

## World Methodist Council and Conference Convenes in South Africa

“Greetings on behalf of the World Methodist Conference!” Thus began a report on the recent gathering of Methodists and Wesleyans from around the world submitted by GNJAC member Rev. Jessica Campbell. The global Methodist/Wesleyan family met from August 1-8 in Durban, South Africa. The initial portion, the Council meeting, included electing delegates, receiving reports and working on various pieces of legislation. The latter portion, the World Methodist Conference, welcomed a larger group including 17 people from Greater New Jersey. A few of the highlights of the conference included:

- Global worship and Bible study focused around the theme of Jesus Christ for the healing of the nations.
- A street parade in which an estimated 3,000 Methodist/Wesleyans joined together in walking through the



streets of Durban as a witness to Christ and to the Church alive.

- Several reports and presentations including one from Archbishop Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Christian working for peace in the Israel/Palestine Conflict.

- The presentation of a Peace Award which went to Rosalind Colwill, a champion of mental health care in Nigeria.

- Cultural excursions and a beach party hosted by the city of Durban.

- Workshops and recommendations around gender justice, global education, African drumming, HIV/AIDS in Africa, the Social Principles, and more.

GNJAC Lay Leader, Rosa Williams noted that she “will go home with a sense of global community and the hope that the work done during the Conference will now be implemented around the world.”

## General Conference Delegates Share Vision of Church



**Drew Dyson**  
CoChair of the GNJAC Delegation

Drew A. Dyson has been an elder in the conference since 2003, and has served the Church in local church appointments (Bridgewater, Clinton, Basking Ridge), the annual conference (BOOM, Raritan Valley DCOM), the general agency level (GBOD Executive Director for Youth & Young Adults), and the global arena (speaker at the Chinese Annual Conference, chair of denominational youth leaders network, and numerous other venues). Drew is currently appointed as the James C. Logan Chair in Evangelism and Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C. where he teaches spiritual formation for ministry, evangelism, missional theology, practical theology, and youth/young adult ministries.

Asked to reflect on the current state of the Church and the challenges ahead, Mr. Dyson wrote:

They say 49% of statistics are made up on the spot – but in this case, I don’t think statistics lie. The United Methodist Church is in the midst of a crisis: we are failing to reach young people with the gospel and engage them in our churches. But behind these statistics are the faces and stories of young people we have loved and served – maybe even our own children – who are no longer in church.

While the alarm sounds from every corner of the church, it usually comes across like an invitation to board the Titanic – “we have to get younger or we’ll die” – and that is an invitation that young people simply find inauthentic and unappealing.

Instead of responding to this crisis with costly programs or flashy marketing – the General Conference must lead the way in calling forth a compelling vision, a vision of a missional church that boldly proclaims the old, old story in a brand new way – calling young people to faith in Christ, connecting them with authentic communities, and empowering them to embody God’s mission in the world.

There are other significant issues facing the General Conference.

- First, we must deal with accountability – but this must go beyond holding clergy accountable for statistics on an annual report, and stretch to include accountability for bishops, general agencies, theological schools, and even local churches. We must find a way to envision connectional accountability that is not based on fear and punishment, but on improving our missional witness.

- Second, we must re-imagine theological education and the ordination process in order to call, equip, and sustain vital young leaders – particularly from underserved and under-represented communities – in order to meet the challenges facing the church in a pluralistic, postmodern culture. I am convinced more than ever that the church is in need of theologically trained pastors and lay people equipped to lead the church in reaching emerging generations with the good news of God’s extravagant grace and connecting them with authentic Christian communities striving to embody God’s mission in the world. In order to do so, we must be willing to challenge the “way we have always done things” and listen to the wisdom of our youth and young adults, local pastors, boards of ordained ministry leaders, and laity in forming a creative response that retains our theological heritage while

embracing necessary change.

- Finally, we must approach our shared ministry with fiscal responsibility. I believe it is critical, however, to move beyond talk of “streamlining” or “downsizing” an outdated and expensive structure inherited in the 1968 merger in order to confront the more difficult task of developing an effective missional structure that supports and enhances our missional witness in the contemporary cultural landscape while easing the financial burden on local churches. And, in so doing, we must carefully attend to missional priorities without eliminating or undercutting existing ministries that are critical to our witness in the world.

In the midst of the many challenges facing The United Methodist Church, we must be aware that the world, and young people in particular, are watching how we share life together. It is

my fervent prayer that the General Conference will offer an embodied witness of radical love and generosity, and that we will boldly call on the church to recover the missional D.N.A. that lies at the heart of “a people called Methodist.”

I am deeply humbled and grateful for this opportunity to serve as a delegate to the 2012 General Conference representing the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. I offer myself for such a time as this because I believe that I have been prepared to help the church address this current crisis – but, more importantly, because I am called and compelled to keep faith with young people, including my own children, who are dying for a church courageous enough to proclaim a gospel worth living for and bold enough to embody the gospel through our missional witness.

*(Continued on Page 8)*

## Fullerton to Begin Duties as Media Specialist



**Heather Fullerton**

Heather Fullerton has been named the new Media Specialist of the GNJAC. She joins the conference after five years at Cabrini College outside of Philadelphia where she served as an Adjunct Media Instructor, General Manager of the college’s radio station, and the Communication Center Coordinator.

With a Bachelor of Arts degree in Radio/TV/Film from Rowan University and a Master’s of Education with distinction degree from Cabrini College, Ms. Fullerton combines technical multimedia skills with the ability and heart to teach others. Using a variety of technologies to tell stories is a thrill that she says will never get old for her.

When asked to reflect on her new ministry, Ms. Fullerton said, “I see the Media Specialist position serving as a steadfast cheerleader for the churches and people in the GNJAC; bringing awareness of the ministries offered and recognition of the unsung laity heroes dedicating their time and energy to make those ministries successful. I also hope to use my multimedia skills to develop new avenues of ministry, congregational growth, and fellowship for the people of the GNJAC.”

Heather has been married for three years to Rob Fullerton. Residing in Williamstown, NJ, both Heather and Rob are members of First church of Williamstown.

# EDITORIAL

## Among My Souvenirs

By Robin Van Cleef

It takes a while to sort through the records and memorabilia of 29 years. It takes a few smiles and an occasional tear too. And time and smiles and a few misty eyes are what I've been experiencing as I review my stewardship on the staff of the United Methodist *Relay*.

What a ride it has been! Looking back on these three decades, I have to say thank you. But to whom? There are just too many to enumerate: Churches and pastors who have shared their stories so that we could pass them along; bishops and cabinets who have been a guiding presence throughout; staff members and editors who have worked with me; the churches I served that accepted as part of their own ministry, their pastor's journalistic diversion; family members who have put up with my absence and moods at deadline time.

I will always be grateful to Bishops White, Irons, Johnson and Devadhar for their support and trust. And I remember with appreciation and affection the late Howard Remaly, my predecessor and mentor as editor.

What a joy these years have been! And what headaches too, facing the deadline of each issue, seeking to fulfill the goals of being "accurate, informative, interesting, stimulating, motivating and sometimes provocative." Now as the mantle of editorial leadership passes into other hands, our new editor, Glenn Ferguson has asked me to reflect on those years and share some thoughts with you, our readers.

Born in 1956 as the communications vehicle of the then-Southern New Jersey Conference under the leadership of founding editor Ed Zelley, the *Relay* became an Area paper 10 years later when Bishop Prince A. Taylor envisioned it as a unifying force, drawing together the Northern and Southern New Jersey conferences.

Longtime editor Bob Beyer recalls a meeting in the basement of the Princeton Church where Bishop Taylor, newly-assigned to the newly-created New Jersey Area, outlined his vision of the *Relay* as an agent of unity. That vision came to fruition in 2000 when the two conferences merged.

At the *Relay's* 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion in 1995, I set forth the premises on which I sought to base my stewardship as editor – what I called "10 Commandments + 2". I have sought to guide my tenure by these 12 principles, though not always perfectly. As I leave the post of editor I pass them on as my legacy and commend them to Glenn and all who follow him.

1. Be honest; be accurate; be fair.
2. You are a newspaper first and a house organ second. Never let the promotional needs of the conference or denomination override the need to tell the whole story.
3. The task of the *Relay* is not only to present the Good News, but to present all the news.
4. Celebrate the diversity of our United Methodist heritage – theological, ethnic, cultural.
5. Remember that truth is not the sole possession of any segment or section of the church, north or south, liberal or conservative, MFSA or Good News, COSROW or MARCHA, UMW or UMM.
6. The wider the circle, the more complete the picture.
7. Our goal is balance: local church, district, conference, general church; ethnic groups and caucuses; hard news and features; fact and opinion.
8. We purchase credibility at the price of honest critique of the structures and policies of the denomination and conference.
9. Do not seek controversy for controversy's sake, but embrace controversy willingly when it is for the sake of truth and justice.
10. Never let policy critique slop over into personal attack.
11. Pursue your task with the curiosity of Joseph Pulitzer and the grace of Jesus Christ
12. Always Pursue truth; the truth shall set you free.

