumental in the development of the *Understanding Men's Ministry Leadership Training*, and an Advanced Lay Speaking course. He also served on the team to refine that course as part of the men's ministry certification process. He has successfully combined his professional training skills with our training needs in men's ministry."

"I am very humbled to serve as a member of the deployed staff team," said Boesch. "I fully support the direction the commission is taking in the renewal of our local churches through transformational ministry-with-men discipleship programs."

The other deployed staff members are: Mark Dehority, Moweaqua, Ill.; Mark Lubbock, Baton Rouge, La.; and Greg Arnold, Vanclave, Miss.

Contact Boesch by cellphone (407-721-0416) or email ((jboesch@gcummm.org).



# Jim Snead remembered

ST. SIMONS ISLAND, Ga. —

**U**M Men of the South Georgia Conference established a monument and dedicated an oak tree to the memory of Jim Snead, a long-time leader of the conference and UM Men.



A dedication service was held last spring on the grounds of the South Georgia Connectional Ministries Office at Epworth by the Sea.

Snead became a staff member of the South Georgia Conference Council on Ministries in 1968. He lived with his wife, Ann, and three daughters on Epworth until 1974 when he was named director of men's ministry at the Board of Discipleship in Nashville.

"Jim had a tremendous impact on UM Men in the South Georgia Conference," said Roy Lifsey, a South Georgia leader and

chairman of the Men's Section of the Board of Discipleship from 1980-88. "There were only 3,000 units when he was named head of the men's section. At his 1995 retirement there were more than 10,000 chartered units."

An active member of Tifton First UMC in South Georgia and Bellevue UMC in Nashville, Snead died September 11, 2002 at the age 67.

"His leadership is still felt among UM Men," said Lifsey.



*The Rev. Charles Adams, Ann Snead, wife of Jim; Roy Lifsey, and Chuck Cowart participate in a dedication service during a spring retreat of South Georgia Conference UM Men. The group stands before the tree dedicated to Jim Snead and the conference office where he once worked.*

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## In Memoriam Charles H. Steele

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

**C**harles Steele, former president of Tennessee Conference UM Men, died last August.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 64 years, Mable Little Steele, and brother, Robert L. Steele Jr.

Steele and his wife owned Little and Steele Hardware Company in Nashville.

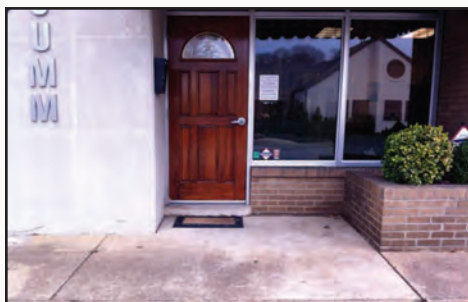
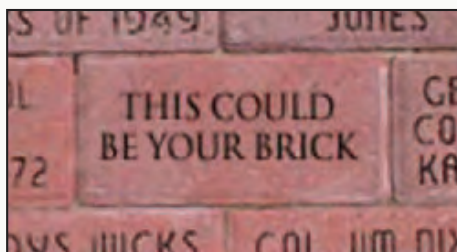
He was a past president of the Tennessee Hardware Association and longtime member of Brentwood UMC. He was also a member of the American Legion and the Melrose Civitan Club.

The General Commission on UM Men honored Steele by reserving a paver with his name on it at the sidewalk of the Nashville office.

## Leave it in stone

**P**ut your name, the name of a loved one, or your local church on a paver at the entrance of the international office of United Methodist Men

If you purchase a paver before May, your paver will be located just outside the main entrance of the building on historic Music Row in Nashville.



*Engraved pavers will vastly improve the appearance of the front walkway of the Nashville office of the General Commission on UM Men.*

You may purchase a 4-by-4-inch paver for \$200 or an eight-by-eight-inch paver for \$500. Once this area is sold out, the commission will open up the remainder of the sidewalk area at second-level pricing.

You may have three lines on the smaller paver and four on the larger; each line may contain up to 18 characters of the Helvetica font.

