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UMM MEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men



A letter from the General Secretary

I hope that you have had a wonderfully blessed Christmas season, and that your plans for 2011 include advancing men's ministry, scouting ministry and your own personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I appreciate your continued support for our many ministries through the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

Once again, we have a wide variety of articles that will comfort, inform, and challenge you in your Christian walk. Several articles are on forgiveness, a subject that appears very appropriate for the start of a new year.

Every January, men and women make commitments to new directions they want to take at various portions of their lives in the new year. They resolve to lose weight, stop smoking, increase activities in some area, read more, and worry less — the list is endless.

From my experience in men's ministry, I have a suggestion: Forgive yourself.

We say we trust in God; we stand up and proudly want to preserve "in God we trust" on our coins. But do we really trust God to forgive us?

I was at a retreat where men listed on a 3x5 card the sins they wanted God to forgive. As the end of the service, they

nailed the cards to a huge cross at the front of the church. Later the cards were removed and burned.

Several men admitted that they listed the same sin they nailed the last time they were at this retreat. They had asked God to forgive them, and had done well with that portion of their lives, but still wanted God to forgive them again.

This is not a God-forgive-me issue; it is an I-forgive-myself issue. God does a much better job forgiving us, than we do forgiving ourselves.

I can't think of a better resolution for 2011 than to trust God with forgiveness, and move on.

Stop re-opening that wound, stop beating yourself up, stop being unforgiving.

Jesus taught his disciples that being forgiven requires us to forgive. That applies to our family, our neighbors, people who have injured us, and that man you saw in the mirror this morning.

Stay in touch, email me or call if there are things we can do to help you and your local church grow men for Christ.

Striving to be His servant,

Gilbert C. Hanke



The purpose of the United Methodist Men is to help men grow in Christ so others can know Christ.



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UM Men

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The issue of forgiveness

My grandson, Harrison, wacked his 4-year-old brother, Hudson, with his Star Wars light saber.

"Hudson hit me first," complained 6-year-old Harrison when I asked him to apologize.

"Say, you're sorry," I insisted.

"Sorry," responded Harrison in an icy manner that assured me he wasn't sorry for his response and he certainly had not forgiven Hudson for his unseen offense.

"Hudson, now say you're sorry for hitting Harrison," I requested in an effort to equalize the battle.

"Sorry," responded Hudson in the same chilly tone offered by his older brother.

I knew I had not really resolved anything. Neither brother had really forgiven the other, but they were willing to engage in a charade to keep their grandfather happy.

Who knows what the pair did when I left the room?

We may not say it in the same icy manner, but I wonder if we are going through the same charade when we mechanically ask God to "forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Do we really forgive those who have intentionally hurt us or our loved ones? Is God impressed with our recitation of rehearsed words?

The Rev. Walter Everett serves as a sterling example of how difficult it is to forgive. Few people would ever be able to do as he has done and forgive the man who killed his son. His story is

illustrative of the benefits derived from forgiveness, and if he can forgive, it should be nothing for us to forgive those who have hurt our feelings by angry or thoughtless words and deeds.

Whenever I hear the story of the Prodigal Son, I identify with the older brother. Not only is it difficult for me to forgive my wayward younger brother, it is difficult for me to forgive my dad for welcoming him back in the family, and, I know, he is going to take an additional portion of my inheritance. Forgiveness appears to be more valued by God than justice.



However, when I think about my own life, it is no longer justice I seek; it's forgiveness.

I'm sure Harrison and Hudson have long since forgotten the light saber incident.

It's reassuring to know that God also has a short-term memory of our sins when we seek his forgiveness and have the courage to really forgive others.

Rich Peck

“I forgive you.” by Walter H. Everett

A United Methodist pastor forgives the man who killed his son

Four hundred miles from home — July 26, 1987 — I received a phone call that would forever change my life.

My son, Wayne, was on the phone; his words came hurtling through the receiver — “Scott was murdered last night.”

Thus began an incredible journey that has carried me from the depths of despair to a new understanding of my relationship to Christ, and also to an unlikely relationship with the young man who killed Scott, 24, the oldest of my three children.

I flew from Richmond, Va., to Easton, Conn., where my family began to plan a funeral service I never thought I would have to plan. As a UM pastor, I had occasionally led people through the dark experience of burying their children, but I never anticipated it would happen to me.

Anger intensifies

For the next year, I went through one experience after another that added to my anger.

I visited Scott’s apartment, where my brother and I interviewed residents who had witnessed the shooting. We then went to the police station where we received a cool reception.

The police were not interested in what we had learned. They had already made an arrest, and “didn’t need any more information.” They were “burned out,” having had four homicides that weekend.

I responded angrily, “One of those four was my son; he is not number one, two, three, or four. His name is Scott Everett!”

My anger continued to intensify, keeping me from meaningful relationships with the people of my parish. I was just going through the motions.

Then I was asked to attend a meeting of a support group for families of murder victims.

At my first meeting, I heard a woman say, “Everybody who kills somebody should be taken out and shot immediately, no questions asked.”

I did not agree with her statement. I believe Christ calls us to something better than retaliation. However, I understood her anger as her son had been murdered 14 years earlier.

Was I doomed to live the next 14 years, or worse, the rest of my life, consumed by such a destructive rage?

Wait

I went home from the meeting and prayed, “God, I can’t live like this. Please help me. How do I unload my anger?”

The unsatisfying answer I received was: “Wait.”

But, for what was I to wait?

The answer continued, “Wait.”

In the absence of an answer that made sense to me, I continued to ask God, “How do I unload this anger? How do I begin the healing process?”

Still the reply was: “Wait.”

Plea bargain

Nine months after Scott’s death, I received a call from the state’s prosecuting attorney. He asked me to come to his office to discuss the case. The following day, he told me, “We have agreed to a

plea bargain with the person who killed your son."

"What are the terms?" I asked.

"He was charged with homicide, but we've reduced the charge to second-degree manslaughter," he responded. "He will plead guilty and will receive a sentence of ten years, suspended after five."

I was incredulous! "Five years for killing my son? Do you think that's fair?"

"I know you don't like it," he answered, "but you don't have any say in the matter. The state is the injured party; the state prosecutes. You are just a bystander."

That was my introduction to what I have come to understand as retributive justice: Who has broken the law, and how do we punish the offender? No thought is given to the needs of victims.

Secondly," the prosecutor continued, "We don't have as tight a case as we would like, and we want to make sure this guy does some serious time. He's been constantly in trouble."

Of course, my mind went back to the police who weren't interested in additional details because they were "burned out."

I stormed out of the prosecutor's office, now angry at him and the state for allowing a plea bargain.

I subsequently discovered that the plea bargain was actually a gift, for it freed the offender to say what he did two months later in court.

Day of sentencing

On July 1, almost a year after Scott's death, we went to court for the sentencing of Mike, the offender.

The judge asked if I would like to say anything.

I spoke for perhaps ten minutes, but I have no idea what I said.

The judge then asked Mike if he would like to say anything.

Against his attorney's advice, Mike began to speak.

Many years later, I remember his words as clearly as if they were spoken yesterday.

"I'm sorry I killed Scott Everett," he began. "I wish I could bring him back. Obviously I can't. These must sound like empty words to the Everetts, but I don't know what else to say. I'm sorry."

End of waiting

At that moment I felt as though God was prodding me to respond to those words.

"This is what I've asked you to wait for," God seemed to be saying.

I went home and pondered how I could respond. The state probably would not let me visit Mike, and I didn't want to. Perhaps I could write a letter — even that would be difficult.

I knew that if I waited until I felt like writing, the letter would never get written. It would have to be planned for a particular time.

The first anniversary of Scott's death was three-and-a-half weeks after the sentencing. I knew that date, July 26, was the date the letter would have to be written.

The letter

On the morning of the 26th I sat at my desk and began to write:

"Dear Mike,

It's 8 a.m. and it was exactly a year ago that I received a phone call telling me that Scott had been murdered."

I told Mike about Scott — his keen sense of humor, his relationship to our family — and of the pain I was feeling knowing that I would never hear him laugh again. I continued to describe my incomprehension that one individual could feel he had the right to end another person's life.

I then added, "Having said these things, I want to say also that I appreciated your words in the courtroom on July 1. You apologized for the pain that you caused my family and me. Someone said to me, 'That apology does not bring Scott back.' I answered, 'No, but it helps to

believe that Mike recognizes the pain we are going through.”

“I know also that I will not be able to move on with my life unless I can accept your apology, and, as hard as these words are to write, I forgive you.”

I then added some words about God’s love and forgiveness, and invited Mike to write back, but I added that if he did not want to respond, I would understand.

Healing begins

I dropped the letter in the mail and felt a slight lifting of the burden I had been carrying for a year. I don’t mean to imply that there was instant healing. God’s healing is more often a process that continues over a period of months, years or a lifetime.

Three weeks later, I received a reply. Mike thanked me for my letter and apologized for taking so long to respond (he had to get permission from the prison warden). He said the day he received my letter was when he could begin to sleep at night.

I later found out that he had not wanted to read my letter. He had taken it to his counselor who read it and handed it back to Mike, saying, “You’d better read this.”

After Mike finished reading, he had tears in his eyes. His counselor added, “Mike you’ve been forgiven by the father of the person you killed; now I think you ought to kneel beside your bunk tonight and ask God for forgiveness.”

Mike half-heartedly mumbled an assent, but didn’t know what to do; he had never prayed before.

However, that night he knelt and prayed, “God, forgive me.” He then heard a voice — “If you like your life now . . .”

Mike dove under the covers and then looked around, but everyone who could see him was asleep.

Ever since that experience, Mike has been growing into a realization of God’s presence as God finishes that sentence in Mike’s life.

The visit

A few more letters ensued, and then I received the letter that reason should have told me would come, but I was still unprepared for Mike’s request: “Would you come and visit me?”

I didn’t want to do that. To write Mike was one thing, but how could I face the person who killed Scott? I knew, however, if I was to complete the journey on which God had sent me, I had to do it.

Two months later, I finally found myself on a two-hour trip to the prison.

I was ushered into the prison where I was frisked as I had never been in the past.

As a pastor, I had visited in more than 50 correctional institutions in seven states, but on that day, I was not a pastor; I was a father.

When the search was ended, I was ushered into a private room where Mike and I could have a confidential visit.

Mike and I began with small talk, but quickly moved to the purpose of my visit. Within a short time, we were both comfortable talking about what God was doing in our lives.

At the end of the visit, we stood and started to shake hands, but instead, found ourselves embracing and crying.

Early release

Two more years of visits led Mike to ask, “What would you say if I told you I was thinking about going before the Parole Board to ask for an early release?”

After pondering for a minute, I replied, “Mike, you are not the same person who killed Scott. God has changed your life. I don’t believe there is any percentage in the state keeping you in prison any longer.”

Two months later, I was saying the same words before the Parole Board. On that day, Mike was the only person who received an early release. He was released at the beginning of June 1991 after serving 35 months.

Since his release, Mike has been working for a trucking firm in Connecticut. He was made a supervisor after a little more than a year on the job, and his boss describes him as “the best supervisor I’ve ever had.”


God blesses both our lives

Today Mike and I often speak at churches, universities and other venues about the change God has made in both of our lives.

Mike also has made a commitment to go anywhere at any time to help others avoid going down the path he traveled.

I celebrate what God has done in Mike’s life. But just as surely, I am grateful

that God in Christ has given me a new life as well.

When we forgive it is not only the person who is forgiven who receives God’s blessing; the person who forgives is blessed as well. 



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

The Rev. Walter H. Everett

Updated copies of historic World War II book given to veterans

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. —

Brighton Gardens, an assisted living center in Brentwood, Tenn., presented updated editions of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to 45 veterans during a Nov. 11 Veteran’s Day program.

Most of the veterans served in World War II when the book was first published.

A two-time bronze star winner, Winford (Win) Abney was among the recipients of the volume provided by



contributors to the *Strength for Service* fund. He received the honor for participating in battles in

Saipan, Iwo Jima and Tinian. He was one of three soldiers from his 24-man unit that survived all the battles.

In Tinian, where Abney served as chief section officer over 40 and 90 millimeter guns, he watched the Enola Gay take off on August 6, 1945. “At that time we had no idea that the bomber carried an atomic bomb or that its destination was Hiroshima,” said Abney. “We all watched because it was a huge plane.”

Abney served as a sergeant in the Army from 1942-1945 and he received two purple hearts. He was shot in the hand, and — in a second incident — he was wounded above the heart.

The veterans were told how a Boy Scout found a copy of his grandfather’s World War II copy of *Strength for Service* and arranged for reprinting the book as an Eagle Scout project. A total of 435,000 copies have been printed and most of them have been sent free to active service men and women by the General Commission on United Methodist Men (strengthforservice.org).

No future without forgiveness

by Thomas Porter

Peter asks Jesus, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus responds, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven (Matt. 18:21-22).

Peter thinks he is being generous. The Hebrew Bible and rabbinic teaching say forgive three times. Isn’t seven times greater?

But Jesus says to Peter, “You don’t get it. Forgiveness should be unlimited.”

In the following verses, Matthew records Jesus’ parable of a master who forgives a debtor who owes him a great amount of money. However, the forgiven debtor refuses to forgive a person who owes him a small sum. When the master finds out about this unforgiving action, he hands him over to jailers until he pays all that he is owed.

Jesus teaches us that if we do not forgive, we will not be able to experience forgiveness. This is not because forgiveness is not being offered by God, but because we do not have the heart to receive it. Our forgiving is critical to our ability to receive forgiveness.

As Walter Everett (see preceding article) discovered, not undertaking the journey to forgiveness involves a double injury — one imposed from the outside and the second imposed from the inside. We can get stuck in the anger and the bitterness. We may then do further harm to ourselves by substance abuse, workaholicism, or overeating. We may experience emotional ailments such as depression, apathy, anxiety, and inability to trust. We may also harm those closest to us through emotional distance and domestic abuse. We finally cause further harm to the one who harmed us as we

continue the cycle of woundedness, retribution and violence.

Elements of forgiveness

- For many, forgiveness is impossible. It is also unjust.
- Is this because of what we have been taught about forgiveness?
- Forgiveness is not about weakness; it is an act of great strength. Forgiveness is not denial of the wrongdoing, excusing the wrongdoing, or condoning the wrongdoing.
- Forgiveness is not giving up on the quest for justice.