There are probably better formulations of journalistic policy somewhere, more elegantly phrased and more cogently stated, but if you pursue these goals, Glenn, the *Relay* will continue to be a responsible and relevant voice to and for the United Methodist Church in Greater New Jersey. And in these days of *Facebook* and *Twitter* that's something worth aiming at.

(Note to Glenn: As a good editor I trust that you will correct the last sentence which, you will note, ends in a preposition.)

### Correction:

The last edition of the *Relay* incorrectly reported- "Effective January 1, 2012, **an elder in full provisional and associated member** will receive an annual salary of \$33,392;..."

It should have said- "**an elder in full connection will receive an annual salary \$37,669, provisional and associate members will receive an annual salary of \$33,902....**"

We apologize for any confusion.

## A Message from the Bishop

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Greetings in the precious name of  
Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



Recently I was at a meeting where someone shared the following prayer composed by Martyn Atkins, General Secretary and Secretary of the British Methodist Conference, published in *God's Open Word, Methodist Prayer Handbook 2010/2011 For Methodists in Britain and Ireland*, p.45:

God does not always lead by the shortest route,  
because some things are best learned on longer journeys.  
God sometimes leads us into the wilderness,  
as well as by the still waters,  
because some destinations are reached with scars  
as well as smiles.

God urges us to travel light,  
but also to take things of our precious past with us,  
because some things remind us  
where we've come from  
and bring hope of a future.

God guides in different ways,  
sometimes half-hidden, as in a grey cloud,  
sometimes blazingly clear,  
because God's people are called to travel  
as God guides them,  
and there is never a time  
when God's guidance fails or ceases.

As Jesus said, "I am with you always." Amen

As we start our Fall activities, and as we prepare for our Church Conferences, may this prayer inspire, stimulate, and challenge us. May it remind us on a constant basis, that we are in God's ministry and mission. As we perform this sacred ministry and mission as faithful disciples of Jesus, may Jesus' assurance of, "I am with you always," be our foundation in our Christian journey.

Christian journey is different from a secular journey where lives are controlled by clocks, calendars, GPS, and destinations. However, in Christian journey we need to listen to God's voice and discern things as God wants us to do for God's glory as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we continue our Christian journey, and as we reflect on our ministry and mission, may some of our questions in our discernment be:

What are some of the precious things of the past that are necessary for our journey to remind us of our unique identity? What are some of the innovative ministries that we need to undertake so that we may "serve the present age," (Charles Wesley) well? What scars may we have to face, or how many smiles may we have to demonstrate so that we remain faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ in our communities, nation, and world?

As a United Methodist denomination, as we prepare ourselves for the General Conference in Tampa, Florida in 2011, different study groups and task forces are bringing several recommendations. Different kinds of reviews and comments are made on these reports. Some hopeful, some skeptical, and some fearful. In the midst of all our reflections, worries, anxieties, and hopes, may we not cease to pray for the delegates so that they may discern what is best for the extension work of the Reign of God for such a time as this.

"God loves you all and so do I!"

In Christ's love,

*Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar*



Sudarshana Devadhar, Resident Bishop  
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## 9/11 Tenth Anniversary – Worship Resources & Interfaith Actions

Sunday, September 11, 2011, the tenth anniversary of 9/11, presents every United Methodist Church in the Conference with an important opportunity. For many churches, this is “homecoming” Sunday. The Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (CUIC) believes that thoughtful planning can result in honoring both themes. As you plan worship and community activities we hope you will consider a few questions: what will advance interfaith understanding and reconciliation? What is the role of forgiveness 10 years after such tragedy? What role can we as Christians play in peacemaking? As you ponder these questions we offer a few thoughts:

Extremism in any form is dangerous

and not God’s way of building up the kingdom. CUIC hopes and prays that the UMC will be a witness to God’s peace and reconciliation over hate and vengeance. We encourage you and your congregation to sensitively commemorate this somber anniversary both in worship and in the community.

One Interfaith Dialogue partner of the CUIC says “Indeed, if any good can be said to have come from 9/11, rising from the ashes of that horrific day, it would be to acknowledge the profound curiosity in interfaith, in learning about the “others” in our community. From an Islamic perspective, terrorists are mass murderers, not martyrs – and are enemies of Islam and all humanity. There is no Islamic justification for any of it – it was evil.”

Below are some helpful resources to help you navigate your planning. If you find creative ways to engage ecumenically or in interfaith relations, please share your stories with Rev. Jessica Campbell at [pastorsjandj@hotmail.com](mailto:pastorsjandj@hotmail.com).

Recommended Resources and ideas for 9/11:  
[www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org) search for 9/11 resources  
[www.nccusa.org/news/110725nineelevenresources.html](http://www.nccusa.org/news/110725nineelevenresources.html)  
<http://www.macucc.org>

Facebook Users: join the UMC preachers group

Around the theme of homecoming, one of our CUIC members suggests: Having an opening hymn, the following litany, tolling a bell 10 times and having a lit candle brought forth for each bell toll, a prayer followed by the Lord’s Prayer, and then singing “softly and tenderly (come home)” to begin worship.

### LITANY FOR SEPTEMBER 11 REMEMBRANCE (adapted from various online resources)

(The people’s response will be “*Lord hear our prayer*”)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven: for all who died on September 11; for the angels to carry them safely home to the arms of the Father.

We pray to the Lord, **Lord hear our prayer.**

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted: for all who are still wounded and saddened during this time of remembrance.

We pray to the Lord, **Lord hear our prayer.**

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy: for those who plan and execute violence upon others; for continued efforts at reconciliation and healing.

We pray to the Lord, **Lord hear our prayer.**

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God: for our church, national, and world leaders; for the courage to bear the cross of peace.

We pray to the Lord, **Lord hear our prayer.**

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied: for (YOUR CHURCH NAME) UMC and the surrounding communities, may we have the strength to be models of peace and justice to our neighbors.

We pray to the Lord, **Lord hear our prayer.**

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land: for all who are sick and suffering, especially for those we now name (long pause).

We pray to the Lord, **Lord hear our prayer.**

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God: for all first responders who run towards danger, when many run from it.

We pray to the Lord, **Lord hear our prayer.**

## 9/11 Time of Remembrance at Succasunna

On Sunday, September 11, 2011 – 8:00am to 9:00am members of Roxbury Township will come together for a day to remember and honor those lost in the attacks of a decade ago.

On Saturday, September 17, 2011 – Registration begins 8:00am, work begins 9:00am

Roxbury Township Public Works Building, 96 North Dell Avenue, Kenil NJ 07847

Continuing a tradition begun in 2010, residents of Roxbury Township will gather to remember the victims of the attacks and honor the heroes of September 11 through community service.

On Sunday, September 11, 2011, beginning at 8:00am, the Roxbury community will mark the 10th anniversary with a time of prayer and remembrance at the 9/11 Memorial at Horseshoe Lake. (In the event of rain, the gathering will be under the pavilion. All are invited to join in this solemn time of remembrance. On the following Saturday, September 17, volunteers from local faith organizations, Scout troops,

and community groups will join together to honor the memory of 9/11 heroes by giving back to their community. They will pick up litter from the parks, assist older neighbors with yard clean-ups, and collect food for Roxbury Social Services. Registration begins at 8:00am at the Roxbury Public Works building, located at 96 North Dell Avenue, Kenil, NJ 07847 (behind the township recycling center). Volunteers will depart for their work locations shortly after 9:00am.

Families are invited to serve together. Youth not yet able to drive must be accompanied by an adult, as all participants will be responsible for their own transportation to the work sites. Volunteers should bring a bagged lunch, gloves, and hand tools appropriate for yard work (pruners, clippers, rakes, shovels, etc.) To learn more, pre-register, or to request assistance with a yard-clean up, please visit [www.september11roxbury.org](http://www.september11roxbury.org), email [september11roxbury@sumcnj.org](mailto:september11roxbury@sumcnj.org), or call 973/584-7349.

Pre-registration is encouraged.

## Free Kindle download of historic book of daily devotions



September 11 marks the 10-year anniversary of the attack upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The date also marks the 10th anniversary of the re-publication of *Strength for Service to God and Country*, a 1942 book of daily devotions written for World War II troops.

In honor of the 10-year anniversary of September 11th and the men and women who serve the country, United Methodist Men are providing a free Kindle version of this historic book of daily devotions.

Visit the Amazon Kindle Store between September 1-15 to download a copy.

More than 450,000 copies of this life-changing book have already been distributed overseas, but hundreds of thousands more are needed for those currently serving stateside and abroad.

To help continue to put these books in the hands of military and service personnel, please consider making a donation at [www.StrengthforService.org](http://www.StrengthforService.org).

Strength for Service recently launched a Facebook fan page. The page will feature stories from service personnel who have found inspiration through reading the book, updates from our organization and a place for readers to join the conversation about this life-changing book.

Visit [Facebook.com/StrengthforService](http://Facebook.com/StrengthforService).

