

'FROM THE SANDY BEACH YOU WILL GET TREASURE' – Deut. 33:19 (CEV)



UMC Connection

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WEB EXCLUSIVE – D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray, the Revs. Earnest Lyles, Charlie Parker and Joe Daniels, and others rally to advocate for affordable housing in the District. The effort drew together members of Brighter Day and Metropolitan Memorial UMCs. Read the full story at www.bwcumc.org/dchousing.

Associate pastors offer another avenue for growth

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

IN 2010, THE Baltimore-Washington Conference took what it considered to be a calculated risk, thinking that assigning associate pastors to black churches that seemed to be stuck in stagnancy, would prompt growth. That bet is beginning to pay off.

In announcing the initiative, conference leaders lamented that more than 30 churches, many of them with primarily African-American congregations, had been closed in the city of Baltimore in the past 30 years, and that very few black churches in the conference reported having more than 300 people in worship on Sunday.

The conference agreed to pay the salaries of four associate pastors, confident that the boost in leadership resources would have a positive impact.

Dubbing the new ministry, the “Strategic Growth Initiative,” the Baltimore-Washington Conference provided funds to hire associate pastors at John Wesley UMC and Epworth Chapel in Baltimore, Asbury UMC in Shepherdstown, W.Va., and Westphalia UMC in Upper Marlboro.

The budget for the six-year initiative was \$963,645, or a typical outlay of \$321,215 per church, with the funds received decreasing over time.

In Oct. 2011, Westphalia UMC excused itself from the program. However, during the period it participated, membership rose 2 percent and worship attendance rose 14 percent.

At John Wesley UMC, membership went up 5 percent (although attendance went down 12 percent), and at Epworth Chapel UMC, membership went up 2 percent and worship attendance rose 11 percent.

These figures are especially noteworthy given

that conferencewide, both worship attendance and membership saw a 2 percent decrease in 2012, during the same period the Strategic Growth Initiative churches saw the increases.

The statistics from Asbury UMC do not easily fit into this analysis because during this time, Asbury merged with Mt. Zion in Shepherdstown. However, the fact that the church is now in the midst of a building campaign and is starting Hezekiah’s House, a satellite church, in Ranson, W.Va., signals growth and possibility.

While there is no direct cause and effect, the fact that each of the churches had such growth is significant, said David Schoeller, the conference business data analyst.

Schoeller also noted that the four churches that received associate pastors experienced a significant

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Mizo Fellowship a vital congregation

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

“I DAM EM?” “How are you?” It’s a question the people of the Mizo Fellowship of the Baltimore-Washington Conference have been asking each other for the past nine years. Responding to the needs that arise with the answer to that question has created a vital, growing and unique church.

The Mizo people, who speak Mizo or *Mizo tawng*, come from Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) and the Mizoram state of India.

When the 14 members began meeting at Ager Road UMC in Hyattsville, most of them were asylees, who had fled the threat of human rights violations in their homeland.

For many years, Myanmar was reviled for well-documented incidents of ethnic cleansing, genocide, the use of child soldiers, human trafficking and a lack of freedom of speech.

The Ager Road group searched for a leader and found the Rev. Biak Chhunga, who was ordained in the Methodist Church in Burma, and who was working on his second doctoral degree, in systematic theology, at Duquesne University.

He agreed to assist them, driving every weekend from Pittsburgh to D.C. to attend to the needs of the new faith community.

“They kind of persisted to ask me to lead here, and



Rev. Biak Chhunga

eventually I felt that, well, if I could be an instrument to help one person to grow in the grace of God, that would be worthwhile for me,” he said.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference agreed, giving the group a \$10,000 grant for three years and consecrating them at the 2004 annual conference as a fellowship.

Chhunga then moved to the D.C. area. Over the years, the fellowship grew. They now meet at Faith UMC in Rockville and have 170 members. Recently, even though they are still a conference “mission church,” the fellowship members started a satellite fellowship for Mizo people in Moorefield, W.Va., which has grown to about 20 people. The new faith community meets at Duffey Memorial UMC.

Serving as pastor of a fellowship of immigrants, Chhunga’s ministry extends far beyond the church on Sunday morning. He often assists people in finding employment, translating at hospitals and in the court system, where he is an official Mizo translator, and

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Ancient church mothers and fathers often greeted one another with the phrase, “Give me a word.” This greeting led to the sharing of insights and wisdom. Today we continue this tradition with this monthly column.

