

UM MEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men



The 50th anniversary of the
United Methodist Church



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Putting the pieces together—then and now

I had a particular view of the Methodist Church in 1968; we (the MYF) washed dishes on the Shrove Tuesday (Fat Tuesday in other places) Methodist Men's Pancake Supper. Dad was a faithful member and I was in my last semester of high school. I knew this group of men, which also included my scoutmaster, several former Sunday school teachers, many of my friend's dads, and leaders in all the committees of



Dulin Methodist Church. They were the go-to guys in this busy suburban Washington D.C. church. Honestly, I wasn't sure what all they did, but if there was "doing" going on, these men were behind it.

I saw another view as a layman at Centenary UMC in Lynchburg, Va.; a longer hair version of myself played guitar in a worship service there. I saw another part of the UMC when I was welcomed as basic trainee (and the shortest hair version of myself) in Columbia, S.C.

In Texas, I saw how wonderfully they embraced their history and college students in San Marcos First UMC. As a young married couple we were adopted by Brenham UMC.

I saw the ecumenical part at First UMC Mexia and the praying part at Lakeview Conference Center. I saw the scouting part and local and international mission part at Perritte Memorial UMC in Nacogdoches.

At Antioch UMC here in Tennessee, I see the power of the weekly small group, a vital part of UM Men and the UMC.

I am blessed to see the UMC at its very best. From

retreats in Finger Lakes, to a camp in New Mexico mountains that literally and figuratively takes your breath away. From men on the prayer line to families bagging potatoes for hungry people. I have seen it in the Philippines, in Europe, and in Mozambique. In a Scout tent or in one of our great colleges, coast to coast, large church to small, when all the pieces fit together the mosaic is amazing. If you are not seeing it all—it is there.

Read this issue and see how the pieces all fit together during a very challenging time.

Thank God that all those pieces came together to bring each of us to Christ.

Gil Hanke

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

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UM Men

Summer 2018

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



I attended my first General Conference in 1960 while I was a student at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. At that time, I was enrolled in a class on “The Discipline and Church Administration.” Dr. Walter Williams required us to spend a few days attending General Conference sessions in the civic auditorium in downtown Denver.

We were required to write an article on an issue discussed at the assembly. I wrote about efforts to disband the Central African-American Jurisdiction.

The 1956 General Conference created a “Commission to Study and Recommend Action Concerning the Jurisdictional System.” That 70-member group recommended to the 1960 General Conference that the Methodist Church should continue to allow churches and conferences in the Central Jurisdiction to transfer to geographical jurisdictions on a voluntary basis.

The commission argued that abolishing the Central Jurisdiction” would impose hardships on its constituent annual conferences. Commission members noted African Americans comprise only one twenty-seventh of the denomination, but the racially based system guarantees them one-sixth of the total representation on Methodist agencies. The jurisdiction also guaranteed African-Americans would be members of the Council of Bishops. Many suggested Blacks might not be elected to the episcopacy by predominately white geographical jurisdictions. They also said there would be few opportunities for African American pastors to serve in

predominately white annual conferences. In a motion from the floor, the Rev. Harold Case asked the assembly to amend the report of the commission and call for the elimination of Central Jurisdiction “by due Constitutional process by 1968.”

George Poor, a delegate from the Pacific Northwest Conference, said Methodists should have confidence that, regardless of race, “competent” people will be elected to the episcopacy and invited to serve on Methodist general agencies.

“I want to make it clear here, that the Negroes of our church have never favored a Central Jurisdiction,” said the Rev. Noah Moore, a member of the Delaware Conference in the Central Jurisdiction. “We are ready for the abolition of the Central Jurisdiction, and we are ready now, but the great question we face is, “Are the geographical jurisdictions ready?”

The 1960 General Conference refused to set 1968 as the target date to eliminate the Central Jurisdiction.

In a less noted speech at the 1960 meeting, Evangelical United Brethren Bishop Reuben Mueller reported his denomination is ready to “explore the advantages and problems involved in organic union with the Methodist Church.”

Eight years later Bishop Mueller joined hands with Bishop Lloyd Wicke of the Methodist Church to create The United Methodist Church (see page 5). That union ended the Central Jurisdiction and created the General Commission on Religion and Race with the Rev. Woodie White as the first staff executive (see page 11). Noah Moore became a bishop in the united church.

Rich Peck



The 1968 Dallas United Methodist Conference formed the United Methodist Church. Photo courtesy of the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History.

The 50th anniversary of the United Methodist Church

In 1968, 130 delegates from the Evangelical United Brethren Church met with 850 delegates from The Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church.

It was the second uniting conference for members of the Methodist Church. In 1939, the northern and southern branches of the Methodist Episcopal Church, along with the Methodist Protestant Church, joined together to create The Methodist Church at a uniting General Conference in Kansas City, Mo.

It was the third uniting conference for the Evangelical United Brethren Church. In

1922, the Evangelical Association united with the United Brethren in Christ Church, and in 1946, the Evangelical Church united with the United Brethren in Christ to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

The plan of union

In 1964, the General Conferences of both denominations elected representatives to serve on a Commission on Church Union. They asked the commission to negotiate “a plan and basis of union.”

The two denominations met in separate sessions in Chicago on Nov. 8-17, 1966. By more than a three-fourths majority vote, delegates to the two assemblies approved the plan of union



with a proposed Constitution, enabling legislation, and statements of Christian belief and social understandings. That action was affirmed by two thirds of the voting members attending 1967 annual conference sessions in both denominations.

Happy birthday

The two denominations again met in separate sessions in Dallas, prior to their joint meeting on April 23. Delegates to the EUB gathering elected Dr. Paul Washburn as bishop.

In the opening session of the uniting conference, Bishop Lloyd C. Wicke of New York Area of the Methodist Church and Bishop Reuben H. Mueller of the Indianapolis Area of the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined their voices to say: "Lord of the Church, we are united in thee, in thy Church, and now in the United Methodist Church. The Tuesday ceremony symbolized the formation of a Protestant denomination of more than 11 million members in the U.S., and more than one million members in more than 50 countries around the world.

"This then is our birthday," said Dr. Albert C. Outler, a professor at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. "It is a day of high hopes and renewed commitments."

Pushed off the mountaintop

"Delegates necessarily had to descend quickly from the mountaintop to get back to the gritty of the Uniting Conference," wrote Lee Ranck, in the June 1968 issue of *Church and Home*, an EUB monthly magazine. "But none expected the abrupt plunge which came in the greetings of Texas Governor John Connally. . . His buffoonery about the glories of Texas pushed them off the mountain to hurl through space and splatter on the rocks at the base of the heights they had ascended."

The Episcopal Address

In the Episcopal Address, Bishop Wicke observed that the Methodist Church in



Evangelical United Brethren Church Bishop Reuben H. Mueller (left) and Methodist Bishop Lloyd C. Wicke join hands on April 23, 1968. Photo courtesy of the United Methodist Commission on Archives and History.

America began with the 1784 Christmas Conference. That assembly commissioned three men to serve as missionaries. Freeborn Garretson and James Cromwell were assigned to Nova Scotia, and Jeremiah Lambert took a ship to Antiqua. Those missionaries marked the beginning chapters of the Missionary Society founded in 1819, the predecessor of the UM Board of Global Ministries. Five years after the Christmas conference, John Dickens founded the Book Concern, predecessor to the UM Publishing House.

Hope during a difficult time

The meeting in Dallas occurred 19 days after the killing of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Bishop Wicke told of the "catastrophic violence" which followed the shooting and subsequent government actions to quell the violence. "True it is that lawlessness cannot be tolerated," he said. "However, to repress these explosions by whatever mean without major attention to the conditions causing frustration and

hopelessness escalates the spirit of hate and compounds the final destruction. The causes of civil war must be found and given conscientious consideration and correction by those who claim membership in the Christian fellowship."

The bishop also noted an antagonistic climate toward theism. "Some best sellers assure us that God is dead," said Wicke. "They say anarchy is freedom, license is liberty, and right and wrong have no ultimate meaning (but) signs of hope are rising out of the storm. They tell us that right and wrong do have assured consequences; that God is definitely alive in the vast movements of our time. This is the hour for the Christian fellowship to speak, to venture across the bridge of communications in the one vehicle that is decisive and conclusive, a Christ-centered life."

End of the Central Jurisdiction

The merger resulted in the final elimination of the Central Jurisdiction, a compromise between the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Methodist Episcopal Church that placed all African Americans in a separate jurisdiction with representatives on general agencies and the Council of Bishops. "The disappearance of the Central Jurisdiction from the visible scene should not suggest that the fellowship has been completely sanctified," said Wicke. "The dimensions of the unfinished task of reconciliation dare not be evaded or hidden. The task cannot be assigned to a committee or commission for suggestion and resolution. No one will 'work it out' for us—only the grace of God at work in the very marrow of our being, discovering in each of us a willing servant."

Religion, race commission authorized

While the conference was dealing with racial issues, Dr. Roy Nichols, an articulate African American pastor of Salem Methodist Church in Harlem, N.Y., rose to propose the creation of a Commission on

Religion and Race. The new commission would take the place of the Commission on Inter-jurisdictional Relations, a Methodist organization working to eliminate the Central (all Black) jurisdiction.

Five days later, after a legislative committee reviewed the proposal, the assembly authorized the formation of the commission and established a budget of \$700,000 for the 1969-72 quadrennium. The budget came from a \$20 million Fund for Reconciliation approved earlier as part of the UM quadrennial emphasis. The commission was asked to counsel and encourage local churches seeking to become inclusive fellowships.

Nichols later became the first African American to be elected to the episcopacy. The Rev. Woodie White was elected general secretary at the first meeting of the newly formed commission.

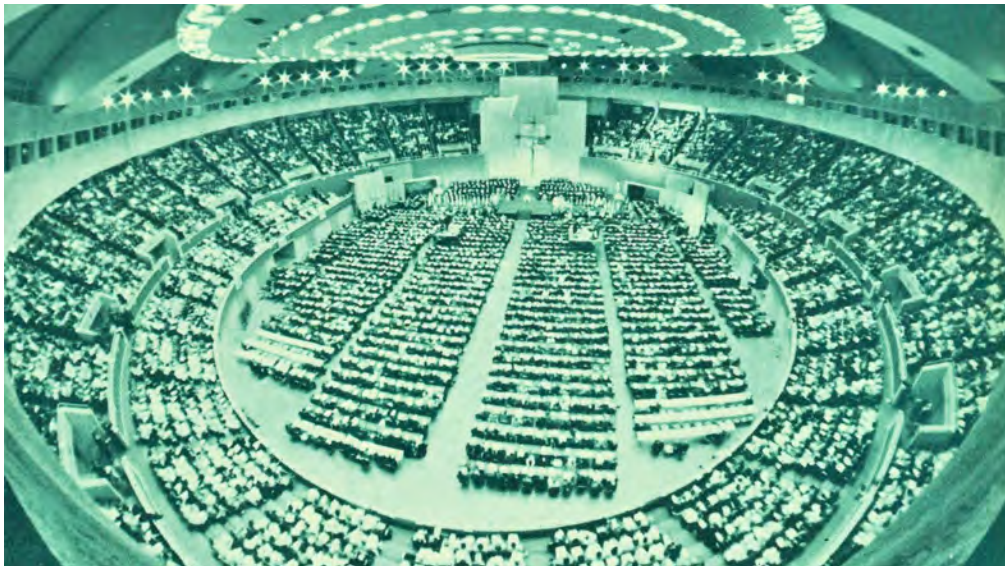
The Uniting Conference spent an evening paying tribute to Dr. King. Bishop Donald Tippett, official Methodist representative to Dr. King's funeral, said, "Dr. King, like St. Francis, sought not so much to be loved as to love, and no one in our day was a more convinced believer in love than Dr. King.

Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, chair of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Board, said, "Martin took love out of the cage of sentimentality and the prison of uselessness and made it jump for joy."

Publishing House under fire

The 1968 conference met days after *Christianity and Crisis* published an article titled "Practice What You Print." In the article, James McGrew noted the UMC will have "beautiful phrases about worker's right," but there is no African American on the governing board of the Methodist Publishing House, and none on the executive staff. Moreover, the Nashville-based publishing arm maintains segregated locker rooms for employees.

Thurman Dodson, a delegate from



Dallas photographer Bob Smith captures the historic service of union with a “fish eye” lens.

Baltimore, asked Lovick Pierce, the top Publishing House executive, if he had received a request from the Central Jurisdiction to appoint a member of that jurisdiction as an employee at the policy-making level. Pierce reported that none had been hired to date, but one might be appointed by “late summer or fall.”

Delegates to the conference also called for all UM agencies to comply with guidelines set by Project Equality, and they created a 16-member committee to investigate policies of the Nashville-based publishing arm.

Pierce acted quickly and that June he hired the Rev. W. T. Handy, Jr. a black pastor from Baton Rouge, as a staff member.

Following Project Equality guidelines proved more difficult. Ten months later, Pierce said, his attorney had advised against joining Project Equality, and he claimed, “Reporting would burden the company with an overload of paperwork.”

Black Methodist for Church Renewal picketed the Nashville headquarter building and regional Cokesbury stores.

Protests ended after the 1970

resignation of Pierce and the appointment of John Procter, who named Handy as a vice president. Lee Ranck, an editor with *UM engage*, a magazine of the UM Board of Christian Social Concerns which had criticized the house, wrote, “A strong new wind is blowing through publishing house walls.”

The investigative committee told the 1972 General Conference in Atlanta, “We see a radical change in the work of the Board of Publications . . . labor-management relations have improved immensely.”

Debate over ordination

During ordination services in the former Methodist and EUB Churches, ordinands promised to not smoke or drink. After hours of debate, delegates finally agreed to ordination vows calling for disciplines of personal conduct rather than legalistic requirements. Some delegates suggested the change would be hard to interpret to the “folks back home.” They feared the absence of required abstinence from tobacco and alcohol would make it appear church standards had been softened.

Delegates in favor of the change said the

change “gets deeper than anything we’ve had before us—a pledge to self-discipline.”

Delegates retained the two-step process to ordination. Candidates would continue to be ordained deacons and later as elders, but the conference gave new status to full-time lay ministers.

Social justice actions

The conference commended President Lyndon Johnson for his moves toward negotiation of the Vietnam war, and called on him to “go anywhere, any time to talk peace.” The assembly agreed, 664-444, that conscientious objectors must oppose all war, not just the Vietnam War.

Rushing through dozens of last-minute legislative items, delegates commended the recent reduction in U.S. bombing of North Vietnam and called for the withdrawal of all outside military forces, guarantees against reprisals following a negotiated settlement, and aid in the reconstruction and development of Vietnam.

In light of opposition to the war and reactions to the death of Martin Luther King, delegates called for people to respect the laws, but they supported the “right to nonviolent civil disobedience in cases of personal conscience.”

Other proposed resolutions were not considered because of time pressure; they were printed in papers for congregational study.

In other business

Delegates to the Uniting Conference agreed to:

- Hold a special session April 20-25, 1970, in Baltimore to consider unfinished docket items.
- Create a \$4 million “Temporary General Aid” fund to increase pensions and salaries for African-American pastors.
- Give permission to nearly 560,000 members of churches in 14 countries




Nearly 10,000 people, many from the Dallas area, participate in the Sunday evening Communion Service in the arena.

to become autonomous. Following this action, churches in Singapore, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Argentina left the UMC to become autonomous Methodist churches.

- Create a local church structure that includes a Council on Ministries and changes the Methodist “Quarterly Conferences” to a “Charge Conference.”
- Establish a Program Council in Dayton, Ohio, and create a Division of Interpretation, a Division of Television, Radio, and Film Communications, and a Division of Coordination, Research and Planning.
- Create a Commission on Ecumenical Affairs, A Commission on Structure, a Creedal Study Commission, a Social Principles Commission, and a Quadrennial Program Committee.

Final Address

In a final message, Bishop Eugene M. Frank of St. Louis, president of the UM Council of Bishops, said the structure built at Dallas is “already burning. . . . Let the fire consume every human barrier to brotherhood. Let it consume every human structure that is unnecessary. Let it burn away pride of position. Let it burn away pride of possession and race. Let it loose in the world that God may be God and the whole world be reconciled to Him through our Lord, Jesus Christ.” 

A view from a EUB

By Bishop Joseph Yeakel

In 1968, I was serving as the executive secretary of the Board of Evangelism for the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

Representatives of our denomination had several meetings with representatives of the Methodist Church prior to the 1968 meeting in Dallas. In those meetings, group members agreed two EUB board executives would serve as top staff executives of boards in the newly formed United Methodist Church.

Representatives decided Paul A. Washburn, executive director of the EUB Commission on Church Union, and the Rev. Paul Church, director of the EUB Program Council, would serve as EUB top staff executives of boards in the merged church.

However, at the final session of the EUB General Conference, Bishop Harold R. Heining of Minneapolis, announced his retirement, and EUB delegates elected Washburn as a bishop. The retirement of Heining and the election of Washburn meant another EUB would need to lead another UM agency

“Hold that position for me,” said Bishop Gerald Kennedy, president of the Methodist Board of Evangelism in 1968.

The Rev. Kermit Long was serving as general secretary of the Methodist Board of Evangelism following the 1965 retirement of the Rev. Harry Denman. While serving as chief staff executive of the Nashville-based board, Long convinced

six or seven Methodist church leaders in Africa to invest in a fund he administered. Although Long promised great returns, the Africans received nothing, and they complained to Bishop Kennedy.

Kennedy fired Long as a con artist, and he told me the executive committee of the UM Board of Evangelism would nominate me for the post of general secretary of the merged board.

After election, Bishop Kennedy asked, “Joe, what salary do you want?” Once I got over the shock of that question, I said, “I never asked for a salary in the EUB church and I won’t ask for one in the UMC. Whatever you decide is fine with me.”

I served as top staff executive of the Nashville board from 1968 to 1972 when I was elected to the episcopacy on the second ballot at the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference. I then served 12 years in the New York West Area (1972-84,) and 12 years in the Washington (D.C.) Area (1984-1996).

I retired in 1996. 



Bishop Joseph Yeakel, 90, served as president of the General Board of Church and Society (1976-1980 and 1992-1996). He served as president of General Council on Finance and Administration (1984-88) and he was president of the Council of Bishops

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Morris bought a new refrigerator. To get rid of his old one, he put it in his front yard and hung a sign on it saying, “Free—you want it—you take it.”

For three days the fridge sat there. No one touched it. Eventually, Morris decided that people were too untrusting of the deal. He changed the sign to read, “Fridge for sale—\$150.” The next day someone stole it.



HUMOR

The view from a Methodist delegate

By Bishop Woodie W. White

It is easy to recall my first General Conference as a delegate. I vividly remember the faces, sounds, and drama, in spite of the fact the historic conference took place 50 years ago.

There was excitement as 980 delegates from around the world came together to unite the Evangelical United Brethren Church with The Methodist Church.

Racial tensions

There was tension as well.

Methodist delegates hoped the birth of the United Methodist Church would conclude the long struggle to end racial segregation.

All delegates hoped the new church would be free of institutional and organizational segregation.

The most obvious symbol of that racism in The Methodist Church was the continuation of the Central Jurisdiction, a body created in 1939 as a racial judiciary comprised of the denomination’s black congregations, clergy and laity.

The death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Uniting Conference was clearly impacted by the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which occurred on April 4, only a few days before the April 23 opening of the assembly. The killing left millions grieving, angry, and uncertain about the future of the nation.

I was a relatively young pastor, and a first-time delegate to the 1968 conference.

Uppermost in my mind, was the issue of race, and the hope that bold action would be taken to signal, the commitment of the new denomination to racial justice and inclusiveness.

I was a member of two unofficial groups: Methodists for Church Renewal and the Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR), an organization formed a month before the 1968 General

Conference. Both groups had been preparing for significant engagement with General Conference. They planned for public demonstrations and lobbying of delegates to end racial segregation and commit the new denomination to racial inclusiveness.

The end of the Central Jurisdiction

Dr. Astor Church, a member of the Central Jurisdiction and a former staff member of the General Board of Christian Social Concerns, introduced a motion to the 1966 General Conference of the Methodist Church that formally ended the racially-based jurisdiction. His clever motion provided that the new denomination would make no provision for a Central Jurisdiction. The adoption of the motion effectively ended the racially based structure.

However, the task that still needed to be accomplished was the merger of Central Jurisdiction churches and members with the five geographical jurisdictions.

The principal discussion of the issues related to race were found in the “Report of the Commission on Inter-jurisdictional Relations,” commonly called, the “Commission of 24.”

Created by the 1956 General Conference, this commission was charged with studying race relations in the Methodist Church and the jurisdictional system. Subsequent conferences reduced the number of commission members and increased the number of responsibilities.

As a member of the recently organized BMCR, I was named to a committee of three or four members. We were asked to review the report of the commission and to suggest amendments.

Once we agreed on the amendments we wanted to offer, we needed an eloquent, respected and influential delegate to introduce an extraordinary amendment

to the report. We selected the Rev. Dr. Roy Nicholas, pastor of the historic Salem Methodist congregation in the Harlem Area of New York City.

Creation of a new commission

Dr. Nichol's presentation was masterful. The amendment contained a call for a new structure with expanded functions and a new name. "The Commission on Religion and Race" would be a general agency with a general secretary and a staff; it would select its own office location.

The proposed amendment elicited hours of debate. There was strong opposition and vigorous support. In the end, the conference created a new agency,

To my surprise, I was selected to serve as the first general secretary of the newly formed commission, now based in Washington, D.C.

The General Commission on Religion and Race continues 50 years later.

