

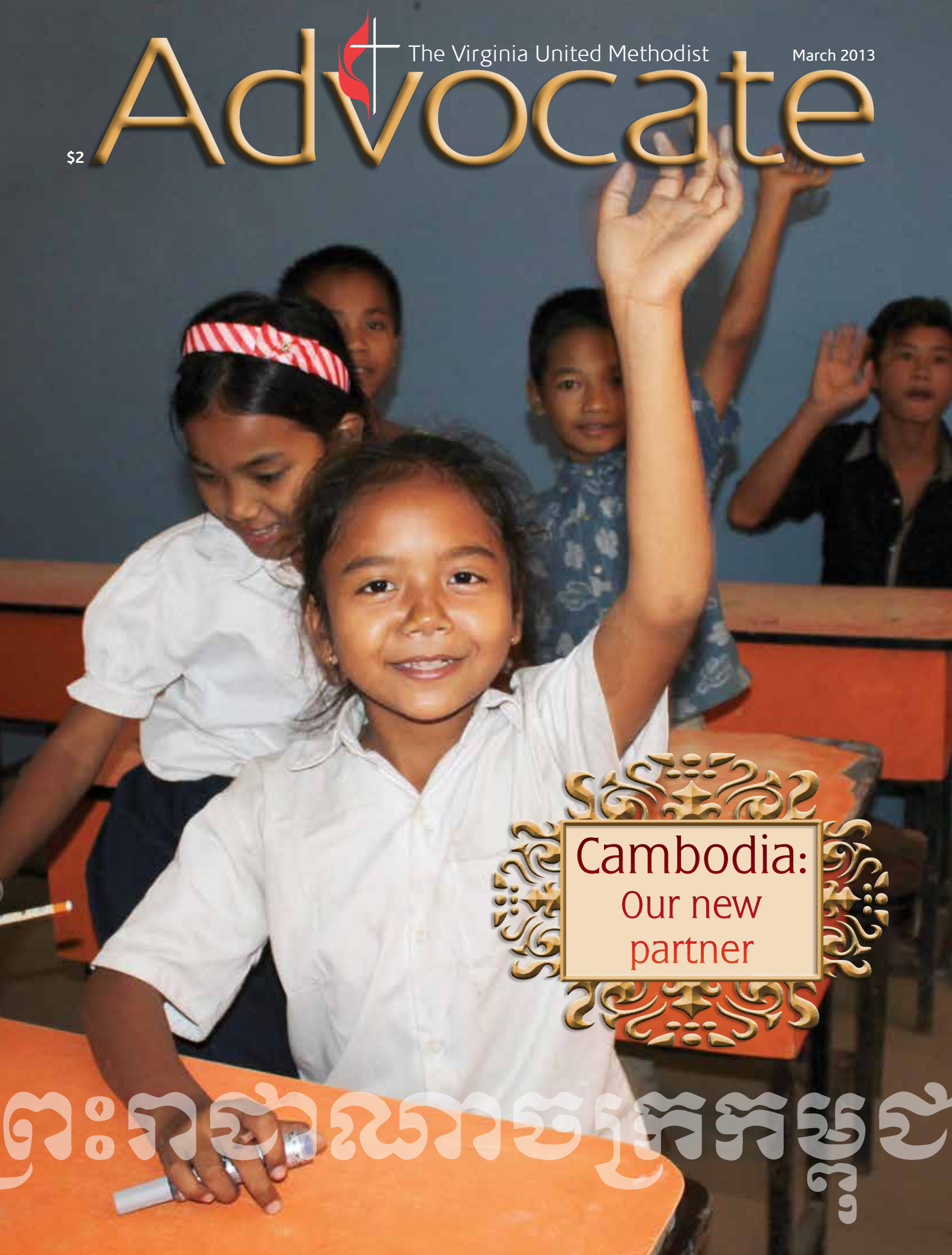
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The Virginia United Methodist

March 2013

Advocate



Cambodia:
Our new
partner

ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា

FROM THE EDITOR



Neill Caldwell
Editor

“Re-con” in Cambodia



People ask “How was Cambodia?” The first word that springs to mind is “warm” – not as in the temperature, although it was pretty warm, a nice change for us making a trip in late January – but as in “warm welcome” ... “warm people” ... “warm hearts.”

The people we met were very welcoming to the eight visitors who toured their country as part of the first major contact between a Volunteers In Mission team representing our Virginia Conference Initiatives of Hope program and the Methodist Church of Cambodia. Over two weeks I met a lot of people, and am sad to say I don’t remember a lot of their names. But a few people stood out, including Putty and Tola, native Cambodians whose English at times is better than mine and who helped us navigate the geography and culture; Joseph Chang, a survivor of the genocide that killed more than a million Cambodians, now a district superintendent and force of nature; Esther, a GBGM missionary from Kenya who simply loves everyone from Khmer babies to somewhat broken-down, middle-aged American visitors like me.

And what can I say about Romy... our dear Romeo del Rosario, a native of the Philippines who has served as a missionary all around the world for The United Methodist Church. In fact, with all due respect to everyone else, including Glenn Rowley, Romy may be our No. 1 missionary, for his combination of larger-than-life personality, deep spirituality and desire to build churches and ministries that are led and fed by natives, not dictated to by foreigners.

All mission trips are life-changing events. But walking and riding through Cambodia, at the height of the dry season, with its bumpy roads and crowded markets, has given me a very strong personal connection to a place I’d never given much thought before. It was not at all like I had imagined it. My pre-trip imagination was full of dark jungles and being menaced by insects and giant pythons. The reality where we visited is more like Kansas or the plains of Africa: table-flat, few trees, endless rice fields, millions of “motos” (motorbikes) everywhere and a traffic pattern that could be described as chaotic – but somehow works, fancy four-story villas right beside corrugated metal shacks, landmines, outhouses, crushing poverty, and a general mistrust of authority. (Learn even a little about the Khmer Rouge years and you won’t blame them for that.) Heck, they even have KFC.

As I came back through U.S. Customs at Dulles Airport the agent asked the reason for my travel overseas. I was trying to describe what our team did and he interrupted me: “Re-con.” Yes. His word is military code for “reconnaissance,” but yes, a trip of exploration, for checking things out and reporting back. The Hebrews did that too, right?

My report is that Cambodia is a fertile field for mission partnership. Our dollars will go a long way there – you can get a huge dinner for \$3 – but more importantly, we can make a real impact on a country that’s experiencing something of a re-boot: because of the genocide, 70 percent of today’s population is age 30 or under, and 50 percent is under age 18. Church participation is made up mostly of children! 🇰🇷

Neill Caldwell

Connecting with the
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The United Methodist Church

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Local Church News
Items should be typed (preferably sent via e-mail) or printed legibly, no more than 100 words, and of conference-wide interest. Complete names of individuals, churches and districts should be included. Because of space limitations, the Local Church section prohibits news items related to church members’ birthdays (of less than 100 years), wedding anniversaries, receptions for moving and/or retiring pastors, photos of traditional Christmas trees or Easter trees/crosses, and any item over two months old. Color photos are encouraged. Photos returned only if submitted with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Photos included on a space available basis. The editor reserves the right to edit all copy or refuse publication.

Letters
Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis. Letters should be limited to 150 words for space reasons. The Advocate will not print letters addressing a topic beyond two months of the publication of that issue. The Advocate editor reserves the right to edit all letters.

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On the cover: A young student at the United Methodist-supported Street Children and Orphans’ Training Center in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, responds to her teacher’s question. Photo by Neill Caldwell

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Watch out for the experts

I wonder if the Virginia Conference staff or the Cabinet or whoever is in charge of scheduling conference events knew that I am an expert polecat skinner and I wonder if they would consider me to be the keynote speaker for next year's Ministers' Convocation.

You may say, "That is absurd, who in the world needs to know how to skin a polecat and what practical use would that knowledge be?"

I don't find it any more absurd than Phyllis Tickle being the keynote speaker this year. What was even more absurd is the fact that she received a standing ovation after each of her three sessions. I asked

some of my colleagues why they applauded and it seemed to be because she was a good speaker and had so much information that sounded good at the time.

I want to make two confessions now. I am not really an expert polecat skinner and I am not an expert on the subject of the emergent church, but I can tell when something has a bad smell. I would advise staying away from polecats and the emergent church movement. If Mrs. Tickle had just been there to share her great knowledge, then I would say, "So what good is it?" Apostate churches and false teachings are nothing new. If she was there to promote this emerging church movement (and I believe that was her intent), then I would like to know who invited her and why.

Tickle vehemently denied that this movement was in any way postmodern relativism. Just the way that she described the structure of a typical emergent church service should have thrown up red flags. She said that there was a pastor present at the church service but that the pastor did not bring the message. Each week a different lay person brought the message and several other lay people were there and prepared to give their opinions as to, "what the scripture says to me." That is a perfect definition of relativism. She said that they did not want

a pastor to preach because he or she may tend to be authoritative and again I say that this is a model of relativism.

The emergent church prides itself in being non-doctrinal and again I say that this is a recipe for relativism. Some say that The United Methodist Church is non-doctrinal, but nothing is further from the truth. Every United Methodist pastor has taken an oath promising that we have studied and understand our doctrine, "and we adhere to it." John Wesley allowed absolutely no deviation from it by his pastors. Doctrine keeps us from following fads like the emerging movement. Tickle says that this is the next "great thing" in Christendom. I say "this too will pass."

When I came home from the convocation I felt really, really bad. I did not want to go in the first place, but I needed the continuing education units. I didn't want to go because I typically come back from conference and district events and trainings feeling bad and worried about our denomination. It seems to me that in our attempt to throw up a "big tent" or cast a "large net" we are leaving behind what made us great, "simple truth for a simple people." Truth is not relative, it is absolute. The Bible is our source and the Holy Spirit our guide and it is just that simple.

I will gladly admit to being simple but that does not make me stupid. I

didn't understand all that Phyllis Tickle had to say at convocation but I had enough sense to come home and find some facts on the emergent, emerging, or emergence church and it definitely has a bad smell. Check it out yourself.

There is a good documentary on YouTube by Elliott Nesh (just Google, "The real roots of the emergent church"). Some of the leaders of this movement are Rob Bell, Tony Jones, Brian McLaren and Doug Pagitt, and there is plenty of information "in their own words" of what they believe. John Wesley said, "If you want to know what I believe then read my sermons." I think it is fair to put these fine gentlemen to the same test.

I was told when I went to school at Duke University that the purpose of higher education was not to tell us what to think, but it was meant to expand our thinking and make us wonder. In that sense, Phyllis Tickle did expand my thinking and wonderment. I wonder what it cost to bring somebody like Tickle to Blackstone for three days. I'm thinking that I didn't see her pray or give any praise to God. I'm thinking that her jokes were crude and her speech unholy. I wonder why anybody thought that we needed this information enough to pay for it when it is all free online. I'm thinking she got too much applause and I'm thinking that some people will fall for anything that

sounds good at the time. I'm thinking that heaven and earth will pass away but the Word of God will remain. I'm thinking our church would do well to stick to what lasts.

Allan Murphy serves as pastor at Southall Memorial and New Hope UMCs, Farmville District

January commentary missed the mark

I write in response to Kirby Griffs' commentary in the January issue of the Advocate ("The wrong side of history?" pg. 4). Although his personal position on the issue of homosexuality seems clear enough, his commentary is mainly directed to the state of the debate. However one might come down on the substance of the argument, his commentary misses its intended mark.

The most concerning flaw is the, no doubt unintended, but quite condescending, ad hominem quality of his position. What is the evidence that supports his claim that "Christians who favor rights for homosexuals are a lot more aware of the possible contradiction of their views and thus more likely have thought carefully about it"? Would he say this of the late Richard John Neuhaus, for example?

Secondly, there is a problem with over generalization. What rights are at issue here? It is entirely possible for

a person to favor every conceivable right for homosexuals with the right to same sex marriage being the only exception and that based upon a particular understanding of marriage, which rules out a number of possible options, including plural marriage as well as homosexual unions.