Here are some concepts that help me understand what forgiveness is and, I hope, practice forgiveness:

- *Forgiveness is a journey.* There is no one script for everyone. Every journey is different. The journey takes time, and all of us must travel at our own pace. We need to forgive ourselves and we need friends on this journey.
- *Forgiveness is a choice.* Forgiveness cannot be coerced or manipulated. It is an act of the whole being — mind, heart, and body.
- *Forgiveness is a gift to ourselves.* Forgiveness releases us from anger, bitterness and the thrall of the offense. Repressed anger and hatred create emotions that make us sick. We can find this release even if the other person is not alive or available. This gift frees us from continuing to feel like a victim. In forgiving, we take control of our own lives. Forgiveness is a gift we offer the other person. Ideally, forgiveness emerges in response to an apology

and a readiness by the offender to make things right. It is, however, not dependent on this. Waiting for the other to do what is right keeps us under the offender's control. In Matthew 18, Jesus talks about the person who is harmed taking the initiative. Forgiveness is a gift to the other, a gift with the potential of opening the other up to do what is right

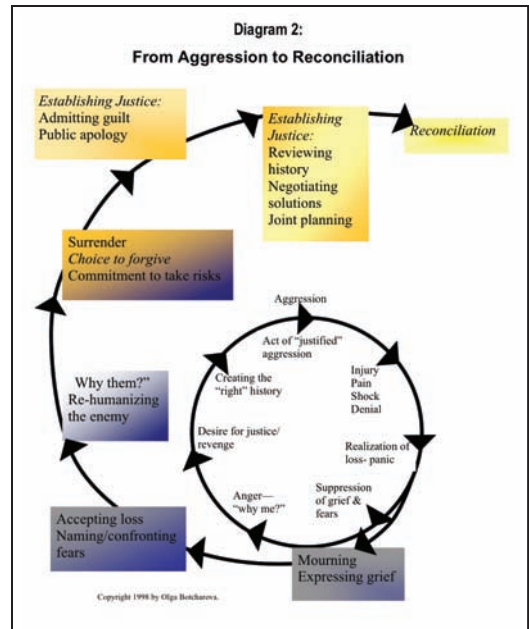
- *Forgiveness breaks us out of the cycle of violence, revenge and retribution.* In forgiveness, we release feelings of ill will and pursue a journey which leads to a different kind of justice that is restorative and not retributive, and one that includes accountability. Forgiveness opens the possibility of healing for all.
- *Forgiveness is the only way to reconciliation. Reconciliation does not happen without forgiveness, an act that begins the healing process.* While forgiveness happens in us and by us, reconciliation happens in relationship.

The journey of forgiveness

Olga Botcharova is a Russian psychologist who lived with the trauma of atrocities in Bosnia. She provides a visual model of the journey to forgiveness.

In her visual model (opposite), the inner circle represents the journey of retribution and violence. The outer journey is one of healing and reconciliation. Here is a brief summary of the four lessons about this journey:

Finding safety is important to breaking free from the cycle of retribution and violence. The person harmed should not be harmed again. This involves physical as well as



emotional safety. Sometimes people try to break out of the cycle of violence and retribution, while living in them. If you or your community cannot create such safety, the person harmed must find the type of inner strength that Viktor Frankl found in the midst of a concentration camp. This safety is ultimately found in God who says, "Do not fear; take courage, for I am with you."

Grieving over our experience and expressing our fears are essential to our healing and to the integration of the loss into our story. Forgiveness does not involve denial or suppression of our grief, fears, and anger over hurtful action. Our anger needs to be articulated and acknowledged by naming the injustices that have been done to us.

As seen in the Book of Lamentations and the Psalms, telling our story with all its emotions to people who care is essential. Our journey to healing becomes easier when our story and hurt are acknowledged by the one who harms us, but that may not always be possible. The hope is to integrate

the story into our larger narrative as we move toward re-storying our life. The harm cannot be undone, but over time it can be part of a larger narrative of the journey to forgiveness and even reconciliation.


Recognizing the other's story is key to rehumanizing the one who harmed us and to moving toward a decision to forgive. To continually ask the unanswerable questions of "Why me?" or "Why us?" keeps us stuck. These questions provoke anger at everything and everyone associated with the perpetrator. To restore the ability to think rationally, the question needs to be reframed to "Why them?" "Why did they do it, and why did they do it to us?" The reframing allows us to acknowledge that the perpetrator also has a story. This reframing is not about condoning what happened, but it does open up the possibility of understanding why we were harmed. It can even yield compassion.

Choosing to forgive is an act of the will primarily for your benefit, but also for the benefit of the other. Forgiveness involves risk. We are talking about engagement with someone who has done us harm. It involves the willingness to coexist. It best comes through engagement with the other. Ultimately, forgiveness is a decision we control, and only we can decide whether and when to forgive.

The craft of forgiveness

L. Gregory Jones, in his book *Embodying Forgiveness*, describes forgiveness as a craft that requires us to develop "specific habits and practices that seek to remember the past truthfully, to repair brokenness, to heal divisions, and to reconcile and renew relationships."

In recent years we saw the ability of the Amish to forgive the person who killed their youth at school. We are told that this happened in an unorganized spontaneous way; individuals began showing up at the home of the parents of the killer, who killed himself as well.

Forgiveness is a way of life for the Amish. As in South Africa, the way of forgiveness lies deep in their bones. As any skill, we need to work on this craft, and we will have plenty of opportunities to practice. As Bishop Desmond Tutu taught us, there is no future without forgiveness. 



The Rev. Thomas Porter is co-executive director of JUSTPEACE Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation. This article is adapted from The Spirit and Art of Conflict Transformation by Thomas W. Porter Jr. Copyright

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H U M O R

After the baptisms of his baby brother in church, Jason began crying on the way home.

His father asked him three times what was wrong.

Finally, the boy replied, "That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I want to stay with you guys."



Forgiveness is a Challenge

by Woodie W. White

Forgiveness is complicated and difficult; but it is not impossible.

All of us have had to deal with the issue. Some have found themselves offering forgiveness to others, and, on other occasions, we are recipients. Most of us have found ourselves in both places at one time or another.

Sometimes forgiveness is experienced in the context of a small personal misdeed or even when words were spoken that were not intended to hurt or offend. Forgiveness can then come easily.

But there are other instances when an act or deed is so horrific and devastating, that to expect forgiveness seems beyond reason and human capability.

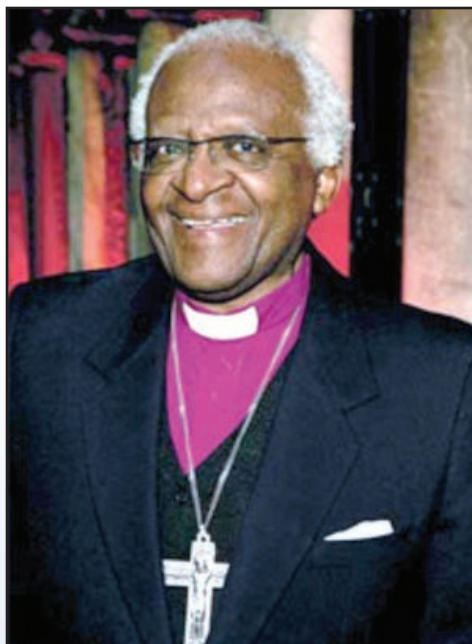
Corporate misdeeds and forgiveness

There is another dimension of forgiveness that is not personal but corporate. Here the wrong or misdeed committed is not just on an individual but on an entire group. That group may be defined by race, ethnicity, class, nation or political affiliation. Most of the conflicts in the world are group conflicts, so are the atrocities inflicted. These acts are perpetuated against others because of their group identity — not their individual deeds.

Here persons are abused, terrorized, marginalized, or persecuted because of their *being* and not always because of their *doing*. Thus, one is introduced to a cycle of misdeeds. Misdeeds become the response to misdeeds: hate to hate; violence to violence.

Breaking the cycle

Some years ago, Anglican Archbishop, Desmond Mpilo Tutu, authored *No Future Without Forgiveness*, a book describing



Bishop Desmond Tutu

his service as president of the All Africa Conference of Churches and chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established by the South African Parliament in 1995.

What he experienced moved him to conclude that there would have to be genuine forgiveness before blacks could move beyond past atrocities to a new future, no matter how difficult that might seem.

The bishop says that in South Africa forgiveness was especially difficult because most whites were not sorry for their misdeeds and did not seek and did not want forgiveness.

Bishop Tutu argues that contrition and confession cannot be preconditions for forgiveness.

"If the victim could forgive only when the culprit confessed, then the victim would

be locked into the culprit's whim, locked into victimhood, whatever her own attitude or intention," writes the bishop. "That would be palpably unjust."

Confession and forgiveness within the denomination

Some years ago, the United Methodist Church was asked to make a corporate confession for years of racism. This request was initiated by ethnic minority leaders and joined by whites that saw the rightness of such an act.

While I was not overly enthusiastic about ethnic minorities championing this cause, I saw the wisdom and potential benefit of such corporate and liturgical acts.

However, I was always clear that my forgiveness of past racism in the church and nation was not predicated upon acts of repentance or contrition (genuine or otherwise).

Benefits of forgiveness

Forgiveness is not only for the benefit others but for one's self.


Carrying old hurts, hatreds, grudges, and the desire for retribution is a burden for those who carry them

In many instances, the person who committed the offense has moved on and is not mindful of our feelings.

Some year ago, following my election as a bishop, I recalled an incident which

occurred when I was a young pastor. During a Sunday afternoon visit with a good friend, also a pastor, we found ourselves involved in a heated argument. He said something that I considered thoroughly racist. I challenged him and he resented the challenge. The dispute escalated. Harsh words were exchanged. I left his home angry and hurt. We never spoke to each other again!"

It was at the beginning of Lent, nearly 20 years later that I remembered the incident with remorse and regret. I wrote my former friend a note and asked for his forgiveness for the way I behaved that day, and the silence for the years that followed.

I had no idea how he felt upon receiving my note, but I know how I felt having sent it — better, much better! 



Woodie W. White is a retired bishop now serving as bishop in residence at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta. He served as the first top staff executive of the General Commission on Religion and Race prior to his 1984 election to the episcopacy. He was president of the Council of Bishops (1996-1997).

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but 70 times seven."

—Matthew 18:21-22

It's time to break the family curse

The new year is a good time to relive my past and address my family curse.

by Larry Malone

My inheritance

This story begins before I was born. Right now, I am in heaven. My future mom is the youngest child in her family. She is struggling in college, and has a binge drinking problem from our family curse. She has not married yet, and I have not been conceived. Later, God will knit me together in my mother's womb

Let me tell you about the family in which I will soon be born. My great grandpa was a mean drunk, and so were the men before him. He singled out my grandpa among many kids for special harsh treatment and abuse.

Grandpa grew up and became an alcoholic. Grandma told him to choose between the family and booze, so he stopped drinking. He started recovery, but his heart never healed from the curse. Now he is a dry drunk with a broken heart. His 37-year marriage ends this year.

The present

Now, let me tell you how the family curse continues in the present.

My uncle has a big father wound in his life that separated him from all the family. His marriage is ending, and my two girl cousins suffer emotionally. The curse passes on in my uncle's family as his wife carries burdens from her abusive childhood.

My aunt married an alcoholic, and they have two boys. Their marriage began with an agreement that he would not drink, but last week, after nearly five years, he hit the bottle. Overnight he became scary and potentially violent, so my aunt took my boy cousins to a safe house. They are scared and upset. My uncle has a family curse as well because he was a child of neglecting, abusive parents. Lots of families have this curse, and they sometimes marry others who have it.

I ask Jesus about the curse


All of my family members are Christians, so it is difficult to understand how this curse can continue in our family. I asked Jesus about it, and he told me all human fathers fail, but that our Father in Heaven never does. He said generational curses must be fought by family members who are brave and committed enough to come together in His name to oppose the powers of hell that sent the curse. I pray this will happen.

There is ONE master relationship key that unlocks the power to break the curse, and heal our family's hearts. Forgiveness unleashes a river of love that cannot be resisted or overcome by the enemy.

Forgiveness River headwaters are in Heaven. God is forgiving; we are forgiven — and none of us deserve it. Our challenge and opportunity is to let God's forgiving love pass through us to everyone else.

Forgiveness comes from God

Our family curse has caused wounds so great that we cannot forgive those who inflicted the harm.

The good news is that God knows that we can't do it by ourselves, but Christ will do it through us if we will let him. We receive forgiveness from God that we don't deserve; God asks that we allow that unmerited forgiveness to pass on to others who don't deserve it. Then we are set free to live and love in Christ's love and power. 



Larry Malone served as director of men's ministry for 13 years prior to his Dec. 31 retirement from the General Commission on UM Men.

A victim treats his mugger to dinner

Julio Diaz has a nightly routine. The 31-year-old social worker ends his hour-long subway commute to the Bronx one stop early so he can eat at his favorite diner.

One night, as Diaz stepped off the No. 6 train and onto a nearly empty platform, his evening took an unexpected turn.

He was walking toward the stairs when a teenage boy approached and pulled out a knife.

"He wants my money, so I give him my wallet and tell him, 'Here you go,'" Diaz says.

As the teen walks away, Diaz says, "Hey, wait a minute. You forgot something. If you're going to be robbing people for the rest of the night, you might as well take my coat to keep you warm."

The would-be robber looks at his victim — like what's going on here? He asks, "Why are you doing this?"

Diaz replies: "If you're willing to risk your freedom for a few dollars, then I guess you must really need the money. I mean, all I wanted to do was get dinner and if you want to join me ... hey, you're more than welcome."

Diaz and the teen go into the diner and sit in a booth.

The manager, dishwashers and waiters come by to say "hi."

"You know everybody here," says the kid. "Do you own this place?"

"No," replies Diaz. "I just eat here a lot."

"But you're even nice to the dishwasher," observes the teen.

"Well, haven't you been taught you should be nice to everybody?"

"Yea, but I didn't think people actually behaved that way," says the teen.

Diaz asks him what he wanted out of life. "He just had a sad face," Diaz says.

The teen couldn't answer — or he didn't want to.


When the bill arrives, Diaz tells the teen, "Look, I guess you're going to have to pay for this bill 'cause you have my money and I can't pay for this. So if you give me my wallet back, I'll gladly treat you."

The teen returns the wallet.

"I gave him \$20. I figure maybe it'll help him. I don't know," says Diaz.

Diaz says he asked for something in return — the teen's knife — "and he gave it to me."

Afterward, when Diaz tells his mother what happened, she said, "You're the type of man that if someone asked you for the time, you'd give them your watch."

"I figure if you treat people right, you can only hope that they treat you right. It's as simple as it gets in this complicated world," says Diaz. 



Produced for National Public Radio Morning Edition by Michael Garofalo.



Forgiveness: A Bible Study

by Delia Halverson

Purpose:

To grow in understanding of God's forgiveness and to recognize the need to forgive others and to be forgiven.

Scripture:

Matthew 7:1-5 and 18:21-22

Background:

Stories of God's forgiveness fill the Bible. The primary thread running through scripture is God's forgiveness, from Adam and Eve to Paul. God made a covenant, the people broke the covenant and God forgave. In forgiving God did not say, "That's OK, just continue as you have been doing." God said, "I know you can do better than that, so let's start all over again with a new covenant."

Even the laws of the Old Testament were set up as guides to help people live together in affirmative relationships and to live under God's guidance. When people placed the fulfillment of the laws above their relationship with God, the laws became a burden.

God made a covenant with the people each time, but the people kept turning away from God. Offering sacrifices became a way to ask for forgiveness but, by the time of the prophets, sacrifices had become lip service only. Relying on sacrifices became a convenient way to assuage one's guilt while still ignoring the poor and others who needed help.