In my estimation, no General Conference has made as many comprehensive changes in the racial direction and policy of the Church as the 1968 General Conference. I have always believed, the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., served as a reminder that the church must do more to erase racism, bigotry, and racial injustice from its institutional life.

Conference accomplishments

- Placed in the heart of its Constitution a commitment to racial inclusiveness and a non-discriminatory clause: "The United Methodist Church is a part of the Church universal which is a part of the body in Christ. Therefore, all persons, without regard to race, color, national origin, economic conditions, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, to participate in its programs, and when they take the appropriate vows to be admitted into the membership in any local

church in the connection. In The United Methodist Church no conference or any other organizational unit of the Church shall be structured so as to exclude any member of any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, or economic conditions.

- Created a Standing Agency to monitor and assist the Church in achieving and maintain its commitment to racial and ethnic inclusiveness.
- Created a \$20 million Bishops Fund for Reconciliation.
- Created a Special Salary Assistance and Pension Fund to assist merger conferences who required financial aid in assuring all pastors shared equally in pension and salary benefits.
- Created a special committee to investigate the employment practices of a general agency.
- Set a target date of 1972, by which all conference mergers would be completed.
- Committed the Church to use its economic influence by supporting Project Equality.



Bishop Woodie W. White served as the first general secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race in 1968. He was elected to the episcopacy in 1984 and he was assigned to the Illinois Area (1984-1992).

Bishop White was assigned to the Indiana Area in 1992, and he retired there in 2004. He served as Bishop-in-Residence at Candler School of Theology, Emory University from 2004 to 2016.

The future of the UMC — It's time to grow again

By Bishop Richard B. Wilke

I am worn out with all this talk about a dying church. Everyone is writing about the demise of Methodism. Church attendance is down. Sunday school attendance is declining. Prospect lists are smaller. Fewer new churches are being started. Not as many people are going into the ministry.

It's a tough time.

Years ago, I wrote a book, *And Are We Yet Alive* (Cokesbury, 1986). It described the tragic decline. Today, nothing has changed. The downward trend continues.

It is time we started looking forward with zest, so I've been looking around for signs of growth.

Here are some ideas. We haven't begun to fight.

Welcome Hispanics

Our population is exploding. President Trump wants to build a wall to keep the Mexicans out. Folks are flooding in from all over. Are we reaching any of them?

Western Kansas is exploding with Hispanics. New Spanish-speaking churches have been started in Garden City and Liberal, and look at this: In Dodge City, they have a Spanish-speaking worship service at the same time as an English service—in separate rooms.

Move to the city

Have you noticed the population shift in our country? Rural churches are dying. Today you can drive for miles in Kansas and never see a farmhouse. Farmers are handling thousands of acres. People are moving to the cities for jobs. What an opportunity to start new churches.

But the old way of doing it doesn't work anymore. You can't just send a young preacher or lay members to knock

on doors. Nowadays, folks open the door three inches, leave it chained and say, "No thanks, we don't want to buy any!"

Good neighbor plan

The new strategy is the "good neighbor" plan. Have a church member take a homemade treat to a neighbor. Visit with someone down the street. Use 25 families scattered in a new area to be "neighbors". Then, after months of getting acquainted, invite their new friends to a Bible study group. Get four or five folks in a Bible study group; multiply that by dozens, and a new church is born. Today, folks are hungry for friends but scared to death over making one.

Purchase land

But what about land for the prospective new church? Years ago when I was a bishop in Arkansas I was talking with the Catholic bishop about starting new churches. I said, "It's so hard to get land." He answered saying, "Oh, we try to purchase land 20 years in advance." "Good grief," I said. He responded, "You see, we have to have room for a school as well as a church, so we buy land well in advance." Wow, I thought. "How do you know where the city is headed?" "Oh," he replied, "The city has a planning committee. They'll share their dreams and plans with you."

So, we need to plan ahead—buy land and send scores of laypeople as "missioners" to make friends and build small-group fellowships. A big downtown church can train 50 or 100 lay families to be "missioners" who will form scores of "friendship" groups.

Talk about Jesus

I'm not a fundamentalist, but, people need to talk about Jesus. For too long our seminaries and our churches have preached world peace and social justice and forgotten square one salvation talk, like, "Have you given your heart to Jesus?" or "God's grace can save us from our sins."

When I was a young preacher, I was working really hard, and I became worn out, half sick, even dizzy at times. I considered asking the bishop to send me to Colorado.

Then, one day, my wife, Julia, and I attended an Ashram with E. Stanley Jones. Now, I had been to seminary, but I had never heard the word preached on "surrender". He said we could come forward, kneel, and surrender our hearts to Jesus. Well, I did so. I surrendered, and I felt the world drop off my shoulders. And, I heard a voice from heaven say, "Well, it's about time." I was healed and I've been free and healthy ever since.

Friends first

We need people to surrender to Jesus Christ. But, we can't start there. We first have to be a friend. Folks are suspicious of strangers, so we need lay people to invite neighbors into small group fellowships. After a time, they can invite them into a study group or a Sunday school class.

We have discovered through *Disciple Bible Study* that people are willing to meet once a week at odd times and places and study the Bible. The heartbeat of small study groups is honest questions, thoughtful prayers, and study about Jesus. It is the Wesleyan way.


Worship options

What about church services? A revolution is occurring in worship. People want fresh, new music—not just old hymns and tired old soft organ music—but not rock

and roll either. They just want a little joy, a little beat, a little enthusiasm. They want children and youth to sing, and solos to bring tears to their eyes. Some churches hold two services—one "traditional" and one "contemporary".

Suppose, you want to send a great administrator and visitor, but a really weak preacher, to start a new church. Why don't you put up a screen in the front of the sanctuary? Let your pastor work all week calling on prospective new members, and then let folks listen to Adam Hamilton every Sunday morning? It's happening in cities across the country.

What about the sermon? On-the-ball preachers today need to talk about Jesus in personal and interesting ways. Old scholarly manuscripts won't do. My son, Paul, recently preached on "Where Jesus Went." Jesus went to the hungry, so Paul included a few pictures of some free food programs. Jesus went to the outcast, so Paul showed a few slides of a homeless shelter. Then Jesus went to prostitutes, and Paul brought in two women who had lived on the streets and were now in rehabilitation, to give their testimony. It was dynamite. The people cheered.

Well, I believe the church is waking up. I believe there are new strategies, new approaches and new ways of doing things. I believe we can recapture John Wesley's strategy and make it work today in a growing church. 



Bishop Wilke was elected to the episcopacy in 1984 by the South Central Jurisdictional Conference and was assigned to the Arkansas Area. He served that Area for 12 years, retiring in 1996. He currently is Bishop in Residence at Southwestern College.

NFL Hall of Famer Tony Dungy reflects on All Pro Dad

By Joe Henderson

Practice had just ended for the day in the 1996 preseason camp for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, but head coach Tony Dungy wasn't talking about football.

As he and Assistant Coach Clyde Christensen walked off the field at Tampa's Pepin-Rood Stadium that broiling, humid August afternoon, they were focused on their families.

Tony Dungy, current NBC analyst and former NFL coach, formed the idea for All Pro Dad in 1996 to place a greater focus on family relationships.

"We talked about trying to be better men, better husbands and better fathers," he said. "We wondered what we could do to spread that word. What happened after that has been stunning."

A year later, what happened out of that conversation was the formation of a movement known today as All Pro Dad. Dungy joined with Mike Merrill, founder and president of Family First based in Tampa, to start an organization focused on the principle of helping men lead their families and be heroes to their children.

The Florida Conference of the UMC has

partnered with All Pro Dad and schools in many parts of the state. One such place is the preschool at First UMC in St. Petersburg, where Associate Pastor Kevin Grills leads a group of men that meet monthly with their children for breakfast.

Kevin was inspired to start the chapter at his church, partly because of his experience with Dungy.

"While I lived in Tampa, some of the men in my small group had worked at All Pro Dad and Family First," he said. "Sometimes Tony Dungy would drop in for our devotionals, and I was just so impressed."

"My youngest is now 4 years old and in preschool. Typically, you don't see All Pro Dad chapters in preschool; they are usually in regular public schools. But I read up on it some more and got involved."

The children in this group range from 3 to 5 years old, so Kevin helped adapt the program—less talk with the kids about responsibility, more activities with their dads.

"We do a lot of affirmation," he said. "We have a sharing time, and we'll say things to praise our kids in front of the other dads. It will be things like, 'My son learned to tie his



Members of the All Pro Dad club at First UMC St. Petersburg start with preschoolers. Fathers, sons and daughters at the church meet for breakfast monthly.

shoe this week,' or, 'He has been a good big brother to his little sister.' You just see their faces light up.

"The way I figure it, it's like deposits and withdrawals. Like when you're fighting with your son or daughter to get in the car or brush their teeth. Those are withdrawals. We need to make more deposits."

Is it working?

Many say, yes.

"The thing we're hearing now is the dads saying how their kids hold them to it when it's time for the breakfast," Kevin said. "My own son will say, 'Hey dad, we're having breakfast in the morning, right?' It's something we can do that's intentional."

"I've had some dads say they're gone a hundred days a year because they have to travel so much, but they'll be there for this."

The Rev. Mark Charles of St. Andrew UMC in Titusville takes a more traditional approach by partnering with a local elementary school.

"Our involvement, as it is today, has come through the relationships my wife, Margaret, has built with staff and other parents at the school over the four years we have been in this community," he said.

"She was basically going along to volunteer her presence to support the work of the group, which was being sponsored by another church in Titusville."

When the opportunity came about 18 months ago to become the sponsoring church at the school, Charles jumped at the chance.

"This is an important commitment for our church, as part of our wider commitment to Oak Park Elementary and James Madison Middle School," he said.

"I guess you could say it is a tangible example of the saying that it takes a village to raise a child. All Pro Dad is just one expression of that. I hope that we can continue to love and support the school in every way we possibly can, long into the future."

That is exactly what Dungy and those associated with All Pro Dad have wanted. It's all about helping children grow into responsible adults.

"The biggest thing we're trying to do is encourage men to see their critical role of being a father," Dungy said. "There are a lot of issues for kids to deal with today, and the father's presence is so important."

Dungy hasn't coached since the 2008 season, when he retired to spend more time with prison ministry and programs like this.

"I remember meeting with a group of 30 rookies and learning that 23 of them had grown up without a father's presence in their lives," he said. "But what about the kids who didn't play sports?"


"What I've always tried to do was tell people that you didn't have that father's presence when you were growing up, and I'm sorry. But you're the next generation. You have the power to change things,"

Dungy said. "I always used to take my wife and kids on road trips so the players could see our family. The Lord says you have to model behavior. To me, that's where it starts."

These days, Dungy stays close to football by serving as an in-studio analyst for NBC Sports. That puts his face in front of millions each week.

But when he travels, he has found people mostly don't want to talk with Tony Dungy, the coach.

"When I get stopped in airports now, a guy almost always says that his church just started an All Pro Dad chapter," he said. "God was definitely involved in this."