This could be a lifetime reminder of the important person in your life, or you may want to lift up your church, district or conference. Monies derived from this project will fund the world-wide ministries of the General Commission on UM Men.

To reserve a paver, send a check for \$500 or \$200 to the General Commission on UM Men, P.O. Box 440515, Nashville, TN 37244-0515. In the memo line, designate the check for “Paver project.”



*Sample paver*

## United Methodists Garner Highest Favorability Score

**A**bout 62% of adult Americans have a favorable impression of United Methodists. That’s according to a new survey from LifeWay Research that looks at perceptions of faith groups among adults in the U.S.

United Methodists had the highest

percentage of favorable impressions among the faith groups included in the survey – Roman Catholics, Southern Baptists, United Methodists, Mormons and Muslims – with 15% of respondents reporting very favorable impressions and 47% reporting somewhat favorable.

# How to become a men's ministry specialist

**T**here are now 30 men's ministry specialists who are helping local churches expand their ministries to men.

Certification for the men's ministry specialist takes 12-18 months. Candidates must participate in a No Man Left Behind leadership training experience\* and a lay speaker course (clergy are exempt from this requirement). Candidates must also complete an on-line course in UMC polity and history and a safe-sanctuary course.

In addition, candidates are asked to read *No Man Left Behind* by Man in the Mirror Ministries and *Spiritual Fathers* by Dan Schaffer. They are asked to write about their spiritual history and complete a spiritual-gifts assessment prior to working with an adviser on a two-year spiritual-growth plan.

All candidates are asked to consult with their United Methodist Men conference and district presidents along with their district superintendents in order to prepare a 3-to-5 year strategy to strengthen men's ministry in their areas.

As a final step, the candidate is interviewed by a member of the steering team and the Turner Center for Church Development at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville.

\*An alternative course is also now available.

## Different paths

"Quite frankly I ignored United Methodist Men for many years because I simply did not see them doing all that much of real value," said Paul S. Wilson, a graduate of Candler School of Theology.

In 2007, that attitude changed when he became acquainted with Orlando, Fla.-based Man in the Mirror ministries. He took three other men from Knightdale (N.C.) UMC, where his wife was senior pastor, to a No Man Left Behind training event in Cary, N. C.

"All four of us came away tremendously excited at this model of making disciples of men," said Wilson. They began the Iron Knights men's mission group at Knightdale UMC.



*Paul Wilson*

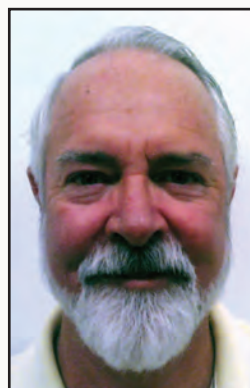
Wilson now serves as a men's ministry specialist and president of Wilmington District UM Men.

Ed Enstine, a member of the review committee, enthusiastically endorsed Wilson as a men's ministry specialist. "As a former pastor and presently a pastor's husband, Paul presents a unique opportunity as a men's ministry specialist in this district and conference. . . . It was apparent from our conversation that he is available and open to being used by clergy and lay to implant and resource men's ministry."

## Mission first

After serving as Volunteers-in-Mission coordinator for the Central Texas Conference and secretary of the Central Texas Conference United Methodist Men, James G. Bell decided to become a men's ministry specialist. He has since moved to the Northwest Texas Conference.

After serving as construction coordinator for a youth mission trip, Bell was



*James Bell*

to serve as Central Texas Conference director of Volunteers in Mission. During the three years he served in that volunteer post, he led seven additional youth mission trips and three Volunteer-in-Mission trips. He also organized conference workdays in Waco and Fort Worth and helped the conference form a covenant relationship with the Eastern Mexico Conference.

In 1995, when grapefruit-size hail hit Fort Worth, Bell served as the Red Cross disaster response coordinator and organized work teams from across the U.S. to put new roofs on more than 30 homes.

Bell is proposing an ambitious five-year action plan that begins with a small group of men and pastors from the Big Spring area who are active in UM Men programs. He then plans to shape this group into a leadership team to set plans for a Northwest Texas Annual Conference retreat.