Lastly, there is the issue of question begging. Whether the admonitions against homosexuality in the Mosaic law belong to the purity laws or the moral codes is precisely at issue; it cannot simply be assumed. The injunction of fornication in Acts 15 is relevant here.

The Rev. Jim Noland Senior Pastor, Reveille UMC, Richmond

New ways to do old things

Recent issues of the Advocate have been filled with ways the church will meet the needs of people – relieving suffering, prison ministry, health care, breaking the poverty cycle... Two stood out to me like neon signs: establishing new faith communities and revitalizing existing congregations. Both have been part of God's program through the centuries. When people listened to God's voice, they acted.

God's people have listened so well, they are really good at it. How would the church have gotten so far without Moses and Paul and Lydia, who took care of the widows and needs

of the children, Daniel and Joseph and the widow who took her last bit of meal and oil to make a cake for a special house guest.

We cannot overlook the Sunday school teachers, who relive these Bible stories in their lessons and songs of faith. Some churches are gone, but the members still went out and made a difference in the lives of others.

Our church is finding different ways to meet our neighbors. Each month a group makes soup, and while making deliveries they sit and visit. Wednesday suppers are welcoming and fun activities for the entire neighborhood.

My own ministry began by reading someone's t-shirt or tattoo! It may be a different kind of approach, but opens a door for conversation and connection.

Recently on a trip with family members I learned we no longer need road maps or stops at a gas station for directions. Instead we listen to a lady on the dashboard for every turn. Phones of various kinds met emergency needs. The roads are the same, but the ways to get there are different.

New directions? Not really: "The voice of God is calling its summons in our day." (Hymn 436, United Methodist Hymnal)

Alouise Ritter, Hartfield

Note from the graphic designer:

We had several comments about the January cover and inside photo illustration.



tions. Meant to represent the anonymous "people in the pews," the photos were altered with an "oil paint" effect in Photoshop. We neglected to credit the photographer for the spread on pages 16-17: Photo taken 9/19/2010 in Leipsic, Ohio, by Mike DuBose for United Methodist Communica-

tions. This photo was taken as part of the UMNS series titled, "HARVEST OF HOPE" which covered rural churches in Arkansas, North Dakota and Ohio.

COMMENTARY



Praying in the garden with Maximus

During this season of Lent, as we approach the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, we journey alongside our mothers and fathers in the faith. Seeking to learn from those who have come before us, I would like to offer some wisdom from Maximus the Confessor, a 7th-century theologian who was exiled, imprisoned and mutilated for his writings on Christ. Attending to Maximus' reflection on Christ's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane can guide us toward the real purpose of prayer, of our Lenten discipline and of the Christian life as a whole.



By ADAM PLOYD

To understand what Maximus has to teach us, we have to understand a bit about the theological controversy in which he was embroiled. After the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) declared Christ to be both fully human and fully divine, one of the questions that arose was whether Christ had one or two wills. This seems like an obnoxiously academic question to many of us, but for Maximus and other Christians it got to the heart of who Christ was and who we are as those whom Christ saves. Maximus (and eventually the rest of the Orthodox church), affirmed that if Christ is both truly human and truly divine then he must have two wills, a human will and a divine will.

How, then, is Christ not constantly warring inside himself between two opposing wills? This is where the Garden of Gethsemane comes in. Christ prays that the cup pass from him, that he not have to die. This, Maximus tells us, is an expression of Christ's human will. It is natural and even proper for humans not to want to die. The instinct to continue one's life, is at the very heart of what the human will is. It is necessary, then, that Christ express this, because it is in this that Christ reveals just how fully human he is. But Christ's prayer doesn't end

there. Christ goes on to say, "But not my will but yours be done." The reason that there is no conflict between the two wills of Christ is that the human will completely submits — voluntarily — to the divine will.

Here, perhaps even more than in the cross, we see the salvation that Christ offers us. For Maximus, what happens in Christ is also what Christ brings about in us. This is deification. This does not mean that we become God. It means, rather, that we are perfected through our relationship with God. And even though we do not have a divine nature and divine will like Christ, our own humanity, including our wills, is deified through Christ. Christ manifests the perfection of our humanity, and that includes the perfect submission of our wills to God's.

Christ's prayer in the garden teaches us how we, too, ought to pray. First, we are invited to bring to God all of our desires, all of our fears, everything that defines who we are and what we do. But prayer is not about getting what we want. Rather, prayer is about learning to want what God wants.

Second, the Christian life, as exemplified in prayer, is a process whereby we are changed. We are called to be more than "only human." As our Wesleyan tradition teaches us, we are "going on to perfection." And this perfection is

a reshaping of our hearts, a reorientation of our desires, such that we may submit our own wills to the will of God. Such joyful obedience is the perfect expression of our humanity when our humanity is renewed in the image of Christ.

During Lent, we often focus on confessing our sins and sharing in the suffering of Christ. This is good. We should do this. But we must remember why we are doing it. We confess when we have been less than fully human — less than what God created us to be — so that we might be made whole, living into our humanity through God's grace. We join in the sufferings of Christ, so that we might share in Christ's resurrection.

For Maximus and other early Christians, Christ must have two wills just as he must have two full natures, human and divine. But this is not simply philosophical hairsplitting. It is a powerful declaration that we are saved in Christ. Through Christian discipleship we come to share in this new humanity that Christ inaugurated. Through prayer, our hearts and our minds are renewed and reformed. So, during this Lenten season, let us come to the garden to pray, confident that God will teach us how to say, "not my will, but your will be done."

-Virginia native Adam Ployd is a PhD student at Emory University in Atlanta

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Virginia United Methodist Foundation board elects new officers, honors retirees



Virginia United Methodist Foundation President Dave Thompson (left) with new officers (from left): Gus Paulette, chair; Ron Hardman, vice chair; Rev. Jim Smith, secretary. (Not present – Bob Spencer, treasurer)

The Virginia United Methodist Foundation Board of Directors have elected new officers and honored three who are stepping away from the board after many years of service.

Lori Roberts, the current board chair, announced the election of a new slate of officers: Gus Paulette, chairperson; Ron Hardman, vice chair; Bob Spencer, treasurer; and the Rev. Jim Smith, secretary.

Paulette is a financial planner for Morgan Stanley Smith Barney in Lynchburg. Hardman is retired chief of staff in the U.S. House of Representatives. Spencer is retired

chair of Citizens National Bank in Chesapeake. Smith is senior pastor of Emmanuel UMC in Stephenson.

Board members also thanked Roberts for her service as chair for the past two years.

The three who are retiring from service on the board are the Rev. Michael Copeland, senior pastor at St. Paul's UMC in Christiansburg; Minnis Ridenour, senior fellow at Virginia Tech and retired CFO; and Jim Branscome, former Virginia Conference treasurer. Roberts said the board expressed its appreciation for their years of service.



Outgoing board members (from left) Rev. Michael Copeland, Minnis Ridenour and Jim Branscome.

Your house...



...can become a very special home for retired United Methodist pastors and their spouses in the years to come.

The Retired Clergy Housing Corporation of the Virginia Conference maintains a program to provide retirement homes for eligible United Methodist pastors who need them.

This program has been made possible by the gift of homes willed to the Corporation for this purpose. Other contributions come through the Covenant of Gratitude whose members contribute \$1.00 a year for each person ordained a commissioned probationer at the Virginia Annual Conference.

If you would like to consider willing your home to the Retired Clergy Housing Corporation of the Virginia Conference or if you would like to share through the Covenant of Gratitude, please mail in the coupon below with your name and address.

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The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Bishop Cho experiences his first United Methodist Day at General Assembly

By Neill Caldwell

Gil Hanke, the top staff executive of the General Commission on United Methodist Men and a Virginia native, told participants in the annual United Methodist Day at the General Assembly on Feb. 7 that being a faith-based witness in the halls of political power is a positive action.

But the real key to success, Hanke said, is what happens next.

"What is the next right step?" Hanke asked the more than 300 participants. "Follow up. Contact the persons you met with today and continue to develop the relationship that was started today. Tell your story... the personal part about how an issue makes you feel. You need to distinguish yourself from the paid lobbyists," he said.

This day of advocacy with state senators, del-



General Commission on United Methodist Men General Secretary Gil Hanke speaks at Bon Air UMC as part of United Methodist Day at the General Assembly. Photos by Neill Caldwell

egates and their staffs has been a 25-year tradition in the Virginia Conference, and unique in the denomination, organizers said. This was also the first United Methodist Day experience for Bishop Young Jin Cho, who spoke to several lawmakers and staff members.

The legislature was wrestling with the state budget, which meant many actual elected officials were tied up in meetings. But most offices provided a chief of staff or legislative advisor for the United Methodist visitors to speak with. Then when the two houses began their respective sessions at noon in the historic Capitol, United Methodist participants filled the galleries and were officially recognized in both chambers.

Bishop Cho repeated his talking points in several offices, recounting the resolutions approved at 2012

Annual Conference dealing with ending the death penalty and restoring civil rights for ex-offenders who have returned to society.

Other issues came up repeatedly: expanding Medicaid benefits for the poor families in Virginia and the long-term benefits of that spending, the importance of education, access to health-care, human trafficking and the greed of payday lenders.

The Medicaid issue was one that was being hotly debated in the wake of the budget negotiations.

"I'm 'all in' on this," Sen. Chapman Peterson told Bishop Cho. Peterson, a Democrat from Fairfax who attends an Episcopal church, reminded his visitors that "every day we fail to enact Medicaid expansion, Virginia loses \$5 million in federal funding."

Participants gathered for breakfast and lunch at Bon Air UMC but in between boarded more than a dozen church buses for the trip to the State Capitol and legislative office building in downtown Richmond. Once they reached the Capitol area, the hundreds of United Methodist participants split up and spread out to speak to their representatives.

Hanke grew up in Virginia before moving to Texas, where he lived for 30 years before relocating to Nashville to take his current position with United Methodist Men. His brother is the Rev. Jay Hanke, who is retired in Winchester.

-Neill Caldwell is editor of the Advocate

Bishop Young Jin Cho talks with UM Day participants while at the State Capitol.



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

Society of St. Andrew broke records in 2012

For the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA), 2012 was the best year ever.

The national hunger ministry, headquartered in Big Island, set new records for the volume of fresh food gleaned from fields, and for the number of gleaning events held, volunteers engaged and servings of food delivered to the plates of hungry Americans.

Last year, the organization delivered more than 33 million pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables to food pantries, soup kitchens and other feeding agencies in 33 states. That is more than 100 million servings of food provided to individuals and families in need.

Early in the year, delegates to 2012 General Conference stopped at the front plaza of the Tampa Convention Center and helped bag more than 30,000 pounds of cucumbers that were all delivered that day to agencies feeding the hungry in Florida.

Also in 2012, Virginia First Lady Maureen McDonnell worked with SoSA in "A Day of Gleaning in the Commonwealth of Virginia." On Aug. 16, 143 volunteers at seven different farms around the state gleaned more than 37 thousand pounds of green beans, eggplants, tomatoes, peppers, apples, peaches and corn. The First Lady herself gleaned at a farm near Richmond, picking egg-

plants and tomatoes that were then delivered to the Central Virginia Food Bank.

In Mississippi, an Episcopal school partnered with SoSA to glean pumpkins. Some were delivered to food banks, and the remainder they took back with them and baked pumpkin bread and muffins that were delivered to feeding agencies for the meals of those in need.

Hundreds of truckloads of fresh vegetables came from farms and packing houses. One of them was destined for the 2012 Virginia Annual Conference session, where members bagged about 40,000 pounds of potatoes in Roanoke. That effort was repeated by churches, civic organizations, schools and other groups across much of the U.S.

When the year came to an end, 40,000 volunteers had worked at more than 6,500 events, gleaning in fields and bagging food in parking lots. Those were record numbers, as was the 33 million pounds of food delivered.

SoSA began in 1979, and the Virginia Conference has been a partner since the beginning. With that continued support, and with the involvement of additional faith groups, more regions of the country, and schools and civic organizations, more than 680 million pounds of food have been collected and



delivered to the plates of the hungry.