Consider those who needed forgiveness:

Genesis 3:1-7

Genesis 4:1-8

Genesis 27:1-29

Genesis 37:12-28

Exodus 32:1-14

2 Samuel 11:1-27

Luke 7:36-50

Luke 15:11-32

Luke 19:1-10

John 8:1-11


Acts 9:1-19

Activity:

Draw pictures of several stones on a sheet of paper. On each stone list a hurt that someone has done to you or someone else that you have not totally forgiven.

Draw additional stones and write actions for which you need forgiveness.

Read John 8:1-11. Jesus doesn't say, "It doesn't matter that you sinned." He said, "You can do better, and I give you that chance." The woman already knew that she was a sinner and did not need to be told. Jesus gave her hope of becoming a saint.

Read Matthew 18:21-22 and Matthew 7:1-5. Pray for a forgiving heart. 

Delia Halverson is a Christian education consultant and author in Woodstock, Ga. This study was developed by Interpreter magazine.

The New Year is good time to bring closure to unresolved conflict

by *Walter Albritton*

Most of us struggle with unresolved conflict with other persons.

Truth be told, some of our disagreements are unsolvable. There are problems we simply cannot fix. However it is possible to bring closure — at least in our own minds — to some of the conflicts that create inner turmoil. The beginning of a new year is a good time to mull this over.

Sometimes we permit minor things to push our anger button. A driver cuts in front of us. A friend's subtle criticism hurts our feelings. Some fool makes us wait forever in line at the super market.

How do we put out this fire that rages within?

We use our brains.

We need to admit three things to ourselves:

- 1) Anger hurts us, not the person who is the object of our rage.
- 2) No one can make us angry unless we give them permission to do so.
- 3) We can choose to give up our anger and let it go.

Anger disrupts bodily functions.

Why would we allow our own attitudes to injure our liver or kidneys? Common sense tells us it is stupid to hurt ourselves with our own thoughts.

As a new year begins, we have a choice. We can choose to dispose of any lingering anger within us just as we do the garbage — throw it out! That is what anger is anyway — garbage. The longer we let it hang around, the worse it stinks.

Bitterness and resentment are kissing cousins of anger. They are like demons lurking in the darkness, waiting to hurt us. If we allow them to lodge in our hearts, they can rob us of our

joy and eventually destroy us. No one is immune to these villains. Like the flu, they can attack us and wound us.

So we need to guard carefully the door of our hearts. If a friend gets a promotion we thought we deserved, we must deal sternly with the resentment that pops up. We can tell ourselves that our turn will come later — or we can embrace the possibility that it may never come. We can congratulate our friend for his promotion. Doing so helps us master our resentment. It is living out that do-unto-others thing Jesus talked about.

Tension may develop if we insist that others live by our standards. Today's society is highly diverse — becoming more so every day. It is necessary to allow others the freedom to make choices that may be different from our own.

Some people like chicken; others like fish. Some folks like country music; others like opera. We can make ourselves miserable if we constantly insist that everybody eat chicken and like country music.

Hairstyles pose a dilemma for some people. Parents become embroiled with their teenagers about the length of hair. Some young people challenge the authority of their parents by demanding the freedom to make their own decisions about issues like music and hair style. To survive, parents have to learn to give and take rather than trying to exercise total control of a teenager's behavior.


This brings up an important principle for life. Both sanity and peace are soon lost if we choose to fight about every issue that comes up. We must

choose wisely those ditches in which we are willing to die. Obviously the length of a person's hair is not a ditch to die in. We can save our energy for moral issues that demand a fight to the finish. An automobile runs better if the radiator is flushed now and then. The human mind can benefit from a good flushing, too. There are attitudes, ideas, and dispositions that, like rust, can be detrimental to our mental health. Flush them out.

If we are willing, we can bring closure to some of the conflicts that keep our stomachs tied in knots.

Let's stop insisting on having our way about everything.

We are not always right. Let's forgive people and give them the freedom to disagree with us.

Such choices can give us a jump start on making 2011 a happy New Year! 



The Rev. Walter Albritton is pastor of congregational care at St. James UMC in Montgomery, Ala.

Thirty reasons men are never depressed

1. Your last name stays put.
2. The garage is all yours.
3. Wedding plans take care of themselves.
4. Chocolate is just another snack.
5. You can never be pregnant.
6. Car mechanics tell you the truth.
7. You don't have to stop and think of which way to turn a nut on a bolt.
8. Same work, more pay.
9. Wrinkles add character.
10. People never stare at your chest when you're talking to them.
11. New shoes don't cut, blister, or mangle your feet.
12. One mood all the time.
13. Phone conversations are over in 30 seconds.
14. You know stuff about tanks and engines.
15. A five-day holiday requires only one suitcase.
16. You can open all your own jars.
17. You get extra credit for the slightest act of thoughtfulness.
18. Your underwear is \$9.50 for a three-pack.
19. Three pairs of shoes are more than enough.
20. You never have strap problems in public.
21. You are unable to see wrinkles in your clothes.
22. Everything on your face stays its original color.
23. The same hairstyle lasts for years, maybe decades.
24. You only have to shave your face and neck.
25. You can play with toys all your life.
26. One wallet and one pair of shoes — one color for all seasons.
27. You can wear shorts no matter how your legs look.
28. You can do your nails with a pocket knife.
29. You have freedom of choice concerning growing a moustache.
30. You can do Christmas shopping for 24 relatives on the 24th of December in 24 minutes.

No wonder men are happier.

Percentage of people living in poverty is increasing

A September, 2010, report from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that 14.3 percent of the population in 2009 lived in poverty, up from 13.2 percent the previous year.

According to the census, 43.6 million people lived below the federal poverty level in 2009, up from 39.8 million in 2008. The report set the threshold of poverty at an annual income of \$21,954 for a family of four.

This is the third consecutive year the poverty rate has increased.

The number of people in poverty is the largest in the 51 years for which poverty estimates are available, according to the report. Families of all kinds have lost in this economy.

UM Men provide aid

Individual groups of UM Men are repairing homes, sponsoring food drives, and helping families meet expenses.

According to reports submitted by local churches, UM Men gave \$14 million to various mission causes in 2008.

UM Men also host Society of St. Andrew potato drops, glean fields for wasted produce, and provide financial support for the Big Island, Va.-based agency. During the last 12 years, UM Men have contributed \$2.3 million to Meals for Millions to provide 176.8 million meal servings.

Last October, men gathered at Brentwood (Tenn.) UMC to bag a tractor-trailer of potatoes for local food banks. Previously, men of Jerrettown (Pa.) bagged 45,000 pounds of potatoes for local food banks.

On the third Saturday of every month, men of La Vernia (Texas) UMC serve a meal and distribute clothing to people living under the Commerce Street Bridge.

In San Antonio, men of St. Paul UMC helped purchase a trailer to transport food to the "Feed my Lamb" community food bank.

Men of Sparta (Mich.) UMC provide

monthly free breakfasts for anyone in the area.

Men of Camp Ground UMC in Paragould, Ark., plowed the ground of an abandoned softball field behind the church in order to plant vegetables for underserved people in Greene County.

For seven years, members of the "Virginia Muslim Coalition have come to Bon Air UMC in Richmond, Va., to spend the night and feed the homeless.

More work to be done

Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men, says these few examples of people who take Matthew 25 seriously continue a tradition begun by John Wesley. However, he notes




The Society of St. Andrew sponsors potato drops where a tractor-trailer load of potatoes is delivered to a church parking lot. Volunteers bag the potatoes and deliver them to local hunger-relief agencies.

that many churches have done little in the face of increasing numbers of people living below the federal poverty level.

"The revival that we now refer to as the Wesleyan Movement began when

Methodist Societies were intentional in their ministry with the poor," said Hanke. "Today, we look like a church that Wesley would want to reform . . . again. My prayer is that we rediscover this vital part of our mission and intentionally and joyfully serve with the least, last and lost."

Hanke says churches must step up their ministries with the poor and, at the same time, work to reform structures and systems that limit the poor from receiving proper health care, education, training, and employment opportunities. 

‘Share the game: Share your faith’

Some 350 men and youth attend Duke football game

by H. William Green

DURHAM, N.C. —

UM Men of the North Carolina Annual Conference discovered God can do amazing things after they invited young people to the Sept. 25 Duke vs. Army football game at Wallace Wade Stadium.

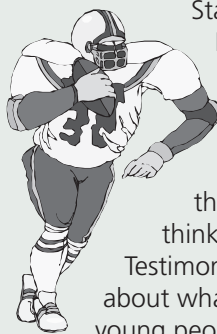
Under the theme “Share the Game: Share Your Faith,” more than 350 men and youth attended a worship service prior to the game. Recording artist, Buddy West, provided the music and Chad Goss, former “walk on” football player at Alabama, shared his testimony. Many youth came forward to accept Jesus as their savior and several men rededicated their lives to Christ.



Chad Goss, former University of Alabama football player, asks men and youth attending a Sept. 25 worship service at Asbury UMC in Durham, N.C., to raise their hands to symbolize their surrender to God’s Kingdom.

Prior to the game, the youth were escorted on the field to meet the Duke cheerleaders and mascot. During the game, young people used food vouchers at concession stands; tickets and vouchers were paid for by local UM Men fellowships.

Following the game, youth were given a tour of Cameron Indoor Stadium, home of the 2010 NCAA national basketball champions.




Many of the youth had never been on a university campus; the day inspired several to think about going to college.

Testimonies are still being heard about what the day meant to these young people.

What made the day such a success? Tom Starnes, president of N.C. Conference UM Men, said, “We had a worthy mission and purpose — to impact the lives of youth with the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

In order to reach young people beyond their local churches, the men invited youth from Methodist Home for Children, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, and Big Brothers-Big Sisters.

John Hall and Allen Shaver, men’s ministry specialists, were part of the planning team. They were joined by Tom Starnes, Ricky Hines, and me.

UM Men who want to plan a similar event may contact Tom Starnes for information (tstarnes@myginc.com). 



The Rev. H. William Green is associate pastor of First UMC, Cary, N.C. He became the model for the men’s ministry specialist program and was the

recipient of the G. Ross Freeman 2010 Quadrennial Leadership Award.

UM Men urged to 'lighten the burden' of persons affected by HIV/AIDS

DALLAS, Texas — **U**M Men are encouraged to "lighten the burden" of men and women infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Joe Boatman, president of UM Men in the Central Texas Annual Conference, was one of the 170 participants in "Lighten the Burden III," the third international AIDS conference held Oct. 14-16 in Dallas.

The stigma

"One of the problems highlighted by the conference was the stigma issue in both the U.S. and other parts of the world," said Boatman.

To illustrate the reluctance of churches to accept persons affected by HIV/AIDS, Minerva G. Carcaño, bishop of the Phoenix Area, told the assembly about a New Mexico woman who after years of service stopped coming to church. After visiting the woman, Bishop Carcaño found out that the woman's grandson was dying with HIV/AIDS.

"I love my church, but I know [church members]. I know what they think of him, although they never met him," she told the bishop.

"The bishop asked us the same question she was asked by friends of the woman's son who eventually lost his life to HIV/AIDS: 'Do you think the church will ever accept us?'" reported Boatman. "

Need for education

Many churches accept that HIV/AIDS exists in places like Sub-Saharan Africa, but are not willing to see or accept



There are more than 33 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, and 2.5 million new people are infected each year. Women living in sub-Saharan Africa represent about half of those affected globally. In 2007 more than 2 million people died from HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS in their local church communities.

"We need to provide age-appropriate sex education," said Boatman. "Many people think we have developed a cure for AIDS. We have developed drugs to help people live longer, but there is no cure, and a lot of people are not using any protection so the rate of infection is now the same as it was in the 1980s."

The Rev. Dr. Donald E. Messer, executive director of the Center for the Church and Global AIDS and chair of the UM Global AIDS Fund Committee, is encouraging United Methodists to participate in "20/20: Visioning an AIDS-Free World." The financial campaign encourages every United Methodist to commit \$20 a year until the year 2020 to support global HIV/AIDS projects. He hopes the campaign will change the HIV lens of the church.

About Lighten The Burden III


The purpose of Lighten the Burden III is to help create an AIDS-free world through ACTION—

advocacy, combating HIV, training, increasing awareness, overcoming apathy, and nurturing a Christ-centered and church-oriented global health initiative. The conference offered participants practical ways to get involved in HIV/AIDS education, advocacy, prevention, and awareness, as well as mobilize and influence their communities through action.

United Methodist Global AIDS Fund

From January to September, 2010, the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund approved over \$488,000 to fund 40 projects in 20 countries around the world. Since 2005, the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund has supported 175 AIDS-related projects in 37 countries throughout Asia, Latin American, the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa. The fund, established at the 2004 General Conference, is helping to reduce the spread of this deadly disease through prevention, education, counseling and community outreach programs.

The role of the church

"What is the role of the church?" asked Boatman. "Are we going to sit on our hands or are we going to be the hands of Christ in the world?" He encourages UM Men to support the UM Global AIDS Fund, UMCOR Advance No.982345. 

Why we need a ministry to men

by Dale Tedder

Once served a church that had the sweetest group of widows who would sit in the same section of the sanctuary during worship. These women were a source of encouragement and fellowship to one another. Very often, after worship, they would have lunch together. They were inseparable. I was profoundly grateful that they had one another.

I was, however, shocked when I eventually learned that each one of these women was married. They weren't widows at all. The truth was that their husbands would have nothing at all to do with the church.

Over the last 18 years of ministry I have seen the need for the church's ministry to men. And I've seen a lot of versions of what's called, "men's ministry" as an effort to meet those needs. Among these efforts are activities such as:

- A once-a-month Saturday morning pancake breakfast
- A once-a-month Monday evening spaghetti dinner
- Occasional service projects on the church property

To be sure, there is a place for pancakes, spaghetti, service projects, campouts, singing Kumbaya, going to sporting events, and the rest. But none of those can or should take the place of gathering together each week for the intentional discipling purpose of growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Iron John

Some of you will remember a secular men's movement in the late 1980s called Iron John. It was all about

men finding their "inner warrior" and letting him out. Men would go into the woods, beat drums, get in touch with their inner something-or-other, and cry around a campfire.

Well, there are a lot of men's ministries today doing a baptized version of that. It's sexy. It's edgy. It's probably fun. I mean, after all, most men love Braveheart, Band of Brothers, Lord of the Rings, and Narnia. I know I really love that stuff!

But every time I read about another Christianized version of Iron John, I can't help but think of updated words of Saint Paul: .1 Corinthians 13:11

Gimmicks, fads and entertainment in men's ministry appeal to some men's desire to remain in adolescence, but they will not produce disciples of Jesus Christ.

Hard work

The process of becoming a genuine and faithful disciple of Jesus Christ is tough. It takes hard work. It doesn't happen over night. You can't manipulate it. It doesn't happen (usually) from a neatly wrapped program. It's a day-in and day-out pursuit of Christ, through his Word and prayer, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in a relational context.