## Midvale Church 9/11 Remembrance Team Announces its 9/11 Services of Remembrance

At 8 p.m. on September 10, 2011 there will be a service of reflection and remembrance in the sanctuary of the Midvale church. Using various media, the service looks to the past and our current need to remember and heal. There will be a procession outside for a candlelighting service on the church lawn. Four fire pits will be ignited to remember those who perished at the World Trade Center, The Pentagon and aboard Flight 93. An overnight vigil will

begin with the reading of the names of those who perished. The vigil will conclude with a light breakfast at 7:30 a.m. The 9:30 a.m. Sunday service of worship will again remember and seek healing for the nation and the world.

The church is located at 490 Ringwood Avenue, Wanaque, New Jersey. For further information call 973-835-4202 or visit the church website at [www.midvaleumc.org](http://www.midvaleumc.org).

## Budget Proposals

### A UMNS Report By Heather Hahn\*

A recommended budget of \$603 million for the 2013-2016 operations of the denomination’s general agencies will go before General Conference in 2012.

The figure represents a 6.04 percent reduction from the previous four years and marks the first time a smaller budget will go before the church’s top legislative body for approval.

General Conference could adjust the recommendation when it next meets April 24-May 4 in Tampa, Fla.

In a separate action, General Conference will take up two constitutional amendments that would allow the body to empower a unit of the denomination to make budget adjustments between conference sessions. At present, after General Conference adjourns, no entity can make changes to the allocated budgets.

To be ratified, constitutional amendments must win a two-thirds majority at General Conference and next must be approved by at least two-thirds of the members voting during annual conferences. By contrast, the budget requires a majority vote by General Conference.

### Impact of budget reductions

The 40-member board of the General Council on Finance and Administration and the 60-member Connectional Table in May gave provisional approval for the budget for all seven general apportionments, including the World Service Fund that supports most general agencies.



A UMNS photo illustration by Mike DuBose.



# Global Relay

Brief Reports from around the world  
via United Methodist News  
Service and Newscope

## Handwritten Bible now available

MANCHESTER, England (UMNS) — The Methodists' Handwritten Bible, created by tens of thousands of people across Britain and Northern Ireland, is now online. It contains 7,000 pages with verses written in English, Chinese, Welsh and Braille, plus accompanying illustrations. More than 30,000 volunteers joined in from every part of Britain - including prisons, schools, colleges, libraries, nursing homes, airports and shopping centers.

## Clergy fear Alabama law imperils ministry

MADISON, Ala. (UMNS) — The Rev. John Bailey fears that after Sept. 1 the most ordinary acts of ministry in Alabama could violate state law. Sept. 1 is when Alabama's new immigration enforcement law is scheduled to go into effect. At issue for many Christian leaders is the law's provision that makes it a crime to knowingly "harbor" or "transport" immigrants who are not lawfully present in the United States.

## United Methodists in hunger documentary

WINCHESTER, Va. (UMNS) — No one was out in the fields, under the hot sun, for the sake of the camera. They were there to help feed hungry people. For two days in late July, a camera captured the work of volunteers — many of them United Methodist — who glean the excess crops farmers do not need. The footage will be used in a documentary available to ABC affiliates.

## Civil rights pioneer W. Astor Kirk dies

WASHINGTON (UMNS) — W. Astor "Bill" Kirk, who spent many years fighting official and unofficial segregation in The United Methodist Church, died Friday night, Aug. 12, surrounded by his family at Washington Hospital Center. He was 89. Kirk, a United Methodist layperson, served as a director of the public affairs department of the *Board of Church and Society* of The United Methodist Church from 1961 to 1966 and as the board's interim top executive in 1987 and 1988. He played a historic role in ending institutional segregation in The United Methodist Church.

## UMCOR continues quake recovery in Japan

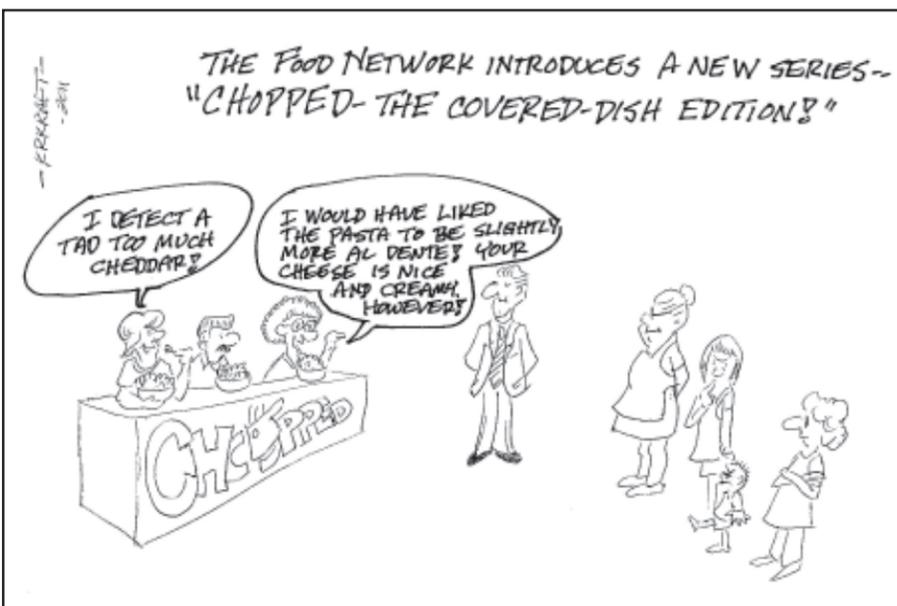
NEW YORK (UMNS) — Five months after a massive earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis devastated Japan, the United Methodist Committee on Relief is continuing to work with partner organizations to address four priorities: the reconstruction of homes and other buildings; the rehabilitation of lost livelihoods; the provision of psychosocial support for affected individuals and communities, and advocacy for responsible energy sourcing. The more than \$11 million given by United Methodist donors and other supporters allows the relief agency "to pick up where others left off, and keep going," said Melissa Crutchfield, UMCOR executive for international disaster response.

## Wesleyan Leadership Conference set

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) — The second annual Wesleyan Leadership Conference, which will bring together people who want to be more missional in their ministry like the original Methodist movement, is scheduled for Oct. 13-15 in Nashville. Speakers will include the Rev. Steve Manskar, director of Wesleyan leadership at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship; and the Rev. Elaine Heath, the McClellan assistant professor of evangelism at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. Heath will speak and teach about her work with new monastic communities in Dallas. Registration costs \$129 before Sept. 1 and \$159 after. Discounts are available for groups of three or more.

## Pre-General Conference news briefing

TAMPA, Fla. (UMNS) — United Methodist Communications will host a pre-General Conference news briefing Jan. 19-Jan. 21 in Tampa, Fla. to prepare for the 2012 General Conference. The three-day event will provide information for church and secular journalists, delegates and other interested parties about issues to be considered by the denomination's legislative body when it meets in Tampa on April 24-May 4. The cost of registration is \$195 before Sept. 30, \$225 through Nov. 30, and \$250 thereafter. Discounted rates at the nearby Marriott Waterside Hotel are available for \$169. Up to four delegates from each conference may attend.



Last fall I saw a PBS documentary about the Lincoln Highway, established in 1913 as America's first transcontinental road. It runs some 3400 miles through 12 states across the country's midsection from New York City to San Francisco. Though parts have since become interstate superhighways, mostly the original Lincoln Highway still consists of two-lane roads that wind gently from town to town. As I watched the video, the Holy Spirit whispered, "You could do that, and take Bibles with you to give out along the way." And He reminded me of God's promise in Isaiah 55:10-11:

*As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

I bought a couple of Lincoln Highway guidebooks and began praying about the trip. I asked the Holy Spirit to be my cloud by day and my pillar of fire by night, guiding me to drive or to linger as He willed. It seemed good to start the trip in May, when inclement weather would be giving way to spring and people would be outdoors again. Our pastor announced a Lenten short course on faith-sharing (do you believe in providence?). Not knowing how long the trip would take or how many I'd need, I ordered 300 Gideon pocket Bibles. I asked for and was greatly blessed to have the prayers of my supportive and caring church family.

Praying (earnestly!) once more, I left home on Monday morning, May 2 and drove to the Lincoln Highway eastern terminus in Times Square, where I gave out half a dozen Bibles to mildly surprised but mostly receptive vendors and visitors. The only refusal came from a middle-aged man holding a large sign advertising "Psychic Readings". The rest of that day and the next two were spent traversing New Jersey and Pennsylvania, offering Bibles mostly to people I met in the restaurants, minimarts and motels I frequented.

In the Casa D'Oro Mexican restaurant in Jefferson, Iowa, our gracious Lord gave opportunity to give Spanish Bibles to the entire staff, and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them one sentence at a time, while one of them translated for the others. In Omaha, Nebraska, a customer-less shopkeeper in a deserted mall quietly accepted the Bible I offered, then told how he felt this affirmed the reassuring dream he'd had that night of God's watchfulness and care. At the Hickison Petroglyphs National Park in Nevada, in perhaps the unlikeliest encounter of all, I met three visitors from Elko, about 150 miles away, who had driven by the park before but never visited until that day; each seemed pleased to accept the Bibles I offered. Finally, on Tuesday afternoon, May 17, at the Lincoln Highway's western terminus in San Francisco's Lincoln Park, I gave a Spanish Bible to a solitary metropolitan bus driver parked at the terminus marker between runs. And suddenly, the trip was over. May God's purpose be fulfilled in and through each of the 120 or so copies of His holy word that He gave opportunity to hand out.