BY MANDY SAYERS
Pastor, Covenant UMC, Gaithersburg

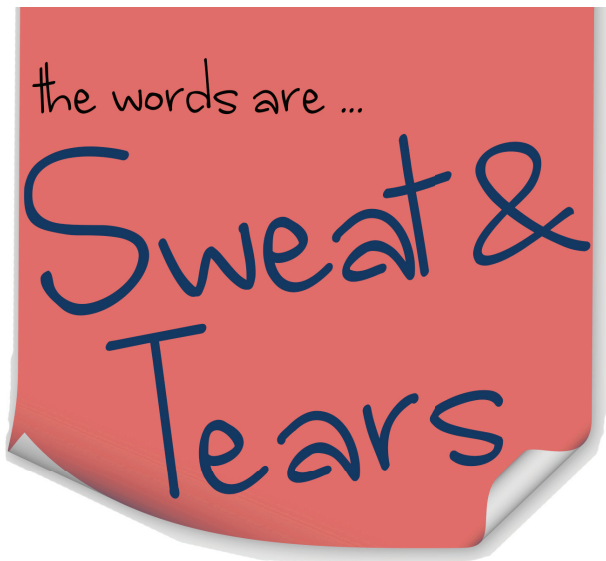
“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Luke 22:44

THIS PHRASE CONJURES up Churchill’s admonition to persevere in the fight of WWII offering “blood, toil, tears and sweat.” An early occurrence of the expression seems to be by Christmas Evans, in a collection of sermons from 1837. “Christ the High Priest of our profession, when he laid down his life for us on Calvary, was bathed in his own blood, sweat and tears.” While I don’t know firsthand what Christ’s labor of love on the cross was like, I do know something about labors of love that feature sweat and tears. I think of what laboring in childbirth is like, that focus, that sense of working for something bigger than and more than the margins of one life alone, and that feeling of leaning on God’s everlasting arms in the midst of it.

“Dear Lord,” I prayed, “One breath at a time, sweet Jesus, help me to do my part in this work to bring this child into the world. The miracle of life is your doing, but help me to be faithful in my part.”

There were times in the dizzying sweat and tears and pain that I didn’t think I’d make it through, and then, tears of mother and father and child mingled with sweat and ice chips, there they were -- our children. A good work of God, a miracle, bathed in sweat and tears.

In the sweltering part of summer, let’s offer to Christ and God’s kingdom the work of our sweat and the love found in our tears. (Both sweat and tears are as much a part of Christian living as worship and study or coffee and potlucks.) It is not the kind of victory Churchill had in mind, but it’s the kind of victory that can vanquish an enemy, overcoming evil with good, overcoming hate with love.



what does “sweat and tears” mean to you?
“chitchat” with us on
getUMSocial.com

... well said
(a chance to express what that word means to you.)

BY DARYL WILLIAMS
Pastor, Nottingham Myers, Upper Marlboro

SWEAT AND TEARS do not come easily. They are both produced from the inside of the human body, but not without some sort of outside stimuli that has pushed us to the point that our inner being releases sweat and tears. Sweat and tears never occur in a vacuum.

Sweat and tears are the result of circumstances becoming so extreme that the natural reaction of the body is to release fluid to bring itself back to a point of balance. Sweat and tears are natural, normal and necessary, but always caused by something.

Unfortunately, we are often embarrassed by our sweat and tears. We live in a society that encourages us to hide our true selves behind a facade of happiness and cheer no matter the circumstances that we face. We are taught to “never let them see you sweat,” and to “cry behind closed doors,” only to have our private hurts eventually spill out into the public square when the facade crumbles at the least opportune time.

The truth is, there are going to be times in life when sweat and tears are the only appropriate response to life and we will just have to unashamedly let them flow.

I believe that sweat and tears are part of a healthy life. There are times when the pains of life will be so great that you will need to shed tears. Even Jesus had to shed a tear from time to time because of the circumstances of life. Those tears allowed him and will allow you to keep going in the midst of your pain.

By the same token, sweat will be what flows when you have exerted yourself so much for a cause that you believe is worthy of your all. When Jesus was at the end of his mission, he sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane. Life will sometimes drain you of all you have. That is when you will need your sweat and your tears.

Don’t be afraid to let them flow.

EVENTS

Outstanding Preacher Series

July 14, 21, 28, 9:30, 11:30 a.m.

Foundry UMC, Washington

The preaching series’ theme is “Let Justice Roll Down: Prophetic Words for Our Nation’s Capital.” Preachers will be the Rev. Dr. Peter Storey, Sister Simone Campbell and Matthew Berryman. 202-332-4010.

‘The Shack’ authors to speak

July 12, 7 p.m.

Timonium UMC

William Paul Young, author of “The Shack” and “Crossroads,” and C. Baxter Kruger, author of “The Shack Revisited,” will speak and sign books. Cost is \$30. For tickets, phone 410-252-5500; for questions, contact Trudy Guetler at tgruetler@verizon.net.