While I am all for Bible studies and small groups for both genders, I think there must be a place for men to gather with other men, to study God's Word and pray, in a context of accountability and encouragement.

Let's face it: How many men do you know who would be excited talking about lusting after another woman in the presence of their wives or other

women? Or how many men would want to share how they struggle with pornography with other women in the room?

Men are the problem . . . and the solution

We need a ministry aimed at men because, very often, men are the problem. But they are also the solution.

Many, if not most, of our cultural problems — divorce, abortion, juvenile crime, and fatherlessness — can be traced back to the failure of men.

According to Pat Morley, chief executive of Man in the Mirror ministries:

- Every third child is born out of wedlock.
- 24 million kids don't live with their biological fathers.
- Half of all marriages end in divorce.
- Only a third of all children in America will live with both of their biological parents through the age of eighteen.
- Half of all children in broken homes have not seen their father in over a year.
- Children who come from fatherless homes are five times more likely to live in poverty, have emotional problems, and repeat a grade.

We can blow by these statistics or we can consider what they mean for our country and our churches. There must be something systemically wrong with a culture that allows these things to happen.

These symptoms are the result of deep systemic issues. Treating symptoms is


necessary and good, but you can't cure a disease by treating the symptoms.

The only way to solve systemic problems is with systemic solutions.

The final goal

The goal of ministry to men is not primarily about producing morally improved men. It's not primarily about warm-fuzzy experiences; it's not about emotional or psychological cathartic breakthroughs drenched in tears.

Each of those things may happen, but that's not why men should gather. Instead, the purpose of ministry to men is about the Gospel of Jesus Christ transforming sinful men into redeemed children of their heavenly Father who want to become like Christ. They will want to know him better, love him more, and follow him more closely.

UM Men will still battle sin, but they will do so through a fellowship of like-minded men, who love, care for, encourage, pray for, and study God's Word with one another. 



The Rev. Dale Tedder is a pastor at Southside UMC in Jacksonville, Fla. This article is an adaptation of four entries from his blog (<http://daletedder.wordpress.com/2010/08/11/ministry-to-men-some-reflections>)



Across the Nation

SWANSBORO, N.C. —

Men present five scholarships

Men of Swansboro UMC presented \$500 college scholarships to Colleen Cummings, Corey Crawford, Sarah Feutz, Jordan Barham, and Max Harlacher.



L to R: Colleen Cummings, Corey Crawford, and Sarah Feutz each received \$500 college scholarships from men of Swansboro UMC. Jordan Barham and Max Harlacher were on a mission trip and unable to attend the awards presentation.

COLUMBIA, Mo. —

Men raise funds for Habitat

UM Men of Community UMC raised funds for Habitat homes during a summer barbecue featuring yummy food, a band and great fellowship.

ANNAPOLIS, Md. —

UM Men sponsor car show and picnic

UM Men of Calvary UMC wanted to reach people in their community, so two years ago, Rodger Findiesen, lay leader of the church, asked Dave Born, founder of the Maryland Ferrari Club, if he would help the group sponsor a car show. Located on a main road into Annapolis, Calvary had the perfect location to attract people. In August 2009, the men sponsored a show with 35 cars. Food sales raised \$500 for a Boy Scout troop.



The Calvary car show and picnic included an inflatable slide for children.

The following year, the men promoted the car show and picnic with a float in the Annapolis 4th of July parade. They won the “Most Patriotic Vehicle” award.

In August, 2010, some 400 people attended the free show and the men served 300 meals. The event included a Red Cross bloodmobile, two fire department trucks, a moon bounce, a model train display, face painting, hamburgers, and desserts. Leftover food was taken to homeless people and the Light House Shelter.

JARRETSVILLE, Md. —

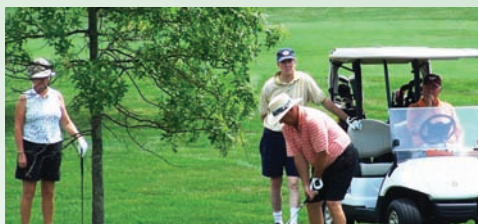
Scout builds award-winning playground in Russia

Alex Griffith, a member of Boy Scout Troop 809 chartered to Jarrettsville UMC, received the Glenn and Melinda Adams National Eagle Scout Service Project of the Year Award for raising \$63,000 and enlisting 634 volunteers from 23 states to build a playground in Krasnoyarsk, Russia. Alex received \$2,500 for his future schooling or to attend a national scouting event.

DRAPER, Va. —

Golf tournament helps send 400 kids to camp

Twenty-six four-person teams in a golf tournament at Draper Valley Golf Club raised \$8,600 to help young people attend Camp Dickenson, one of the four UM camps in the Virginia Conference. B.W. Hill, Kenny Collins, Jeff Wolfe, Doug Mabry shot a whopping 16 under par in a captain’s-choice tournament to



A foursome participates in the 15th annual golf tournament for Camp Dickenson scholarships. Virginia Conference UM Men event raised \$8,600 for camp scholarships.

garner bragging rights and the opportunity to send 400 young people to the camp in Fries, Va. No one claimed the \$10,000 hole-in-one award.

ANDALUSIA, Ala.—

UM Men present historic book to public servants

UM Men of First UMC presented *Strength for Service* books of daily devotions to 65 fire fighters and police officers.

KENSINGTON, Md. —

Pancakes and sausage pay for buses and mission trips

Forty years ago, the Rev. Charles Kirkley, pastor of St. Paul’s UMC, asked for a bus. Jim Hobbs, president of UM Men, decided it could be financed by pancakes and sausage. Scrambled eggs came later.

In 1970, UM Men put together a monthly community pancake breakfast. Two years and 20 breakfasts later, they had enough money to buy a 1962 Chevrolet bus.

Since people kept coming back, the men kept serving the all-you-can eat breakfasts to some 150 guests on the first Saturday of each month except July and August. Pancake sales purchased two buses, a van, and nearly \$35,000 for scholarships, mission trips, and charities, according to UM Men Treasurer Jerry Watkins.

ALBANY, Texas —

Men aid elderly widow, provide 4,000 pounds of food



UM Men of First UMC in Albany helped an elderly widow and her physically challenged son by clearing storm damage from their yard. The men also trimmed trees and shrubs, and they now check on them periodically.

Noting several families were without funds for food, the men convinced a potato company and a company dealing in black-eyed peas to contribute produce.

The Rev. Steve Ulrey, pastor of First UMC and a member of UM Men, picked up the food, and UM Men sacked the peas. Several families received 50-pound bags of potatoes and 20-pound sacks of peas.

DEMOPOLIS, Ala. —

Churches feed high school football team

Tom Causey, coach of the Demopolis High School football team, takes his team to a different church for dinner every Thursday night before a Friday game. "If a kid doesn't have a church home, we carry them to several different church homes, and maybe we can find a home for him," said Causey. "You'll hear kids say, 'We're going to my church, and we're going to eat this and this,'" he said. "Last week, we went to the First UMC, and that's the church I attend. I told them, 'We're

going in there, and we're going to do some singing!'"

EARLVILLE, Ill.—

Fifty-four years of service



The UM Men organization of Earlville UMC was first chartered in 1956 and they have tackled 48 projects around the church over the years. We're not talking about minor repairs; we're talking backhoe-, tractor-, jackhammer-, dump truck-, cement mixer- and crane-lift projects.

CORNELIUS, N.C. —

Conference Men establish partnership with Men in Balance

Henry (Hank) Dozier, president of Western North Carolina UM Men, says the Men-in-Balance curriculum is available to UM Men's fellowships in the conference. The curriculum enables small groups to discuss fatherhood, career, marriage, and meaning in life.

BENTON, La.—

Men host monthly garage sale

Men of Benton (La.) UMC host a monthly garage sale at a storage facility owned by UM Men President Rob Stinson. They sell furniture, bedding, washers, dryers and other large items donated by church members. Proceeds from the garage sale and a sale at a summer barbecue support the Methodist Children's Home and other projects.

The men also ask members to place food donations in a barrel at the entrance of the Family Life Center to help feed the hungry.

The group meets for breakfast on the third Sunday of each month to discuss upcoming events and fundraisers.

TEXARKANA, Texas —

Dinner theater raises funds for church pavilion



UM Men of Williams UMC sponsored a fast-moving humorous dinner theater to raise funds for a new pavilion to be built in the back of the church. The men said they will not borrow funds for the construction; the pavilion will be finished on a pay-as-you-go basis.

THE WOODLANDS, Texas—

Geezer Squad' builds wheel chair ramp

Six members of the "Geezer Squad" of The Woodlands UMC spent eight hours replacing the stairs to the trailer of Lucile Milo and building a ramp for her daughter. They returned to build a cover over the small porch.

MURPHYSBORO, Ill. —

Men build shelter

UM Men of Murphysboro UMC built a shed for Scout troops, Sunday school classes and neighbors. The men raised most of the funds with some contributions from the church.



SPIRO, Okla.—

Men flip pancakes

Men of Spiro UMC flipped pancakes while the women sold baked goods, and young people held a yard sale. Dennis Peterson, president of UM Men, said proceeds from the pancake sales supported their Scout troop and a local food pantry. "It was a no-diets-allowed morning," said Peterson.

ANNAPOLIS, Md.—

Eleven churches celebrate 225 years of Methodism

Members of 11 churches gathered at Calvary UMC to celebrate 225 years of Methodism in Annapolis. John Wesley UMC was founded in 1875, the same year as nearby Mount Moriah African Methodist Episcopal Church.

During the fall event, children played on the church's playground while, in a large tented area, people from different churches ate picnic fare together. The Annapolis Drum and Bugle Corps performed while a duo sang folk songs.

Inside, a health-and-wellness fair included speeches by a physician, and county officials.

Larry Thompson, a Calvary member and historian, staffed a canopied booth where the history of several local Methodist churches was outlined on colorful posters.

XENIA, Ohio —

UM man volunteers 7,000 hours to convert hotel to homeless shelter

Don Schneider, a member of UM Men of Aley UMC in Dayton, volunteered 7,000 hours to convert an old hotel into a homeless shelter, now named "The Schneider House." Other UM Men from various churches also volunteered a total of 23,000 hours.

Robert T. Montgomery, founder of Montgomery Insurance and Investments, donated the building, and received a life membership in UM Men. His sons, Brad and Eric, continue to operate the family business. All members of the Montgomery family are members of Faith Community UMC in Xenia.

WEST COLUMBIA, S.C. —

Men sell 140,000 pounds of pork in 40 years



In 1971, men of Mt. Hebron UMC held a barbecue to raise money for mission projects and scholarships. The men sold tickets to church members and barbecued about 1,300 pounds of pork that first year.

Some 1,200 plates were prepared at the 40th annual barbecue held last October. In addition, almost 1,000 pounds of chopped pork, 700 pints of hash and 550 chicken halves were sold in about five hours. The sale netted about \$20,000.

A total of \$250,000 has been raised for mission projects and scholarships over the 40-year history of the annual event.

HACKETTSTOWN, N.J. —

UM Men help fund memorial

Men of Trinity UMC provided funds to Matthew Williams, a member of church sponsored BSA Troop 416, who built a memorial honoring those who died serving their country. The memorial includes three poles bearing the flags of the United States, the State of New Jersey, and POW/MIA. William's Eagle Scout project includes personalized paving stones, two benches, land

scaping and an engraved plaque. "This project was the hardest thing I ever did in my life," said Matthew. "It's something I'll never forget."

ETTERS, Pa. —

Nothing holds back quadruple amputee

Michael Brame, 14, a member of a Scout troop chartered by Fishing Creek Salem UMC in Etters, Pa., was 9-years old when he was tripped at a soccer practice. What appeared to be a minor mishap turned into sepsis, a severe infection in which bacteria overwhelms the bloodstream.

In order to save his life, surgeons amputated both legs below the knee along with his right hand and four fingers of his left hand. "Nothing holds me back, though," said the Scout.

Michael is the only Scout amputee to complete a two-mile swim and is only a project away from the rank of Eagle.

NEVADA, Ohio —

Church establishes free clothing store

As parents of four children, the Rev. Matthew Garrabrant and his wife, Angela, know the cost of clothing. They established a free clothing closet in the balcony of their Nevada UMC. The balcony had plenty of space, but the clothing bank was open only a few hours each week.

Dave Mooney, a church member, said the church could use one of his downtown buildings if the congregation would pay the utilities. That was the beginning of the Guiding Grace Clothing Closet. The closet provides free shoes, coats, maternity items, and clothes for children and adults. Donations help pay utility bills.



Michael Brame, a quadruple amputee, rides a zip line at the National Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill, Va.

LIVONIA, Mich.—

Twelve-year-old leads potato drop

Alex Fadoir, 12, recruited 30 volunteers to help distribute 45,000 pounds of potatoes from the parking lot of Newburg UMC in Livonia. Volunteers came from Newburg UMC, UM Men of Detroit West District, St. James UMC in Westland, and a Boy Scout troop where Alex is a member.

FAIRFAX, Va.—

Survivor of Haiti earthquake meets rescuers

On Jan. 12, Dr. James Gulley, 64, was buried alive under the wreckage of Hotel Montana in Port-au-Prince. He was in Haiti as part of a General Board of Global Ministries team along with the Rev.



Hotel Montana lies in ruins following the Jan. 12 earthquake. A UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

Sam Dixon and the Rev. Clint Rabb. Fifty-five hours later, Gulley was discovered alive by a rescue team that included members of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue squad.

Last October, Gulley traveled to Fairfax UMC where he reunited with William Thurston and William Moreland, two of his rescuers. Dixon and Rabb did not survive.

COLUMBIA, S.C. —

Men raise \$900 for Haiti

UM Men of Ashland UMC in Columbia donated \$900 to the UM Committee on Relief to help Haitians rebuild following the devastating 7.0 earthquake. Funds were raised by the annual sale of Vidalia onions.

SULPHUR, La.—

Men give \$1,000 to Meals for Millions

UM Men of Henning UMC raised \$1,000 for the Meals for Millions program of the Society of St. Andrew. Michael Granger, president of Henning UM Men, presented the check to Joe Kelley of the Louisiana Conference UM Men. Kelley sent the money to the society.



Joe Kelley (right) congratulates Michael Granger, president of UM Men of Henning UMC, for raising \$1,000 to feed hungry people across the nation.

WAYNESVILLE, Md. —

Seven Scouts receive God and Country Awards

Seven Scouts in Troop 202 received God and Country Awards sponsored by Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (P.R.A.Y.). Three boys received God and Life Awards; three received God and Church Awards, and one received the God and Family Award. Classes were taught by Joe Bautista, Bill Westfall and Dan Dillon. The Rev. Bill O'Neal is the pastor. The troop received a Shepherd Church Charter Recognition from the General Commission on UM Men.

MOBILE, Ala.—

Church offers full slate of recreation activities

Christ UMC offers recreation facilities and seasonal sports leagues—in the autumn it's soccer; winter—basketball; spring—baseball; and summer—flag football. Cheerleading is offered in the summer and winter.