As for me, here are some of the lessons the Holy Spirit taught me on the journey:

- Never underestimate the blessings of belonging to a loving, praying church family, nor forget to thank God for them and for leading you to them!
- If you would enjoy God's blessings of peace and joy that passes all understanding, open your hands and let go. Let go of needing to create and control your own agenda, and let go of the desire to be seen as successful or significant. Just be obedient instead, and rest in the light and gentle yoke Jesus has promised all who come to Him. It's God's glory, not yours that matters.
- Of the 127 or so Bibles I offered, only 7 were declined. Perhaps people are readier to receive God's word than I've been to share it. My niece says I'm like Johnny Appleseed, but with Bibles. I like this image, and pray God may make it so, in this trip and those He leads me on next.

May Jesus Christ be praised.

Gary Kochman  
Middletown United Methodist Church

## RELAY Reflections

Thoughts on the Spiritual Life  
Relayonline at [www.umrelay.org](http://www.umrelay.org)

Read, Reflect, then Write your own and e-mail your contribution or comments to [editor@umrelay.org](mailto:editor@umrelay.org).

## Yes, You Are Being Digested!

By now, you have probably discovered the thrice-weekly GNJ Digest, your conference's electronic newsletter full of Announcements, Events, Celebrations, National News and Conference Calendar Updates. There are also special letters from the Bishop and notifications of deaths among members of the Annual Conference.

If you are not currently on our e-mail list and would like to be, please send your request to become a part of our "digested community" to [communications@gnjumc.org](mailto:communications@gnjumc.org).

## Jesus is Lord of Cyberspace

"Jesus is Lord of Heaven and Earth, Lord of the Church, Lord of History, my personal Lord and I can now say Jesus is Lord of Cyberspace," says Pastor Lin Smallwood. He recently finished facilitating an online, 34 week *Becoming Disciples through Bible Study Class* on line through [www.BeADisciple.com](http://www.BeADisciple.com). "We had had a wonderful time together in this unusual venue. God has opened up God's words through the use of another medium," he observed.

It was Smallwood's third Disciple class as leader. He noted that while the medium is different, the message is the same as the more traditional method for leading Disciple. One of the differences is in the use of video cameras. Said Smallwood; "I tried hard to wait just like a face to face class after I ask a question and in the pause I trust people are thinking. It was harder for me to get used to doing this on line but with prayer and perseverance the class came together like every other one of the classes in Disciple that I have facilitated."

There is a steep learning curve with the technology but the results can be well worth the effort. One of the students in the online community has decided to go into the ministry. Many became more active in their local churches. Some had never read parts of the Bible before but most had a very high level of experience prior to the class. One woman had taken the class several times before in person. One man was visually impaired and one woman was hearing impaired. The class is especially helpful for those who have challenges in a regular class.

The diversity of the churches involved is one of the most enriching features of the class because when people share their experiences they are so vastly different. There were two mega churches represented and eight states. Despite the restrictions of technology and distance, the sharing became profoundly intimate with people sharing their struggles and their journey just as they might in the face to face Disciple class. During the class one person's church experienced a tragedy when one of their members was murdered. One participant had two children deployed in the Middle East at the same time. The participants became a tight knit community of disciples who cared for one another.

Smallwood says that he learned to trust God to get him through the technical glitches - "like once when the slides wouldn't show up on the screen and we had to do the class with just a blank page in front of everyone. Sometimes I would forget to put my microphone on while talking away - and someone would write in the chat box - *microphone*. I had to trust God had brought me to this task with the willingness to muddle through and that that was enough." The pastor reports that it took a bit of time to get his confidence level up with the mechanics of the computer, the folders, and the Blackboard platform. The class members kept reassuring him that everything was just working well enough.

Smallwood is excited by the possibilities this teaching method has in store for those willing to give it a try. "What can be more thrilling than introducing Christians to the study of the Bible?" he said. "I can't personally think of anything more transforming to a congregation than Disciple Bible Study. Studying the Bible in community *can* be done online." John Wesley said, "I look upon all the world as my parish. By that I mean in whatever part I am, I judge it my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work that I know God has called me to do."

## Budget (Continued from Page 3)

After a review during their July 27-29 meeting, the two groups agreed to send the proposed budget to General Conference.

As it stands, the recommended budget will mean "reductions in programming or staff depending on how the individual agencies react to reductions in funding," said John Goolsbey, an executive of the General Council on Finance and Administration.

Reductions in the number of members in U.S. congregations and declining revenue already have forced general agencies to eliminate some staff positions and programs. The number of staff positions in 13 general agencies has decreased every year, from 3,139 in 1971 to 1,384 in 2010.

The Rev. Andy Langford, pastor of Central United Methodist Church in Concord, N.C., and a member of the Connectional Table, said most of the denomination's money is spent at the annual conference and local church level.

"I personally think that the majority of the work in our denomination in dollars and everything else is done not in the seven funds but in the rest of (the denomination)," he said. "That \$603 million is only 3 percent of the total expenditures of the denomination."

The reduced budget should provide some relief to congregations and annual (regional) conferences, Langford said.

"What the annual conferences are going to say is, 'My goodness, we're going to have more flexibility with what we do,'" he said. "And the local churches are going to say, 'We will have more flexibility in what we do.' I think this could actually help the church."

Factors that go into budget projections include: church membership, inflation, per-capita disposable income, "giving elasticity" (the percent of giving from increased revenue), net spending and the U.S. gross domestic product. What church leaders ultimately are trying to predict is what church members will be able and willing to give in the coming four years.

The recent volatility in the U.S. stock market illustrates why the long-term prospect for giving is often difficult to anticipate.

### Impact of constitutional amendments

The proposed constitutional amendments are trying to address some of that unpredictability, Langford said. He is the secretary of the Apportionment Structure Study Group, which first suggested the amendments that the council endorsed.

"We need a body that can say if we need to spend more money on advocacy than a program, we can shift stuff around. Right now, that cannot happen," he said. "What we have is an organization that we set it on a course and they have to follow this same track for the next four years and you can't lay any new track."

The General Council on Finance and Administration did not support two study group proposals: One to combine the seven general apportioned funds into one fund and one to restructure the apportionment formula to move from an expenditure-based model to an income-based model.

The council did support the study group's recommendation to emphasize stewardship as a spiritual discipline.

"I feel that there is a need to refocus on the practice of giving as a spiritual discipline in the church," Goolsbey said. "We're focusing so much on cutting expenditures, and we're not really addressing the fact that United Methodists and religious people in general have not been as generous as they have been in the past. Perhaps we need to focus on that as well."

*\*Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service. News media contact: Heather Hahn, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 742-5470 or [newsdesk@umcom.org](mailto:newsdesk@umcom.org).*

## 2012 Community Outreach Grants

The Parish & Community Development Team of the Conference Board of Global Ministries of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference will be receiving and reviewing applications from churches for grants to fund **new programs** in the local church designed to reach out beyond our walls and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world with emphasis on the Four Areas of Focus: (1) Leadership Development; (2) Congregational Development; (3) Ministry with the Poor; and (4) Global Health.

Local churches must submit their application before the **October 14, 2011** deadline. Application forms will be mailed as requested by local churches (call Ginny Kaiser at 732-359-1043) or may be downloaded from the conference website [www.gnjumc.org](http://www.gnjumc.org).

Criteria:

- Grants are intended to help start *new ministries* at local churches and not to sustain established programs.
- Grants are provided for one year at a time and not awarded for more than three (3) years to the same project.
- Preference is always given to new ministries at local churches that have not received funds previously.
- Only one project per church should be submitted.
- Project goals need to be according to the Four Focus Areas: (1) Leadership Development; (2) Congregational Development; (3) Ministry with the Poor; and (4) Global Health.
- Grants cannot be used to fund staff positions, equipment or capital improvement.
- Churches and ministries receiving grants *must* submit a copy of the Safe Sanctuaries Certification.
- Preference is given to local churches which have paid their fair share in the previous year.
- District Superintendent of the local church requesting funds needs to recommend the project.

Please follow the general instructions listed in the application as the Funding Committee will not consider *incomplete* applications.