"I think about a chapter starting in Missoula, Montana. People want to talk about that much more than they do the game. To see what's happened since that day Clyde and I talked, it's amazing. I've always thought this was a much bigger calling than coaching." 

Joe Henderson is a freelance writer based in Brandon, Fla.

Looking for love in all the wrong places

By Dan O'Mara

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C.—

Some 1,000 men, and a few women, gathered at Christ UMC for a February spiritual retreat.

The Rev. Jorge Acevedo, lead pastor of Grace UMC near Fort Myers, Fla., used John 4—the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well—to explore the effect of guilt on our spiritual lives.

The woman had three strikes against her, Acevedo said: She was a woman during a time when women were treated like property; like all Samaritans, she was considered a second-class citizen by Jews; and she was morally imperfect with a checkered past.



"But something radical and transforming happened when this woman met Jesus," Acevedo said. "This woman had had five husbands and was living with a man."

She was out looking for love in all wrong places, looking for love in too many faces. Then she saw the face of Christ.

"Grace overcame her guilt when she met Jesus."

Today, he said, guilt affects believers in three ways: It destroys our confidence, damages our relationships, and distorts our thinking.

How to overcome guilt


The simple truth of the Gospel reveals how to overcome guilt, Acevedo said, and it's really pretty simple: Admit our sin, accept God's forgiveness and then quit it.

"Self-deception leads to death, while confession leads to life," he said. "Far too many of us—even in church, even preacher types—have gotten really good at hiding."

"Allowing God to forgive us, Corrie ten Boom said it best: 'God takes our sins—the past, present and future—dumps them in the sea and puts up a sign that says: 'No Fishing Allowed.'"

As for quitting our sin, Acevedo said, the Samaritan woman showed us how to do that.

"John 4:28 tells us that she left her water jar at the well when she went to tell others she had met the Messiah," he said. "That water jar represented everything in her life. It sustained her, but it also represented all of her shame and guilt."

"She left it at the foot of Jesus, and she left that water hole transformed, because she had met Jesus." 



The Rev. Jorge Acevedo.

Stuck in God's unconditional love

By Bishop Gary Mueller

It's not very often I explicitly write about theology. It's even less often I write about it from a distinctly Wesleyan perspective. But there's something going on in United Methodism right now that has made me realize it's time—the fact I see more and more signs that we've gotten stuck in God's unconditional love instead of emphasizing the fullness of God's love that is unconditional, invitational and transformational.

We experience God's unconditional love when God accepts us just the way we are long before we are ever aware of it and even when we do not accept it. It's just who God is and what God does. The nature of this love is expressed in infant baptism, when God's love is fully experienced even though the child is unaware of what's happening.

We experience God's invitational love when God offers us a changed relationship through Christ's sacrificial gift of love on the cross. The very nature of our

relationship changes as we are brought into an intimate and eternal relationship with God.

We experience God's transformational love when God actually changes us from the inside out. We're changed—actually and really—as we become holy in heart and life, perfect in love and a new creation in Christ.

So why am I concerned we're getting stuck in God's unconditional love? It's because the consequences are staggering. First, we fool ourselves into thinking it's all we'll ever need. Then, we end up focusing far more on what makes us comfortable than on God, far more on justifying the way we are than God's vision for us, and far more on feeling good than growing in our ability to become the people God has created us to be. Most importantly, we miss out on the fullness of the love God offers us.

Of course God loves us just the way we are right now. But, God loves us so

much that God wants us to be more than just the way we are right now. God longs for us to experience a deeper, richer and more intimate relationship with God through Christ that begins right now and continues into eternity. God yearns for us to become new creations in Christ who have the heart and mind of Christ.

I've spent a great deal of time trying to figure out why we've gotten so stuck in God's unconditional love. I think it's because we're trying to make up for past sins. Sadly, we've arrogantly told too many people too many times, "God won't really love you until you decide you're wrong and are going to start getting serious about God. And, by the way, that means doing exactly what I tell you to do." Our "stuckness" is the result of trying so hard to make amends for past judgmental behaviors that we've over-emphasized one particular aspect of the fullness of divine love to the exclusion of the two others.

I need God's unconditional love because I need to know I'm loved not just when I'm perfect, but right in the middle of my imperfection, mess-ups and mistakes. But, I also need all of God's love to become

the kind of person I long to be. Sure, it's tempting to stay stuck in God's unconditional love because it feels so good. But, it feels even better to have a new relationship with Jesus Christ and become a new creation in Christ.

The UMC is growing smaller, older and less relevant in our world for a variety of reasons we can't control. But it may also be doing so because of something we can still do something about: the fact that we're so happy to be stuck in God's unconditional love that we've lost touch with the fullness of God's love.

I wonder if it might be time to stop proclaiming, "God loves you just the way you are - and that's good enough." Instead begin boldly, gracefully and joyfully proclaiming, "God loves you just the way you are - but God's not finished with you yet!"

Come, Holy Spirit, come! 



Arkansas Area Bishop Gary Mueller is vice president of the General Commission on U.M. Men.



Married in Heaven

HUMOR

On their way to a justice of the peace to get married, a couple has a fatal car accident. The couple is sitting outside Heaven's gate waiting on St. Peter to do an intake. While waiting, they wonder if they could possibly get married in Heaven. St. Peter finally shows up and they ask him. St. Peter says, "I don't know, this is the first time anyone has ever asked. Let me go find out," and he leaves.

The couple sits for a couple of months and begins to wonder if they really should get married in Heaven, what with the eternal aspect of it all. "What if it doesn't work out?" they wonder. "Are we stuck together forever?"

St. Peter returns after a month, looking somewhat bedraggled. "Yes," he informs the couple. "You can get married in Heaven." "Great," says the couple, "but what if things don't work out? Could we also get a divorce in Heaven?" St. Peter, red-faced, slams his clipboard onto the ground! "What's wrong?" exclaims the frightened couple. "Come on!" St. Peter exclaims. "It took me three months to find a preacher up here! Do you have any idea how long it's going to take me to find a lawyer?"



Smugness is a man's greatest health problem

By Bryant Stamford

Thankfully, we live in a country where we don't worry about issues that are prominent in third world countries, like infectious diseases arising from poor sanitation and polluted water, inadequate or unavailable medical care, or lack of nourishment. In fact, we have it so good you'd think we'd all be on top of our game, healthy as can be.

Aren't we?

No! Despite our numerous advantages, the opposite is true.

We are a sick nation, but we don't know it until we get sick. Huh? This means we are unaware of what is going on inside our body, and we could not care less. We plod along, year by year squandering our health, illnesses evolving and advancing until we reach a breaking point. Then, suddenly, and seemingly from out of the blue, we get "sick," and when we do it's usually serious (heart attack, stroke, or cancer) and we see ourselves as unfairly victimized and completely mystified by the turn of events.

Smugness

This leads to what I believe is one of our greatest health risk. Smugness! We are smug about our health to the point where we grossly overestimate how well we are doing.

How is it possible that we are smug even though we are at high risk for several devastating diseases? The answer is, our body keeps bad news a secret because it knows we don't want to know. It keeps bad news from us until it cannot hide it any longer. This creates a false sense of wellbeing that lasts until our health hits the fan.



No symptom, no problem

The way we practice medicine in the U.S. is to focus on treating sick patients. Makes sense. And how do we know we are sick? We have symptoms. This leads to the erroneous assumption that all is well unless we have symptoms. We assume we have need no advice because we are symptom-free.

This approach to medicine worked well when we were dying of infectious diseases with obvious symptoms like a high fever, pox on the skin, etc. But, nowadays we have an epidemic of chronic diseases, like heart disease, that has no symptoms until it's very advanced and our arteries are clogged significantly. Similarly, cancer can be growing and spreading throughout our bodies, our blood pressure may be elevated, or we may have diabetes, all without our knowledge.

Clinical reports lead to smugness

Clinical significance is an important reference point for doctors. It tells them a problem has progressed to the point where treatment is needed, usually in the form of medications. Take blood pressure for example. When blood pressure reaches 140/90 mmHg, it is considered to be clinically significant and needing treatment.

Here is the problem with this

approach. Patients erroneously assume that unless their blood pressure has reached clinical significance, it's OK. Wrong!

A healthy blood pressure is 120/80 or lower. So, what does this say about all the blood pressure values that fall within what I call the "gray" zone between healthy (120/80) and clinically significant (140/90)?

Blood pressure levels in the gray zone, and especially in the upper end of the gray zone, contribute to poor health. What's more, unless preventive steps are taken (lose weight, exercise, and change diet) eventually they will reach clinical significance. Unfortunately, such preventive steps are rarely taken. Why not? Gray zone values often are labeled "normal," which promotes smugness.

You don't want to be normal

In the U.S., what is normal when it comes to health? It's normal to be overweight, to be sedentary, to be on several prescription medications, and to die of heart disease. Clearly, the last thing in the world you want to be labeled when it comes to your health is "normal." Even so, when we are told our blood pressure, cholesterol or blood glucose levels are normal, we naively and erroneously take this as good news.

Here is an example of how this can play out to promote smugness.


A wife is concerned about her husband's health, his protruding mid-section, and how he gasps for breath when climbing stairs. She has cause for concern, but he refuses to go to the doctor for a check-up. Why is he so resistant? At least three reasons.

One, deep down inside he knows he's on a downhill slide but doesn't

want it confirmed. Two, he hates exercise and loves eating sludge and doesn't want to give it up. And, three, he is a man; and we men don't go to the doctor unless we are either in dire straits or we surrender to the relentless drumbeat of common sense from our wives.

The wife finally convinces her husband to get a check-up. The doctor looks at his chart and says, "Your blood pressure is normal." This is a great relief to hubby who doesn't know a blood pressure of 135/86 is quite unhealthy, even though it has not yet reached the level of clinical significance (140/90).

Worse, he incorrectly interprets the word "normal" to mean all is well and that he is "healthy." This is far from the truth, but you can see how hubby might misinterpret what he hears, especially if his misinterpretation helps him avoid making healthy lifestyle changes.

Greatly relieved, hubby heads home to his wife who is anxious for news about his visit to the doctor. Hubby walks in with a big "I told you so" grin on his face and informs his wife that the doctor told him all his tests are "normal," which means he is healthy as can be. As a result, hubby's lifestyle can no longer be questioned, and there is no need for any changes. Defeated, the wife backs off, and hubby continues down the path toward disaster. 



This article is adapted from articles by Dr. Bryant Stamford in the Courier Journal in Louisville, Ky.

In Memoriam

Judge Morris McCall

PORT NECHES, Texas—

Municipal Court Judge Morris McCall Sr., a district and Texas Conference prayer advocate for UM Men, died February 28 in Houston.

An Air Force veteran (1946-49), Judge McCall graduated from Stephen F. Austin in 1951 and the University of Texas Law School in 1954.

He served as a municipal judge for 41 years.

"I worked the prayer line with Morris many times at Texas Conference retreats," said Dan Ramsey, former president of the National Association of Conference Presidents. "I have no doubt he is operating the Upper Room Prayer Line in Heaven." Dan says that some fathers and sons also answered prayer requests and their participation in the prayer ministry helped heal differences




between them.