The effort continues. The question reverberates: "When were you hungry, Lord, and I fed you?" The answer: "Every day."

-Mike Hickcox, Society of St. Andrew

Top: Virginia First Lady Maureen McDonnell and a Girl Scout show off an eggplant gleaned at Mount Olympus Farm on the official 'Day of Gleaning' in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Photo by Kathleen Taylor Scott
Bottom: Members of the 2012 Virginia Annual Conference bag potatoes early in the morning in the parking lot outside the Roanoke Civic Center. Photo by Jennifer Vestal Moore

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Virginia United Methodist *Heritage* magazine celebrates 40th anniversary

By Boyd Lucas and Cathy Morgan

In the forward to the Spring 1973 issue, editors wrote “The policy will be to print articles of historical interest relating to United Methodism in Virginia.”

Spring 1973: Vietnam and Watergate... “Tie a Yellow Ribbon...” and “Godspell” ... According to Gallup’s poll, “the church or organized religion” was the most highly rated of all institutions. ... The Historical Society of the Virginia United Methodist Conference published its first issue of *Heritage*. ... Though turmoil and scandal abounded, so did hope and positive attitude.

With a small balance remaining from previous Virginia Conference programming, the Virginia Conference Historical Society published its first issue of *Heritage* 40 years ago this year.

In the forward to the Spring 1973 issue, editors wrote “The policy will be to print articles of historical interest relating to United Methodism in Virginia.” They urged readers to submit “unpublished manuscripts, original diaries, or other writings of Virginia ministers, book reviews, or other

materials that might be suitable for such publication ...”

The Historical Society wanted to publish a “continuing record of [Virginia United Methodist] history,” *Heritage*’s founding editor the Rev. Robert Garner said in a recent phone conversation.

Garner also said that the editorial team worked hard to publish a quality first issue. In doing so, that first team of editors, Garner (Publication), Raymond F. Wrenn (Circulation), Melvin Lee Steadman Jr. (Contributing), and Hazel Davis (Copy), set a high standard for themselves and the subsequent editorial teams to equal.

After Robert Garner, Cathy Morgan (1984-1990) assumed the editorship, continuing *Heritage*’s tradition of high quality. Morgan initiated a partnership with the *Virginia Advocate* staff to design and publish each issue, making *Heritage*’s appearance more professional.

The standout of her tenure is the Spring 1987 issue, which offers practical advice for church archivists and historians. Wrenn wrote on research problems, conference Archivist Patti Russell wrote on church record keeping, and Davis wrote on writing a church history. Even though some of the

recommendations are outdated, the issue is still consulted today because the principles have not changed.

Russell (1990-2008) followed Morgan, taking the editor’s job for what she expected to be of short duration. Eighteen years later she looked back in satisfaction at the scholarship offered to *Heritage* readers.

Russell made an effort to attend meetings of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Historical Society in search of writers for *Heritage*. In 2001 she organized the group’s gathering in Ashland and subsequently published most of the papers presented there.

Mark Leep accepted the editor’s position in 2009. Unfortunately, his job situation changed, forcing him to step aside after one issue. The good news is that he continues as a contributor on the editorial team.

Heritage now has a stable of writers just like in the early days when a group, which included Roscoe Johnson, Dallas Robertson, James Becker, Bishop Harold Hughes and Wrenn, could be counted on to make regular contributions. Though Dr. Wrenn has written more articles than any other contributor, he self-deprecatingly vows that he is not a historian, but

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merely someone with an extra good memory. Most people disagree.

Most contributors are “home grown,” being faculty members of conference schools or individuals who appreciate Virginia United Methodist history. To date, articles contributed by clergy outnumber laity three-to-one.

Some contributors have been experts on specific subjects: Kirk Mariner (Eastern Shore); Bruce Souders (all things Evangelical United Brethren); and David Bearn (Blackstone College and Fluvanna County).

Heritage has also published quality papers that originally fulfilled college and seminary course work requirements.

In some issues, *Heritage* contains two to three disparate articles. In other issues, the primary articles may focus on a theme, such as the histories of women and minorities. Past examples are clergy rights for women, the Central Jurisdiction and Korean Methodism. Some issues have focused solely on specific topics, such as camp meetings, church architecture, Methodist women and Ferrum College.

In 1992, Russell published a well-received commemorative issue devoted to Bishop W. Kenneth Goodson in which a diverse selection of writers from all over the Southeast reflected on the bishop’s larger-than-life career.

Other issues have published original source material, notably the “Short Account,” the autobiography of William Watters.

Then, there are the quirky and the different, such as: Antonia Ford, a well-born Methodist lady, who not only spied for the Confederacy, but also fell in love with and married a Union officer; the continuing saga of first *Advocate* editor Ethelbert Drake; Sarah Anderson Jones, the 18th century mystic from the Old Brunswick Circuit; and the printing of the Ballad of William Watters sung to the tune of “Davey Crockett.”

Heritage is a truly serious publication (“scholarly without the academic attitude”). We do enjoy all aspects of Virginia United Methodist history. And when those aspects contain stories of human interest, we do our best to pass the stories on to our readers.


The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

That has not changed in our 40 years. Nor will it. What has changed is the “delivery method” of Virginia United Methodist history. Forty years ago “print” was the method. Today, digital publication is slowly replacing print.

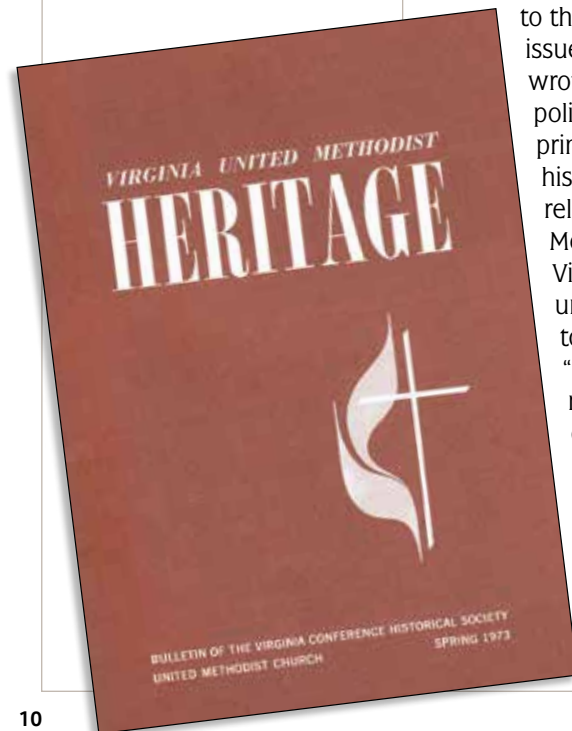
Subscribers have a choice of receiving their issues either by print or digital, or both. Digital publication makes it easy to share either whole or partial issues. As a companion piece to this anniversary article, we are sharing former editor Russell’s article “*Heritage*, A History” from the Spring 2009 issue at this Web address: www.vaumc.org/ncfilerepository/Heritage/HeritageFall2010.pdf. Non-subscribers, who are now either intrigued or hooked, can read a sample issue here:

www.vaumc.org/ncfilerepository/Heritage/HeritageFall2010.pdf in time for the publication of the Spring 2013 issue.

We on the *Heritage* team cannot thank our readers enough for their support. Like our readers, we have a passion for Virginia United Methodist history, and our readers enable us to express and share our passion.

Thank you all who have made the first 40 years possible. Here’s to the next 40. 

-Boyd Lucas is the current editor of *Heritage*.





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The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Rising from the ashes: Church gets new life after 2011 fire

By Laura Peters,
Staunton Newsleader

The Rev. Neil McLaughlin never thought an entire church could be completely destroyed within a night.

But the pastor of Mount Bethel UMC in Crimora did witness it in September 2011, just after a year of leading the congregation. Everything was destroyed, with more than \$400,000 in damage. There was no determination of the cause of the fire.

"That was very devastating. I've never gone through that in my ministry before," McLaughlin said about the disaster that struck the 100-year-old church. "We were determined. That fire happened on a Saturday morning. We did not lose one service."

But, that didn't stop the congregation. Meeting that Sunday at the Grottoes Fire Department for more than a month, the church found a more permanent home in a warehouse in Crimora, until they moved into the new building in the begin-

ning of December. "We were getting our church how we felt we wanted it, and we were working hard to get it there. About the time we were almost to that point, we lost it all," said Judy Armstrong, who has been attending the church since she was in fourth grade. "So, we had to start over. God knew we needed a new church, so he took care of it."

to death. The people have been great, and with God's help, we got it all here," Armstrong said. "The community has been great. Not only United Methodist churches, but brother churches, Presbyterian, the Mennonites, everybody and not from just right here but from all over the area. We've gotten donations from people who used to go here years ago."

Although the church still needs between \$10,000 to \$15,000 for improvements — they have everything but the kitchen sink — raising money hasn't been a problem.

"We've got a wonderful community. Everybody has helped us out. We just all worked together," Catherine McLaughlin said. "It's just a matter of staying together as a family. The pastor reminded us that the church is just a building, that a church was actually the people in it and we remembered that."

The church was filled almost to capacity with more than 150 people. Smiles were wide, and spirits were high. "This day is a very exciting day to be in a new building and dedicate it to God. We are able to be here, debt-free, which is very exciting," Neil McLaughlin said. "It's just very exciting to have all the community people, who have been a part of this with donations and prayers, they're all here today... they're seeing exactly what they did for us."

from insurance, but many community members and other area churches donated money to help Mount Bethel.

Now, with a new church building completed, the congregation poured in on Jan. 6 to dedicate the new building.

"It's super, we're tickled

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"It's super, we're tickled

Recently retired Asbury professor to lead Bible study at Annual Conference



Dr. Steve Harper

Asbury Theological Seminary recently announced the retirement of Dr. Steve Harper, professor of Spiritual Formation and Wesley Studies, and founding vice president of the school's Florida Campus.

Harper will lead Bible study during the 2013 Virginia Annual Conference to be held June 21-23 at the Hampton Convention Center.

"Nearly a decade ago Steve wrote, 'We are never nearer the purpose of our existence than when we embrace the idea of life lived for others.' Steve has lived out his purpose every day in extraordinary ways, and Asbury Seminary is richer for it," said Dr. Tim Tennent, president of Asbury Seminary.

In 1997 the Board of Trustees of Asbury Seminary chose Orlando, Fla., for the location of its second campus. Orlando was an intentional choice — it was decidedly urban, richly diverse, rapidly growing, and a de facto gateway to the world. The choice of Harper as its first leader was equally intentional.

Under Harper's leadership, the Florida campus has grown to an enrollment of 241 students, making it larger than nearly 80 percent of seminaries in North America.

In 2001, he oversaw the development of the Latino/Latina Studies program, a non-degree certificate in theological studies with an opportunity to specialize in six different areas of ministry. The program is taught in Spanish from a Hispanic perspective and is designed to prepare leaders for the rapidly growing Latin Church. In 2008 Harper forged a partnership with Asbury University to establish "Asbury Achieve," a non-traditional, accelerated program designed to provide adults with an opportunity to complete a degree.

Harper recently received the Asbury Seminary 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award.

He has served as a youth pastor, evangelist, pastor and professor. He was an elder in the Northwest Texas Conference from 1972-2004, and then transferred to the Florida Conference. Harper served as professor of Spiritual Formation at Asbury Seminary from 1980-1992. From 1992-1996, he and his wife, Jeannie, launched and developed a ministry to ministers called Shepherd's Care, where they served until 1996, when The Upper Room in Nashville invited Steve to become the founding director of The Pathways Initiative, a ministry to spiritual leaders.

-Asbury Theological Seminary

Dr. Bradley Bateman named 10th president of Randolph College

By Brenda Edson

The Randolph College Board of Trustees has named Bradley W. Bateman as the institution's 10th president. The announcement was made in Randolph's newly renovated Student Center on Feb. 14.

The Lynchburg school is one of five United Methodist-related colleges in the Virginia Conference.