**Completed applications must be returned to the Conference Office no later than 4:00 pm on Friday, October 14, 2011. All applications are to be sent to: Rev. Sung H. Ahn, Greater New Jersey Conference, 1001 Wickapecko Drive, Ocean, NJ 07712, or faxed to 732-359-1049. If you fax your application, you must also mail the original. No emails will be accepted.**

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## Changing the World in the Rockaways

Like many churches around the denomination, the UMC of the Rockaways led a community wide effort in making a difference and changing the world late last Spring. Thanks to the dozens of volunteers and participants in the event, eight different projects were completed, including:

- 157 boxes of clothes were made available to residents in Paterson, NJ, in cooperation with St. Philip's Ministry.
- More than 25 boxes of pet supplies were delivered to Noah's Ark Animal Shelter.
- \$500 was raised to purchase mosquito netting for an ongoing project in Uganda. (that's almost 70 nets). \$350 will go to the Building Fund of the Morris County Food Pantry.
- A Chili cook-off to benefit the hungry. All of those who either made or tasted chili made that happen.
- \$110 was raised to support Radio Methos in Cote d'Ivoire through the efforts of all those who baked brownies - and those who sacrificed their diets in order to taste them.
- \$168 to help provide support for a child in Camden, NJ to participate in a summer enrichment program. (Hotdogs & Hope)
- \$80 to benefit Kamina Children's Home in North Katanga region, Congo, to provide housing, food, clothing and education for a child for 70 days. (Cookies for Kamina)
- \$75 will help provide safe drinking water in Sudan.

The members of the congregation



worked cooperatively with community organizations including The Girl Scouts (from 3 different area troops) who participated - and their leaders, of course.

Also, the individuals and five restaurants who provided chili for our Chili Cook-Off. Alexis Diner won the Cook-Off, and is now "Chili Champion of the Rockaways." They were joined by Potbelly's Restaurant, The Rattlesnake Cafe, Texas Smoke, and Torpedo Joe's.

Also participating was Jack Borris, who represented the Rockaway Rotary Club at the NO MORE MALARIA table.

Working together, everyone helped make a positive difference in the county, state and world!



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For additional information contact  
K. Edward Jacobi, President,  
at 732-747-4891 or  
ejacobi07739@yahoo.com  
or Jay Kim at the  
GNJAC Office 732-359-1032.



## St. Marks Member Celebrates 106<sup>th</sup> Birthday



On May 12, 2011, Mr. Richard Lee Owens, Sr. celebrated his 106<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Mr. Owens was born in Anne Arundel County, Maryland in 1905. He resided and was educated in the City of Annapolis, Maryland where he attended the first African American high school in that city, the Staton School. He was a member of Asbury Methodist Church in Annapolis and was married there in 1928 to Martha Johns of Montclair, New Jersey. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Owens moved to Montclair.

Mr. Owens, has been a member of St. Mark's church in Montclair since 1928 and has served as a Lay Leader, Board of Trustee Member, Bible Class teacher and in other capacities over the years. Mr. Owens also served as a District Lay Leader. Throughout his life, Mr. Owens has demonstrated his faithful service to his Church and Church family and could often be found

preaching, teaching and counseling.

Mr. Owens was employed for a number of years by the Executive Association of the Eastern Railroad in New York and served as President of Local 620. Since his retirement from PNC Bank in 1974 Mr. Owens was an active community member contributing his considerable energy to the improvement of Montclair in many ways. Mr. Owens is one of the founders of the Glenfield Senior Citizens' Club and served as president for a number of years. He also served on the Township of Montclair's Senior Citizens' Advisory Committee. He is a founding member of the Glenfield Task Force in the renovation of Glenfield School and a member of the Board of Montclair Grass Roots. As a recipient of the Community Service Award, sponsored by the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Mr. Owens was honored for his many contributions to the community. In 2001, he was recognized for his years of community service and the Glenfield School Community Suite was renamed and re-dedicated as the "Catchings-Owens Community Suite".

He and his wife, Martha were married for sixty-eight years until Mrs. Owens passed away in 1996. Mr. Owens has two children, Richard L. Owens, Jr. and Myrna Owens Hinton, five grandchildren, fifteen great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

As is customary over the past few years, a celebration of his 106 years was celebrated with family and friends where Mr. Owens entertained with stories of his young life in Annapolis as a Quarterback for the Ward Athletic League. If asked how he is doing, Mr. Owens will always reply – "If I felt any better, I would think something was wrong with me".

## Multi Cultural Celebration Is Just Around the Corner

The Multi Ethnic Coordinating Committee of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference will be holding the annual multi cultural celebration on October 22, 2011 Saturday (from 4PM to 7PM) at St. John's church, 2000 Florence Avenue, Hazlet, New Jersey. The purpose of this annual celebration is to celebrate our diverse cultural heritage and gather together for worship, fellowship and cultural festivity. Why an annual multi cultural celebration?

For the past two years, the multi cultural celebration has been well attended by persons from local groups and congregations, representing many nations, many languages and displaying an array of talents. Last year, the celebration brought hundreds from over 35 different nations together for worship and talent show festivity (*Relay, December, 2010*). The annual celebration is also well participated in by both laity and clergy, each with their varying gifts to offer.

This year's celebration will be meaningful for everyone as it will bring people together once again to experience the blessings of diversity. Worship with inclusive participation is being developed where representations from different age groups, cultural ethnicities and from all races are sought. The planning team is looking for verse readers from different lan-

guages and a sign language interpreter. The festivities would not be complete without native food from different continents, nations, and cultures from all races. Anyone can bring a dish of any of these kinds: meat, chicken or fish, vegetable, or side dish (rice or pasta) that can feed at least 50 people. Dessert and drinks will be provided.

The cultural presentations will follow from the different nations/continents and from all races. Presentations must be culturally oriented and not more than five minutes long. For further information, access the multi cultural celebration brochure from the conference web site and send in your church's registration to the conference office as identified in the brochure. To add color to the festivity, we also encourage that everyone wear their native dress and/or national costume.

It is a goal to have inclusive participation from all local churches in the conference. The hope and prayer is that the gathering will enhance awareness of the rich diversity of the conference, not only of the many countries and nations represented, but also of the many gifts and graces present in the fellowship of United Methodists in the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference.

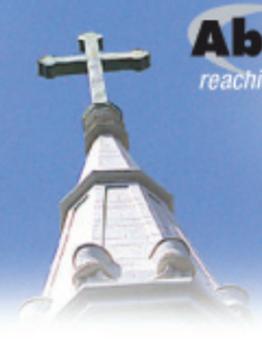
– Judy Colorado, Team Leader, *The Multi Ethnic Coordinating Committee*

## Bloomington Church Honors 2011 Graduates



On June 12, the Bloomington Church honored its 2011 graduates. This year's graduates included Caroline King who graduated from Riverdale Public School, Brian Hallock who graduated from Butler High School, Kurt Reinmund who graduated from Delbarton School, Steven Spadaccini who graduated from West Milford High School, Kelly Ashe who graduated from Kutztown University, Erin Hallock who graduated from Ramapo College, and Rachel Manella who graduated from Montclair State University. This special worship service is an annual event at B.U.M.C. Stephany and Arnold Freifelder provided special music for the occasion, and after church everyone enjoyed refreshments and fellowship in Troxler Hall.





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**The October Issue Deadline is September 5, 2011**

## General Conference Delegates

(Continued from Page 1)



**Rev. Dr. Heasun Kim**

Rev. Kim is currently the pastor of Simpson UMC in Old Bridge, NJ where she has been healing, renewing, and building up a community of faith. Rev. Kim has nurtured and equipped the laity of Simpson United Methodist Church for mission, ministry, and a major capital campaign in an extremely difficult economic environment. Rev. Kim also has been a leader in both the district and the annual conference, Korean-American Caucus of the GNJAC, and the Northeastern Jurisdiction. Rev. Kim currently serves as chairperson of the Order of the Elders, Rules and Order Committee, and is a BOOM member of the Annual Conference. She serves as Vice-Chair of the Holy Conferencing Table and is a member

When asked to reflect on her election as a General Conference delegate, Rev. Bennett replied:

I am tremendously honored to have been elected as part of the GNJAC delegation for the United Methodist General Conference 2012. Along with the rest of the delegation, I will be investing considerable time over the course of this year preparing for General Conference by studying legislation to come before us, listening to clergy and laypeople around and beyond this annual conference, and considering my own inclinations, desires, and visions for this church in which I find my religious heritage. As a fourth generation Methodist clergyperson, I hold a deep regard for the tradition and theology of the United Methodist Church. I also deeply respect the opportunity we have, in the UMC system, to constantly evolve and revision a church to be responsive to a changing, challenging world.

As a person serving in ordained ministry, I believe that we always have everything we need to accomplish what God has in mind for us. Although this may seem a utopian, even naïve, standpoint, I have experienced it to be sound, both theologically and pragmatically. I believe that, if we work collaboratively, sharing our human gifts and graces, as well as our budgetary and institutional resources, we can transform hearts and minds, and make disciples for Jesus Christ. If we choose instead to assume a territorial stance, conserving resources for our small piece of the dream, it is unlikely that we will be successful in furthering the kingdom of God. A community of leaders, sharing a vision and working in partnership, is far more effective than a group of individuals each working towards a solitary goal. This said, I believe that the legislation considering restructuring of our board and agency system will require significant consideration and attention at General Conference.