"Morris was a great man of faith, and a dear friend of many of us," said Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men. "He loved UMM at every level, and attended our meetings in Nashville and in the Texas Conference for decades. I don't think he ever came to the Prayer Advocate meetings without a check to support the prayer line. He was a joy to be around, and I already miss him."

Judge McCall served as the lay leader of the district and First UMC in Port Neches.

He also led many Easter Sunrise Services sponsored by the Rotary Club; those services were later named the Judge Morris McCall Easter Sunrise Services.

Judge McCall is survived by Dorothy, his wife of 61 years; daughter Ann; son Morris; and four grandchildren. 

A marble mover

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

The Rev. Stephen Handy spoke at the opening session of a 2015 meeting of the National Association of Conference Presidents.

The pastor of McKendree UMC in Nashville told how members of his congregation share the love and grace of Jesus Christ by giving away marbles. He said each marble represents the love and grace of Jesus Christ. He invited conference presidents to do the same.

Bill Weller, former president of the Baltimore-Washington Conference UM Men, took Stephen's suggestion to heart.

He stocks up on marbles at the Dollar Store and carries them in his pocket.

When he encounters someone, he approaches them saying, "Hi, there, I want to share something with you. I am part of a group of people called 'Marble Movers'. When we find someone who might need an encouraging word, we give them a gift."



Bill extends his hand and places a marble in the stranger's hand. He folds his or her fingers about the marble and says, "When you feel this in your pocket, when you see it on your desk or your bureau tonight and for as long as it lasts and it will last longer than you, it will remind you that God loves you and so do I."

So far, Bill has given out 2,800 marbles. 

Dad, be the superstar you are

By Tom Tozer and Bill Black

The Families and Work Institute's recent "National Study of the Changing Workforce" finds that men now experience more work-family conflict than women.

Although gender roles have changed in the light of women's increasing contributions to the family economics, men are still expected to be the primary financial providers for their families.

The study found that men who have children at home work longer hours than men who don't. At the same time, dads today are expected to be more involved at home than their fathers were. They are expected to be involved in all the activities of their children. The study points out that men are experiencing the "do it all" expectations that women encountered when they began to enter the work force in large numbers.

The ideal man

Fathers today are expected to be financially successful and also involved in their family.

The demands to achieve at work and to be involved in raising children make fatherhood pressure-packed and can lead to work-family conflict.

Today, many families include two working spouses, which contributes to feelings of stress and sometimes chaos in the home.


An employer's support for family priorities often lags behind the changing nature of a modern father's relationship with his family, resulting in a disconnect between work and home.

Better conditioning, greater commitment

It is important to recognize and balance out the pressures you encounter in trying to contribute to work and home. From talking to other dads and through

our own experience, we have identified a few things you can do that might help.

- Try to verbalize your commitment as a dad. Let your employer know it is an important part of your life. This does not mean you are less committed to your job. It means fatherhood is an important part of your identity and a top priority for you.
- Create some separation between your life at work and at home. Be there for your family. Be a listener, a learner and a lover. When you're at work, be committed. When you're home, be truly **at home** ... and be fully committed.
- Care for yourself through good nutrition and exercise. This should be part of your regular routine. It makes you a more effective parent, a better worker and adds years to your life.
- Be expressive. Let your kids know you love and support them. Tell them so.
- Make some time for yourself. You need to re-charge so you can engage.

Taking a few simple steps will help you create the balance in your life that is important in meeting all the expectations you face. Your kids will benefit and so will you. 



Tom Tozer and Bill Black are authors of *Dads-2Dads: Tools for Raising Teenagers*. Like them on Facebook

and follow them on Twitter at *Dads-2Dadsllc*. Contact them at *tomandbill@Dads2Dadsllc.com*.



AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq—
Army reserve troops receive devotional books

The 139th Regional Support Group of the Louisiana National Guard received a box of 48 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country*. The Steward Family Foundation and Kingdom Capital provided the books. SFS supporters paid shipping costs.



Col. Stuart Burruss (third from right) joins with other members of the Louisiana National Guard after receiving devotional books. He was instrumental in getting books for the unit.

GULF SHORES, Ala.—
Let the pancakes roll

UM Men of Gulf Shores mark every Shrove Tuesday with a pancake breakfast. "Several hundred guests gathered to enjoy hot pancakes and all the trimmings prior to the annual Mardi Gras parade," says Steve Means. "This event has a variation of the traditional saying "Laissez les bon temps rouler" (Let the good times roll). We say "Laissez les bon crepes rouler—Let the good pancakes roll."



From left: Bob Burton, Steve Means, Jim Koepen, Kent Vesper, and Ken Matthews are ready to "laissez les bon crepes rouler."

HACKETTSTOWN, N.J.—
Hoagies for sale

UM Men of Trinity UMC have sponsored a hoagie sale every Super Bowl Sunday since 2007. Funds from the sale support the Rev. Mathias Torgersen Memorial Scholarship Fund for high school graduates. In 2017, the men gave \$2,250; in 2018, men sold 260 hoagies and provided \$1,500 for scholarships.



UM Men prepare hoagies for Super Bowl Day sales.

LAFAYETTE, La.—
Physician pens book

Dr. Bryan G. Sibley, a pediatrician, didn't intend to write a book, but when his pastor at Asbury UMC invited the lay minister to preach, his sermons soon became chapters in the book *God First*. Sibley, 52, grew up in the Roman Catholic Church, but he joined the UMC in the mid-1990s after a mission to Mexico caused him to reflect on his own beliefs.



Dr. Bryan Sibley.

The 10 short chapters in the book are a prescription for the soul: put God first, family second, and everything else third. Sibley is philosophical about the confluence of religion and medicine. "I believe God is present all the time," he says. "I don't know why some patients have a miraculous recovery and others don't. It's not mine to know."

ADA, Okla.—
Church receives Shepherd Church Charter

First UMC, sponsor of Cub Scout Pack 13, Boy Scout Troop 13 and Venture Crew 1382, received a Shepherd Church Charter Recognition for their contributions to scouting ministry.



Scouts light candles prior to February Scouting Ministry Sunday at First UMC in Ada, Okla.

ARLINGTON, Tenn. —
Three hundred and fifty Scouts receive PRAY Awards

Arlington UMC sponsors a 100-member Cub Scout pack and a 55-member Boy Scout troop. The church began offering PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) classes in 2003 and since that time, 350 Scouts have completed at least one of the classes. In 2017, 38 Cub Scouts completed "God and Me" or "God and Family" classes.

On Scout Sunday, 2018, the church received a Shepherd Church Charter Recognition for its scouting ministry.



VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.—

'Take it to the streets,' says bishop

Expanding on Mark 16:15, Virginia Bishop Sharma Lewis told 170 people attending the annual banquet of Elizabeth River District Men's Ministry Team to "take it to the streets." She said we all are called to preach the Gospel through our words and our actions.

David Collins, a member of the host Community UMC, was installed as the district team leader, and Johnnie Draughon, past team leader, encouraged the men to think of the district team as a box filled with tools to help them reach men in their local fellowships and surrounding communities.



Virginia Conference Bishop Sharma Lewis encourages a young couple after speaking at the Elizabeth River District Banquet.

SUN CITY CENTER, Fla.—

Disaster response teams receive 1,000 devotional books

The Strength for Service team sent 1,000 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to Early Response Teams who provide emergency repairs and assistance to survivors of Hurricane Irma.

A Feb. 24 meeting trained team members to provide physical, emotional, and spiritual assistance to survivors of the devastating storm.

Some 65,000 structures were damaged in West Central and Southwest Florida and 93 people died in storm-related deaths.

Five disaster team leaders each took three cases of 52 books to share with

other responders in their respective communities.

The Steward Family Foundation and Kingdom Capital provided the books. SFS supporters paid shipping costs.

"These books were very well received and will make a difference in the lives of those who are first on the scene when disaster strikes," said Deborah Coble, director of communications for the West Virginia Annual Conference; she helped coordinate book deliveries.



Bill Parry, a construction coordinator in Collier County, reviews a copy of *Strength for Service to God and Community* during training meeting for early responders at Sun City (Fla.) UMC.

Photo by Deborah Coble.

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—
Scouts retire flags

Boy Scouts retired flags in the front parking lot of Northwest Hills UMC. They retired flags after each of three worship services.



DRAPER, Va.—

Pancake supper feeds 100

Men of the Draper Circuit UM Men (Cecil's Chapel, Glenwood UMC, and Draper UMC) served 200 pancakes to 100 people on Shrove Tuesday. They also fried 20 pounds of bacon, cooked 17 pounds of sausage, and baked 80 biscuits.



Men have served pancakes at Draper UMC since 1987. Proceeds from the supper support Camp Dickenson and programs for underserved people at Christmas.

RUSH, N.Y.—

Eagle Scout Bishop hosts scouting dinner

Bishop Mark Webb, an Eagle Scout, hosted the first Upper New York Conference Bishop's Scouting Dinner at Faith UMC. The family of Mark Jones, president of Upper New York UM Men, provided a barbecued-chicken and pulled-pork dinner for 75 participants.

The Rev. Cathy Stengal presented a PRAY award to Cub Scout Kory Baum. George Sanford, president of Genesee Valley UM Men, introduced Eagle Scout Logan Dague as the new district Scout representative.



Brownie Scout Jade Galaska provides a display of the activities of Troop 60218, sponsored by Rush UMC.

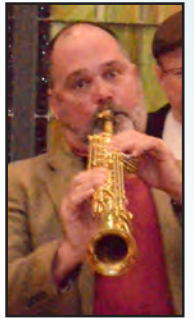
AURORA, Ill.—

New Orleans comes to Illinois

Fourth Street UMC provided a taste of a New Orleans Mardi Gras as they joined with Flowing Grace UMC to celebrate Fat Tuesday with a 12-piece band.

"It has been the custom in many Christian traditions to have a celebration of fellowship as believers make a final preparation for Lent," said the Rev. Deborah Tinsley Taylor, pastor of Fourth Street UMC.

Freewill donations from the concert provided funds for a Flowing Springs UMC mission trip where 25 high school students and 10 adults repaired homes in Long Island, N.Y. The church also sold \$25 mock stock certificates to fund the trip.



The Rev. Jeffrey Bross, pastor of Flowing Grace UMC, provided a clarinet solo of *Amazing Grace*.

Photo by Al Benson.



The concert concluded with a rousing rendition of "When the Saints Coming Marching In" that brought the audience to their feet with clapping and singing. Photo by Al Benson.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. —

Roundtable discusses need for racial unity

The solution to ending racism is building relationships that model the love of Jesus. That was the takeaway from a one-day conference at Mandarin UMC, sponsored by Igniting Men, a ministry of Florida Conference UMC Men.

John Delaney, president of UM Men, moderated the five-member roundtable.