School-age students are divided by grade, and all sports except baseball are co-ed. The church's detailed website offers sign-up information and electronic copies of brochures.

SCOTTSBORO, Ala. —

Church hosts museum about innocent boys accused of rape

Joyce Chapel UMC in Scottsboro hosts



Scottsboro-Jackson County Multi-Cultural Heritage Foundation members Shelia Washington and Garry Morgan look at one of the photographs that will be displayed in the Scottsboro Boys Museum located in the Joyce Chapel UMC in Scottsboro. An AP photo.

a museum about nine young black men who went on trial in Scottsboro in 1931 on trumped-up charges of raping two white women. The defendants became known as "The Scottsboro Boys," and the charges were revealed as a sham. The museum received a \$5,000 grant from the Na-

tional Trust for Historic Preservation.

BRYAN, Texas —

Pastors honored at fall dinner

Men of First UMC, Bryan, Texas, honored the Rev. Matt Idom, senior pastor, along with associate and retired pastors, at a September dinner featuring a speech



Bryan Moorhead (left) and Mike Beal barbecue chicken for pastors' appreciation dinner.

by the Rev. Joe Fort, superintendent of the West District. Some 150 guests participated in domino-, washer- and horse-shoe-tournaments. Children were invited to ride hand-crank Personal Energy Transportation (P.E.T.) units that would later be sent to Third World persons unable to walk.

"It took a lot of planning, a great location, many volunteers and a little bit of luck but the event was fun and well received by clergy, staff, and members," said Don Montgomery, president of UM Men at the Bryan church.

COLUMBIA, Md.—

Men operate conference prayer center

Sixteen UM men of Baltimore-Washington Conference receive some 35 prayer requests a day. Additional groups of UM Men also operate remote prayer lines and serve in covenant prayer groups. Established in 2003, the center is led by Harrison Johnson, conference prayer advocate. The Prayer Line can be reached by calling (800) 936-6893.

LAMAR, Mo.—

Church sponsors bluegrass jam

Men of Oakton UMC sponsor a monthly bluegrass jam. Warren Underwood, founder of the program, said UM Men invite musicians from the community to jam together on bluegrass and gospel tunes.



For the past three years, once a month from April until October seven to ten bluegrass musicians play bluegrass music together. Underwood, who plays banjo and guitar, said they use a songbook as a basis but visiting musicians also play whatever comes to mind. One month a 7-year-old will play a fiddle the following month a 70-year-old will play a banjo.

BALTIMORE CITY, Md.—

Conference men restore 140-year-old cemetery

Sherman Harris, president of UM Men, and C. Anthony Hunt, superintendent of the Baltimore-Hartford District, led a 50-member team to restore a 140-year-old African-American cemetery belonging to Sharp Street Memorial UMC.

The effort to clear the 34-acre Mount Auburn Cemetery of vines and vegetation began in 2008 and was completed in 2010. The restoration effort was part of the Baltimore-Washington Conference "Hope for the City" initiative



The Mount Auburn Cemetery is the site of the grave of Joe Gans, the first black American to win a world boxing title. Gans held the lightweight boxing title from 1902 to 1904 and 1906 to 1908.

HILLSBORO, Texas —

Church bakes 3,400 cookies for prison ministry

Members of First UMC in Hillsboro baked 286 dozen cookies in the church kitchen to support Kairos Prison Ministries. Three

members took the cookies to the prison and participated in the weekend experience.



ELLIJAY, Ga. —

Men glean 8,000 pounds of apples

On October 2, 2010, some 35 UMs gleaned over 8,000 pounds of apples at Panorama Orchards in Ellijay. Since there were still 10,000 pounds of apples remaining, North Georgia UM Men scheduled a second gleaning on Oct. 16. All apples were given to area food banks.

CHESTERTON, Ind.—

Men collect 400 pounds of food for food pantries

In seven weeks, UM Men of Chesterton UMC collected 400 pounds of excess produce from family gardens and gave it to local food pantries and a once-a-week free-meal program operated by the church. Donations included tomatoes, beans, corn, potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, squash, peppers, and pears.



After harvesting food from local gardens, Chesterton men prepare to take the food to a food bank (left to right): David Samuelson, Warren Canright, George Price, Phil Burke and Dick Maxey.

SAN JOSE, Calif.—

Troop celebrates 50 years of activities, rebuilds shed

Cambrian Park UMC celebrated its 50-year relationship with Boy Scout Troop 373 during a September barbecue.

The 45-member troop takes annual trips to Shaver Lake in the Sierra National Forest. They have also hiked in Yosemite, Big Basin Redwoods State Park and Henry Coe State Park. In August, they took a 50-mile backpacking trip to Marin's Lost Coast.

Stephen Thomas, troop committee chair, said Scouts faced a challenge about three years ago when a fire destroyed their shed and camping equipment. The troop rebuilt the shed and purchased new equipment. Ted Krainick, a scouting ministry specialist, presented the church with a Good Shepherd Charter Recognition.

WINTER GARDEN, Fla. —

Troop produces 32 Eagle Scouts



First UMC of Winter Garden has chartered Scout Troop 210 for 71 years, and in the last eight years, the troop has produced 32 Eagle Scouts. Many of the Eagle projects improved the church's building and grounds. Last year, the troop marked the 100-year anniversary of the national organization.

GENEVA, N.Y. —

Men of Upper New York Conference glean fields



Men in the newly formed Upper New York Annual Conference are getting acquainted with one another. One of their first outings was gleaning the fields of Cliff Kuhn's farm. The men sent corn, squash and pumpkins to the Rochester Food Bank.

REMINGTON, Ind. —

Fifty volunteers clear timber, pick up litter, deliver food

Some 50 members of Remington UMC spent a September Saturday delivering food to 80 families, picking up litter, removing 1,400 timbers from a city park, and staining picnic tables. "Projects were completed, but most importantly we were impacted and—in some instances—changed in the process," said Jim Stringfellow, president of Remington UM Men.

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. —

Food banks receive 21 tons of potatoes

Last October, UM Men of Tennessee Conference and the *For Men Only* ministry of Brentwood UMC, loaded 42,000 pounds of potatoes in trucks, trailers and vans bound



for 28 food banks. Vehicles pulled up every 15 minutes and 60 volunteers formed bucket brigades to load them.

CLINTON, Miss. —

Chet Dillard inducted into John Wesley Society

W.O. (Chet) Dillard, a two-term president of Mississippi Conference UM Men, was inducted into the John Wesley Society during a session of the Mississippi Annual Conference. Dillard served as a district attorney and later as a district judge. He also served on the Complaint Tribunal for the Mississippi Supreme Court for cases brought against attorneys. The dedicated churchman served as conference scouting coordinator and founder of an endowment fund for ministerial students. He is the author of three books.

ARLINGTON, Tenn. —
Boy Scouts pack 111 'blessings bags'



Boy Scouts of Troop 452, chartered by Arlington UMC, packed 111 "Blessings Bags" for children at the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home in Bartlett, Tenn. The bags were filled with after-school snacks and juice boxes. The project fulfilled a requirement of the God and Church program of Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY).

An Arlington UMC Cub Scout troop joined the Boy Scout troop to collect 90 cell phones for ReCellar, an agency that provides one-hour of free talk time for members of the Armed Forces for each phone donated. In the previous year, Scouts collected 25 phones.

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.—
Venture crew focuses on music

A Venture Crew at Cumberland UMC focuses on contemporary Christian, upbeat gospel music.

The group was begun by George Morrell, a scouting ministry specialist. "I could not believe how many youth had an interest in music," said Morrell. "Cumberland UMC has welcomed the crew with open arms and support. They have given us a fantastic room with a lock to secure instruments and the choir director wants to meet with them."

PASADENA, Md. —
Six churches honor troops



National Guard Chaplain (Colonel) William Sean Lee presents a recognition plaque to the Rev. Sherrin Marshall. The pastor of Pasadena UMC received the plaque for her congregation's participation in "Partners in Care," a program that helps families of deployed and returning National Guard troops.

Members of six UM congregations met Nov. 5 at Pasadena UMC to honor men and women serving in the Armed Forces. The 275 people in attendance gave nearly \$1,000 to the Strength for Service fund. The Rev. Sherrin Marshall serves as pastor of the host church.

KEMBLESVILLE, Pa. —
A quarter century of breakfasts

Men of the Kemblesville UMC continue a 25-year practice of dishing out breakfasts every second Saturday of every month. The kitchen crew arrives by 6 a.m.; by 8:30 a.m. the room is full of customers for scrambled eggs, pancakes, French toast, home fried potatoes, sausage, scrapple, bacon, cereal, creamed dried beef, sausage gravy, biscuits, and toast.

The men generate about \$5,000 a year to contribute to the church. They raised the 2010 price from \$6 to \$6.50 in 2011.

Holston men package over 10,000 meals for STOP HUNGER NOW

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. —

Holston Conference men packaged 10,104 dehydrated meals for Stop Hunger Now prior to a late summer conference at Cokesbury UMC in Knoxville. Other men assembled 10 hand-crank carts for people disabled by disease and war in Benin, Africa.

The “Calling All Men” conference featured Pittsburgh Area Bishop Thomas Bickerton, Dr. Tyrone Gordon, pastor of St. Luke Community UMC in Dallas, and Holston Area Bishop James Swanson Sr.

The spokesperson for Nothing But Nets, Bickerton asked the 465 attendees, “If we can eliminate malaria deaths in the United States, why can’t we do the same for Africa? He urged the men to raise money for malaria nets and the “Imagine No Malaria” campaign.

“Every 30 seconds, an innocent child in Africa dies of malaria,” Bickerton said, pausing periodically to announce the total number of children who had died thus far during his presentation. “The reality is that every one of God’s children deserves the same chance our children have.”

Turn wounds into worship

“It does me good to see men praise God,” said Gordon during one of three worship services that included a performance by the Concord UMC praise band. Gordon encouraged men to “turn their wounds into worship.” He referred to the story of David, “who had trouble keeping his hands to himself, his pants on, and his zipper up.” (2 Samuel 6:12-20)



Prior to a Calling All Men conference in Knoxville, Tenn., men and women prepared Stop Hunger Now packets of dry food.

“Can I be real in here?” Gordon asked. “I believe David became a worshiping man because he realistically faced his demons and confronted the issues in his life.”



Men of Holston Conference assemble 10 hand-crank carts as a part of the international PET (Personal Energy Transportation) project based in Columbia, Mo.) Photo courtesy of The Call.

“Expose your spirit to the healing of God,” Gordon said. “Don’t ever let your faults turn you into a failure.”


Swanson concluded the two-day event with Holy Communion and the continuing emphasis on a man's need to turn his problems over to God.

"Your theme is 'You are Not Alone,'" Swanson said, waving to the stage backdrop. "Quit acting like you are alone. Learn to turn some things over to the Lord. We try to fix everything ourselves instead of allowing the Lord to fix it."

Seven workshops were offered on Saturday, highest attended were "Dealing with Difficult People, Spiritually and Professionally" led by the Rev. Ron Matthews, and "Growing Spiritual Giants" led by Gordon.

Awards presented

During the conference, Larry Coppock presented Silver Torch Awards to four persons who served in the UM scouting ministry booth at the National Boy Scout Jamboree: Keith Smith, scouting coordinator for Holston Conference; Jim Bowen, scouting coordinator for the Chattanooga District; and Laura and Robert Wilson, Scout leaders at Burks UMC.

Monica Cook received a Good Samaritan Award. 

This article is adapted from The Call, the newspaper of Holston Annual Conference and information provided by Mike Smith, president of Holston Conference UM Men.




Twelve African American Boy Scouts earn Eagle Scout rank

DALLAS, Texas —

Twelve Scouts of the 60-member Boy Scout troop of St. Luke Community UMC achieved the rank of Eagle.

"As far as we can determine there's only been one other time in the history of the Boy Scouts where there were more African-Americans at one time, from one troop" becoming Eagle Scouts, said Pat Currie, Scout executive for

North Texas' Circle Ten Council of the Boy Scouts. Only about 4 percent of Boy Scouts earn the rank.

Troop 914 began at St. Luke in 1996 with six boys, two tents and one piece of outdoor cooking equipment. Since then, counting Saturday's group, nearly 40 from the troop have made Eagle Scout. Two have gone on to military service academies. 

Country star talks about fatherhood, adoption

by Susan Passi-Klaus

NASHVILLE, Tenn. —

It wasn't until Rodney Atkins held his own son, Elijah, that the notion of "family" really hit him.

"It was when the nurse came in the room and said, 'His Apgar score is 7 and 8. And by the way, his blood type is A positive,'" the country music hit maker explains. "And I'm sitting there holding this little rug rat in my arms. He barely fit in my hands. And I looked at him, then I looked at my wife, and I said, 'Your blood type is O, right?' And she said, 'Yeah.' I said, 'I'm A positive. I'm holding the only blood relative I've ever known.'"



Allan and Margaret Atkins adopted son Rodney from the Holston UM Children's Home in Greeneville, Tenn., when he was just 3 years old. Photo courtesy of Rodney Atkins.

It was an emotional revelation for Atkins, adopted at the age of 3 from the Holston UM Home for Children in Greeneville, Tenn. "The experience with Elijah really got me thinking about

adoption and how fortunate I was to have a family—and what having a family means," says Atkins. "It's pretty enormous when you think of what having a family can do for you.

"Family...that word just makes me smile," the ball-capped star says. "It's the thing that drives me, that pushes me, motivates me, drives me crazy, keeps me up at night and makes me thank God."

The talent behind chart-topping hits like "If You're Going Through Hell,"

"Watching You," "These Are My People," "It's America," and many more, had a rocky start as a frail infant given up for adoption. Unable to cope with the needs of a seriously ill baby, two sets of prospective parents returned him to the Holston Home.

'It takes special people'

"I had a respiratory staph infection, and I think I was colicky too," Atkins says. "That was a heck of a lot to get past if you really don't have any ownership. It takes special people."

Along came Allan and Margaret Atkins, a couple who had just lost a baby boy. Despite their tragedy, they said, "Yes," and Rodney had a permanent home.

"My parents gave me the one thing that adoption is supposed to give a child — the knowledge that I was loved unconditionally," he says. "It's a feeling so many kids don't get a chance to know. Sure, places like the Holston Home are amazing. They ground kids and make sure kids feel wanted and needed. They teach them responsibility and self-esteem,

and they help them discover what their purpose in life is, but they can't give them what a real family can."

Atkins believes in giving back what he's been given. As spokesperson for the National Council for Adoption, the father of three (son Elijah and two daughters—Lindsey and Morgan—from his wife's first marriage) makes it a point to tell his adoption story whenever he can.

Why don't more people adopt, especially older or children with special needs?

Atkins says it boils down to spirituality.

"It's a world of 'self' out there," he says. "Adoption has to be some form of service where people put another individual before themselves. I think people really need to be honest and ask themselves, 'What are you doing to make a difference? Are you living, dying and then gone, or did you do something meaningful with your life?'"