"I feel both exhilarated and humbled to be asked to do this job," said Bateman, 56. "Randolph College is a wonderful institution with an incredible community that was built on the strong foundation of Randolph-Macon Woman's College. It is an excellent institution about to come into its own, and I am proud to be a part of this exciting time."

Current President John Klein's retirement is effective June 30. The search committee worked to review applications from a wide and diverse field of more than 90 candidates.

"Randolph has undergone a dramatic transformation since our decision to admit men seven years ago," said Becky Morrison Dunn, chair of the Board of Trustees. "We are proud of how far we have come as an institution, and we are indebted to our current president, for leading Randolph successfully through this transition. Just as John was the right president for our time of transition, Brad is the perfect fit to

lead us into the future."

Bateman, Dunn added, brings a strong passion for the liberal arts, stellar academic credentials and experience, and an extensive economics background. "The Board recognized that Brad is a gifted teacher, brilliant scholar and natural leader," she said.

Bateman has served as provost for Denison University since 2007. In that role, he functioned as Denison's executive vice president with direct leadership responsibilities related to curriculum and faculty. He also had oversight of libraries, computing services, intercollegiate athletics, off-campus study, the office of the registrar and the Denison Museum.

"The great passion of my life is liberal arts education," Bateman said. "It was transformative for me personally, and I chose to become a liberal educator because I wanted to help offer that same transformation to other people. It is a

(Continued on page 15: "Bateman")



Bradley W. Bateman



The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA



Bishop Cho announces five new appointments to Cabinet

By Neill Caldwell

Almost a third of the Virginia Conference 16-member Cabinet will be changing this year, as Bishop Young Jin Cho announced Feb. 19 that he is appointing five new pastors to his Cabinet.

All Virginia Conference appointment changes become effective July 1. This is Bishop Cho's first opportunity to appoint district superintendents following his election to the episcopacy last July.

One "newcomer" is actually coming back to the Cabinet, having served as a superintendent once before. The Rev. Kathleen Overby Webster will be appointed to the Roanoke District. She is currently pastor at Asbury UMC in the Harrisonburg District.

The other new appointments are: The Rev. Catherine Abbott is moving to the Arlington District office from Arlington Temple UMC; the Rev. Danny Kesner, moving to the Charlottesville District from Great Bridge UMC in the Elizabeth River District; the Rev. Dr. Rob Colwell to the James River District from Timberlake UMC in Lynchburg District; and the Rev. Dave Rochford to the Staunton District from St. Mark's UMC in the Roanoke District.

"I am very excited about these appointments of new district superintendents," said Bishop Cho. "I am grateful for their willingness to make commitments to spiritual disciplines and to working together for All Things New – Equipping Vital Congregations. Their diverse ministry and life experiences will be assets to the Cabinet."

New Cabinet appointees from top to bottom: The Rev. Catherine Abbott, the Rev. Dr. Rob Colwell, the Rev. Danny Kesner, the Rev. Dave Rochford, and the Rev. Kathleen Overby Webster

Bishop Cho added that these new superintendents will carry out their ministry as "mission strategists."

"This is a new term in the (Book of Discipline)," he said. "It means that the church's mission should be the driving factor."

The five superintendents coming off the Cabinet this summer will be the Rev. Dr. Brenda Biler (Charlottesville District), the Rev. Dr. John Vest (James River), the Rev. Dr. Mike Houff (Staunton), the Rev. Dr. Steve Hundley (Roanoke) and the Rev. Anthony Layman (Arlington).

Overby Webster came off the Cabinet as Staunton District Superintendent in 2010. She is a native of Falmouth in Stafford County and graduated from the College of William & Mary and Duke Divinity School. She started her ministry career at the four-point Greenville Charge in Emporia, and was pastor of Forest Grove UMC in Ashland and McGaheysville UMC before joining the Cabinet.

Colwell is a native of Roanoke. He graduated from Radford University and later earned a Master of Divinity from Duke and a Doctor of Ministry from Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. He was ordained an elder in 1993 and has served as a pastor for 29 years at appointments including the Catawba Charge, Calvary in Salem, Smith Memorial in Collinsville, Thrasher and Timberlake.

Kesner grew up in St. Luke's UMC in the Arlington District, and is a graduate of James Madison University. He joined the conference in 1982 as a student at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, was ordained a deacon in 1983 and an elder in 1985. He's been at Great Bridge since 2005, and prior to that was at Deep Creek UMC.

A native of Fairfax County, Rochford

is a graduate of Davidson College, the Latin Studies program of the University of Texas at Austin and the Duke Divinity School. He has been at St. Mark's in Daleville since 2005, and prior to that served at Williamsburg UMC.

Abbott has an interesting background as a second career pastor. Originally from Prince George's County, Abbott studied religion at Swarthmore and earned a Master's Degree in public policy at Harvard. That led to a job working for President Jimmy Carter's White House as an energy policy advisor, followed by a 10-year stint as a vice president at Enron in Houston, Texas, and a position as president of the Columbia Energy Group. She completed a Masters of Divinity at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., in 2006.

-Neill Caldwell is editor of the Virginia Advocate.

The United Methodist connection in VIRGINIA

United Methodist home in Williamsburg to file Chapter 11

Virginia United Methodist Homes of Williamsburg, Inc., known as WindsorMeade of Williamsburg, a continuing care retirement community, announced Feb. 19 that it will file for Chapter 11 reorganization to implement a consensual restructuring plan that has been agreed to by WindsorMeade's debt holders.

WindsorMeade, a not-for-profit organization, is sponsored by Virginia United Methodist Homes, Inc. (VUMH). No other VUMH communities are affected by the reorganization.

Chapter 11 is a chapter of the United States Bankruptcy Code, which permits reorganization and allows companies to function and maintain ownership of assets while paying off creditors.

WindsorMeade has reached agreement with its banks and 2/3 of its bondholders (the amount required for plan approval by Chapter 11 guidelines) and therefore will submit a consensual plan to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Richmond in early March. WindsorMeade expects to emerge from Chapter 11 no later than May 31.

"WindsorMeade will continue to operate uninterrupted during this process, and will continue to provide quality services and care to its residents," according to a press release. "Among other things, the restructuring plan is intended to facilitate financing for the future expansion of WindsorMeade's healthcare facility."

"WindsorMeade began full-service operations in June 2008 during the height of the housing market decline and has had difficulty reaching its projected occupancy, which has resulted in the need to restructure its long-term debt obligations," said Christopher P. Henderson, WindsorMeade's president.

"Bateman," continued from page 13)

passion that I bring to Randolph. Randolph's rich history and the chance to continue working on the evolution of the College are things that are appealing to me."

Bateman plans to begin his tenure by meeting as many Randolph constituents as possible. "I want to find out who they are, what they hope for, and why they are so dedicated to Randolph," he said. "I'm a leader who likes to roll his sleeves up and be actively involved in the day-to-day life of the College. I am looking forward to working with the people of Randolph to move the College forward and to build on the solid foundation that has been created over the past few years."

-Brenda Edson is director of Communications for Randolph College.

Grand Camp

"These are a Few of My Favorite Things"

An intergenerational camp for grandparents and their elementary age grandchildren.

Epworth By The Sea ~ St. Simons Island, Georgia

June 28-July 1, 2013

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- Tour Fort Frederica, a National Monument
- Learn how to square dance with your grand
- Tour our historic Coast Guard Station
- Have fun at the beach or climb to the top of the lighthouse
- Enjoy a picnic under the oaks



Details online: www.epworthbythesea.org or call 912-638-8688

LOCAL CHURCH NEWS



▲ Last year **Swansonville UMC** tithed a tenth of all funds received each month, before any bill was paid, to a hunger-related project. There was also land next to the church where members decided to plant a “pick your own” turnip patch. An article in the local newspaper helped people find their way to the patch. In January, Swansonville members picked 2,041 pounds of turnips and delivered them to God’s Storehouse in Danville.



▲ One of the youth handbell choirs from **St. Matthew’s UMC** performed at the State Department’s Christmas party in December. Ambassadors from around the world were greeted to handbell music as they entered the hall. After the event, President Obama came over and personally thanked the group and had his picture made with him. Nancy Cappel has been the director of Music at St. Matthew’s for 43 years.



▲ For their confirmation service, the youth at **Main Street Church, South Boston**, Farmville District, planned a “Baby Shower for Mary” on the third Sunday in Advent. The congregation was asked to bring baby gifts to honor Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus. More than 30 gifts were collected. The youth then took the gifts to the Halifax County Social Services to be distributed to expectant and new



mothers in need. Pictured, confirmands Liza Moore and Isabel Rosche present gifts to Kathy Anderson, director of Social Services.



▲ Members of United Methodist Women at **Burnt Chimney UMC** pin cards to shawls and baby blankets that they collected as their January Mission Purpose. The cards showed that the items had been individually blessed. They were then delivered to the Franklin County Women’s Shelter in Rocky Mount.

Main Street UMC in Suffolk now has 48 Girl Scouts from Daisies to Cadets. They are involved in several community outreach programs. Recently, they participated in a “snooze at the zoo” night at the Virginia Zoo in Norfolk. The girls went on night hikes through the zoo, saw animals sleeping and lions being fed and participated in educational games learning about habitats. The scouts were awarded with Virginia Zoo patches and a pillow case that reads “I spent the night at the Virginia Zoo”! ▼



EVENTS

MARCH

Seminar for Clergy

March 4-5: Virginia Wesleyan College, Norfolk
“Preaching from the Prophets” will be the topic of the next CEU Seminar for Clergy at Virginia Wesleyan College March 4-5. The presenter will be Dr. John Oswalt, author and Old Testament scholar and visiting distinguished professor of Old Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary. This seminar is approved for one CEU for clergy. Online registration is available at www.vwc.edu/ces, or you can visit the Virginia Wesleyan College website at www.vwc.edu for more information.

School for Children’s Ministry

March 9: Baylake UMC, Virginia Beach
April 13: Bonsack UMC, Roanoke
The School for Children’s Ministry has hit the road this year and is coming to a district near you. The day’s schedule is 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on March 9 at Baylake UMC in Virginia Beach; and April 13 at Bonsack UMC, Roanoke. A \$10 registration fee includes lunch, workshops and networking. Registration deadline is the Wednesday before the event. Visit the conference website at www.vaumc.org to register.

Confirmation retreats

March 15-17 and May 3-5: Westview on James
Westview on the James, in Goochland, is offering two Spring confirmation retreats: “Confirm Your Faith” will be offered March 15-17, and “Live Your Commitment” will be offered May 3-5. Westview staff will lead small groups based on the “Credo” curriculum and will lead confirmands in an interactive faith-growing experience. The Rev. Drew Willson, from Salem UMC, Charlottesville District, will be the speaker and worship leader. Call **(804) 457-4210** or e-mail 1231westview@hughes.net for more information.

Extension Ministers’ Annual Gathering with the Bishop

March 22: Richmond Hill Retreat Center
This annual day apart for extension ministers and those appointed beyond the local church will be held by Bishop Cho and his wife, the Rev. Kiok Cho, on spiritual leadership and spiritual disciplines. The cost is \$20 and CEUs will be offered. For more information contact Beth Downs at BethDowns@vaumc.org or call **1-800-768-6040** or **(804) 521-1100**.

Journey middle school weekend

March 22-24: Rockbridge Alum Springs, Goshen
Journey middle school weekend is specifically designed to encourage and challenge middle school students in their

walk with Christ and to provide encouragement and training for adult leaders working with middle school students. Journey weekend will be March 22-24. Willow Creek’s Middle School Pastor Scott Rubin will be speaker and will also provide training for youth leaders. Worship leaders will be a band called The Beautiful Refrain (www.thebeautifulrefrain.com). Details at www.journeyweekend.org.