"I know this for a fact: Racism is a

human condition,” said Chris Pillay, president of Meridian Technologies in Jacksonville. “It is not white or black or brown. There has always been racism. There will always be. The issue is, ‘How do we react and deal with it?’”



Participants in a roundtable discussion about racial unity are from left: David Dusek, executive director of Rough Cut Men Ministries in Sarasota; Bobby Belton, grant project coordinator for 21st Century Community Learning Centers; Lamont Hogans Sr., pastor of New Life Community UMC in Jacksonville; Chris Pillay; and Jack Levine, founding director of Voice of God Ministry in Orlando.

**LIVINGSTON, S.C.—
Fish fry draws hundreds**

Livingston UMC served fish, slaw, and hushpuppies to some 600 people of various denominations. Baptists from Aiken traveled by bus to the late January event, Men did the cooking while women sold canned homemade salsa, stewed tomatoes, and they auctioned off a homemade quilt.



Men of Livingston UMC fry fish and chop slaw. Photo courtesy of the Rev. Graham M. Bennett.

**MYRTLE BEACH, S.C.—
Men renew their baptisms**

UM Men renewed their baptisms by pouring water on their heads during a Come-to-the-Water spiritual retreat at Christ UMC.

The Rev. Jorge Acevedo, lead pastor at Grace Church, a multisite UMC in Southwest Florida, was the keynote speaker. South Carolina Bishop Jonathan Holston also addressed the assembly of 1,000 men.



Bishop Jonathan Holston demonstrates servant leadership by doing an on-stage foot washing at a spiritual retreat in Myrtle Beach. Photo by Matt Brodie

**BETTENDORF, Iowa —
Church presents awards to 25 youth**

Asbury UMC presented PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) awards to 25 Cub and Girl Scouts and other church youth.

The Rev. Realff Ottesen, a Silver Torch recipient who served as a chaplain at the 2005 and 2010 National Jamborees, led the Scout Sunday service.



At the conclusion of the February church service, the Rev. Realff Ottesen leads Scouts in singing Scout Vespers.

**KERRVILLE, Texas —
Valentines in the 1950s**

Men and women of First UMC celebrated a 1950 version of Valentines Day. Young people served ice-cream floats to couples dressed as they did in the 1950s. A young Elvis, a children’s choir, a jazz band, and a barbershop quartet provided the entertainment. The event featured “Rock Around the Clock”, “Yakety Yak”, “Mr. Sandman”, “Don’t be Cruel”, and “Hound Dog”.



From left: Dwight Goode, Allan Howard and David Oehler make ice cream floats.

**AMSTERDAM, N.Y. —
Men provide devotional books**

UM Men distributed 52 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to fire departments in the area. “We received words of appreciation from the fire fighters and our own members,” said the Rev. Jerry Kauffman, convener of UM Men in Amsterdam.



A UM team delivers devotional books to fire fighters. From left: Paul Phillips, Pastor Judy Humphrey-Fox, and Tom Ahrens. Back row: David Hobbs, Dick Marotta; the Rev. Jerry Kauffman. Not show: Al Thornton, and Bob Phillips.

**CHAPPELL HILL, Texas—
Men teach treatment for gunshot wounds**

UM Men of Chappell Hill UMC held a training class for the treatment of gunshot wounds. Our training was based on a course prepared by U.S. Lawshield,” said Bob Stogdill. The course was taught by a Lawshield graduate and an emergency-room nurse. The church keeps a severe bleeding first-aid kit next to an automatic-electronic defibrillator.



Pat Smith plays the role of a gunshot victim. Keith Iwig applies pressure to the wound while Bob Stogdill applies a tourniquet.

**CLINTON, Ark.—
Men give church a spring cleaning**

Clinton UMC joins with other churches for Lenten services. On March 4, the church was scheduled to host the service. Since the church does not have a custodian, UM Men decided to give the church a good spring cleaning. On March 3, the men gathered for breakfast and then spent the day power washing sidewalks and cleaning the sanctuary.



A member of UM Men does some second story cleaning of the Clinton UMC sanctuary.

CENTREVILLE, Md.—
Men build cross for camp



St. Mark's UM Men of Easton, Md., built a cross for Camp Pecometh. This is their third building project in the past five years. They also built a fire pit and a pavilion with a circle of swings.

People attending a March dedication service are (from left): Claude Edwards; UMM President Roger Eareckson; Phil Rekitzke; John Hurt; Bishop Peggy Johnson; the Rev. Michelle "Missy" Rekitzke, pastor of St. Mark's UMC; the Rev. Dr. Shirlyn Henry Brown, superintendent of the Easton District; Jim Scott, project engineer; Tom Barwick; Raymond Harrison; and Paul Harrison, St. Mark's lay leader. Photo by the Rev Michael Johnson

recruiting presentations at three elementary schools and they cleaned up the grounds around a Scout office. They also gathered toys for children and sang Christmas carols at senior centers.

Boy Scouts improved the grounds around an elementary school, assembled bears for children in hospitals and installed commemorative bricks and planted trees at a veteran's park.

Girl Scouts provide hygiene tote bags for underprivileged girls and built benches for an outdoor classroom at a local historical site.



Cub Scouts and parents plant flowers.

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—
Leader of UM Men unveils heritage stamp

Larry Dozier, a former 40-year postal employee and now pastor of St. John's UMC in Los Angeles, was instrumental in getting the Post Office to produce a Lena Horne black heritage stamp.

Larry is the former president of UM Men of the California-Pacific Conference and former president of the Western Jurisdiction UM Men. He is a board member of the General Commission on UM Men and vice president of the UM Men Foundation.



From left: Larry Dozier, Hank Dozier, president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction UM Men, and Bishop James Swanson, president of the General Commission on UM Men, attend the national meeting of Black Methodists for Church Renewal where they unveil a heritage stamp honoring Lena Horne.

CORAL SPRINGS, Fla.—
Chaplain distributes books following Parkland Shooting

Chaplain Ken McLymont gave 52 copies of *Strength for Service* books to members of the Coral Springs Police and Fire Departments following the killing of 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla.



Police officers in nearby Coral Springs responded to the Feb. 14 shooting and one of their officers arrested Nikolus Cruz two miles from the school. The officer took the 19-year old to a hospital emergency room with "labored breathing". Cruz was released after 40 minutes and the officer booked him into the Broward County Jail.

"On behalf of the Coral Springs Police Department, we want to say thanks to you and your organization in our time of need," said Chaplain McLymont. At the chaplain's request, the ministry sent him additional books.

Chaplain McLymont (left) presents a copy of *Strength for Service to God and Community to Police Captain George Soberon. The Steward Family Foundation and Kingdom Capital provided the books. SFS supporters paid shipping costs.*

ROCKFORD, Ill.—
Men distribute 40,500 pounds of potatoes

UM Men of the Rockford District distributed 40,500 pounds of potatoes to food pantries, churches and other agencies during a March potato drop at Christ UMC.

Some 100 men gathered for breakfast, a worship service and carrying 10-pound bags of potatoes to waiting cars, trucks and vans.

"The potatoes were harvested from farms that would have otherwise gone to waste," says Steve Nailor, president of the National Association of Conference Presidents of UM Men and a member of the Board of Directors for the Society of St. Andrew. That Virginia-based organization provided the potatoes.

Northern Illinois Conference topped all conferences in the U.S. by contributing \$18,691 in 2017 to the Meals for Millions program of the Society of St. Andrew.



Don Moore (left) and Michael Simons of Grace UMC in Rockford prepare to load potatoes into waiting vehicles.

HOUSTON, Texas
Nine UMs repair flood-damaged homes

Gil Hanke led a 9-member UM team from Tennessee, Arkansas, Virginia and Texas to repair two flood-damaged homes.

Mr. Fisher, son of the elderly couple who owned one of the homes, said he asked God to send someone who could help his parents get back into their home. "Our God is an on-time God," he said as he watched the team cut and install new drywall.



From left: Myron Hanke, from Church of the Good Shepherd, Vienna, Va.; Jill Durbin, Antioch (Tenn.) UMC; and Mark Dalhoff, Perritte UMC, Nacogdoches, Texas, install new wall board in a Houston home.

JOPLIN, Mo.
Modular ramps serve many

Men of Christ Community UMC built six modular wheel-chair ramps, which can be taken to various sites. They are disassembled when they are no longer needed, and they are reassembled at other locations.



The men raise funds for the ramps by smoking chickens, turkeys and hams.

PARKERSBURG, W.Va.—
Church receives Shepherd Church Recognition

The UM Office of Scouting Ministries presented Stout Memorial UMC with a Shepherd Church Charter Recognition for its support of a Cub Scout pack, a Boy Scout troop and a Venture crew.

Cub Scouts participated in lunchtime

Presidents of UM Men set ambitious plans

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

The National Association of Conference Presidents of UM Men set ambitious plans during their Feb. 22-25 meeting.

The presidents set plans to:

- Form additional Wesley Class Meeting groups, either face-to-face or using live video conferencing.
- Participate in “Amend Together,” a program of the General Commission on UM Men and the Nashville area YWCA to eliminate domestic violence.
- Distribute copies of Strength for Service to God and Country to patients in Veteran’s Hospitals.
- Encourage UM Men organizations to participate in “Sound the Alarm,” a program of the Red Cross to install smoke alarms in neighborhood homes.

- Increase the number of chartered churches by 10 percent.
- Provide funds for hunger ministries through the Meals for Millions program of the Society of St. Andrew.
- Increase the number of connections with men of all ages in every church, district and annual conference.

During the four-day meeting, Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the men’s commission, noted this network of men’s ministry is the largest and best organized denominational ministry in the world.

The Rev. Rick Vance, director of men’s ministry for the commission, said the most important question to answer is “why” we do things. General Conference added the “why” to making disciples – “for the transformation of the world.” He told the conference presidents that what and how they do



Seventy-five men attending the Feb. 22-25 meeting of the National Association of Conference Presidents join with 13 conference prayer advocates for a noontime photo in front of the Upper Room Building in Nashville.



Conference Presidents of UM gather around colleagues in need of prayer

things must be consistent with their “why.”

“When your ‘why’ is big enough, the ‘how’ is easy,” he said. “We all had two great days: the day we were born and the day we discovered ‘why’ we were born.”

Greg Arnold, a deployed commission staff member, said three things are necessary for an organization to thrive: 1. People who believe in what you’re doing; 2. A product that is worth working for; and 3. a process, or a way to help you do what you want. Greg says, we have the people, and the Good News of Jesus Christ as the product. We lack a good process. He introduced “Facebook Work Place” as way for conference and district presidents to

assist one another.

Steve Nailor continues as NACP president. Herman Lightsey was elected vice president; Wayne Prejean, second vice president; Lee Donley, secretary; and Donald Davis, treasurer.

Mark Dehority, Jim Boesch and Mark Lubbock provided participants with clear job descriptions for officers of UM Men organizations and ways to recruit men to fill the positions. “Every unit should have a recruiter,” said Dehority. “Unity comes from having a shared purpose: ‘To glorify God and edify and build up others,’” said Boesch.