“In five years, I see a district president, a men’s ministry specialist, a prayer advocate, a scouting coordinator and a committee in each of the districts,” said Bell. “I also see at least 25 men attending the 2013 National Gathering of UM Men in Nashville.”

“We have been praying for someone like James to step forward in the Northwest Texas Conference to lead the men,” said Ron Sarver, former president of South Central Jurisdiction UM Men. “He is very passionate about men’s ministry and will be a great asset.”

### **Emphasis on prison ministry**

Each men’s ministry specialist emphasizes a different aspect of men’s ministry. Charles Gilliland, a district

president of UM Men in the Memphis Annual Conference, is recruiting men to take DISCIPLE Bible study into Tennessee state prisons.

Gilliland serves as secretary of the Tennessee chapter of DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries, After co-leading DISCIPLE I about a dozen times in his local church, Gilliland now plans to recruit teams to take the 34-week Bible study into state prisons.

For the past couple of years the Memphis Conference layman has been visiting and writing an inmate in a Tennessee prison in West Tennessee.



*Charles Gilliland*

“Those visits have had a real effect on me,” he said. “I have always believed prison should be about changing lives in positive ways and

not merely warehousing people to do their time. The DISCIPLE study offers us a way to take a small first step to effect that change.”

In presenting the men’s ministry certificate, Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men, said Gilliland “brings to this task a great background in DISCIPLE Bible study and a strong commitment to congregational development.”

### **Future volunteers welcomed**

If you are interested in becoming a men’s ministry specialist, visit the [gcumm.org](http://gcumm.org) website or contact LaNisha Sayles (615-620-7260) ([lsayles@gcumm.org](mailto:lsayles@gcumm.org)).

# UM Men Awards

## Oklahoma men present John Wesley Award to treasurer

STILLWATER, Okla.—

**U**M Men of Stillwater UMC inducted Floyd Hawk, secretary/treasurer and assistant cook, into the John Wesley Society.

Retiring as chief administrative officer for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in

1988, Hawk is a passionate golfer, but he has found time for Gideon's International, Habitat for Humanity, Kiwanis Club and he serves AARP as a volunteer tax return preparer.

"There's

almost nothing to which Floyd's ever said 'No' when asked to serve," said Richard Buchanan, president of Stillwater UM Men. "He truly does have eyes like a hawk; he can see a need from afar; but he compassionately responds with the heart of a lamb."

## Missouri Annual Conference inducts three into John Wesley Society

COLUMBIA, Mo.—

**M**issouri Conference UM Men presented John Wesley Society Awards to Robert Stevens, a past conference president who also worked for the American Bible Society; George Wilcox, a lifelong supporter of men's ministries who has attended most of the 63 conference retreats; and David Baily, a key organizer of the last eight Missouri retreats.

## Northern Illinois men conference honor prayer advocate

WILLIAMS BAY, Wis.—

**U**M Men of Northern Illinois Annual Conference inducted Wardell Boyd,

conference prayer advocate, into the John Wesley Society during the 2011 Spiritual Congress at the Conference Point Center in Williams Bay.

"Wardell's passion for ministry has led him to serve as president of Hazelcrest Community Church men's unit, chair of the Board of Trustees, co-chair of the Food Pantry, and president of the Southern District UM Men," said Steve Nailor, president of Northern Illinois Conference UM Men. "Wardell has served on the executive committee of Northern Illinois Conference UM Men for 16 years and during that time, he helped the conference focus on many areas of mission, ministry, and leadership."

Boyd also teaches various levels of a certified automotive technician course to at-risk students attending Simon Vocational and Evening School and the Washburne Trade School.

## South Carolina church honors two leaders

COLUMBIA, S.C.—

**U**M Men of Francis Burns UMC presented life membership awards to Wes Furgess, president of the organization, and Edward McNair Sr., a Korean and Vietnam War veteran.

Furgess served as president of UM Men for the past six years, and also serves as a lay member of the South Carolina Annual Conference. As UM Men president, Furgess led efforts to: 1) purchase video equipment for fellowship hall; 2) purchase a six-passenger golf cart to transport persons from the parking lot to the sanctuary; 3) purchase and install church awnings; 4) raise funds for Providence House, and 5) provide a family with lawn maintenance and household repairs.