APRIL

Order of Elders Retreat

April 21-22: Blackstone Conference Center
This retreat will be led by the Rev. Graham Standish, pastor of Calvin Presbyterian Church in Zelienople, Pa. He is the author of six books, including *In God’s Presence: Encouraging, Experiencing, and Embracing the Holy in Worship* (2010) and *Humble Leadership* (2007). He has also written numerous articles in spirituality, spiritual direction and spirituality in congregations. For more information, contact Beth Downs at BethDowns@vaumc.org or call **1-800-768-6040** or **(804) 521-1100**. CEUs will be offered.

MAY

Sojourn to Sacredness

May 19-24: Camp Bethel, Roanoke
The theme of this year’s Sojourn is “Feeding the Five Thousand... How About the Seven Billion?” The retreat will examine issues of food as related to our faith that calls us to be good stewards of God’s creation. The cost is \$125. Participants must be between the ages of 18-35. Contact the Rev. Pat Watkins at caretakersofcreation@me.com or Becky Tate at beckytate@vaumc.org.

Nominees sought for two awards in higher education

The Virginia Conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries is accepting nominations for two awards, one given by the conference and one by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Honorees will be announced during 2013 Annual Conference.

The John Wesley Award is awarded to a person who has made a distinguished contribution to higher education (colleges, academy, Wesley Foundations or campus ministries) within the Virginia Conference. A broad scope of contribution is important. (It is best that the nominee is not employed by one of our United Methodist higher education ministries, but those who have held such positions and have made particularly outstanding contributions during his or her active years will be considered.)

(Continued on page 29)

The Virginia Conference in ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា

CAMBODIA



Recently, eight Virginia Conference United Methodists spent two weeks in Cambodia, visiting with ministries and congregations there. As our newest *Initiatives of Hope* partner, the Methodist Church in Cambodia is new and young and growing. You'll be hearing more about our effort in the coming months, including during 2013 Annual Conference.



Cambodians empowered to build up their own church

By Sam NeSmith

Our Virginia Conference United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) team to Cambodia experienced a Southeast Asian country with a rich culture and history.

Perhaps Cambodia is best known for the genocide in the 1970s by the Communist Khmer Rouge regime, which resulted in the killing of an estimated 3 million people, almost a fourth of the country's population. It has been noted that there is not a single person in Cambodia who was not affected in some way by the genocide.

Because of this tragic history, I imagined that we would encounter numerous persons suffering from the trauma of those years. I was surprised and very inspired to find a faith community of Christians in Cambodia, not bogged down in the past, but optimistically hopeful for the future. Rarely have I encountered so many persons that are so happy and proud to be Christian!

Empowering! This word describes my overall impression of what I saw, witnessed and learned about the Methodist Mission in Cambodia. The Methodist Mission was started in 2004 through the joint venture of five organizations, one of which is the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).

"Rarely have I encountered so many persons that are so happy and proud to be Christian!"

The goal was to help the Cambodian Mission to become an autonomous Methodist Church by 2016. From all indications, the accomplishment of this goal is well under way.

The Mission has a rapidly growing membership with 150 churches led by pastors who are native Cambodians. I hold the highest esteem for the

very talented and dedicated GBGM missionaries whose outstanding leadership is bearing much fruit and empowering the lives of the Cambodian people.

Cambodia has many challenges. Poverty and hunger are prevalent in the rural areas. About 80 percent of the population relies on agriculture for food and livelihood. There is no access to clean water in many places.

Cambodia is a country of youth and young people, with 70 percent of its population of 16 million people currently under the age of 30. Due to this demographic, many youths in the country need, but are unable to access, basic education, good health-care and full-time employment. The Methodist Mission is addressing many of these challenges through programs that equip pastors and laity to meet the social and spiritual needs in their communities, through ministries for children and youths, and self-help programs that give the people the chance to utilize their capabilities, improve their living conditions and become economically self-sufficient.

The Faith Engine ministry, one of many projects visited by our team, targets out-of-school youths, ages 18-25, from poor rural farming families who have no opportunities for schooling or jobs outside of the farming season. Without skills, these youths have very little confidence in their future. Faith Engine provides training in auto mechanics and engine repair so that the youths will have a means



of a livelihood. Biblical instruction and Christian teaching are also a part of the program. The person behind this program, Putthy Fy, is a convert to Christianity who has committed his life to lifting up his people. He also teaches literature to young monks at a Buddhist school, but this hands-on mechanical program is what gives him the most satisfaction. Putthy's witness for Jesus Christ through this ministry truly empowers hundreds of youths, giving them the chance for productive living.

One might wonder why "empowerment" within the Cambodian Church resonated so deeply with me. Sadly, in my years of experience with various mission projects, indigenous or newly-planted churches, I have frequently witnessed that the "locals" are not running their own ministries. There is also the problem of long-term dependency on outside decision makers. Based on my observations, such is not the case in Cambodia. The locals in the Cambodian churches are in charge of things and the churches are rapidly growing. May this "empowerment" continue to be so.

The potential for partnership between the Virginia Conference and



the Church in Cambodia is unlimited, open-ended and most of all, highly desired. It is my hope to lead another UMVIM team to Cambodia in the near future. Anyone who might be interested may contact me at nesmith9924@gmail.com.

What did the trip to Cambodia say to my spirit? It reaffirmed for me that God is moving in the world and that God's empowering hand is always present to guide us wherever we are.

-The Rev. Sam NeSmith is a retired elder living in Richmond. This was his 94th mission trip.

Experiencing the global aspect of the church first-hand

By Olivia Hinton

What a wonderful experience it was to travel to Cambodia as part of a United Methodist Volunteer In Mission team from Virginia.

I shall always remember how humbled I felt by the loving, respectful, prayerful greetings that were extended to us in each village, church, orphanage, school and other ministries we visited. I truly sensed the Jesus in the Cambodians greeting the Jesus in me.

I was impressed by the amount of good work being accomplished with meager resources. It was heart-wrenching to hear the pastors articulate specific needs for their churches and to see how real the needs are. It did my heart good to have the team pitch in to purchase a crib for a pastor who had no bed for his new child.

It was one thing to have read about the Killing Fields and yet another to visit the Genocide Museum and hear first-hand from a survivor whose whole family had been annihilated.

To ride through the crowded motorbike-filled streets and to see the faces of a population that is 70 percent under 30 years of age – with few visible elderly people – gives full testimony to the genocide that took place.

The hospitality shown to us by the Methodist staff in Cambodia and their effectiveness in keeping us on schedule maximized the opportunities for us to experience the global aspect of the Virginia Conference's Initiatives of Hope. It has certainly motivated me to help spread the word on our partnerships with the Cambodian people and to share what a wonderful choice our church at large has made in making Cambodia a new Initiative of Hope partner.

-Olivia Hinton, St. Andrews UMC in Portsmouth, is past conference president for United Methodist Women.



At left, the Rev. Sam NeSmith entertains the children at the orphanage in Phnom Penh. Top right, Ann Stingle (foreground) and the team from Virginia teach a song to children and adults at a church in the Banteay Meanchey Province. Bottom right, Pastor Pros Leng with his family outside Tueok Thla Methodist Church.



Cambodia partners feel very Wesleyan

By Judy Fender

After our Virginia Conference UMMIM team of eight arrived at Phnom Penh airport and was warmly greeted by United Methodist missionaries serving in Cambodia, the next 11 days were filled with new sights, sounds and interactions with wonderful, grace-filled people. We had come to see, hear and experience what was happening with the Methodist Church in Cambodia so that when we returned we could be a witness to how God is at work.

Our first day was spent at the genocide museum and the "killing fields" site. Tragically, from 1975-1979, around 2 million people died under the regime of Pol Pot. The fabric of the Cambodian society was torn apart; educated and trained people were wiped out; and trust and hope were lost during this horrific time and throughout the next 10 years of Vietnamese occupation.

It is so difficult to see humankind's inhumanity, especially knowing the

number of children who died. And yet one sensed the reclaiming spirit of God, absorbing the shame and evil that occurred in those places as the victim's stories were told. While most Cambodians are two or three generations removed from the "killing fields," it is reflected in attitudes of mistrust, especially of authorities. Little has been done in the area of reconciliation that might allow Cambodians to name and discuss what happened, even though victims and perpetrators live in the same community.

We experienced a country faced with crushing poverty. It is primarily an agrarian economy with serious issues: lack of funding for education, job opportunities and sanitation; human trafficking; land mines. These are tremendous challenges for a nation where 70 percent of the population is under age 30.

Over challenging roads we traveled to visit churches in the north central and northwest regions of Cambodia. Gracious hospitality was offered as we prayed and worshipped together,

learning about their joys and challenges. Children filled the churches, and we were told they quite often brought their parents and grandparents to the church. As I spoke to the children in one church, I asked if they knew "Jesus Loves Me." Our interpreter replied, "Yes, we all do... you could say it is the theme song of our Methodist churches."

We heard with great pride about different sorts of ministry that were vital to the community. Cow banks, rice banks and small credit lenders operate through the churches with agreed-upon bylaws and procedures. Not only are they fighting poverty and hunger during the dry season, they are also building trust and community, and anyone in the community can join, not just church members. Pastors are donating their land on which to build the churches, and they want fences so that gardens and fruit trees can be grown to feed the community.

All of the churches are concerned with education for their children and young adults. Our team was struck with how little funding is required to send a child to school or provide training for young adults or university tuition.

Church visits, a visit to Clara Biswas' orphanage, the Methodist school, Bible Seminary, attending a Faith Engine Ministry graduation, sharing with our missionaries about their work – all reinforced for us that in all these places, God's Holy Spirit is moving and blessing and hope is being offered in the name of Jesus Christ.

To me it all seemed so very Wesleyan: Teach the Scriptures, form Christian communities that pray and care for one another and those in need in their community. Educate

Several team members pose with Bou Meng (front row, far right), who survived the Khmer Rouge's notorious Toul Sleng prison. In front, Olivia Hinton holds the author's book; back row, from left: Judy Fender, Nancy Yarbrough, Sam NeSmith and Claudette Freeman.



and care for the children, provide job training, work on health issues, help people sustain themselves. The church has tremendous potential to help develop a middle class in Cambodia and to be part of rebuilding from the ashes of "the killing fields"

Our brothers and sisters in Cambodia seek to be prayer partners with churches in the Virginia conference. They are grateful for the ways we and Methodist churches around the world are helping them build churches, train and educate their pastors and people. Financial support is so necessary. But there is more than funding at stake. We can learn from each other, and God will transform us as we continue to meet and work together.

I am blown away by this thought. This is a wide open mission field for teaching the children "that Jesus loves them" and that with Christ in their lives all things are possible. May we be instruments of God's grace in Cambodia in as many ways as possible.

-The Rev. Judy Fender is minister of Missions at Burke UMC.

How to partner with the growing Methodist church in Cambodia

For over a year now you have been hearing about the inspiring witness of the young church in Cambodia and our conference's new relationship with the Methodist Mission in Cambodia through *Initiatives of Hope*. We as a conference have made a commitment to a partnership with them through 2016. Their goal is to move from being a mission conference to becoming an autonomous Methodist church by that date.

What does that mean to us as Methodists in Virginia?

It means that we have an opportunity to provide prayer, finances, and people in their witness to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of Cambodia! Ways to help:

- ❖ Make an individual or faith community commitment to pray for the lay, clergy and missionary leadership of the Cambodian church regularly.
- ❖ As a faith community begin a Covenant Relationship with one of the missionaries serving in Cambodia. Information on establishing a Missionary Covenant Relationship is available online at www.umcmmission.org/Get-Involved/Partnerships/Covenant-Relationships/Covenant-Relationships. Make sure you send your covenant form to the conference office of Justice and Missional Excellence.
- ❖ Make a commitment to support one of the Advance Special projects in Cambodia. The missionaries and projects can be found online at www.umcmmission.org/search.aspx?ModuleID=3516&keywords=Cambodia.
- ❖ Take a VIM team to Cambodia. Cambodia is looking for teams to teach Vacation Bible School, and help with building churches, parsonages, schools and dormitories. Don't let the size of your faith community stand in your way. Teams can be formed from several churches traveling together.