'You have to be present'

Known for having the "real factor," Atkins credits his parents for teaching him to be authentic.

"The thing about being real is that first you have to be present," he says. "If your kid is in the room and talking to you, then be there. That's the toughest thing I've had to deal with in this business because I'm gone so much.

"You know, I had the most played song of the year about being a father and how your kid watches you," Atkins continues, "and yet I'm out on the road while he's going to his T-ball games without me. People are coming up to me and saying, 'Boy, you're so real. You're authentic.' And I'm thinking, 'No, I'm not. I'm here, and my kid's somewhere else.'"

Elijah is now 7, and it's not known



Rodney Atkins and family pose at the 2010 Academy of Country Music Awards show. Photo courtesy of Front Page Publicity.

what his gift to his dad will be, but for Rodney it will be hard to top the "award" his son gave him last year. He transformed the elaborate and expensive box that held a Baccarat crystal "Number One" (for the chart-topping success of "Going through Hell") into a vessel that displayed his own version of an aluminum foil-wrapped "Number One Dad" statue on a paper plate.

"I'm sure my wife found and put away the fancy 'Number One,' but what I've got sitting up on a shelf where I can see it is the one Elijah made me – a bowl with aluminum foil in a \$1,000 box covered in foil wrap." [UM.com](#)

Susan Passi-Klaus is public relations specialist/writer with the Public Information Team at UM Communications. This is adapted from a UM Communications feature article.

Why men die earlier than women

Consider these sobering statistics:

Coronary artery disease is three times higher among men who are clinically depressed.

Male suicides outnumber female suicides in every age group.

Homicide and suicide are among the top three causes for death among males between the ages of 15 and 34.

By the age of 85, women outnumber men in the U.S. 2.2 to 1; this rises to 3 to 1 in their 90s.

These are just a few of the realities examined in *Why Men Die First: How to Lengthen Your Lifespan* by Dr. Marianne J. Legato. The book focuses on the reasons the average woman lives six more years than a man.

Legato says males are more fragile and vulnerable than females from birth. Unlike women, who fight to have their health needs addressed, men haven't demanded equal treatment.

"It is a need that has never been addressed," Legato says. "Men have been tremendously neglected and it doesn't have to be that way."

Men's medical challenges are the result of cultural conditioning. The rules are set shortly after birth, Legato says: Suck up the pain, don't be a wimp, show no weakness, and "man up." Many men only seek medical counsel when under duress from a spouse or when their condition has deteriorated to a severe state.

"Women are able to logically ask for help," says Legato, who has long promoted the concept of gender-specific medicine. "They're hardwired in the brain and very motivated."

"The cultural reasons for not going to the doctor are killing men," she says.

How Men Can Live Longer

In her book, Legato champions an end to the lack of awareness among men — and the medical community — regarding the specific health needs of a male that could help prevent male deaths. Men, she says, deserve better and should insist on higher standards.

"Don't tolerate the current situation where men die six years before women," Legato says. "If we can conquer breast cancer and AIDS to the extent we have, we can certainly save our men."

Legato makes the following suggestions to improve male life expectancy:

1. Speak frankly with a doctor.

Leave embarrassment in the waiting room. Women are taught at an early age to be candid and open with their doctors. Symptoms that can be uncomfortable to talk about — such as erectile dysfunction — can be tied to more serious ailments such as diabetes and heart disease. Men, despite cultural tradition, should also request breast checks.

"It's a part of the body and should be examined," Legato says.

She encourages men to perform testicular self-exams in the way women are taught to check their breasts for irregularities. Although men may cringe at getting a prostate check, they are far less uncomfortable than experiencing the pain of cancer treatment.

2. Check testosterone levels.

Beginning at age 30, testosterone begins to dip by 1 percent each year, says Legato. Lowered testosterone levels can lead to a decrease in vitality, muscle mass, ability to perform prolonged exercise, memory, concentration, and libido. Not only does this impair quality of life, it can contribute to depression, which can

have a significant effect on male health, potentially increasing the risk of coronary disease. There are several treatments available — including gels, patches, and injections — that can help restore this vital hormone to proper levels.

Dr. Robert Ruxin, an endocrinologist from Ridgefield, Conn., says normal testosterone loss has little correlative effect on vitality or sexuality. But there are instances when dramatic loss — more likely between the ages of 60 and 80 — can impede quality of life.

"A level that drops from 800 to 500 has not been shown to have a clinical effect," said Ruxin, "but a drop from 800 to 400 can be too low."

Diabetes patients, for example, may have a greater risk of significant testosterone loss. Conversely, pituitary hormones, he says, can balance out the effects of the difference in individuals who are losing testosterone at a typical rate.

"There's a wide variation of normal."

3. Protect your immune system. The male immune system is not as vigorous as those of females, and men die from seven of the ten most common infections at a higher rate, Legato says, particularly tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases.

Men should check with their doctors for updated vaccinations when traveling to foreign countries. A tetanus shot should be administered every 10 years.

"Immunization is not finished after the second year of life," Legato says.

Proper nutrition and supplementation can also be beneficial. Despite the gender-focused attention it receives, osteoporosis also strikes men.

4. Recognize and treat depression. Male depression may be much more common than previously estimated. Symptoms aren't always obvious. Depressed men may turn to drinking alcohol, TV watching, and sexual exploits.

Legato says the current medical system often prevents doctors from obtaining a proper understanding of a patient's personality and life structure. Make time to discuss any such issues with a doctor and be open to treatment. "Structured conversations can be very helpful."

Dr. James Korman, director of the Behavioral Health and Cognitive Therapy Center at Summit Medical Group in New Jersey, agrees that depression in men occurs far more often than reported. He also points to cultural factors as often influencing men's reluctance to get treatment.

"Men tend to express depression differently than women," Korman says. "This can result in sleep disturbances, mood change, and sexual disinterest."

Left untreated, depression can have catastrophic results.

Regarding suicide, Korman says that while women typically make more attempts, "men are much better at completing it."

Men need to realize, Legato says, how destructive depression can be to their health and openly discuss their concerns with a doctor.

"To enjoy the day and be as viable as possible in the present is the best attitude," she says.

5. Keep a close eye on young males. The reckless nature and lifestyle of adolescents make them prime targets for injury or death.

Females develop a more evolved sense of judgment and decision making at an earlier age than males. Add to that the cocktail of testosterone and other hormones and, biologically, males possess a potentially lethal internal recipe. Monitoring their activities and setting careful limits is vital.

"Boys have been compared to a Porsche without brakes," Legato says. "They take risks, are idealistic, intense, and believe they're invulnerable."


6. Assess your risk for coronary disease. Coronary disease, Legato says, "takes a toll on men in their prime and leaves families bereft." It's imperative to sit down and assess the risks along with any predisposed genetic tendency and discuss these with a doctor. Have any relatives died of heart disease before the age of 60? What are your cholesterol levels? Have you experienced fainting episodes, loss of consciousness, or shortness of breath?

"We downplay this tremendously," Legato says.

Again, men aren't genetically blessed compared to women in this area. The

female hormone estrogen provides women with a layer of protection that men don't naturally possess, asserts Legato.

Men can begin developing signs of coronary artery disease at the age of 35, Legato says, while women don't present a risk of a heart attack similar to men until much later. Men with a family history of heart disease should alert their doctor and take proper precautions beginning in their 30s.

"It doesn't have to be that way," Legato says. "We should be turning a very critical eye on why coronary disease starts in the mid-30s." 

Reasons why the English language is hard to learn.

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce produce.
3. The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
4. We must polish the Polish furniture.
5. He could lead if he would get the lead out.
6. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
7. Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
8. A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
9. When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
10. I did not object to the object.
11. The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
12. There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
13. They were too close to the door to close it.
14. The buck does funny things when the does are present.
15. A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
16. To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
17. The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
18. After a number of injections my jaw got number.
19. Upon seeing the tear in the painting, I shed a tear.
20. I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
21. How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

English is a crazy language

There is no egg in eggplant, no ham in hamburger; and there is neither apple nor pine in pineapple.

English muffins weren't invented in England, and French fries aren't French.

Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

Quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea, nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write, but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce, and hammers don't ham?

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth?

One goose, 2 geese; so, one moose, 2 meese?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends, but not one amend?

If you have a bunch of odds and ends, and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?

If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

In what language do people recite at a play, and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell?

Why does a house burn up as it burns down, and why do you fill in a form by filling it out?

Reprinted courtesy of MISTupid.com

Four persons selected to lead men's ministry in 2011

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

Four persons with decades of experience will soon be available to assist local churches, districts and conferences expand their ministries to men.

Following the announcement that Larry Malone, director of Men's Ministry, would retire at the end of 2010, Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, recruited four volunteer leaders to assume the responsibilities of the 13-year veteran staff member.

The four volunteer leaders begin their service in January, and they are presently enrolled in electronic training experiences in order to ensure they will be able to provide consistent and powerful messages to annual conferences, men's retreats, district rallies and local churches where they are invited.

Malone assisted Hanke in the selection process. "We had many excellent applicants, but these men each have unique skill sets that will broaden our ministry," said Malone.

"Each is heavily involved in men's ministry and will remain active within their local settings," said Hanke. "The commission will pay travel expenses when the host conference or district is unable."

Hanke notes that last May and June, he represented the commission at four annual conference sessions; he hopes the four deployed staff will increase that number to twenty at 2011 sessions.

DEPLOYED STAFF OF MEN'S MINISTRY:

Greg Arnold,
*Vanceleave,
Mississippi*



A graduate of the University of Alabama in communications, Arnold worked for 10 years as an on-air broadcaster and program manager. He developed a pilot program on men's ministry called *M3* (Men -Ministry -Mission). He has written for several Christian publications and recently released his book for men titled, *DIRT: Uncovering Authentic Faith*. He serves as a roster speaker for *GodMen* and president of his local UM Men unit. Arnold serves as operations director for Stein and Associates, and is an equity partner in several healthcare and technology companies.

Neil Brown, *Spruce Pine, North Carolina*

A graduate of Cleveland Community College in operations management technology, Brown is a two-time president of his local UM Men unit and vice president of the Western North Carolina Conference UM Men. He is a certified men's ministry specialist who serves on the



Men's Ministry Advisory Team. He worked for three years in disaster recovery with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and he is active in prison ministries. Brown received the highest award given by the state of Kentucky as he was named a "Kentucky Colonel" by Governor Paul Patton in 2002.

Mark Dehority, *Moweaqua, Illinois*

A magna cum laude graduate of the University of Illinois, Dehority is in process of fulfilling requirements for certification as a men's ministry specialist. He served as president of a local unit of UM Men, president of a district, and he currently serves as vice president of the Wisconsin and Illinois area of UM Men for the North Central Jurisdiction. He is a key presenter in the area of intentional discipleship, active in national missions, and has professional experience in organizational development. He operates a construction company specializing in in-ground pools.



The Rev. Mark Lubbock, *Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

A local pastor in the Louisiana Conference, Lubbock formerly served as pastor of three congregations. As a certified men's ministry specialist he now helps churches in the conference establish effective ministries to and with men through Louisiana Men of Christ, an organization he founded. Before becoming a pastor he served as president of a local unit of UM Men and is current secretary of the District UM Men. He has led Man in the Mirror, Promise Keepers, Men at the Cross, Kairos Prison Ministry, and Men Mentoring Men events. The self-starter served as chief executive officer and president of a technology company since 1987; the organization is now called Louisiana Data Systems.



To request the presence of a director at any event, call 866-297-4312, or email: gcomm@gcomm.org.

UMMen launch prison ministries

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

The General Commission on UM Men has forged a partnership with DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries of North Carolina in order to bring DISCIPLE Bible study to prisons across the U.S.

Meeting last September, the 21-member commission approved an agreement with the Rev. Mark Hicks, executive director of North Carolina's DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries.

The mission of the ministry is "Making disciples through Bible study to bring God's grace to a hurting world," said Hicks.

Hicks has been leading the DISCIPLE program in correctional settings since 1999, and he says the studies are transformational for both volunteers and prison participants.

"I was always excited by the possibility of transformation among the inmates," Hicks said, "but I'm equally excited by the transformation occurring in our volunteers, and as a result, our churches."

"I was involved in a prison ministry weekend at a maximum security prison in Texas," said Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the commission. "That experience changed my whole perspective and perception of prisons and the need for our engagement in this vital ministry. I believe that Jesus' list of places of service (Matthew 25:31-46), is all inclusive and ongoing. If I give to a food pantry or clothes closet once, I don't think that fulfills Jesus' request; I'm not off the hook. I don't think we can pick one from that list that is the easiest or most comfortable for us. Jesus directs us to where the need is greatest and we should be obedient."

INMATES RESPOND

"My DISCIPLE Bible study class represented love to me," said a North Carolina prison inmate. "It is a blessing for

me to know that God loves me. In the group there was no “inmate feeling.” When we studied the word everybody had value. When you’re sitting on the other side of the wall, you need all the encouragement you can get.”

“For the last five months I have been involved in the DISCIPLE program,” said another inmate. “My time could not have been spent any better doing anything else. This class has enabled me to deal with my circumstances better and find answers to live my life with peace and love.

A third inmate said, “I have come to know the Lord better, and am convinced that He is greater now than ever before. It is my prayer that the DISCIPLE course will continue to grow throughout the prison system.”

GUIDELINES

Hicks offers the following guidelines to begin a prison ministry:

DISCIPLE prison ministry requires approval from the local church and the agency sponsoring the ministry as well as the prison authorities where the studies will take place.

Prisons require volunteers to submit to a criminal background check prior to approval as a volunteer.

The scheduling of a time and place for the study, the recruitment of inmates for classes, and the ongoing supervision of prisoners will require the help and cooperation of correctional staff.

In prisons where there is a chaplain on staff, you’ll want to coordinate your activities through this person. It is important to develop a relationship with the prison chaplain and to respect his or her authority as the person responsible for the spiritual needs of the inmate population.

In prison, the DISCIPLE program operates much as it does in the local church. However, be aware that you are in a controlled environment. Respect those responsible for your safety. There are times when your class will be interrupted for security reasons or the class will be affected by other issues unique to correctional settings.

To be involved in prison ministry, you must agree to follow all training procedures, rules, and regulations mandated by the prison or the sponsoring church or agency.

Beyond these specific issues and suggestions, be aware that a DISCIPLE prison ministry will only be effective if you and your group have planned for the long term. Prison authorities—especially the chaplain—need to trust that your church or conference is making a continuing commitment. Your initial plan should include which units of DISCIPLE you’re going to lead and how soon after you’ve finished the first unit do you plan to start a second. Find someone who is committed to teaching all the units.

Recruiting the initial group of participants from the prison population will require laying some groundwork. If a church is already engaged in a mentoring or pen-pal ministry at the prison, then participants in those programs can become part of the core group. Barring that, look for a pastor in your area who regularly visits the prison, and ask his or her help in recruiting participants.