UM Men continue 40-year support for Upper Room Prayer Line

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

Migdiel Perez, manager of the Upper Room Prayer Line, expressed appreciation to UM Men for 40 years of support to the ministry that receives prayers from around the world.

Migdiel told 75 conference presidents and prayer advocates that there are now 172 remote prayer line partners who answer prayer requests and 494 Covenant Prayer Groups who continue in prayer for those who call in.

UM Men contributions to the prayer line totaled \$25,245, with men of the Louisiana Annual Conference contributing \$5,120 of that total, the highest in the nation.



Representatives of the Louisiana Conference receive the top award for giving to the Upper Room Prayer Line. Mark Lubbock, president of the conference holds the award.

Churches need to pay more attention to men's ministry, says bishop

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

The needs of men

The bishop said, men have three basic needs: 1. A genuine faith journey; 2. Relationships with others that are real; and 3. Knowledge of how this faith helps them in their work-a-day world.

In addition, men have an aversion to phony relationships. They prefer genuine honest relationships with persons with whom they have developed a strong trust.

"Men are turned off by the phony," said the bishop, and "far too often our words do not match our actions."

"We have to learn to be honest," he said. "When we were young we all did some things we shouldn't have done, and that's something we can only say in the company of other men."

"An insight from C. S. Lewis, helps us here," said Swanson. "Lewis felt English men visit pubs regularly not because they long to drink, but simply because they want to be with other men as men."

"Men need to be with other men in the same way women need to be with other women."



Bishop Swanson may begin a speech behind a lectern, but he doesn't stay there long. He continues his speech as he wanders among conference presidents and conference prayer advocates. He pauses to share with Hampton Conway, president of UM Men of the Baltimore Washington Annual Conference.

Wallace Neal named National Prayer Advocate

ROCKFORD, Ill.—

Steve Nailor, president of the National Association of Conference Presidents, has named Wallace Neal, a leader of prayer ministries in three annual conferences, as the national prayer advocate.

Currently serving as prayer advocate for Missouri Annual Conference, Wallace has held leadership positions in the Missouri, Illinois Great Rivers, and Northern Illinois Annual Conferences.

Wallace succeeds Joe Kelly who was named president of the South Central Jurisdiction UM Men following the October 2017 death of Kenneth Tielke.

"Joe and I have been praying about his successor since he assumed the jurisdictional position," said Steve. "Wallace has served as a prayer advocate at all levels of the church and he chaired a Spiritual Congress in Northern Illinois Conference."

Wallace is currently straddling two annual conferences. On alternate Sundays, he cross-

es a state line to attend New Bethel UMC in Glen Carbon, Ill., and St. Andrew UMC in Florissant, Mo. He leads prayer ministries and works with UM Men units in both congregations.

Wallace also serves on the UM Foundation of Illinois Great Rivers Conference.



Joe Kelley (left) former national prayer advocate joins Wallace Neal, new national prayer advocate at the chancel of the Upper Room Chapel in Nashville.

UM Men give \$150,000 for hunger relief

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

In 2017, UM Men provided \$150,000 to the Meals of Millions program of the Society of St. Andrew. That amount provided 7.6 million servings of food

In a report to the conference presidents of UM Men, Wade Mays, director of the Meals for Millions program, said he is working with leaders of UM Men to increase 2018 contributions.

"The Society of St. Andrew is very grateful for every donation to our ministry," said Wade.

Last year, funds from Meals for Millions supported 17 hunger relief advocates who led 1,250 volunteers to pick up 714,565 pounds of fresh food for America's hungry. This hunger relief initiative was begun in 1998 by the Society of St. Andrew, the General Commission on UM Men, and the NACP.

The top 10 conferences supporting Meals for Millions:

1. Northern Illinois	\$18,691
2. Virginia	\$12,254
3. Baltimore-Washington	\$10,629
4. Indiana	\$9,883
5. Detroit	\$6,648
6. Missouri	\$5,330
7. North Carolina	\$4,448
8. Susquehanna	\$4,154
9. Oklahoma	\$4,045
10. West Ohio	\$3,827



Wade Mays (left) presents the 2017 Meals for Millions award to George M. Groves, president of Northern Illinois Conference UM Men.



Wade Mays presents the "But the Spud Award" to Delton Billy of the Oklahoma Annual Conference. The conference topped all other conferences in increasing their percentage giving to Meals for Millions in 2017.

Food Waste Facts

- Nearly 40% of food produced in the U.S. is never eaten.
- The food thrown out each day could fill a professional football stadium.
- About 25% of the food your family purchases will never be eaten.
- The pollution generated from one ton of food rotting in a landfill is equivalent to the pollution generated by driving 2.25 cars for a year.

UM Men Awards

David Crittenden

President assumes communication duties

CARY, N.C.—

UM Men of Cary UMC presented David Crittenden with a Life Membership Award following his 3-year term as president of UM Men.

He now serves as vice-president of communication and continues to work on home construction teams, and he works with rebuilding crews following hurricanes.

Mildred Norton

Men present Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence

HUNTINGTON, N.Y.—

UM Men of Huntington-Cold Spring Harbor UMC presented Mildred Norton with the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence.



From left: The Rev Steve Kim, pastor of Huntington-Cold Spring Harbor UMC; Bill Rhinehart, chair of UM Men; Mildred Norton and granddaughter; Charles Roth; Skip Norton; Steve Henry; and Dr. Charles Timson.

Chester Campbell

Former president builds Habitat Homes

BELLA VISTA, Ark.—

Men of First UMC presented Chet Campbell with a Life Membership Award for his service as president of UM Men in 2008. He also chaired a summer golf league.

Chet and wife, Cheryl, lead the Metfield Shepherd Group, one of most active shepherd groups in the church.

Chet also cooks pancakes, makes home repairs, works at Sager Brown Depot, builds sheds for Habitat for Humanity, and volunteers at the AARP Recycling Center.

“The bottom line is, if you need help, call Chet,” says Louis Kaufmann, president of UM Men.

Doug Valley

A leader of 20 mission trips to Bolivia

STILLWATER, Okla.—

Men of First UMC inducted Doug Valley

into the John Wesley Society following 20 years of mission trips to mountain areas of Bolivia where he constructed church buildings, medical clinics, and community water systems.

In Stillwater, he leads church and community efforts to feed the hungry.

“Doug has the servant heart of one who strives to live as the hands and feet of Christ,” says

Becky Taylor, executive director of “Our Daily Bread”, a program to feed the hungry.

Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

Men induct bishop into John Wesley Society

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C.—

UM Men of the South Carolina Annual Conference inducted Bishop Holston into the John Wesley Society during their



UM Men President Roger McMillian (right) presents a John Wesley plaque to Doug Valley.

February Come-to-the-Water spiritual retreat.

With the encouragement of Bishop Holston, the number of men attending the annual retreat increased from 150 in 2013 to more than 1,000 in 2017 and 2018.

The bishop also served as one of the preachers at the 2017 National Gathering of UM Men in Indianapolis.

Holston was elected to the episcopacy in 2012 while in his 7th year as senior pastor of St. James UMC in Atlanta. Prior to that, he served as superintendent of the Atlanta-Decatur-Oxford District from 1997-2005.



Herman Lightsey, president of South Carolina UM Men (left), presents a John Wesley Society plaque to Bishop Holston. Photo by Matt Brodie

Janet Valdes

Scout leader receives Susanna Wesley Award

BAYTOWN, Texas—

On Scout Sunday, St. Mark's UMC presented Janet Valdes with a Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence.



Sea Scout Reagan Smith wheels Janet up to the front of the church where her husband, Eloy, presents her with a Susanna Wesley Award. The couple have been Scout leaders for 40 years.

Jim Clanton

WWII veteran named Man of the Year

AUGUSTA, Ga.—
Men of Burns Memorial UMC presented Jim Clanton with a Life Membership Award, and they named him the Milford Scott Burns Memorial Man of the Year.

After World War II, Jim found his way to Georgia where he started his family. Seeking medical help for his wife brought him to Augusta and Burns Memorial UMC.

Jim is involved in UM Men; the Happy Club, a group for seniors; and Family Night programs. He served on the Finance Committee and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.



UM Men President Burles Johnson (right) presents Jim Clanton with a Life Membership Award.

Norm Bauer

Men provide monthly meals for inner city families

DES MOINES, Iowa—

Immanuel UM Men presented Norm Bauer with a Life Membership Award for leading efforts to provide monthly meals for the Children and Family Urban Movement. He also recruited teams to transport food items from grocery stores to the mission, and he leads a semi-annual men's prayer breakfast and book study.

Norm served in the military and worked as a claims supervisor for the Veteran's Administration. “He is a devoted servant of God,” said David Beard, president of Immanuel UM Men's Club. “We are honored to nominate him for the Life Membership Award



Norm Bauer (right) loads food for a children and family mission in the inner city of Des Moines.

South Carolina engineer and pastor named director of scouting ministry

LEXINGTON, S.C.— Steven Scheid, a licensed local pastor in the South Carolina Annual Conference, assumed the post of director of scouting ministries for the General Commission on UMM Men on June 1.

Steven succeeded Larry Coppock, a 21-year veteran with the commission, who retired to become executive director of the non-denominational Strength for Service Corporation.

Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the commission, announced Steven's appointment.

Two passions

"In my first phone interview with Steven, he made it very clear why he was applying for this position," said Hanke. "There are two entities that I really love: The United Methodist Church and Boy Scouts of America," said Steven. "To think that I could work at the place where those two great organizations connect presents an opportunity that would be amazing."

Steven was licensed as a local pastor in the UMC in July 2017 and the Eagle Scout has ten years of experience as an adult leader of Scouts.

"Steven has served as our chartered organization representative and our chaplain, said Eric Cassity, scoutmaster for Troop 518 at Red Bank UMC in Lexington, S.C. "Together we have grown a small troop of nine boys into more than 50. Besides anchoring our troop's spiritual life, Steven has led the troop to all four BSA National High Adventure bases."

Eric also notes Steven's passion and abilities as a trainer. Steven has taught the "Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills," Wood Badge courses, and classes on the role of a chaplain, Programs of



Steven Scheid

Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY), youth protection, Venture Crew planning, and "Leave No Trace."

"Steven has a rare passion and it really comes through when he is teaching," said Eric.

Connecting scouting with ministry

In 2008, Steven was one of the founders of Venture Crew 518 and served as the adviser and chaplain.

"There was disconnect between the troop and the church at that time," said Steven. "We worked on this connection using the PRAY program, and the 'Scout's own Service'. By 2012, the troop and crew were well established ministries of the church."

"The scouting movement of recent years has become afraid to recognize the founder's idea that scouting is the application of religious principle to the formation process," said Steven. "I have sought not to preach but to facilitate the discovery of a relationship with God. I started as mentor to youth, moved to mentoring adults and then to leading in sharing with the council at large."

In 2013, Steven attended the United Methodist Scouting Workshop at BSA Sea Base in the Florida Keys, and he became as scouting ministry specialist.