If you are interested in experiencing the exciting growth of the church in Cambodia first hand, contact Juanita Csontos, coordinator for the Cambodian Team of the Initiatives of Hope at Juanita@csontos.net or Glenn Rowley in the office of Justice and Missional Excellence at glennrowley@vaumc.org.





Faith Engine Ministry teaches youths a practical skill



By Neill Caldwell

Put Ngen was 12 when he quit school and started working in a brick factory in his native Svay Rieng Province of Cambodia. He earned \$4.50 per day working alongside a lot of other children. One day a horrible accident happened when Ngen got too close to machinery and got his left arm caught in the gears. His crushed arm was later amputated.

After a long recovery period, he tried to resume school, but his family could not afford the uniforms and books required of all Cambodian students.

Now 18, he said he heard about a vocational training called Faith Engine Ministry that he thought he might be able to do. The program, sponsored by the Methodist Mission in Cambodia, teaches youths to be mechanics, to repair the many motorcycles and motorbikes that are the most popular mode of transportation in this poor Southeast Asian nation. The program also offers training in auto repair, welding, driving skills and fixing farm machinery.

About 150 students have completed the 14-week Faith Engine training, which also includes a strong Christian education component.

"When I heard about Faith Engine Ministry, I was very excited and I thought I could now learn a skill that is useful," Ngen said. "It is good for me to learn how to fix motor bikes and cars. I think this work is not too hard. This skill can help me earn my living."

Now he's part of the latest class of eight graduates from the program, which started in 2002.

Fellow graduate Sok Hour, 28, from the Kampong Thom region in the central part of the country, grew up on a farm, and spoke of the many challenges of being a farmer in Cambodia.

"We depend totally on the rain water," he said. "When there is too much rain, our seeds are flooded and spoiled. When it is too dry, the seeds cannot grow and we end up with no harvest. I do not have enough money to buy a pumping machine that could pump the water from the irrigation canal to the rice field. Being illiterate, I have no idea what else I

can do for my living besides farming. Then, I heard from my brother-in-law that Faith Engine Ministry provides mechanical training. I was so happy and I thought that it would be a great opportunity for me to develop a new skill."

Faith Engine's current director, Putthy Ly, is a former graduate of the program. He was 21 when he started in 2005. He also started English classes, which whet his appetite to attend a university, and a Methodist scholarship helped make that happen. After getting his bachelor's degree in 2011, he's now teaching four days a week as a professor of literature, teaching monks at a Buddhist university. Plus he is working as a translator for the Methodist mission, pursuing a Masters in Business Administration, and working at his wife's restaurant in a Phnom Penh mall.

Participants repeatedly expressed their thanks for our support. United Methodist Women, for example, donated \$5,000 to support Faith Engine's ministry. The cost of the program is around \$350 per student for a year for accommodation, food and their own tool set when they graduate.



Graduates of the Faith Engine Ministry pose together on Jan. 23 with their certificates, new tools, family members and visitors from the Virginia Conference. Top, the Rev. Glenn Rowley hands a graduate his new tools during the graduation ceremony.

CAMBODIA FACT SHEET



DEMOGRAPHICS

Population (2012 est.) 14,925,000
(Estimated 1.7-2 million people died from starvation, execution and disease during the years of the genocide between 1975 and 1979.)

AGE STRUCTURE

0-14 years 31.9%
15-64 years 64.3%
65 years and over 3.8%
(41% < age 24; 75% < age 30)

ECONOMY

Labor Force (2010 est.) 8.8 million
Agriculture 57.6%
Industry 15.9%
Services 26.5%
Unemployment (2007 est.) 3.5%
Population below poverty line of \$1.25 per day 31%

HEALTH

Physician density (2008 est.) 0.227 physicians/1,000
Hospital bed density 0.1 beds/1,000 people

Children under the age of 5 years
underweight (2008 est.) 28.8%
Global ranking: 20

Maternal mortality rate (2010 est.):
..... 250 deaths/100,000 live births
Global ranking 44

Infant mortality rate (2012 est.):
Total 54.08 deaths/1,000 live births
Global ranking 37
Male 61.02 deaths/1,000 live births
Female 46.82 deaths/1,000 live births
77 deaths per 1000 live births among infants from the poorest household compared to only 23 deaths per 1000 live births among infants from the richest households. Also, infant mortality is twice as high among children whose mothers have no schooling compared to those with secondary or higher education (72 versus 31).

Life expectancy at birth (2012 est.):
Total population 63.04 years
Global ranking 178
Male 60.66 years
Female 65.53 years

Infectious disease
Degree of risk: very high
Food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
Vectorborne diseases: dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis, malaria and avian flu.

HIV (2009 est.)
Adult prevalence rate 0.5%
People living with AIDS 63,000

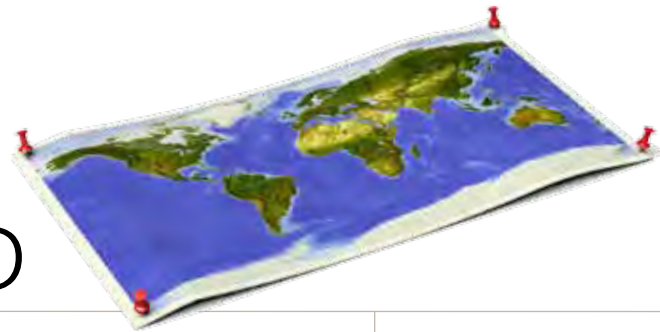
Deaths due to AIDS 3,100
Children living with HIV 6,000

EDUCATION

Education expenditures (2009 est.):
..... 2.1% of GDP
Global ranking 153
Literacy (>age 15 who can read and write):
Total population (2004 est.) 73.6%
Male 84.7%
Female 64.1%
More than 25% of Cambodians 15 and over cannot read and write. To this number should be added children who are younger than 15 and who should already be reading and writing but cannot.

School life expectancy (Primary to tertiary education, 2007 est.):
Total 10 years
Male 10 years
Female 9 years





Winkler to step down as head of church's social advocacy agency

By Heather Hahn

Jim Winkler, who sometimes has been a lightning rod for controversy in advocating the church's social positions, will depart this year as the top executive for the United Methodist Board of Church and Society.

He's an active member of Fairlington UMC in Alexandria.

Winkler, who has worked for the agency for 28 years, is ending his 12-year term as the top executive. The United Methodist Board of Church and Society is charged with advocating the social

teachings approved by the United Methodist General Conference, the denomination's top policymaking body. The agency owns the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill and has a presence at the United Nations in New York.

The Book of Discipline, the denomination's law book, limits elected executives of general boards to serving a dozen years.

Church law allows agency boards to suspend this provision by a two-thirds vote, and the Church and Society board has asked Winkler to remain in his job until his successor is hired.

"It's been a phenomenal honor to serve the church in this way," Winkler said. "I know there are a lot of interesting jobs in the church, but I can't imagine any one being more interesting than this one in the amount of information and the sheer breadth of issues we address."

The Board of Church and Society has set March 18 as the deadline for applications for a new top executive. Winkler told United Methodist News Service he is not sure what his future work will be.

"I've always been impressed by Jim's ability to move with comfort into some difficult conversations with people of power and influence to represent our United Methodist social

witness and see that it does not go unheeded," said Phoenix Area Bishop Robert Hoshibata, the board's chair as well as chair of the search committee.

Both Winkler and Hoshibata agree the job can at times be controversial.

That was especially true in 2010 when the U.S. Congress passed and President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act health-care reform law.

The majority of United Methodist lawmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives voted against the plan. However, then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D.-Calif., referred to The United Methodist Church as one of many organizations "sending a clear message to members of Congress: Say yes to health care reform." More specifically, the United Methodist Board of Church and Society was included on Pelosi's website in a list of organizations supporting reform.

Winkler has faced frequent criticism that his advocacy does not speak for every United Methodist.

"Never once have I purported to speak for the whole United Methodist Church," Winkler said. "The

general board is directed by General Conference to speak its convictions on what's happening in the world, and we do that."

For example, he pointed out, eight consecutive gatherings of General Conference had called for comprehensive health-care reform in the United States.

The Book of Discipline contains a Social Principle on the "Right to Health Care" and the Book of Resolutions includes a number of resolutions on the topic.

Winkler also sparked controversy in 2011 when he and 10 other religious leaders were arrested in the U.S. Capitol as they refused to stop public prayers asking the Obama administration and Congress not to balance the budget on the backs of the poor.

Not every issue Winkler and his staff deal with is controversial among church members. The agency also campaigns to stop human trafficking and child abuse and supports ministries aimed at fighting substance abuse.

The past two years, the agency has called on United Methodists to give up alcohol consumption for Lent, donate the funds they would have used to buy alcohol and start an international conversation about the harm done by this common vice. 

-Heather Hahn is a reporter for United Methodist News Service

Clergywoman is first United Methodist worship director at National Cathedral



The Rev. Gina Campbell, a United Methodist clergywoman who is the first non-Episcopalian to serve as worship director of the National Cathedral, planned the national memorial service for Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon. Photo by Donovan Marks/Washington National Cathedral.

By Vicki Brown

A few months after the Rev. Gina Campbell, a United Methodist elder, was appointed worship director at the Washington National Cathedral, she planned the national memorial for Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon.

"The Armstrong family was great to work with, and the people from NASA were delightful," Campbell said.

Among the unique moments in the service were the playing of President John Kennedy's 1962 speech calling Americans to put a man on the moon and a slow and solemn version of the song "Fly Me to the Moon," sung by Diana Krall. The image of the cathedral's space window was used in the service and on the program. That stained-glass window holds a piece of lunar rock that the crew of the Apollo 11 brought back to earth.

Campbell is the first worship director at the cathedral who is not an Episcopal

priest, and she believes that was intentional. "I think they knew this would be a departure from what people expect. And from a missional point of view, the cathedral is a house of prayer for all people."

Campbell was appointed to a congregation in Bethesda, Md., and in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, she helped with pastoral support at the Pentagon. The experience was incredibly difficult, and she developed some respiratory problems and ended up "stepping out a little" from her pastoral duties. She took part in the Academy for Spiritual Formation Companions in Ministry – four years of deep communal prayer formation – taught at Wesley Theological Seminary, and worked with the Center for Family Process in Bethesda, Md.

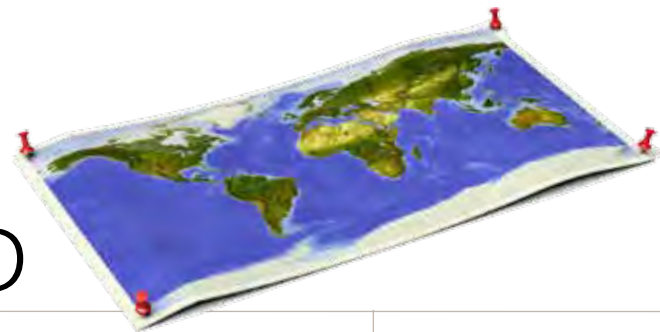
During this time, she volunteered for the choir and the library at the cathedral, then later became the music librarian. All of that resulted in her getting to know

(Continued on page 29: "Clergywoman")



Bishop Bob Hoshibata (left) and Jim Winkler, chief executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, walk together to the Imagine No Malaria conference on Capitol Hill in Washington Dec. 3, 2012. UMNS photos by Jay Mallin

Religious news from around the NATION & WORLD



United Methodists send first chaplain to hike 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail

By Annette Spence



The Rev. Alan Ashworth is an organizer behind the Appalachian Trail Outreach Ministry. Photo by Annette Spence

For the past 10 springs, three tiny churches offered free home-cooked breakfasts and other friendly services to Appalachian Trail “thru hikers” passing their portion of southwest Virginia.

This year, the ministry moves out on the legendary trail with the introduction of a roving United Methodist chaplain. Josh Lindamood, a 26-year-old preacher’s son, is scheduled to take the life-changing hike himself, beginning April 4 at Springer Mountain in Georgia and finishing some six months later at Mount Katahdin in Maine.

The goal is to provide an encouraging spiritual presence to trekkers tendered by nature and physical challenge during the 2,200-mile, spring-to-

fall quest, said the Rev. Alan Ashworth, pastor of the three hospitable churches that began Appalachian Trail Outreach Ministry in Bastian, Va.