McNair served in the Korean War from 1951-52 and in Vietnam from 1968-69. He retired from the U.S. Army in 1971 after 26 years of service. He helps with the Meals-On-Wheels food delivery, and serves as a traffic



*Officers of the UM Men organization of Stillwater UMC (left to right) Ken Hudgeons, Richard Buchanan, and Norv Stunkel look on as Floyd Hawk reviews his John Wesley Society plaque*

control officer, a mentor, and a testing monitor for local elementary school. He sings in the choir, participates in the DISCIPLE Bible class and a men's Bible study class, and he brings monthly meals to men at Providence House.

### Church honors man of the year

CHARLOTTE, N.C. —

**S**t. Paul UMC named Oliver Bruce, a former school teacher and former chair of the church's finance committee, as the man of the year 2011. A lifelong member of St. Paul, Bruce owned a bookkeeping and income tax business for more than 30 years.

The organization also honored Shiquille Cottrell, a high school honor student and football player, for outstanding service in the church and community.

### Men honor former president

MOREHEAD CITY, N.C. —

**M**en of First UMC honored Harry Smith, a former two-term president of the group, with a John Wesley Society award.



Harry Smith

Smith also served as UM Men treasurer, a Sunday school teacher, and an assistant scoutmaster with his two Eagle Scout sons. He has also served the church through the television ministry and as chief cook and bottle washer for UM Men

"The history committee is happy to join with the members of our church in congratulating Harry on this well-deserved award, said Bob Guthrie. "He is creating a new heritage for those who will follow!"

## Six Southeastern pastors honored for men's ministry

**I**n recognition of outstanding men's ministry in their local churches, the Southeastern Jurisdiction UM Men in partnership with the G. Ross Freeman Foundation annually presents G. Ross Freeman Leadership Awards to pastors nominated by their local men's fellowship through their annual conference UM Men. In 2011, six pastors received the honor.

The Rev. Philip Short, pastor of First UMC in Stuart, Fla., began a weekly meeting of the Band of Brothers. The weekly Bible study launched several service projects.

The Rev. Ross Carter, pastor of Sunrise UMC in Holly Springs, N.C., participates in UM Men activities including Saturday breakfasts, the softball team and a building project at Camp Rockfish.

The Rev. Lynn Hill, pastor of First UMC in Franklin, Tenn., launched "Men of Momentum," a group that meets weekly for Bible study and prayer. He also supports mission trips, Habitat builds, and a ministry in the Nashville inner-city.

The Rev. Geneva Stafford, pastor of Jeremiah/Mt. Seal UM churches, leads a Bible study and supports a prayer-line ministry. She helped lead the "Hundred Men in Black" fund raiser, a Veteran's Day celebration and a Senior Citizen Day.



*Six pastors from six annual conferences received G. Ross Freeman Leadership Awards (l-r; row 1): Ross Carter of the North Carolina Conference; R. Phillip Short Jr. of the Florida Conference; Geneva Stafford of the South Carolina Conference; (l-r; row 2) Dr. A. Lynn Hill of the Tennessee Conference; Paul Milton of the Western North Carolina Conference; and Eddie Braswell of the South Georgia Conference.*

The Rev. Eddie Braswell, pastor of First UMC of Dawson, Ga., supports local and district UM Men activities and helped form a disaster-relief team.

The Rev. Paul Milton, pastor of St. Mark UMC in Charlotte, N.C., leads a men's Bible study group and participates in all UM Men activities.

## My four-week tour at the Philmont Scout Ranch

by Norman O. Williams

*A United Methodist clergyman reports on his summer as a chaplain at the New Mexico Scout camp*

### **The Philmont experience was awesome.**

During the first two weeks of staff training, we received an overwhelming amount of information, and I wondered if I had taken on more than I was prepared to execute.

Over 1,000 college age staff and 22,000 Boy Scouts and their adult advisers annually visit the ranch to hike and hike and hike.