I am passionately dedicated to giving voice to youth and young adults in the re-framing of "how we do what we do and why." Through my work with high school age students in local church and now with college students in my chaplaincy role at Drew, I've learned just how vital a role the church can play in shaping the futures and possibilities for the next generation of

of the Program and Arrangements Committee of the Northeastern Jurisdiction. Rev. Kim believes she would be a valuable member of our General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation as she would provide competent, mature, and faithful representation to our annual conference at the General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

Asked to reflect on the state of the Church and the challenges facing it, Kim replied:

I believe one of the most important issues for the General Conference 2012 is the issue of congregational vitality. I believe that we must renew our focus on how the United Methodist Church nurtures and supports clergy and lay leadership to work towards sustaining and improving the vitality of their congregations. One way I believe we can address this issue is by encouraging and empowering small- to mid-size churches. Oftentimes, clergies and churches are led to believe that large churches are the standard or ideal role model. However, this idea discourages many smaller, struggling churches as it does not fully appreciate or capitalize on their uniqueness and value. The ministry of the United Methodist Church, disciple making and world transformation occurs through vital congregations regardless their sizes. Therefore, the main issue of the Jurisdictional Conference 2012 would be to elect Episcopal leaders who are equipped to minister the churches for their vitality.



**Rev. Bennett**

adults. I've also learned just how often we miss the opportunity to demonstrate compassion and concern for young people, their needs, interests and desires. Shaping a church that is inclusive, relevant and justice-oriented is critical to drawing the Millennial Generation to the promise of hope and love through God and Jesus the Christ — a promise that can be life-saving for young people living in an objectified, disenfranchised, hypertechnologized world. We need to be the body that honors the voices of young people and responds by centralizing them in the process of re-visioning church.

I am also dedicated to expanding the inclusiveness and cultural sensitivity of our ordination process. I have observed the ways in which our candidacy process marginalizes and excludes gifted and committed candidates for ordained ministry based on gender, culture and racial/ethnic identity. The United Methodist Church is losing valuable leadership through its approach to this process. We need to develop a new strategy for approaching the identification, recruitment and nurture of clergy people who can serve our church well. Also, both accountability and affirmation for those currently serving in ministry needs to be pieces of assuring that we are providing leadership for congregations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

I anticipate many conversations over the year to come which will help to inform my opinions and hone my vision for the church and reign of God. I would encourage all of us to be part of preparing for General Conference 2012.



**Ms. Campbell**

Asked to reflect on the state of the Church and the challenges ahead, Ms. Campbell replied:

I am humbled and honored to be serving the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference as a General Conference delegate. I believe that it is an exciting and challenging time to be the church. As a young clergywoman I have a profound sense of hope that Christ is leading the United Methodist Church into the future. This General Conference will be a part of that work.

When asked to reflect on her election as a General Conference delegate, Rev. Wright replied:

Let me first begin by giving thanks to God and to the members of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference for this awesome opportunity to attend the 2012 General Conference as a delegate. It is indeed a humbling experience to know that I'll be participating in the restructuring the church for future mission and ministry. I solicit your prayers for the delegation as we seek to discern God's will for our denomination.

One of the fundamental issues facing our denomination today is how we redefine and revitalize our local churches to prevent the increasingly growing decline in our membership. How should we realign our budgets, general agencies, leadership (bishops, pastors and laity) and structure to reverse this downward spiral?

In response to this question the Council of Bishops put forth a document entitled "Call to Action". They believed that if we are to increase the number of vital congregations effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world all the denomination's resources, attention, energy from local churches, annual conferences, and general agencies will be direct to achieving this goal. What is needed is adaptive change in our structures, policies and mindsets.

I invite you to read the Call to Action be going to [www.Umc.org](http://www.Umc.org). Listed below are a few of the recommendations from the "Call to Action".

1. Reform the clergy leadership development, deployment, evaluation and accountability system.
2. Establishing, implementing and

Having just returned from the World Methodist Conference I have a much broader and deeper understanding of how our global family works. I believe that increasing the effectiveness of our global and ecumenical nature will be a key issue for such a time as this.

As I study the proposed legislation I continue to prayerfully consider the Call to Action Report and what its lasting impact would be for my generation and for generations to come.

My ministry has been shaped by the denominational Rethink Church campaign and I will carry that framework to the Conference particularly when considering the possibilities of how our church functions and carries out its mission and ministry by asking myself—what is working effectively and what can we collectively "Rethink"?

Again, thank you for this privilege of serving the church in this way. I appreciate your prayers during these coming months. Please be in prayer that we will act out of hope and not fear, that the entire delegation will be well prepared physically, mentally, and spiritually, and that God's will and not our own will be done.



**Rev. Wright**

evaluating best practices for creating vital congregations.

3. Reform the Council of Bishops by establishing a new culture of accountability.
4. Realigning the general agencies by consolidating programs and administrative services.

The Call to Action is just one of the many recommendations that will be decided at the 2012 General Conference.

My sisters and brothers, I truly believe that our church stands at the crossroad of life and death and General Conference will determine the road we travel in the future. I'm committed to creating a United Methodist's culture where diversity is value, justice is experience, grace is given, lives are transformed and God is glorified. My prayer is that God will use the 2012 General Conference Delegations to do a new thing in our denomination that will transform the us and the world. Amen and amen!!

## Drew Dyson

(Continued from Page 1)

In the months ahead, you will hear multiple avenues for you to connect with your elected General and Jurisdictional Conference delegation in order to share your hopes and dreams, as well as your insights and perspective on critical issues facing the church. I look forward to hearing your voice and listening deeply to your longings for The United Methodist Church. I am blessed to be a part of your delegation,

but I am more blessed to share in ministry with clergy and laity who passionately desire to enhance our missional witness in the world — and in the Greater New Jersey area. In the meantime, I covet your prayers for the entire delegation as we prepare for this awesome and awe-filled task.

*Serving Christ Together* —  
Drew A. Dyson  
August 2011

# Relief Aid Needed for Drought Victims In East Africa

**A UMNS Commentary By Tim Shenk\***

7:00 A.M. EDT August 24, 2011 | NAIROBI, Kenya (UMNS)

There are an endless number of stories to tell about this year's devastating drought in East Africa. Across much of Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and beyond, more than 12 million people are struggling to survive the failure of seasonal rains, the scarcity of water and the skyrocketing price of food.

"This time is the worst drought we ever faced," the Rev. Ezekiel Mutua, an Anglican priest, told me in Kaikungu, a rural Kenyan community that is a three-hour drive east of Nairobi. "People have gone without food, two to three days, so it's just surviving by God's grace."

Kaikungu is a farming area with about 6,500 people. The fields where corn, beans and sorghum once grew are now just bare, reddish dirt. Spiky green sisal plants — a type of agave — are about the only crops that grow. To survive, women hand-weave sisal fibers into colorful baskets to sell in Nairobi. There are few other sources of income.

Church World Service, a United Methodist partner, and the Anglican Church of Kenya began distributing food in Kaikungu in August, hoping to stave off the worst forms of malnutrition. It is estimated that the drought is affecting 11 million to 12 million people in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti.

Most people believe, however, that the long-term solution to recurrent drought is to capture and store more water in the community. Since 2007, Church World Service and the Anglican Church of Kenya have helped residents drill a well, build a hilltop water catchment and construct six concrete "sand dams" that hold water in the sandy beds of seasonal streams.



**In Mwingi, Kenya, a relief worker advises 250 people who received food from Church World Service.** Photos courtesy of Tim Shenk/Church World Service.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief has provided grants to Church World Service to help with the relief effort in the Horn of Africa.

Melissa Crutchfield, UMCOR executive for international emergency response, said UMCOR's board of directors on Aug. 1 approved four grants for \$20,000 each to support:

- CWS-implemented work in the Mwingi and Kibwezi areas of Kenya, which includes five months of immediate relief measures, such as family food packages and nutritional supplements for young children, and initiatives to improve food security and livelihoods
- ACT Alliance members in Ethiopia responding through food distributions and food for work, malaria prevention and capacity building
- ACT Alliance members in Somalia providing for a variety of emergency needs — food, shelter, clothing and water — along with long-term assistance to promote agricultural, income-generating activities
- GlobalMedic, bringing in water purification tablets to Kenya and Somalia to provide 9.6 million liters of clean drinking water as well as purifier sachets for an additional 1.85 million liters of clean water.

UMCOR is appealing for donations to address the Horn of Africa crisis. The Advance number is 982450.

—Linda Bloom, United Methodist News Service

These efforts have helped ease the current drought by preventing people from having to walk miles to fetch water, but local water supplies still must be rationed to 40 liters per household per day. Each household has the equivalent of about 10.4 U.S. gallons of water each day for all uses. The average American household of four can use 400 gallons of water every day, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

## Building dams to trap water

In Kibauni, another rural area east of Nairobi, scores of women and a handful of men stack rocks in a dry riverbed in preparation for building a sand dam. Two years ago, a sand dam was built along another stream in the community, and it still holds water in sand that naturally accumulates in the riverbed. People scoop the water from shallow wells to irrigate a few small gardens and orchards.

There is an acute need for more water, so the women of the community came out in force to build another dam.

I asked a community leader, Christine Matheha, why the laborers were mostly women, some as old as 70.

"Because the women are more suffering than the men in our homes," she said with a long laugh, before explaining that men have left the community to look for work.

People hope that seasonal rains will return in October or November. If that happens, it still will be another five months or so until crops mature. In Kibauni, as in many other drought-affected communities, partner organizations of Church World Service are distributing food to help sustain the population until the next harvest.