It was at that training event Steven first learned of the position of national director of scouting ministry.

"Although I do not want him to leave our troop," said Lori Norris, assistant scoutmaster for Troop 518. "Like any true follower of Christ, Steven adheres to God's call. Without a doubt, he is

the most Christ-like person I have ever met."

Engineering background

A graduate of Tennessee Tech University (B.S., industrial engineering), Steven currently serves as production manager and sole management representative at the Orangeburg site for Ecka Granules of America. He is responsible for purchasing stock, sales, invoicing, staff management, training, budgeting, and maintaining all legal requirement for the multi-million dollar plant. He has served that company since 2008.

"My sales experience will cover the need for fundraising," said Steven in a letter of application. "My project and plant management will make stewardship and personnel management routine. . . . The key soft skills that are needed for the director of scouting ministries position are an excellent fit with my gifts and commitment."

At the same time, Steven serves as a part-time pastor of Oak Grove UMC and Calvary UMC in Swansea, S.C.

Family

Steven comes from a large scouting family. His father, Roy, gave him a passion for the outdoors as their family camped in the Rocky Mountains when Troop 643 was not on camping trips. Steven's mother, Kathy, taught him to teach and care for children.

Steven and Connie will soon celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. Together they have journeyed through college and both have served as licensed local pastors. They have two children: Richard and Cathryn who is married to Matthew; they have two sons: James (6) and Ryder (2).

PRAY offers new patch

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—

Programs of Religious Activities with Youth now offers a "Wind of the Spirit" patch.

The new patch is part of a RP3 series designed to help families, Sunday school classes, and scouting groups get into the Bible.

Each patch requires three sessions.

The curriculum for each patch includes questions for younger children, older youth, and adults, and is designed to be done in a group setting with all participants (including parents and leaders) earning the patch.

These patches are separate from the PRAY awards and do not have the same strict guidelines as God and Me, God and Family, God and Church and God and Life. The patches are shorter programs, can be earned by all ages, and do not require workbooks or an application/review process by clergy. These guidelines make the new patch series ideal for weekend campouts and retreats.



"Wind can be soothing, calming, and cooling," says the introduction to the three-story Wind of the Spirit session.

"Wind can also be scary, dangerous, and destructive. The Bible tells us that God is in the wind, that God is with us in and through all times and situations."

Story #1: Creation: Wind from God

From the very beginning of creation, God has been present filling the world with the wind of the Spirit. The comforting news is that God was present, still is present, and always will be present to us.

Story #2: Elijah and the Gentle Whisper

God comes to us sometimes in unexpected ways.

Story #3: Jesus Stills a Storm

Remember that Jesus is with us even in scary times to remind us to have faith in him.

Scouting Awards

Corbin Watson

Scout organizes food drive

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn.—

St. Bethlehem UMC presented Corbin Watson with a Good Samaritan Award following his successful effort to provide food for Ann's Closet, a ministry of the church to hungry people in the area.

Corbin also collected socks for the "Room in the Inn" program and he raised funds to purchase stuffed owls for the children in the cancer ward of Vanderbilt Children's Hospital.

"I have been blessed to see Corbin's growth from a young boy who struggled with social relationships due to Autism to a young man who does not let his different ability define him," said Lillian Watson, charter organization representative for the church. "Corbin has earned two PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) awards and he is working on his third.

Carrie Mueller

Troop surges in size

GILBERT, Ariz.—

First UMC presented Carrie Mueller with a Cross and Flame Award for assuming leadership of an 18-member Girl Scout troop and increasing it to a 45-member troop.

Troop 1656 is now composed of girls from kindergarten to the 8th grade who serve the church and community.

Carrie also serves as congregational care minister, chair of the church's Preschool Committee and chair of the Family Ministries Committee.

Troy Garcia

Eagle Scout designs gravesite flag holder

TUCSON, Ariz.—

Troy Garcia, a member of BSA Troop 365, sponsored by Santa Cruz Valley UMC in Sahuarita, Ariz., received a \$250 prize for the best Eagle Scout project in the Catalina BSA

Council.

Troy designed and manufactured a receptacle for people to place flags at gravesites on Memorial Day or Veterans Day.

"I know from personal experience that Troy's project will make it easier to install thousands of American flags to honor veterans in cemeteries across the land," said Douglas Wright, co-vice chair of the UM Scouting Ministry Committee and head judge of the contest for the best Eagle project.

The award was presented before almost 300 Scouts and guests, at the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base Officers Club on January 26, 2018.



Troy Garcia.

Julie Oberlin and Vince Underwood Parents receive Cross and Flame Awards

CENTERVILLE, Ga.—

Both of Julie's and Vince's sons are Life Scouts working on their Eagle.

Centerville UMC presented them with Cross and Flame Awards.



Julie and Vince (with white ribbons) receive their awards during Scout Ministry Sunday at Centerville UMC.

Nick Stabler

Church honors Cubmaster

CHATHAM, Ill.—

Chatham UMC presented Nick Stabler, Cubmaster of Pack 48, with a Cross and

Flame Award. Nick began his service as a den leader before becoming the Cubmaster.

He is also in charge of the church's Scouting Ministry Sunday.

His son has now crossed over to Boy Scouts.



Curt Floyd (left) presents a Cross and Flame Award to Nick Stabler.

Randy Wineke

Serves youth of conference

UPPERCO, Md.—

The Rev. Peggy Click, pastor of Emory UMC, presented Randy Wineke with a Torch Award for his service as a scouting ministry specialist and charter organization representative.

The award honored him for "outstanding service to children and youth in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference."



The Rev. Peggy Click presents a Torch Award to Randy Wineke.

Thomas Armstrong

Wrestler cleans church and shovels sidewalks

POUGHQUAG, N.Y.—

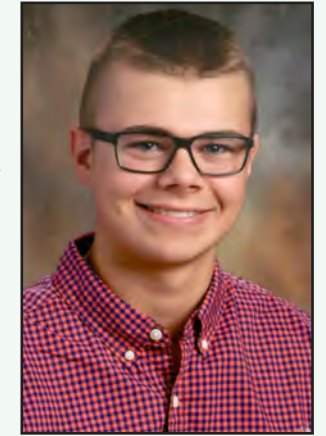
Poughquag UMC presented Thomas Armstrong, a member of the Arlington High School wrestling team, with a Good Samaritan

Award.

Thomas joined other wrestlers in providing a safe Halloween for children and he helped train younger wrestlers at a middle school.

He joined other youth in cleaning the church, Christmas caroling at a nursing home, selling pumpkins, and carrying food to cars for the church's food pantry.

Thomas also shovels snow for a neighbor and helps raise funds for a 5K race to benefit cancer patients.



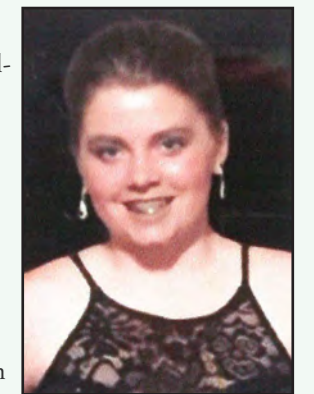
Thomas Armstrong.

Kendall McElwee, Abbey and Emily Tudor, and Kaetlin Markwell Church gives Good Samaritan Awards to four Girl Scouts

ODENTON, Md.—

Nichols-Bethel UMC presented Good Samaritan Awards to one Lutheran and three UM Girl Scouts.

Kendall McElwee, a member of First Evangelical Lutheran Church and a 10-year veteran Girl Scout, was honored for cooking and serving dinners to homeless men and for caring for the children of Girl Scout leaders during their



Kendall McElwee

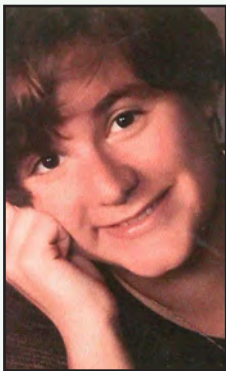
meetings.

Emily Tudor, a 13-year member of Girl Scouts, has earned Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards and has served on the Encampment Committee for five years. She volunteers at the church's clothes closet and the Backpack Buddies program providing food for underprivileged children.

Emily's younger sister, Abbey, shadowed her big sister at Girl Scout meetings before she was old enough to join. She also served food to homeless men, provided backpacks for children, and sang in the youth choir.

Kaetlin Markwell, a recipient of Gold and Silver Awards, serves as a mentor to younger girls, teaches Sunday school, and helps plan events for other troop leaders.

The four girls were recommended to Pastor Clark Carr by Tracy Cannan, service unit manager for Girl Scouts of Central Maryland.



Emily Tudor



Abbey Tudor



Kaetlin Markwell

Matthew Lohman Scout build play loft

GENESEO, Ill.—
For his Eagle Scout project Matthew Lohman designed and built a reading/play loft for the nursery at Grace UMC.

"I had seen a reading and play loft at another church and decided my church would greatly benefit from it," said Matthew.

"Throughout my scouting career, I have enjoyed being in the outdoors, camping, fishing and doing activities with my fellow scouts," Matthew said. "I was able to go to Philmont Scout Ranch, near the town of Cimarron, New Mexico, where I spent seven days backpacking through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of the Rocky Mountains of northern New Mexico."

In 2015, he accompanied his mother and brother Daniel on a mission trip to Haiti, returning there a second time as part of a 2016 mission team with his sisters, Hilary and Hannah Lohman.



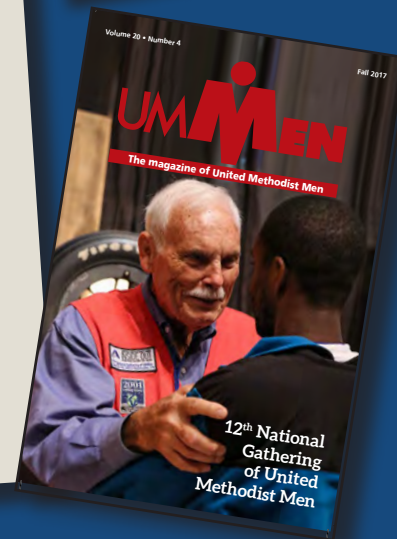
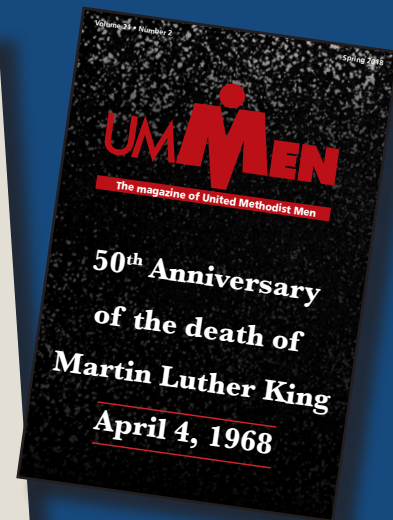
Matthew shows the reading/play loft he built for Grace UMC.

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