Approximately 400 Scouts arrive and depart each day, and each day some 5,000 campers are in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains surrounding Philmont. College-age staff are in charge of the various camps and provide programs for the Scouts as they pass through.

My first week was at the health lodge. Since it was the week before campers arrived, staff members were the only occupants of the hospital. While there were only a few cases, I did run to a Taos hospital to visit a senior staff member with pneumonia.

At the beginning of a trek, one ranger hurt his shoulder and was unable to carry a pack and had to be reassigned to another position. He was quite upset because he had been training for two years to be a ranger.

The second week I was assigned to the Philmont Training Center. The center trains adults who want to become council members or leaders, scoutmasters, and cub leaders. In the center, I explained the role of chaplains and spoke about the "Duty to God" award. On Sunday, I was asked to lead an inter-faith worship service. It was difficult to conduct the service as I had to be careful not to offend non-Christians.

### **Back Country**

The third week I got to cover the back country; it was the most exciting week of my tour.

I was issued a four-wheel-drive Chevy Suburban to use on scenic and rough logging roads through the mountains. Participants in the television program "Hazardous Journeys" would be envious.

I made pastoral calls on back-country staff members and campers and provided rides for people into and out of the mountains. During the week, I hauled people, mail and trash over 350 miles at speeds never exceeding 30 miles per hour.

One camp, Apache Springs, is 20 miles from base camp and it takes two hours to get there. I would have paid to get to drive the roads that seemed to be straight up and straight down. It was such fun.

The fourth week I was assigned to logistics. The radio room receives all kinds of messages and some require special attention from the chaplain. I delivered two death messages to participants in the back country. These were unpleasant assignments; but my time in the Navy prepared me well. Some days on logistics were relatively quiet and others very busy.

During the fourth week I was also responsible for camp headquarters, which gave me time to get acquainted with the folks in the various offices and areas that I had not been able to visit previously.

People in base camp do an outstanding job





*The Rev. Norman Williams, a 2011 chaplain at Philmont Scout Ranch, hands a New Testament to Devin Luster, a member of Troop 700 chartered by New Beginnings UMC in Kennesaw, Ga.*

job of keeping everything running smoothly. They are responsible for welcoming and registering campers, providing medical checkups, checking equipment, assigning rangers, arranging transportation, assigning housing and providing meals. It is a momentous task to keep that kind of organization running smoothly.

### **Evening worship services**

Each evening at 7 p.m. chaplains are responsible for faith-specific worship services. From 150 to 260 campers attend the daily Protestant service. Unlike the services at camporees, and council camps, Protestant services are the same as Scouts would experience in their home churches.

I was very informal in leading the services. I let the campers know that church does not have to be stodgy. I had them sing lively choruses, and I injected bits of humor. Sometimes it worked. God wants us to have a good time in His presence.

During worship services, I also handed out backpacking New Testaments, a most gracious ministry to young people. UM Men sent 3,600 copies to be given to the campers. I told UM Scouts to go home and express their appreciation to the UM Men in their churches.

I was unprepared for the number of sermons that I was asked to deliver. Early in my tour, I called my wife and asked her to send a few folders of sermons. Otherwise I would have had to spend every spare minute working on messages.

Scouts from Alaska and the Middle East State of Qatar attended a Saturday service at the Cimarroncito Chapel. It was terrific that Scouts came from opposite sides of the earth to worship God in the mountains of Philmont.

I only regret that I did not know about the Philmont chaplaincy program until this year. For the past 12 years of retirement I could have been contributing to this ministry.

If the opportunity arises next year, and if I am up to it, I will be better prepared.

.....

### **United Methodist Scouters Workshop • August 5-11, 2012**

You and your family are invited to attend a workshop on UM scouting ministry at the Philmont Training Center in Cimarron, N.M.

Topics include the scouting ministry specialist program, adult, youth and church awards, and ways to reach youth

through Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Venturing, American Heritage Girls and other youth ministries.

Your family can also enjoy hiking, horseback riding, archery, crafts, fishing and more.