Yet, there are many places where too little help has arrived too late. In Huruma, an impoverished section of Nairobi, the National Council of Churches of Kenya distributes food packages to people living with HIV.

With food shortages driving up prices, many HIV patients are not eating enough to stay healthy, and some who were healthy are now bedridden.

Phyllis Kamau, a regional coordinator for the National Council of Churches of Kenya, took me to visit five ailing HIV patients in the lightless tenement buildings of Huruma.

"Whenever I take the medicine I feel dizzy," explained a 17-year-old named Bob, who contracted HIV from his mother and is now battling tuberculosis. "We sometimes go hungry if there's no money."



**Ephraim Kiragu, a Church World Service staff person, greets a recipient at the food-distribution outpost in Mwingi.**

Kamau explained to me that the food packages from the Kenya council of churches have been reduced because of a lack of funds, and only the most desperately needy people receive them on a rotating basis. She has a proposal to expand significantly food aid for HIV patients in Huruma, but so far the needed donations have not come.

## Weak HIV patient goes hungry

The worst case we saw was a girl named Elizabeth, about 12 years old, who lay unresponsive on a sofa in the home of her aunt and caretaker.

Elizabeth contracted HIV from her mother, who has since died, and in recent months her own condition worsened dramatically. Elizabeth's CD4 count — a way of monitoring the severity of AIDS — dropped to 50, and anything below 200 is considered very serious.

Elizabeth's aunt, a single mother, stopped working at her market stand to take care of Elizabeth when her condition worsened. They were hungry. She did not have the money to pay rent and buy food.

"How can we be helped?" she asked Kamau and me.

I wanted to give her the money in my pocket, just the Kenyan equivalent of \$15, and although it would not have saved Elizabeth, I wish that I had given it anyway.

Instead, thinking everything should go through the proper channels, I turned to Kamau and asked if she could respond. Kamau said to hold on, "We're doing our best to get support so that more help would go their way."

Kenya is an East African nation that borders the Indian Ocean. Its neighbors are Ethiopia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Somalia.

Kenya's land mass is 580,367 square kilometers, or about twice the size of the U.S. state of Nevada.

About 75 percent of the employment in this nation of 41 million people — the 33rd most populous in the world — is involved in agriculture.

Kenya ranks fourth among nations in the number of people living with HIV/AIDS. The life expectancy is 59.48 years.

Source: CIA World Factbook

We stepped out on the street and talked about where funding could come from to feed the neediest of the thousands of HIV-infected people in Huruma. We agreed that we had to do everything possible to share the story of this drought and explain why help is so desperately needed now.

The next day, Kamau emailed me: "I hope you will remember the last client that we visited yesterday. Her name is Elizabeth ... I HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT SHE PASSED AWAY THIS MORNING. HER BODY HAS BEEN TAKEN TO KENYATTA UNIVERSITY MORTUARY. I am very sad. What a loss! This is what this drought situation actually means."

I feel stunned, sad and angry. What can we do?

In 2 Corinthians 9:9-11, Paul writes: "God freely gives his gifts to the poor, and always does right. God gives seed to farmers and provides

everyone with food. He will increase what you have, so that you can give even more to those in need. You will be blessed in every way, and you will be able to keep on being generous."

My prayer is that I, and all those like me who have been generously blessed, can help those suffering the consequences of this terrible drought to the best of our ability.

\*Shenk is a communications officer for Church World Service. News media contact: Maggie Hillery, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 742-5470 or newsdesk@umcom.org.

## Stewardship Stories

By Rich Hendrickson  
Coordinator of Stewardship Education  
and Development, GNJAC



### An Extraordinary People for an Extraordinary Time

Fear is one of the most powerful motivators in the world — and one of the most destructive. Given the state of the our world today; terrorism, wars, political upheaval, political intolerance, and a dismal economy it is no wonder that so many of us find ourselves in a place that is unsettling at the least and downright scary at the worst. As the Church of Jesus Christ, I believe one of the most important choices we are faced with today is do we give into our fears and retreat inward or do we step out in faith?

An interesting dynamic is clearly emerging in churches of all shapes and sizes throughout the United States and beyond. Churches that “give themselves away” and are upfront with their parishioners about that’s what they’re all about are finding a much more resilient, enthusiastic, and generous giving base. On the other hand, churches that turn inward and ultimately focus only on their own self-preservation watch their support fall off pretty quickly. The evidence is clear, churches that fall into survival mode are having difficulty surviving and those that don’t play it safe and hoard their resources are flourishing. Jesus had something to say about this principle a long time ago: “Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.” (Luke 9:24 NRSV)

Pastor Josef Aaibue, from the Family of Christ Lutheran Church, Vancouver, Washington, said it best when he wrote: “Instead of pulling in and reducing our commitment to God and God’s creation, let us redouble our efforts and become an extraordinary people for an extraordinary time. With God’s help we can do it!”

## Sloane Named Director of Stewardship at GBOD

Tom Gillem



The Rev. Ken Sloane

NASHVILLE, Tenn. Aug. 23, 2011 /GBOD/ — Rev. Dr. Ken Sloane will begin work Oct. 1 as Director of Stewardship at the General Board of Discipleship (GBOD) where he will help congregations determine effective ways of giving, as well as embracing stewardship of all areas of life within a discipleship system.

“The stewardship position is a very important one not just for GBOD but for the denomination,” said Karen Greenwaldt, General Secretary (top executive) at GBOD. “Fostering a climate of generosity — through the seminars we lead, the articles we write, and the resources we provide — supports one of the essential ministry areas for vitality in congregations.” Rev. MaryJane Pierce Norton, GBOD’s Associate General Secretary for Leader-

ship Ministries, said as Director of Stewardship, Sloane will be working with established networks, researching and identifying congregations and leaders who are fostering generosity, as well as producing resources and training for more effective stewardship in the digital age. Sloane has served as Director of Communication Ministry at United Methodist Communications since 2006, working with the denomination’s ReThink Church campaign, online and face-to-face communications training and Denominational Giving. He has spent much of his time on the road during these past six years talking with congregations about connectional giving—churches working together to do what no one church could do alone. Sloane is a member of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, where until 2006 he served as Director of Connectional Ministries. He previously was pastor at three congregations, including a new church start, for a total of 20 years. Sloane received a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications and theater from Hofstra University and both his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Drew University.

## RELAY MISSION STATEMENT

The **mission** of the *United Methodist Relay* is to provide print communication to the leadership and membership, clergy and lay, of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. It shall be a **vehicle** to tell the church’s story and a **forum** for the exchange of ideas regarding Christian Faith and Practice.

In fulfillment of this mission, its **purpose** is:

- to inform the readership of events and resources at local, district conference, area and denominational levels
- to promote the mission of the annual conference, the area, and the general church
- to invite discussion of and response to important and controversial key issues facing the church
- to encourage readers to grow in their commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in church and society
- to inspire readers to grow in their faith and commitment to Christ and the Church

In pursuit of this mission and purpose, we will endeavor to be: Accurate \* Informative \* Interesting \* Stimulating \* Motivating \* And sometimes, Provocative.

## VITAL CONGREGATIONS

### “Remembering our Wesleyan Heritage”

By Douglas Ruffle

Coordinator of Congregational Development, GNJAC



Our denomination, through the “Call to Action,” wants each United Methodist Church to come up with a Plan of Action to make disciples for the transformation of the world. As churches make their Plans, it will be helpful to remember key elements of our heritage as People Called Methodists. Those roots have their origin in the theology and practice of the Methodist revival in England and the Americas during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A foundational piece to the revival was the role that individuals play in their salvation. So much time has passed since this occurred that many of us take it for

granted that we humans have the free will to choose to accept God’s gracious gift of salvation or not. Wesley believed strongly in the Arminian view that people make genuine free choices, including that of responding favorably to the gift of salvation. While God has foreknowledge of such decisions, God does not predetermine the choice itself. This was incredibly good news for the poor and down-trodden who interpreted their life’s lot as evidence that they were not part of the ‘elect’ who were saved.

The key point for Arminius and Wesley was that human beings can do something that would affect their salvation. For Calvinists, human beings have no control whatsoever over their salvation. The “something new” that Wesley introduced, then, was that one’s own *experience* plays an important role in the salvation process. Wesley harnessed new faith in Christ through an organizational system and sent new believers out to “spread scriptural holiness” across the land. What might be the transferable principles of these Wesleyan best practices that would help people in our age and culture embrace the gift of salvation and the pathway to discipleship? I would like to suggest three:

1. **Intentional Opportunities.** Churches need to be intentional about offering opportunities to experience God in a personal way. For John Wesley, such an opportunity occurred on Aldersgate Street on May 24, 1738, at 8:45 p.m. when he felt his heart “strangely warmed” at the reading of Luther’s Preface to the Book of Romans. As a conference we have seen younger people have life-transforming spiritual experiences through pilgrimages to Taize, the “Search Weekend” and worship at the Ocean City Youth Weekend. The important element here is to engage people in conversations about their experience with God and provide counsel, nurture and ongoing mentoring so that the experience is not a one time occurrence but part of a life long journey of Christian discipleship.