“I know we’ve touched lives because of the letters we’ve received, but the relationship ends right there,” Ashworth says of the 1,000 or so hikers who have received a hot breakfast or a ride into town for supplies over the past decade. “The idea behind the chaplain is to put somebody on the trail an amount of time to build real trust.”

The chaplaincy venture is backed by Holston Conference, the parent regional body for 897 United Methodist churches. Lindamood, a landscaper from Lynchburg, has already received chaplaincy training and will soon receive “wilderness medical training” before

shouldering his backpack through 14 states and a variety of weather conditions.

“Everybody hikes the ‘AT’ for different reasons and at different points in their lives,” Lindamood said. “I just love nature and the outdoors and the way God speaks to you when you’re in it.”

Ashworth believes that Lindamood will be the first chaplain to represent a mainstream denomination while hiking the entire route (as a thru hiker), although he knows of evangelists and religious fundraisers who have done so or who hike part of the trail (“section hikers”).

A former church camp director, Ashworth’s been talking to hikers about their particular needs since he first convinced his congregations to provide a trash can and picnic table on the trail in 2001.

Later, church members realized that weary travelers could benefit from a hot meal as they passed through. So breakfast was served at New Hope Union United Methodist Church, located 1½ miles from where the trail crosses state Route 615 in Bastian, Va. Ashworth also pastors Green Valley United Methodist and Pine Grove United Methodist, each with fewer than 20 worshippers on Sunday.

The three congregations worked together to provide a unique ministry, including placing a cooler with drinks, weather reports,

and New Testaments on the trail. Over the years their nature-loving pastor began to dream of the next step.

“We started with an idea to intercept hikers and minister to their needs,” Ashworth said. “But we had a desire for lasting relationships and long-term contact.”

The Rev. Bob Hayes, a retired pastor and avid hiker in Maryville, Tenn., was one of the first people approached by Ashworth in pursuing the chaplain mission. Like others, Hayes immediately recognized the opportunity for faith-sharing within a life experience well-known for drawing or driving spiritual seekers.

However, the AT chaplain is not on a mission to cultivate new church members.

“Josh is not ordained and he doesn’t have theological training,” Hayes said, “but he has faith in his heart and he’s an authentic thru hiker. We wanted somebody who could enter into dialogue with people without having all the answers.”

Lindamood said he’s long had his own dream to conquer the trail, although he couldn’t afford the expense. (“He was somebody, I think, who was waiting for a call,” says Ashworth.)

Organizers are raising \$11,500 to support the chaplain with training, gear, food, insurance and other expenses.

“I’m definitely looking forward to growing myself

spiritually, to being one-on-one with God and hashing some things out,” Lindamood said. “But I’m also looking forward to connecting with people, to witnessing for the presence of God, without forcing it on anybody.”

A group of United Methodist pastors, including Ashworth and Hayes, will provide spiritual direction and support by telephone or internet on the long and difficult path from Georgia to Maine. At least one pastor will accompany the chaplain during his first week on the trail.

“I have so many great resources outside my own knowledge, so many people I can turn to,” Lindamood said.

The chaplain’s backpack will be marked with a symbol incorporating the recognizable green “AT” logo symbol with the traditional United Methodist “cross and flame.” Lindamood also has a Facebook page established as “Appalachian Trail Chaplain.”

Holston Conference doesn’t have plans to send out a chaplain each year for a 14-state pilgrimage. However, organizers may appoint a chaplain to serve hikers passing through Holston in East Tennessee and southwest Virginia.

“We have an opportunity to offer something beyond food,” says Ashworth. “We can offer encouragement.”

—Annette Spence is editor for Holston Conference Communications

Religious news from around the NATION & WORLD

(“Clergywoman” continued from page 27)

many of the staff at the cathedral; and since music and worship work together, she took a job as the clergy associate for liturgy.

When the job of worship director came open, Bishop James Dorff, episcopal leader of the Southwest Texas and the Rio Grande conferences, and the Episcopal bishop in Washington, the Right Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, were open to her appointment.

The guideline for all worship services at the cathedral is the Book of Common Prayer, and she does not depart radically from that. “But I bring a slightly different style of preaching, as I’m more of a storyteller. And I use slightly different prayer language,” Campbell said.

One of the issues to consider is the space, since the cathedral is so enormous. “You have to think about the liturgy on a larger scale. How do you really put it out into the space?”

The cathedral has about 2,000 services each year and there is a congregation, which has a high percentage of people in their twenties and thirties who are really interested in fresh forms of worship.

Campbell’s duties include providing leadership and direction for a number of worship groups — including Communion ministers, nave chaplains and lectors — and she has also served as the chaplain to the various cathedral choirs. She works closely with the dean, the vicar and the director of program and ministry as a teacher in areas of Christian formation and education. Like the other cathedral clergy, she also serves as a pastor and preacher to the broad Cathedral community and the congregation.

Campbell, a member of the Southwest Texas Conference, has served churches in Georgia, New Jersey, Texas and Baltimore. She attended Duke University as an undergraduate and seminary at Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

—Vicki Brown writes for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

(“Awards” continued from page 17)

The Francis Asbury Award for Fostering United Methodist Ministries in Higher Education and Ministry recognizes and encourages support of higher education ministries in all levels of the church. Any lay or clergy member of The United Methodist Church who helps bring heightened awareness to the significance of higher education ministries is eligible.

Nominations are due April 3. Contact Becky Tate in the office of Ministries with Young People at beckytate@vaumc.org or (804) 521-1139 for a nomination form.

Appalachian Trail thru hikers (below) enjoy a breakfast served by three churches in Bastian. Photo by Alan Ashworth



For more information, contact Alan Ashworth at Alanashworth2@hotmail.com, or call (276) 688-6151. If you would like to support the AT Chaplain ministry, make your check payable to “Holston Conference” with “Appalachian Trail Chaplaincy” on the memo line. Mail to: ATOM, P.O. Box 203, Bastian, VA 24314. On Facebook: www.facebook.com/AppalachianTrailChaplain.

Devotions from International Lesson Series

LIVING THE WORD



Lauren Lobenhofer is the Associate Pastor at Bon Air UMC in Richmond. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Missouri and a Master of Divinity from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. She was ordained an elder in full connection at the 2012 Virginia Annual Conference. She lives with her enormous golden-doodle, Charlie, and is excited to marry her fiancé, Sam, this fall.

March 3, 2013
The joyful apocalypse
Daniel 7:9-14

“Apocalypse” is a word on everyone’s lips these days. Scads of movies have been set in “post-apocalyptic” universes and whenever there’s a big storm it’s called a “snowpocalypse.” It seems that the apocalypse is a threat, and we are supposed to fear it appropriately. But to the original audience of the book of Daniel, the apocalypse was something to be hoped for; it was the promise of something better to come.

The Jewish audience to whom the prophet was speaking were victims of conquest; their land had been invaded by Persian, Greek and Egyptian armies in turn.¹ Many of the Jews had been forced into exile; they lived as refugees in a foreign land. Every day they experienced the oppression of harsh foreign dictators. They witnessed the ugly underbelly of earthly powers. They chafed under this repressive rule and searched for hope in their distress.

Through the prophet Daniel, God offered that hope. God presented these suffering people with a vision of a heavenly power that put all of the political scheming and military might of their oppressors to shame. The vision of the Ancient One and the human savior taught them to trust that God would come and destroy the beastly powers that held them captive. Daniel’s vision was of the end of the world as they knew it, and the dawn of a bright future.

In Daniel, God reminds us that the end of this world, with its suffering, disease and corrupt earthly powers, is a divine promise, not a threat. It is the assurance that the power of God is greater than that of our institutions. This is the promise that the injustice and suffering of this world will be overcome by the Ancient One, who will bring instead an “everlasting dominion” filled with peace, justice and love.

March 10, 2013
Dirty words and divine grace
Daniel 9:3-19

I’m about to use the dirty S-word: Sin. (What, did you really think they would let me use the other S-word in the Advocate?) We usually don’t like to talk or think about sin. We would prefer to gloss over the ways we’ve disobeyed

God and harmed one another. And often we can get away with ignoring or dismissing our sins for a while; but sooner or later the consequences of our misdeeds sneak up on us and bring us face-to-face with our sinfulness.

It’s like the moment when, after dodging the gym and sneaking around on my diet for the whole holiday season, I found myself on the scale at the doctor’s office, looking at a number that showed me all of my holiday indulgences at once.

Daniel and the people of Israel were in that position as well. They had broken the covenant and disobeyed God’s commands, and while they had skated by for a while, the consequences of their sins had tipped the scales of justice against them. Suddenly they saw just how far they had strayed from God’s call and how unfaithful they had been to the Lord who loved them. When that realization dawned, they were ashamed about how they betrayed God. They prayed and confessed, fasted and wept; they threw themselves on God’s mercy.

As dreadful as the moment of recognizing our sinfulness can be, it also allows us to see God more clearly. Beginning to be aware of our brokenness opens our eyes to the depth of God’s compassion and mercy. Realizing how far we have strayed from faithfulness allows us to glimpse the great love of the God who draws us back into the divine embrace. So let us start owning up to our sins and shortcomings, which we may come to know the forgiveness and deep healing offered by the God of Mercy.

March 17, 2013
Ask for directions
Daniel 8:15-26

I don’t like to ask for directions. I prefer to figure out where I’m going on my own, or even to pretend I know where I’m going and wander until I find my destination. I hate having to admit that I’m confused and require the assistance of someone more knowledgeable than I am. It’s part of our human nature, and our pride, that we do not want to ask for help. But sometimes we simply reach the end of our knowledge and have to face the choice: Do we admit our confusion and seek assistance, or do we remain in confusion and ignorance?

When we face huge problems in our society, issues of terrorism, climate change and economic

instability that are multifaceted and overwhelming, we do not like to admit that we are overwhelmed. We want to insist that we have the answers, or that we can somehow figure out a solution on our own. But our explanations and responses often come up short. The problems we face are of vast scope and incredible depth; facing them will require us to admit our limitations and ask for help.

In such cases, it is reassuring to know that even great prophets like Daniel struggled to interpret the events going on around them. Even with visions from God, Daniel was confused and had difficulty determining which way to lead his people. But Daniel was a man of wisdom and humility. He recognized the limits of his understanding, and he sought God’s help. Daniel had the courage to pray for guidance, and God answered with a vision and an angelic messenger.

Likewise, God invites us to ask for help making sense of the events around us. God invites us to bring our confusion, our fear and our doubt to the Almighty, and to pray for guidance. God invites us to ask for directions as we navigate life on Earth. Just as God gave Daniel comfort and hope in answer to his queries, God will reach out to us with care. We may not get a direct, immediate response like Daniel did, but God will respond. Our answer may be peace in response to our prayers, or the words of a trusted friend or spiritual guide; it might even be an understanding that dawns much later. Even in the midst of our confusion and doubt, we can rest in the assurance that, if we ask with humility, persistence and patience, God will respond with wisdom and revelation.

March 24
A seat at the table
Luke 22:14-30

It was the Passover meal, and all of the disciples wanted to sit beside the Rabbi, Jesus, in the seat of honor. Like 4-year-olds begging to sit near a favorite relative at the holiday dinner, or middle school girls having a spat over who will sit beside the most popular girl in the lunch room, the disciples were upset about seating. Seating was a sign of importance; where you sat told people how important you were in society. Sitting in a place of honor told the people around you that you were a notable personage. So the disciples wondered: Who would get the best seat? Who was the greatest?

As the disciples vied for a seat near him at the table, Jesus was preparing to be crucified for them. As they debated which of them was the greatest, Jesus, who was truly greatest among them, prepared to give his life in their service. When they asked him to weigh in on the matter, Jesus reset their expectations. He told them that greatness was not about age, wealth, prestige or table placement, as they assumed, but about humility. The one who should be held in highest honor, he said, was the one who would serve.