For information, contact Marc Stowe ([mstowe@gcumm.org](mailto:mstowe@gcumm.org)).



# What does a Scouting Ministry Specialist do?

There are 130 scouting ministry specialists in the United Methodist Church.

Each of these volunteers helps area churches understand how Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire USA, 4-H, and Big Brothers Big Sisters can enrich and expand their ministries to youth within and beyond their local congregations. But each volunteer approaches the task in a different manner.

## Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. —

**D**an Gates, one of seven scouting ministry specialists in Indiana, understands how churches can reach unchurched young people through scouting. He became a Methodist



*Dan Gates*

because his Scout troop met in a Methodist Church.

In 1938, at age 13, Gates joined Boy Scout Troop 59, chartered by Michigan Street

Methodist

Church in Indianapolis. “As I progressed through the ranks and positions of scouting, I became a Methodist,” said Gates. “I have been one ever since.”

He achieved the rank of Eagle in 1944 and was awarded the rank in absentia because he was on active duty with the U.S. Army.

In 1946, he was named skipper of a Sea Scout Ship for a Chesapeake Bay Cruise, and he has held just about every position there is in scouting since that time. He has served as a cubmaster, scoutmaster, district commissioner, adviser to Explorer Post 599, and president of

Belzer Scout Band Boosters.

Following a week-long training experience in 2009 at Philmont Scout Ranch, Gates was named charter organization representative for Troop and Pack 100, sponsored by the Lawrence UMC in Indianapolis.

Gates is presently in process of forming a Venture Crew. “We have the organization, leadership, paperwork and recruiting well under way,” he said. “The crew will start with a high-adventure theme until the young adults decide what their emphasis will become.”

## Kentucky

MAYSVILLE, Ky. —

**S**teve Richards, a mining engineer and a former scoutmaster, noted that there were no Boy Scout troops in any of the six United Methodist churches in his hometown of Maysville, Ky., a community with some 6,500 residents.

“I really wanted our church, Washington UMC, to sponsor a troop,” said Richards. “I travel a lot out of the country and knew I could not be the scoutmaster like I was 30 years ago.”

Richards received approval from the church board to form a troop and he is working with the other five UM congregations to establish the unit.

While Richards has had a long history in scouting, he learned about the office of scouting ministry specialists at the 2010 National Boy Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia where he met Larry Coppock, national director of UM scouting ministries.

Shortly after meeting Coppock, Richards was certified as one of three scouting



*Steve Richards*

ministry specialist in the Kentucky Annual Conference.

"I have attended the online scouting ministry specialist training sessions and they are wonderful," said Richards.

He now serves as a unit commissioner with the Shawnee District of the Bluegrass Council, and he helps with fundraisers, training and program activities.

"The first thing I did was to assist the Society of Mining Engineers by working a booth to promote the Mining Merit Badge," said Richards. That merit badge was one of the original scouting merit badges, but has been ignored in recent years. As a mining engineer, it was natural for Richards to support the badge.

### Arizona

SIERRA VISTA, Ariz.—

**J**im Larsen has experience on nearly every level of scouting, beginning with a Cub Scout Pack Committee and a Boy Scout Troop Committee.

He has served as a scoutmaster, chair of a troop committee, a varsity team committee, and a member of the district training committee.

He has also served as a charter organization representative and a commissioner on the Boy Scout Round Table and a district unit.

The veteran leader has also been a staff member of three world jamborees, five national jamborees and four international campouts with Mexican Scouts. The on-the-move leader has attended five National Order of the Arrow Conferences (four as a member of the staff), and three Philmont



*Jim Larsen*

training courses, including a UM Scouters Workshop in 1999.

He now serves as an adviser to a chapter of the Order of the Arrow and he is the conference scouting coordinator.

Larsen annually presents Cross and Flame Awards to Scout leaders in the Sierra Vista UMC. "With a troop, pack, team, and crew there is usually an adult who is deserving of the award each year," says Larsen.

Larsen says the Sierra Vista Church will introduce Duty to God as part of the Sunday school curriculum. "I think the Duty to God program is a great program and the primary reason I am a scouting ministry specialist," says Larsen.