2. **Accountability Partnerships.** Wesley’s genius was in his organization of societies (voluntary associations of believers), classes and bands as means for following up on religious experiences. Thousands would come hear him and George Whitefield preach. It was the organizational follow-up that led to the transformation of lives and eventually of the entire nation. The challenge for us today is to devise “accountability partnerships” that make sense to our culture and day. Many churches offer Christian coaching and mentoring as ways to help people follow a pathway to discipleship. Small group ministry that includes an element of accountability would follow the spirit of the original Wesleyan Class Meeting. Other approaches include prayer partnerships or Bible Study classes. Given the technology available today, some of these ‘accountability partnerships’ can be done on the telephone, via ‘Skype,’ by video conferencing as well as by face to face meetings in people’s homes or at the local coffee shop.

3. **Hands-on Mission.** Wesley had a vision for “happiness and holiness to cover the earth.” He sent clergy and mostly laity out to spread “scriptural holiness” across the land. The principle here points us beyond ourselves to help others experience and grow as disciples. The invitation is to engage in *mission*. I have seen peoples’ lives transformed after spending a week as volunteers in mission in Honduras or Haiti or Russia or the local Habitat for Humanity worksite. There is something about getting out of our immediate neighborhood and seeing Christ at work in other locations that can open our hearts and minds to new understandings of discipleship. Our churches need to be asking the question, “Where and with whom should we be in mission?” When churches gain clarity about the Mission to which God is calling them they also tend to be growing churches.

The Office of Congregational Development exists to help our churches be vital, disciple-making congregations. May God bless you as you offer intentional opportunities for people to experience God; accountability partnerships so that people can grow in their faith journey; and hands-on-mission endeavors.

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## October Deadline September 6

News, letters, photos, or other material must be in the hands of the editor by that time to assure consideration for publication.

## OPPORTUNITY FILE

A roundup of coming events in the Greater New Jersey Conference and beyond. Send items of conference-wide interest to the Opportunity File at [Editor@umrelay.org](mailto:Editor@umrelay.org) or UMRelay, 1 Mayflower Ct., Whiting, NJ 08759.

### September 9-11 — Youth Weekend

OCEAN CITY — Hip hop artist Agape and illusionist Jared Hall will be on stage at this annual September gathering at the shore for GNJ youth. New workshops and for the first time ever, "So U think U can Praise" praise video competition. FFI: Visit the MYP website.

### September 10- Volunteers in Mission Training

Hazlet- If you are interested in learning more about being a UMVIM team leader or hosting mission teams this training is designed for you. Team Leader Training is required for all first time United Methodist Volunteers In Mission team leaders, but all interested persons are welcome to attend whether leading a team or not. St. John's United Methodist Church, 2000 Florence Ave., Hazlet. 9:00am - 4:00pm

### September 17 — Historical Tour

PHILADELPHIA — The historical Black Connection comes alive in visits to a number of churches that contributed to the spiritual development of the City of Brotherly Love. Visits to Old St. George, Mother Bethel, Tindley Temple and others. Registration deadline, August 27.

### September 18- The Bishop's SongFest

Ocean Grove- Hymn singing, music of praise led by folks from the UMC of Union, choirs from the UMC of Union, Christ Church: Piscataway, a children's choir from Korean Community Church: Englewood, and the Songfest Choir under the direction of Dr. Tony Godlefski will all be Celebrating in song. In the great Auditorium 4:00-6:00 p.m.

### October 3 — India 2011 with the Bishop

GNJAC - Eleven days of discover on the Asian sub-continent where the passion of Jesus Christ is moving and stirring the people. See conference website, [www.gnjumc.org](http://www.gnjumc.org) for details.

### October 22— 2011 Multi Cultural Celebration

Hazlet - The purpose of this annual celebration is to celebrate our diverse cultural heritage and gather together for worship, fellowship and cultural festivity. Time: 4:00pm - 7:00pm. St. John's United Methodist Church, 2000 Florence Avenue, Hazlet, NJ 07730.

## OBITUARIES

**MERTON A. STEELMAN III**, full elder, whose current appointment was to the Trinity United Methodist Church in Marmora, New Jersey, died on Tuesday, July 19, 2011. A funeral service was held July 26, at Trinity United Methodist Church.

His service included ministry in Trenton (Hamilton Ave. 1968) as a student. From 1969-71 he served in Bridgeport and Centre Square, moving in 1971 to Pedricktown and Auburn. 1974 found him in South Seaville, Seaville and Asbury and from 1976 to 1978 he was an Associate pastor at Turnersville. Millville: Broad Street and Cumberland from 1978 to 83 was followed with ministry in Belford beginning in 1983. He moved in 1992 to Salem where he served both the Broadway and First UMC's. In 1997 Allentown UMC became the focus for his ministry. He returned to the shore area in 2008 when he came to Marmora's Trinity UMC.

He is remembered by many for his role in "Outpost Camping" at Mount Misery.

Messages of condolence may be sent to Jelyn Cook, 101 North Shore Road, Marmora, NJ 08223. In lieu of flowers, gifts of remembrance may be made to the Trinity UMC in Marmora.

**MARY BANACH**, wife of the Rev. Dr. Richard W. Banach, retired elder of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference, died on May 20, 2011, after a very brief encounter with gall bladder cancer. A celebration of her life as a partner in a 40 year ministry alongside her husband of 52 years, was held at the Prairie Park Chapel in Yelm, WA on May 27, 2011. Messages of condolence may be sent to The Rev. Dr. Richard W. Banach, Box 1013, Rainier WA 98576. [drRichardB@hotmail.com](mailto:drRichardB@hotmail.com) Memorial gifts may be made to The Centenary Fund and Preachers' Aid Society, c/o The Greater NJ Conference, 1001 Wickapecko Dr., Ocean, NJ 07712.

*"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth...that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"*

— Rev. 14:13

## The Bishop's SongFest

September 18, 2011

4:00-6:00 p.m.

### In the Great Auditorium, Ocean Grove

Hymn singing, music of praise led by folks from the UMC of Union, choirs from the UMC of Union, Christ Church: Piscataway, a children's choir from Korean Community Church: Englewood, and the Songfest Choir under the direction of Dr. Tony Godlefski will all be celebrating in song. Mrs. Joanne Tuebner-Prussak will once again be our organist and accompanist for the afternoon. We'll cap the afternoon with a rousing rendition of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus, and everyone who wants to sing this glorious piece will be invited onto the stage of the Great Auditorium to perform it. Please mark your calendar, and come join our Bishop and the entire GNJAC leadership team as we praise the Lord in song and celebration!

If your choir wishes to participate, please call Songfest Producer Rev. Rich Hendrickson to receive your copies of the music. The conference will be providing music, so if your choir participates, you'll be set with three anthems for your church's upcoming singing season! (Individual singers will be able to receive music at the rehearsals.) All other participating choirs are asked to please participate in the Songfest Choir as well.

There will be **Songfest Choir rehearsals** on

- **Saturday**, September 10th, 10 AM, Montgomery United Methodist Church, 117 Sunset Road, Belle Mead, NJ 08502.
- **Thursday**, September 15th, 7:30 PM, The Tabernacle, Ocean Grove, NJ.
- **Saturday**, September 17th at 10 AM at Montgomery United Methodist Church, 117 Sunset Road, Belle Mead, NJ 08502.
- **Sunday**, Dress Rehearsal, September 18th, 2:45 PM
- **Songfest**, September 18th, 4:00 PM Please attend as many of the rehearsals as you can.

**Here's what we'll be singing:**

- Ralph Vaughn Williams: "O How Amiable";
- Joseph Martin: "Jesus Is My Song of Grace"
- Phillip Kern: "Behold That Star".
- Handel: "Hallelujah Chorus"

Questions? Email me at [PastorTony@MontgomeryUMC.org](mailto:PastorTony@MontgomeryUMC.org)

W. Michael Campbell, AIA

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The **World Service Fund** is the primary avenue of support for the global mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church.

It is the heart of our denominational presence, expressing in the Four Areas of Focus the vision and yearnings of the people of our denomination. During this quadrennium, the church seeks to focus the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world around these areas of ministry:

- Developing Principled Christian Leaders for the Church and the World
- Creating New Places for New People and Renewing Existing Congregations
- Engaging in Ministry with the Poor
- Stamping out Killer Diseases of Poverty by improving Health Globally



The **World Service Fund** truly demonstrates the Mission of the United Methodist Church by:

- Supporting specific local church work with children, youth, students, persons who are mentally and physically challenged, adults and older persons;
- Providing leadership and coordination for denominational ministry with youth;
- Continuing nearly 200 years of commitment to quality college and graduate education;
- Certifying United Methodists professional Christian educators, communicators and musicians;
- Assuring United Methodists speak and work to help encourage a more ethical, just and human world;
- Continuing a proud tradition of cooperation and dialogue with other faith traditions through interdenominational and ecumenical work;
- Giving our denomination a presence in the mass media and making a new communications technologies accessible to the church.



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