STUDY MATERIALS

DISCIPLE Bible materials are available at Cokesbury bookstores (www.Cokesbury.com). In addition, Bishop Richard Wilke has provided a booklet of questions and activities for men based on DISCIPLE II; that study is available in the resource section of www.GCUMM.org (UM Men DISCIPLE Bible Supplement).

THE PLAN

At this time, the North Carolina-based ministry and the commission are seeking \$5,000 for each pilot project in up to eight states. Some states have been tentatively selected, but this partnership should be viewed as an open door for interested groups to participate.

For more information contact Hanke (ghanke@gcumm.org) or Hicks (MCHicks@northstate.net).



The Rev. Mark Hicks, executive director of North Carolina's DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries.



Southeastern Jurisdiction presents awards in men's ministry

Six clergy, including the first female, received G. Ross Freeman Leadership Awards for 2010.

Sharma Lewis

The Rev. Sharma D. Lewis, pastor of Wesley Chapel UMC, McDonough, Ga., received the North Georgia Conference award for her commitment to the work of the men at her church. Her ministry resulted in phenomenal growth both in numbers and spirit.

"Rev. Lewis boldly preaches and teaches with an unyielding desire for us as a church body to serve God and revere His Holy Name," said Tonja Johnson, president of the UM Men organization at Wesley Chapel. He said her "sincere concern for our personal welfare and spiritual growth as men of the church is truly remarkable."

John Stephensen

The Florida Conference recipient of the award is the Rev. Dr. John Stephensen, pastor of Anona UMC, Largo, Fla. He consistently lifts up and participates in men's ministries in a variety of areas including: disaster response, mentoring, fellowship groups and mission outreach. The conference nominated him as a person who "always finds a way of bringing to our gatherings and fellowships a holiness in the Spirit — reminding us that it is not always all about us, but about our Lord Jesus Christ."

Richard Stone

The North Carolina Conference recipient is the Rev. Richard Stone, pastor of Fuquay Varina (N.C.) UMC. He has been active and involved in small groups, mission projects and Bible studies.

"Richard Stone is very committed to the mission and ministry of men in our church," said Charlie Gray. "He sets an example in his words and actions that serve to motivate and energize those who serve alongside him. His leadership style is not 'all consuming' but instead provides opportunities for leadership and decision making to develop in others."

Jimmy Asbell Jr

The Rev. Dr. Jimmy Asbell Jr is the South Georgia Conference recipient of the 2010 G. Ross Freeman Award.

The pastor of First UMC, Warner Robins, Ga., was praised for his involvement in many projects that the men undertake — "not only helping but leading the way." The conference cited Asbell is a pastor who goes the extra mile and works tirelessly with the men to help them be the best that they can be.

Stephen E. Handy

The Rev. Stephen E. Handy Sr., pastor of McKendree UMC, Nashville, is the recipient of the Tennessee Annual Conference award.

"Brother Steve has been instrumental in promoting and supporting men's ministry in all of the churches he has served and is most deserving of this honor," said Ingram Howard, president of Tennessee Conference UM Men. "Rev. Handy has been instrumental in rebuilding and reorganizing the men's ministry at McKendree UMC. Under his leadership, the men of the church have been active in multiple forms of mission to the community and beyond in the name of Jesus Christ."

Clarence "Smoke" Kanipe

The South Carolina Conference recipient of the award is the Rev. Clarence "Smoke" Kanipe, pastor of Mauldin (S.C.) UMC.

In a nomination statement, Kanipe was praised for his role as pastor and the way he lives his life outside the church. "He makes sure that his family is taken care of both spiritually and physically. By his actions — his love of God, and the way he walks with Christ — he serves an example for each of the men in Mauldin."

The Rev. G. Ross Freeman, a member of the South Georgia Conference, served 52 years as a city missionary, pastor, academic administrator, district superintendent, denominational executive, and editor before he retired in 1993. The G. Ross Freeman Foundation annually presents awards to pastors approved by The Jurisdictional Awards Committee as designated by the Annual Conference Selection Committee.

Life Members

San Antonio church honors Tuskegee airmen and an Air Force veteran

A total of 187 people attended a September men's day celebration at St. Paul UMC. The featured speaker was Robert Felder II, son of a former pastor. The theme for the morning was "Christian Men Trusting and Believing in God's Word."

One of the highlights of the occasion was the presentation of life memberships to two former members of the Tuskegee airmen, and one 23-year Air Force veteran. Rick Sinkfield, president of St Paul UM Men presented the awards.

Thomas Ellis

Ellis, 90, has been a member of St. Paul UMC since 1939. He was president of the St. Paul Methodist Men during the 1968 merger of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. A native of San



Antonio, he graduated from Phyllis Wheatley High School at age 15 and entered Sam Houston College in Austin. After six months of marriage, Ellis was drafted into the army. After completing administrative clerk training in October, 1942, he was assigned to Tuskegee Army for the newly activated 301 Fighter Squadron. He transferred to the 332 Fighter Group in Taranto, Italy, where he achieved the rank of sergeant major and received seven battle stars. Following his discharge, Ellis returned to San Antonio where he served for 35 years as a mail carrier, and pursued his love of music with his own quintet. Ellis and his wife, Janie, will celebrate 68 years of marriage this month (January, 2010).

Warren Eusan

A former president of UM Men, Eusan's devoted service helped keep the organization alive. Born in San Antonio, he graduated from Wiley College in 1940 with dual Bachelor of



Arts degrees in sociology and education. After graduation, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps where he integrated the Army Base Instrument Command Flying School in Bryan, Texas.

In 1944, he taught the instrument flying at Tuskegee until his discharge in 1946. Upon his return to San Antonio, Eusan held a teaching and leadership position. He earned a Master of Education degree from Atlanta University (now Clark College), and he engaged in post-graduate studies at the University of Texas, Our Lady of the Lake College and Trinity University. He retired after 44 years of service. Eusan is a recipient of a special alumni award from Wiley College in recognition of over 50 years continuous support to the school.

Ellis and Eusan are members of the original Tuskegee Airman and were invited to the inauguration ceremony of President Barack Obama.

Harold Williams

Williams was born in San Antonio, Texas where he attended public school and St. Phillips College. He served in the Air Force for 23 years where he was stationed in Japan, Korea and Vietnam. After retiring from the military he worked at the U.S. Postal Service for 17 years. Since moving back home in 1974, Williams has been a faithful and devoted member of St. Paul UMC. He has been active in UM Men, the Board of Stewards and serves as class leader for the annual men's day.



ADDITIONAL LIFE MEMBERS

Freddie Brown

MURFREESBORO, Tenn.—

Ingram Howard, president of Tennessee Conference UM Men, presented Freddie Brown with a life membership during a Personal Energy Transportation (PET) build. Brown has served as the coordinator for the Middle Tennessee Office of PET Project International since 2004.

PET is a faith-based, volunteer driven,

non-profit organization that manufactures and distributes hand-crank, three-wheel transportation units for people who have lost the use of their legs. Brown organized the first effort to assemble PET units during the 2009 National Gathering of UM Men in Nashville. In 2010, he coordinated PET builds in the Holston, Memphis, and Tennessee conferences.

Brown is a lay speaker and has served Blackman UMC as lay leader and lay member of the Tennessee Annual Conference. He served as Blackman UM Men president for two years prior to his present position with PET. "Freddie Brown is a very spiritual Christian and one of the most dedicated people I know," said Howard. "He is certainly deserving of this recognition."

Russell Man SANFORD, N.C. —

Whenever the air conditioning or heat units cease working, only one member of Jonesboro UMC knows how to fix the problem. That may be one of the reasons Jonesboro UM Men gave a life membership to Russell Mann, a charter member of the organization.

Since Mann is the only one who knows where all the important church documents are located, perhaps the men also wanted to ensure his continued presence in the church.

"In addition to serving faithfully with UM Men, Russell has served the church in a variety of ways, but most notably as a long-time member of the choir and the trustees," said Bill Huggins, president of UM Men.

In addition to repairing heating and air-conditioning systems, Mann is the must-call person for anything that breaks. He recently painted all the church doors.

Bill Chisoe NORMAN, Okla. —

UM Men of McFarlin UMC presented Bill Chisoe with a life membership in UM Men following his service as director of the Lay Speaking program at the district, conference and jurisdictional levels of the denomination.

Chisoe has been on Volunteer in Mission trips to Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, and 20 annual youth mission trips to Mexico.

"Bill has a servant's heart," said the Rev.

Dick House, pastor of McFarlin UMC. "Bill is involved in the handy-man program, led the 'Letters from Dad' program, and gleans and distributes food to various agencies that feed the poor."

He serves on the church's prison ministry team and the Oklahoma Conference Criminal Justice and Mercy Committee.

The tireless layman teaches a spiritual-gift class and serves on several church committees.

Samuel Cass SEALY, Texas —

UM Men of First UMC in Sealy presented a life membership award to Sam Cass after he chaired the men's club for two years.

A 61-year member of the church, Cass has also served as chair of the Finance Committee, a member of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, and as an usher.

"He enjoys Sunday school and is very helpful wherever he is needed," said James Schroeder, president of First UM Men.

Cass serves as a special agent for the Southern Pacific Railroad and when he is home, he works with cattle and serves on the Board of Directors of the Austin County Livestock Association and the County Forage Association.

Dan Rozelle GREENSBORO, N.C. —

Men of Centenary UMC presented a life award to Dan Rozelle, past president of the organization.

The men honored Rozelle for his service at Centenary and two other UM congregations.

While a member of Centenary, Rozelle served as chair of the Church Council, chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, and president of UM Men. He also serves as an usher and a member of the Finance Committee.

While a member of Whiteville UMC, he chaired the Finance Committee and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. He also taught Sunday school and served as an usher.

While a member of Inglewood UMC, Rozelle chaired the Church Council, and he was a member of the Board of Trustees and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

In Memoriam

Phillip R. Ferguson

SEAT PLEASANT, Md. —

Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Phillip R. Ferguson, treasurer of Baltimore-Washington Conference UM Men, died Oct. 2, 2010 after a lengthy illness.



A 40-year member of Gethsemane UMC, he was one of the pioneers who chartered a UM Men fellowship called G-Men.

As president, he led G-Men to focus on God, stewardship, prayer and Scripture.

“Phil was a stern, to-the-point leader, and he would firmly stand his ground to get a point across,” said Sherman Harris. “He believed in decency and order and when all was said and done, he was your best friend. He believed that what happens in a meeting stays in the meeting.”

Ferguson was a friend to the youth of Gethsemane UMC, and he would load up his vehicle with sleeping bags and suitcases to take young people on mission trips and retreats. When the “Spirit of Gethsemane,” a youth music group needed help, Ferguson surprised young Phil Thornton Jr. with a new set of drum and cymbals. He purchased bicycles for winners of a children’s reading program.

He was a 50-year member of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity, and he belonged to two golfing groups.

Upon learning of his illness, the UM Men executive committee of the conference inducted Ferguson into the John Wesley Society.

“As Phil rests from his labor, we will cherish his memory and carry on his Spirit until we too can hear the Master say, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant,’” said Harris.

Col. Ferguson is survived by his wife, Sandra, three children, Alicia, John and Philippa, and a host of other relatives and friends.

Jerry Joel Bernardy

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. —

Jerry Bernardy, 75, a long time supporter of UM Men and scouting, died Dec. 3, 2010.

The Oklahoma UM Foundation established an endowment fund for scouting ministry in his honor after he retired from the Foundation Board of Trustees.

As a certified lay speaker, he enjoyed speaking to congregations across Oklahoma. He was actively involved in various community organizations, including Oklahoma Goodwill, American Cancer Society, and Rotary International. He had the distinction of being named a Paul Harris Fellow with Rotary.

A 1959 graduate of Oklahoma City University, he was an Oklahoma City banker for 35 years and served as senior vice president and trust officer.



Circuit Rider Members

Members of the Circuit Rider Society have pledged to annually give \$1,500 or more for men’s ministry.

Mr. John Dowell, Tampa, Fla.; Mr. Dan Henry, Bolingbrook, Ill.; Mr. Larry Coppock, Joelton, Tenn.; Mr. Larry Malone, Nashville, Tenn.; Mr. Robert T. Cate, Nashville, Tenn.; Mr. Curtis P. Brisbon, Washington, D.C.; Mr. Gilbert C. Hanke, Antioch, Tenn.; Mr. Paul Diehl, Austin, Texas; Mr. Harold W. Green, Cary, N.C.; Mr. Greg Papajohn, Gulf Breeze, Fla.; Mr. Joseph Boatman, Mansfield, Texas; Mr. Neil Brown, Spruce Pine, N.C.; Mr. Mark Hatcher, Tuscumbia, Ala.; Mr. Sonny Evans, Natchitoches, La.; Mr. Marcus Wren, Minden, La.; Mr. Allen Evans, Natchitoches, La.; Mr. Joe Lancaster, Columbia, Tenn.

Persons interested in becoming members of the Circuit Rider Society may enroll by phone (615/340-7145) or online (www.gcumm.org)

Society of St. Andrew

United Methodist Men can be the leaders in ending hunger

Society of St. Andrew offers the way



This Lent answer the call to feed the hungry

- ◆ SoSA offers a socially mindful Lenten devotional booklet.
- ◆ Daily devotions throughout the season explore the question "How has knowing Jesus changed your life?"
- ◆ Take seriously God's mandate to feed your brothers and sisters in need.
- ◆ Unique opportunity for spiritual renewal.
- ◆ A commonsense was to feed people in need in our own communities.

VBS is the perfect time to teach Christian compassion

- ◆ Designed to supplement your church's VBS program and is easily adaptable to any theme.
- ◆ VBS kids learn about hunger & how Jesus wants us to feed our brothers and sisters in need.
- ◆ Daily activities for all ages contain: short scripturally-based stories; facts about hunger and SoSA's hunger-relief ministry; pencil activities; and much more!
- ◆ Each VBS is challenged to raise at least \$50 which provides 2,500 servings of fresh, nutritious produce.
- ◆ Last year 110 churches used SoSA's VBS materials & raised \$26,566 that provided 1.3 million servings of food for American families living in poverty.

Meals for Millions — Since 1989, United Methodist Men and the Society of St. Andrew have been in partnership to end domestic hunger. Your donations provide millions of servings of nutritious food to the hungry. Join today and make a real difference! For more information contact Wade Mays, National Meals for Millions Director, at 800-333-4597 or development@endhunger.org.

- ◆ **Society of St. Andrew—national hunger-relief ministry (Advance #801600)**
3383 Sweet Hollow Rd. ~ Big Island, VA 24526 ~ 800-333-4597
- ◆ All materials for both programs are FREE ◆ No obligation
- ◆ Order sample packets today: church@endhunger.org
www.endhunger.org/lent.htm ◆ www.endhunger.org/vbs.htm
- ◆ VBS materials will be shipped starting March 15 - Order a kit today!

West Virginia establishes fund to support scouting ministries

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The UM Foundation of West Virginia has established an endowment fund to support scouting ministries at the Summit: Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve, a 10,600-acre site near Beckley, W.Va.