### Arkansas

HAMBURG, Ark. —

**A**llyne Solomon, a church and community worker for the General Board of Global Ministries, is a graduate of Central Methodist University in Fayette, Mo. She also has a master's degree from the University of Oklahoma.

A member of Hamburg UMC, Solomon is helping Hamburg churches understand how scouting and other youth-serving organizations can expand their outreach to the poor and disenfranchised.



*Allyne Solomon*

"As a program specialist I am a resource person for our Cub pack and Girl and Boy Scout troops," said Solomon. "Last year we started having a Girl Scout unit meet at the church and this year we are going to start having a Boy Scout troop. Part of job is to be the liaison between the church and Scouts."

## Missouri

ST. CHARLES, Mo. —

**G**reg Nelson, scouting ministry specialist in Missouri notes that each troop or pack has a unique relationship with the church.

“There is no such thing as a typical Scout charter arrangement or relationship,” says Nelson. “Each unit is as unique as the church by which it is chartered.”

In an effort to recruit Scout troops to join a UM Men retreat, Nelson found some units had dissolved. Others had changed charter organizations. Still others were led by non-Methodist scouters.

During sessions of the Missouri Annual Conference, Nelson spoke with pastors and lay persons about their scouting ministries.



*Greg Nelson*

“We met a number of visionary Scout leaders and pastors who see scouting as a ministry,” says Nelson. “Some churches were strong supporters of their chartered Scout units, fully integrating their church with scouting, and that was clearly reflected in their active PRAY awards programs. One troop near Kansas City was awarded the Bishop’s Award of Excellence at the conference.”

“At the same time, we met even more folks who had never considered the idea of scouting as ministry. Many pastors were not even sure if their church chartered a unit or not, and didn’t know who the scoutmaster or cubmaster was — if they had units.”

### More welcome

If you are interested in becoming a scouting ministry specialist, please contact Larry Coppock, staff executive for scouting and other youth-serving agencies for the General Commission on United Methodist Men ([lcoppock@gcummm.org](mailto:lcoppock@gcummm.org)) (615/620-7261).

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## F.B.I. reveals new findings

ST. LOUIS, Mo. —

**T**he F.B.I. (Faith-Based Initiative) of the Boy Scouts of America reports that Scout units that are chartered by churches and other faith-based organizations last longer and participants advance further in the ranks.

The F.B.I. also reports that 70 percent of the troops and packs meeting in churches have only one member whose family belongs to the church. “The opportunity for sizeable growth is real,” says the F.B.I.

The F.B.I. found that 21.27 percent of units meeting in faith-based institutions

were discontinued while 30.26 percent of units meeting in other facilities were dropped, and 87.9 percent of Boy Scouts in churches and other religious institutions advanced in the ranks, compared to only 66.6 percent chartered by secular organizations.



# Scouting Awards

## Michael Harris

**A founder of national association honored**  
CIMMERON, N.M. —

Michael Harris, a founding member of the National Association of U.M. Scouters and a member of the BSA National Executive Board, has received the Silver Beaver, Silver Antelope and Silver Buffalo Awards. To add to his silver collection, he received a Silver Torch Award while serving as a leader of a workshop at the Philmont Scout Ranch.

Although Harris never achieved the rank of Eagle, he helped his son, Michael Jr., achieve the rank and is now helping Michael III, his Tiger Cub grandson, follow in his father's steps.

The Palm Springs, N.M., attorney recalls a pivotal moment when he was elected troop leader. "From that moment on, I was never in doubt again that I could lead when called on."



*Michael D. Harris Sr. (left) presents an historic National Association of U.M. Scouters (NAUMS) flag to the Rev. Gregory Godwin at the U.M. Scouter's Workshop at the Philmont Training Center in Cimarron, N.M. No longer used because of a trademark violation, the flag was given to the General Commission of Archives and History. Harris received the flag at the end of his tenure as the second NAUMS president. Godwin presented Harris with a Silver Torch Award during the workshop.*

Harris attended BSA world jamborees in Canada, Korea, Holland and Chile, and he chaired the Chile event. He is a fellow of the John Wesley Society and a recipient of the

James West Fellowship Award.