We are tempted to look down on the disciples’ selfishness and arrogance. In hindsight, the contrast between the disciples’ yearning for status and Jesus’ humble sacrifice is clear. But it is much harder, in the moment, to see our own jealousy and self-importance. How often do we look at a co-worker’s promotion or another church member’s award for service and wonder why we weren’t honored instead? How often do we walk into a room and rank the people in it according to popularity, class or status? How often do we look down our noses at others, when we should be serving them?

Like the disciples, we are steeped in a culture of comparisons. We strive to

be honored above our peers, publicly recognized and admired. In the pressure to succeed, we forget that Christ’s call was not to high achievement, but to humble service. But God is patient. Just as Christ reoriented the disciples’ image of greatness with the reality of the cross, Jesus calls us at the communion table to remember that there are no special reserved seats at the Lord’s banquet, only pews for all those who serve.

March 31, 2013
Resurrection and emergence
Luke 24:1-35

Scientists call it “emergence,” the idea that animals, without any verbal communication, will form patterns and systems of working together. It can be seen most clearly in ants. Ants usually wander without patterns, passing aimlessly through their space. If you drop some sugar water into an ant farm, the ants will take a while to notice. But eventually one ant will stumble upon it, and carry it to the base. Then another will stumble upon that ant’s trail and discover the sugar water. Then another ant, recognizing the trails of these two ants, will follow them, leaving a stronger trail, and soon the random smattering of ants will form a neat line traveling from the sugar water to the base. It begins with one ant’s recognition, and turns into a mass movement.²

Cleopas and the other disciple are a lot like those first ants. They were wandering toward Emmaus, without the direction of Jesus, their beloved rabbi. As they walked, they met a stranger, also traveling rather aimlessly on the road. When all three travelers reached Emmaus at dusk, the disciples invited the stranger to join them for dinner.

As the stranger broke the bread and blessed the wine at their dinner table, suddenly everything clicked for

(Continued on page 33, “Living Word”)

CLERGY & DIACONAL



Deaths



The Rev. Ronald Ralph Jones died Jan. 22, 2013. He served two churches in North Carolina while attending Duke Divinity School. He served the Virginia Conference for 36 years, retiring on medical disability in 2001. Jones also served on the Wesley Housing Development Corp. Board of Directors from 1984-1989. A memorial service was held at Kilmarnock UMC.



The Rev. Donald N. Fridinger, retired since 1989, died Feb. 4, 2013. Fridinger began his ministerial career in 1952 at Franklin in West Virginia. He then served in the Virginia Conference at Elkton, Great Bridge, Monumental in Emporia, Wesley Memorial in Martinsville, and Saint John's in the Staunton District. His funeral was held at Otterbein UMC in Harrisonburg.

Martha Ernestine Huff Corley, mother of the **Rev. Cynthia A. Corley**, retired United Methodist pastor, died Feb. 6, 2013. Mrs. Corley was a member of Chester UMC.

Emma Thomas Mead, widow of the **Rev. Forest H. Mead**, died Jan. 9, 2013. A graveside service was held at Woods UMC in Chesterfield.

Maggie Mae Meadows, mother of the **Rev. Dr. Patricia Meadows**, died Feb. 3, 2013. Rev. Meadows serves St. John's UMC in Staunton.

George Rowley, father of the **Rev. Harold White Sr.**, died Jan. 21,

2013. White serves New Mission UMC, Eastern Shore District.

LaSandra (Sandy) Walker, sister of the **Rev. Jan Prentace**, died Jan. 18, 2013, in Delaware. Rev. Prentace serves Roberts Memorial UMC, Alexandria District.

Merle Mae Briggs Yow, 91, died Jan. 26, 2013, in Suffolk. She was the widow of the **Rev. Carl Yow** and mother of **Becky Crabill**, wife of the **Rev. Ralph Crabill**, who serves the Linden-Markham Charge.

CORRECTION to the obituary for The Rev. Al Lynch (Jan. *Advocate*): Rev. Lynch is survived by his wife, the Rev. Susan Lynch, two daughters, and a son.

Births

The Rev. Jessica Fuller and her husband, Brian, announce the birth of a daughter, **Genevieve Grace "Genna Grace" Fuller**, on Jan. 11, 2013. Fuller is the pastor of Crozet UMC, Charlottesville District.

The Rev. Kyongsuk Cho and his wife, Hyesook Lee, welcomed a baby boy, **Yunhyerng John Cho**, on Jan. 11, 2013. Big brothers are Joshua and Caleb. Rev. Cho is pastor of Victoria UMC.

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("Living Word" continued from page 31)

the disciples. It was like the moment when, after days of rain and gray skies, the sun finally splits through the clouds and dazzles you. Suddenly, the disciples' hope was restored; they recognized that Jesus, their friend and leader, their savior and Messiah, had overcome death and returned to stand before them. That realization transformed them from men who wandered lost after the assassination of their leader to missionaries who journeyed to share the good news of life and love that are stronger than pain and death.

The two disciples returned from Emmaus to share the good news of the risen Christ. Their recognition and journey of proclamation left a trail for future disciples to follow – for us to follow. When Cleopas and the other disciple met the risen Christ and ran to share that good news with others, they started a movement, and we, today, participate in it. We follow their journey to the Lord's table to experience resurrection hope, and we trace their footsteps as we journey forth with joy to share that good news with others, part of a global movement that began with just two men. ☞

¹ Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. "Introduction to the Book of Daniel." Keck, Leander E., et al, eds. *The New Interpreters Bible Commentary*. Vol. VII. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.) 24.
² "Emergence". Radiolab. Season 1, Episode 3. (New York: WNYC Radio, 2007). August 14, 2007.

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FROM THE BISHOP



Their history will be changed

In January I had a chance to spend four days on the campus of Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. The Bishops of the Southeastern Jurisdiction spent two days as a learning group and two days in meetings. It was a great time of learning and fellowship. This visit was also meaningful to me to remember the beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Church South's mission to Korea.

It began with one brilliant young man's conversion to Christian faith in 1887 while he studied at Anglo-Chinese College in Shanghai, China. His name is T.H. Yun, and later he came to the United States and studied at Vanderbilt University and Emory College. When he went back to Shanghai to teach at Anglo-Chinese College, he left a couple of hundred dollars with Dr. Candler, then-president of Emory College, as seed money for mission to Korea.

Later Dr. Candler contacted missionaries in China and helped to start the Methodist Episcopal Church South mission to Korea in 1895. The Methodist Episcopal Church North sent the first missionaries to Korea in 1885, 10 years earlier than the South. They started schools and modern hospitals and made a great contribution not only to evangelizing Korean people, but also to modernization of Korea.

My wife, Kiok, was converted to Christian faith and felt God's call to ministry while she attended the junior and senior high schools founded by Methodist missionaries.

The reason I share a brief history of the Methodist Church's mission to Korea is to emphasize the importance of mission. The Gospel the Methodist missionaries introduced to Korean people touched so many people and changed their lives and their families. This Gospel also transformed the entire country and its history. A new education system and modern science and medicine were introduced. Many leaders who changed the history of Korea were raised by the church. The churches in the United States support the most missionaries in the world followed by the churches in Korea. I am also one of the persons touched by this Good News of Jesus Christ.

This year we will have another great opportunity to take part in transforming a part of the world with the Gospel. The Virginia Conference has been supporting missions in Mozambique and Brazil. We will add Cambodia as our new Initiative of Hope. In January a mission team visited Cambodia and checked the mission works there. We are also planning to invite the representatives of Cambodian United Methodist mission to our upcoming Annual Conference. I am very excited about this possibility.

As many of you know, people in Cambodia have had a very painful and difficult time in their history.

More than 2 million people were killed during the Khmer Rouge era (1975-1979) and many people continue to be injured by landmines that were planted during that time. We are going to help Cambodians to overcome their painful past history and build their future by sharing the hope in Christ. We have an opportunity to transform their history with the Gospel.

As a person who has experienced the transforming grace of our Lord, I invite you to pray for this great opportunity. I believe that prayer should go first in our mission. If you sense that God is calling you to help and support this mission, please contact Glenn Rowley, director of Justive and Missional Excellence for our conference. During the Annual Conference in June we will have more information on this new Initiative of Hope partner. Your prayer and offering to support our mission will be deeply appreciated.

I am deeply grateful for this calling from the Lord. God wants to use us for the Kingdom of God. Let us respond to this calling with joy and gratitude. Especially, in this season of Lent, let us reflect upon ourselves and the mission God has entrusted to us.

May the Lord continue to bless all of you with peace surpassing all human understanding. 🌹

In our Lord,

Young H. Cho



By Mark Miller

A couple of weeks ago, someone brought a box of donuts to the church office. It was about 2 in the afternoon, and I was hungry and in need of a little "pick-me-up." I'm really not a big donut fan, but I figured that since there were a half-dozen donuts still in the box, and the note above the box said "Please take one," I would go ahead and indulge myself.

O my gosh! I had never eaten a donut that tasted this good. It is probably not appropriate for a pastor to say this, but this donut tasted heavenly. I combined the donut with a cup of espresso, and it was a very satisfying experience. It turns out this box of donuts came from a place called Paul's Bakery in Fredericksburg. I had never heard of this place, and this is not an official endorsement of the bakery, but on this particular day, at that particular time, I enjoyed the best donut ever created.

I thought about my heavenly donut experience as I was preparing for the Sunday sermon. We are beginning a new teaching series called "Heart Disease" about the "Seven Deadly Sins." We are tempted to think of these sins as simply individual bad behaviors, but they are behaviors that spring from the attitudes of our heart. The list of seven deadly sins has been around for centuries. From the earliest days of the church, Christian leaders identified the seven deadly sins as "source sins" (the basic sins out of which all other sins derive).

One of the seven deadly sins is gluttony, the unhealthy and inappropriate over-indulgence in food and drink. This sin came to mind as I pondered my encounter with that donut.



It was not a sin to enjoy that donut, that donut was good. Lo, it was very good. But after I finished off that one donut, I did find it very difficult not to go back and finish off the 4-5 donuts that still remained in the box. I managed to summon enough self-control to stop at just one donut, but I really understood the powerful temptation that good food can generate.

It's not just donuts that tempt us. We can be tempted by many things, most of them good, provided we keep the proper perspective. The real challenge we face is enjoying God's good gifts with moderation and appreciation, while making sure our desire for those gifts do not become the dominant force in our life. When a sincere love for God is overwhelmed by a selfish desire for more of God's gifts, we slide into idolatry and bring pain and brokenness into our lives.

When our appetites take control of our lives, our proper devotion for God is replaced by an inappropriate devotion to donuts, or homes, or cars, or clothes, or power, or prestige, or _____ (you fill in the blank). It all comes back to one basic question we all have to ask and answer frequently throughout our lives, "Who or what will be my God?" Or to ask it another way, "Who or what will you worship and serve?"

Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to go jog off that donut. 🌹

-The Rev. Mark Miller is pastor at Ebenezer UMC in Stafford.

ONE LAST WORD



Tweets heard 'round the conference

- Steve Jennings @SteveJennings7**
Fasting for Ash Wednesday. My stomach may be a little noisy for awhile. #Lent #fasting #ashwednesday
- Bert @bertcloud**
My daughter told me that I was dust and that I would go back to dust. Then, she told me she loved me very much. I think I heard God.
- Thomas G. James @ThomasGJames**
Jesus drives a Land Rover. #whoknew
- Justin Hicks @JUST_livIng_it**
What a great weekend with the @riseh-burg interns. #stillprocessing
- Michael Reaves @revreaves**
Is #DowntonAbbey as funny as Fawlty Towers? I will have to watch it some day. #unlikely
- Patti Money @pattimoney**
I've decided to give up being sick for Lent.
- Ghost of John Wesley @Ghost-JohnWesley**
In 1855, 1 of every 4 Americans was a Methodist. In 2013, 1 of every 4 #Methodist is about to kick the bucket. #umc
- Pastor Jason Elmore @PastorJasonE**
Off work late after a house fire then immediately went to church smelling like smoke to meet a cpl for pre-marital counseling.

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