The foundation established the fund with a \$1,000 initial gift. Contributions to the fund will be invested by foundation trustees, four percent of the total will help purchase New Testaments for Scouts participating in high-adventure camps at the Summit and help fund training opportunities for clergy and laity involved in scouting ministries.

Three persons from Scouting Ministries of the West Virginia Annual Conference will be authorized to withdraw available funds from the trust.

“Some 370,000 Scouts presently participate in troops sponsored by UM congregations (the second highest number of Scouts and scouting units of all faith groups),” said the Rev. Greg Godwin, lead UM chaplain for the 2013 jamboree and vice-chairman of the National UM Scouting Ministry Committee. “The establishment of this fund will enable scouting ministry to grow in West Virginia and provide spiritual and practical resources for Scouts and leaders who participate in scouting activities within the state.”

The Bechtel Reserve is the fourth high-adventure site for the Boy Scouts of America. Other sites are the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, the Northern Tier in Minnesota, and the Florida Sea Base. The West Virginia site will host the 10-day

National Scout Jamboree in 2013 and every four years thereafter. The 2010 jamboree was held for the last time at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia with over 43,000 Scouts in attendance. Some 5,500 Scouts attended a UM worship service at the U.S. Army site.

Fourteen United Methodists attended an Oct. 2 scouting ministry training session at Braxton County Memorial Hospital in Gassaway, W.Va. Eleven of the participants signed up to become scouting ministry specialists.

“Last year we gave 6,200 New Testaments to Scouts at the national jamboree and two other high-adventure sites. Proceeds for this fund will enable us to continue the practice and provide financial support for additional training opportunities in the state,” said Larry Coppock, top scouting ministry executive for the General Commission on UM Men.



Larry Coppock, director of scouting ministries, stands behind West Virginia Conference leaders signing a letter of agreement to create a fund for scouting ministries within the state. Men signing the agreement (left to right) are: Ralph Herron, scouting coordinator for the conference; the Rev. Greg Godwin, vice-chair of UM Scouting Ministries Committee, and Fred Jackson, president of UM Men in the conference.

Chaplain distributes New Testaments to Scouts

CIMARRON, N.M. — The Rev. Steve Hickle, pastor of Fairmont UMC in Raleigh, N.C., served as a summer chaplain at the Philmont Scout Ranch. He distributed “Trail Bibles” to Scouts attending base-camp worship services prior to their treks across portions of the 214 square miles of wilderness.



The Rev. Steve Hickle presents New Testaments with Psalms and Proverbs to Scouts attending a worship service at the base camp of the Philmont Scout Ranch.

Last summer, the New Testaments had a special cover that celebrated 100 years of the Boy Scouts of America.

“My Dad went to Philmont in 1953 to do Wood Badge leader training, so from the age of 3, I grew up on stories of Philmont, including a horse named Banjo,” said Hickle. “At age 16, we were able to go together. I returned in 1995 and 1996 as an adviser. In 2001, I returned with my son, Jesse, first when he was a Scout, then later when he was an adviser.”

Hickle spent the summer of 2002 as a Philmont chaplain and returned again for a month in 2010.

Hickle conducted nightly Protestant worship services at base camp. At the close of each service, the chaplains announced the availability of Bibles. Often, the chaplains announced the sources of the gift: UM Men and the National Association of UM Scouters. “Those sharing our denominational DNA are always pleased to hear that,” says Hickle.

When the service ended, Scouts rushed forward to receive their gift Bibles. “It’s fun to watch them gauge the weight the 3-ounce Bible will add to their packs,” says Hickle.

Two troops celebrate Centennials

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Two UM churches in the Nashville area have sponsored Boy Scout troops for 100 years. Brentwood UMC began Troop 1, and East End UMC began Troop 3 in 1910, the same year the national organization was formed.

“I think it is a commitment to the next generation through thick and thin that has kept this congregation alive and viable and allowed us to celebrate for Troop 3 a century of continued service,” said Diane Blum, pastor of the East End congregation.

The East End celebration included the groundbreaking for an Eagle Scout project.

David Merin, 17, a member of Troop 3, is building a 10-by-25-foot arbor in the church park. “I feel like I am a totally better person for [scouting],” said Merin. “We have so much fun. We learn how to deal with uncomfortable situations with a level head.”



Larry Coppock, national director of scouting ministries, breaks ground for David Merin’s Eagle Scout project at East End UMC in Nashville.

UM trekkers scale the heights at Philmont

CIMARRON, N.M. —

Five youth and three adults from Indiana made up the first UM Philmont Crew. Led by the Rev. Art Collins, president of the National Association of UM Scouters, the crew visited Fish Camp and Apache Springs before heading over the 11,721-foot Mt. Phillips. The crew panned for gold, climbed cliffs, and rode horses before ending their trip by crossing the Tooth of Time, the iconic landmark of the Boy Scout ranch.

Crew members called themselves “The Children of Jedediah Smith,” patron saint of UM trekkers. A Methodist trapper, fur trader and explorer, Smith (1799-1831) left descriptions of his travels thus opening the Rocky Mountains to pioneers from the East.



UM trekkers reach the top of Mt. Phillips at the Philmont Scout Ranch near Cimarron, N.M.

Left to right: Crew Leader Makayla Goen, Kaleb McArdle, Jordan Napier, Ben Jeatran, Scott Thomas, Melodie Hash, Connor Thomas, and the Rev. Art Collins, crew adviser.

Boy Scout renovates choir room

TURLOCK, Calif. —

Dustin Speckman, 16, a member of First UMC in Turlock, spent three months leading a crew that provided fresh paint, carpeting, plumbing fixtures and shelving for a 50-year-old handbell choir room. The team spent



Dustin Speckman
a total of 273 hours on Dustin's Eagle Scout project.

Dustin is the senior patrol leader of a troop sponsored by UM Men. He also completed the entire God and Country series (God and Me, God and Family, God and Church and God and Life) sponsored by Programs of Religious Programs Activities with Youth (PRAY).

Summer training opportunity offered Scout leaders

Local church, district and conference scouting coordinators, Boy Scout and Cub Scout leaders, clergy, and youth leaders are encouraged to attend a July 10-16, 2011, United Methodist Scouters Workshop at Philmont Scout Ranch near Cimarron, New Mexico.



Each year the Office of Scouting Ministry conducts a workshop at the high-adventure camp. Workshop topics include: Transform your scouting program into a ministry; new scouting ministry specialist program; The Summit, new BSA high-adventure site; adult, youth and church recognition awards, and more. The workshop is limited to 50 people.

To receive information about the workshop, please email your name, phone number and position to Larry W. Coppock, national director of scouting ministries (lcoppock@gcumm.org).

Reasons why churches should support scouting

by Max Mertz

As the UMC seeks to reach young people, we look for models that have influenced people in the past.



An Eagle Scout Praise Band consisting of William Lucas, T.J. White, Mark Porterfield, Howard Morgan, Michael Bass, and Jason Grimberg perform at Wesley Foundation and Texas A&M University events.

Boy Scouts of America has a proven track record of providing positive influences on young men.

In my 30 years as a campus minister and former youth minister I have witnessed first-hand young men whose lives have been

shaped by participation in Boy Scout troops.

Students at Texas A&M University who display principled leadership abilities, possess disciplined character and have practical life skills are frequently Eagle Scouts. Their integrity is generally the result of their personal faith. Their experiences with God blend well with the moral and healthy behaviors taught by good Scout troops.

Quality Scout leaders are pivotal in the influence on each young man. Without healthy mentors, a young man can be quickly led away from God and into unproductive and destructive behaviors. The church needs to encourage our best men to volunteer to serve as Scout leaders.

The church can also encourage and enable troops in additional ways, thereby helping to change the lives of young men.

I am encouraged by efforts of Texas Annual Conference leaders to establish at least one Boy Scout troop in every church in the conference.



The Rev. Paul (Max) Mertz is director of the Wesley Foundation at Texas A&M University in College Station



The Rev. Greg Godwin stands beside a cross he and Jack Fedeking crafted for the 2010 Boy Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia. The wood came from a 60-year-old white oak tree located on the grounds of the Summit: Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve in West Virginia, site of the 2013 jamboree. Mosquito netting was hung on the cross during the UM jamboree worship service where Scouts and leaders donated \$12,400 to the Nothing But Nets program. Additional contributions made at the UM Scout display area at the U.S. Army installation brought the total amount raised for bed nets to \$17,500.

AWARDS

Graham Wright named to 4-H Hall of Fame CHEVY CHASE, Md. —

Graham P. Wright, 1970 founder of the Arizona 4-H Youth Foundation, was inducted into the 4-H Hall of Fame during an October, 2010, ceremony in Maryland. The Arizona Youth Foundation now serves 110,000 youth in the state. Forty years later, his son, Douglas, now serves as vice-president of the youth-serving organization.



Graham Wright (seated) wears his National 4-H Hall of Fame medallion following an October ceremony in Chevy Chase. He is joined by his son, Douglas, vice president of the Arizona Youth Foundation and scouting coordinator for the Desert Southwest Annual Conference.

Two women honored for a total of 110 years of service to scouting

STARK, Fla. —

Laurie Mullins and Carolyn Eaves have each chalked up 50 years as members of Stark UMC and each has given over 50 years of service to Girl Scouts; Laurie has 60 and Carolyn, 50 years. Each of them has served as president of UM Women and each served as a Sunday school teacher along with assorted other leadership roles in the church.

Little wonder that the church decided to give each woman a Cross and Flame Award.

Scout honored for service to the community

IUKA, Miss.—

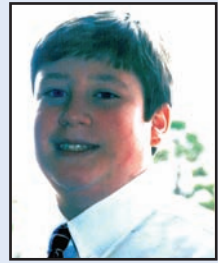
Noah Robertson received a Good Samaritan Award for a ton of community service projects.

He helped pack and distribute food at the Tishomingo County Food Depot and he

helped remodel Mount Evergreen UMC in Iuka; he also helped with the church's Vacation Bible School.

He picked up trash at the Iuka Middle School during the school year and he mowed the grass at the National Armory while the soldiers were deployed in Iraq.

He was a spokesperson for anti-bullying efforts in local schools. In scouting, he assists with the Pinewood Derby and the Order of the Arrow banquet, and he trained future leaders of the Order of the Arrow.



Noah Robertson

Scout provides care packages for U.S. Troops

NACAGDOCHES, Texas —

Brett Smith received a Good Samaritan award for helping raise money and supplies for care packages to be sent to U.S. troops. First UMC of Nacogdoches presented Brett with a Good Samaritan award.



Brent Smith

Scout honored for building bell stand

LAKE CHARLES, La. —

Mallalieu UMC had no way of displaying a church bell, so it languished in a closet "for as long as anyone can remember." Jake Hinton, a member of First UMC, was looking for an Eagle project and learned about the bell. He and other Scouts of a troop sponsored by First UMC of Lake Charles, provided 150 hours of labor to build a mounting for the bell. The church presented Jake with a Good Samaritan Award.



Members of troop 150 proudly stand before a new bell stand

Brothers receive Good Samaritan Awards

DALLAS, Texas —

Hunter and Dillon Kennedy received Good Samaritan Awards following the successful completion of their Eagle Scout projects.

Older brother Hunter wanted children in Haiti to have something beyond the necessities. He led scouts in 353 volunteer hours to send 150 “kid kits” to Haiti. Each kit included a small ball, crayons, a coloring book, a stuffed toy and a fruit roll-up snack.



Hunter Kennedy

Dillon, the youngest scout in Troop 914 history to attain the rank of Eagle, led an organ-and-bone-marrow donation drive in which he provided information to some 5,000 people and registered 70 people as bone marrow and organ donors. The Eagle Scout project involved 318 volunteer hours and could save up to 3,500 lives.

Both boys participated in a potato drop, the Angel Tree program, two feeding projects and a community effort to provide blankets and clothes for underserved people.

The troop is chartered by St. Luke Community UMC.



Dillon Kennedy

Cub Scout becomes youngest recipient of the Good Samaritan Award

TAMPA, Fla. —

Eight-year-old Gary Ancrile received a Good Samaritan Award for his actions following his teacher’s grand mal seizure.

On Monday, April 19, Courtney Knowles was teaching her second grade class at Davidson Elementary School when she experienced a grand mal seizure.

Following the attack, the children began to scream and ask her if she was all right.

“Be quiet,” said Gary. “Mrs. Knowles is having a seizure.”

He then asked one student to push the call button, another to go after a nurse and a third to get the teacher next door.

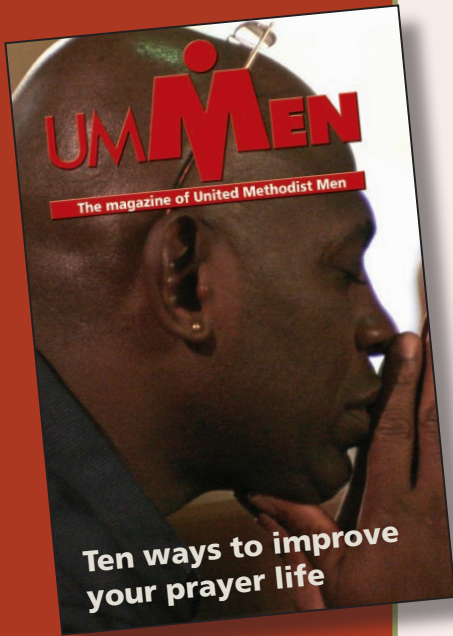
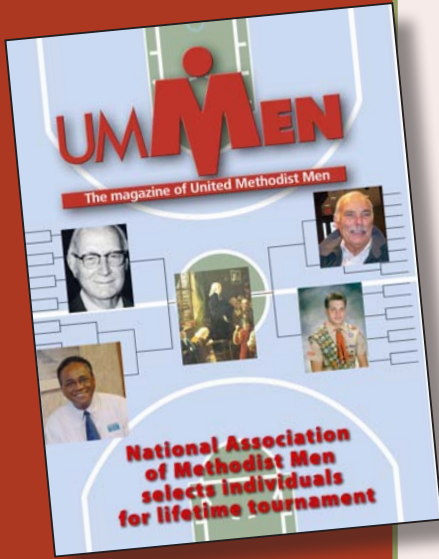
When the principal arrived, Gary explained the situation, and Knowles received immediate medical attention.

Gary’s mother, Sonia, credits scouting for Gary’s helpful response. “Even though he was scared, he was able to stay calm and get his teacher the help she needed,” said Sonia. “I really believe because of scouting and always discussing what to do in an emergency, Gary was able to respond the way he did.”

The age requirements for the Good Samaritan Award were recently lowered from 12 to 6, making Gary the youngest Good Samaritan to date. The Cub Scout received the award from Wesley Memorial UMC in Tampa. He was also nominated for a Boy Scout Heroism Award.

The Good Samaritan Award is awarded by the General Commission on United Methodist Men following nomination by a local church member and approval by the pastor and president of United Methodist Men in the local church making the nomination (see the resource section of gcumm.org for application information).





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