## Dalton Greer

**AV techie and participant in mission trip**  
MARSHALLTON, Pa. —

Dalton Greer, a leader of junior high youth and a member of a mission team to Mexico, received a Good Samaritan Award from Marshallton UMC. A member of a local Good-Works program and a participant in three musical fundraisers, Dalton also serves as the audio-visual technician for worship services.

For the past eight years, Dalton has attended Greenwood Hill Boys' Camp and Challenge Week; he is now a counselor in training.

Senator Rafferty presented Dalton with a Good Citizenship Award in 2008.

The Eagle Scout also volunteers at the West Bradford Youth Association and always participates in church work days. The high school senior was a member of the Keystone Boy's State program last summer and is a big brother in the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization.



*Dalton Greer*



*Isaac Joseph*

## Isaac Joseph

**Scout honored for service to homeless**  
FUQUAY-VARINA, N.C. —

Isaac Joseph, 13, a member of Boy Scout Troop 320 chartered by Fuquay-Varina UMC, received

a Good Samaritan Award from the church for participating in a quarterly program that provides meals and housing for homeless families. The youngster also serves as aide to the troop chaplain.

to serve the Lord through church or Scouts. Isaac has a true servant's heart," said his youth leader.

### **Terry Cosgriff** **Alaskan Scout leader honored**

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—

**T**erry Cosgriff, scoutmaster of Troop 214 and a member of the Great Alaska Council, received a Cross and Flame Award from St. John UMC.



*Terry Cosgriff and Troop 214 celebrate popcorn sales totaling \$90,235. The sales funded a trip to Hawaii.*

John Anderson, scouting coordinator for the Anchorage church, says Cosgriff has served as director of two Wood Badge six-day training sessions and as a staff member for an additional five years. "The six-day course is known as a Ph.D. in scouting," said Anderson.

In 2010, Cosgriff served as scoutmaster for the Alaska Boy Scout Centennial Jamboree in Seward, an event attended by 1,400 Scouts.

"Under his leadership, Troop 214 has sold more popcorn than any other troop in the United States for the last three years," said Anderson. The popcorn sales program is the largest of BSA fund-raising projects.

Cosgriff will put the Cross and Flame Award along side of his other awards, including the Silver Beaver Award, the District Award of Merit, the National President's Scoutmaster Award of Merit, The Commissioner's Arrowhead Award, the Scouter's Training

Award, the Cubmaster's Training Award and the American Legion Scouting Award. In addition to scouting, Cosgriff also coaches a little league baseball team and a soccer team.

### **Darryl Moore, David Pickel and Dwight Elrod** **Indiana church honors three Scout leaders**

SELLERSBURG, Ind. —  
**S**ellersburg UMC presented Cross and Flame Awards to three leaders of a Boy Scout troop, a Cub Scout pack, two Venture crews, and a Varsity team serving over 175 young people.

Darryl Moore, a former Cub scout leader, now serves as assistant scoutmaster, assistant coach of the Varsity team, and associate adviser of the Venture crew.

David Pickel has served as den leader and cubmaster; he now serves as assistant scoutmaster and associate adviser for the Venture crew. He also serves as the charter organization representative for all five Scout units.

Dwight Elrod has served as committee chairman for the Cub pack and scoutmaster of the troop. He now serves as troop committee chairman.



*Three Scout leaders of Sellersburg UMC proudly show their Cross and Flame Awards. Left to right: Dwight Elrod, Darryl Moore and David Pickel provided a total of 50 years of leadership to church Scout units and helped more than 50 boys attain the rank of Eagle.*

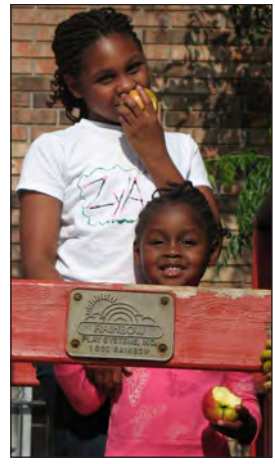
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