JFON’s 10th anniversary

July 14, 8:30, 11 p.m.

First UMC in Hyattsville

Observance of the 10th anniversary of Justice for Our Neighbors, a ministry that assists immigrants with legal needs. For information, contact Cindy Harding at charding8290@yahoo.com.

Baltimore County Christian Workcamp

July 21-26

Hunt’s Memorial UMC, Riderwood

This commuters’ workcamp’s daily mission is to repair homes in the county, for high school age and up. Volunteers may commit for a day or return each day for the week. Visit www.bcchristianworkcamp.org.

Mission U

July 26-28

Marriott Hotel, Bethesda

Formerly called the School of Christian Mission, the training offers classes for everyone, youth and adults, women and men, clergy and laity. Topics are “Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly,” “Roma of Europe,” and “Poverty.” For more information, contact registrar: Darlynn McCrae at 443-254-2083, or darmccrae@yahoo.com.

Early Childhood Educators Conference

Aug. 15, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Calvary UMC, Mt. Airy

The theme will be F.R.O.G., “Fully Rely on God.” The speaker will be the Rev. Laurie Tingley, pastor of Mays Chapel UMC in Timonium. Cost is \$50 per person, includes lunch and all workshop materials. To register, go to www.bwcumc.org and click on the conference under “events.” Last day to register is July 15.

School of Congregational Development Satellite

Aug. 17, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

St. Paul UMC, Oxon Hill

Those who can’t attend the live event in Denver, Aug. 15-18, may wish to attend the Satellite Experience in this conference. Registrants will participate remotely through live and tape-delayed interactive live streaming. Satellite registration is \$49. To learn more go to <http://www.gbod.org/lead-your-church/school-of-congregational-development-2013>.



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Associate Pastors: Investment surpasses expectations

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increase in giving to the church.

Westphalia UMC saw a 35 percent increase in giving by non-pledging but identified givers and a 56 percent increase from unidentified givers; John Wesley had a 27 percent increase in the amount it received from pledges and a 16 percent increase in money received from non-pledging, but identified givers; and Epworth Chapel's pledges went up by 5 percent and its gifts from non-pledging, identified givers went up 166 percent.

While Epworth Chapel brought in 32 new members last year, Rev. Kelly Grimes, the associate pastor, believes her presence has been most felt in the field of



community ministries.

Grimes, who works as a partner with senior pastor, the Rev. C. Anthony Hunt, is primarily in charge of age-level ministries, working with youth, young adults and discipleship.

The community around Epworth is undergoing a transition and Grimes believes the church is doing an outstanding job of community outreach. However, more could be done, she said.

"The way we're growing, this church could probably use two associates," said Grimes. "I could see us having someone whose job would be making more community connections so that the church and community would work together even more. There is so much possibility."

The Rev. Twanda Prioleau is serving as an associate pastor at John Wesley UMC, where the Rev. Bruce Haskins is senior pastor. Haskins has encouraged Prioleau to share in the preaching ministries of the church as well as marrying and baptizing members of the church. But her primary responsibilities are in the areas of hospitality, mission and service.

Having a partner in ministry helps "the overall wellbeing of a pastor and the congregation," she said. It also enables the church to move into the community to share the Gospel in new ways.

For the Rev. Tommy Murray of Asbury UMC in Shepherdstown, W.Va., building relationships with new people and drawing them into worship is one of the most important roles he plays. Murray is responsible for the church's youth ministry and witness ministry, which includes all of the congregation's multi-media ministry. Working with senior pastor, the Rev. Rudy Bropleh, his goal is to have 500 in worship each week.

With Murray's assistance, the church, which is already in the midst of a building program for a multiplex facility, has decided to further expand its outreach efforts, and is starting a new satellite ministry, called Hezekiah's House, in Ranson, W.Va.

Having an associate pastor "can bring a tremendous amount of growth over time," Bropleh said, "but we must continue to be patient."

The success of the Strategic Growth Initiative has prompted conference leaders to expand the number of

According to 2012 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, "the term associate pastor is used as a general term to indicate any pastoral appointment to a local church other than the pastor in charge." The Discipline lists at least 15 different responsibilities of a pastor, which can be clustered into seven major areas:

- **Spiritual leader;**
- **Worship leader, preacher, teacher;**
- **Trainer of laity;**
- **Administrative leader and steward of the congregation's vision ;**
- **Custodian of institutional integrity;**
- **Participant in the United Methodist connection;**
- **Minister to the community.**

participants and add a multicultural dimension.

This year, Asbury UMC, an historic black church in Washington, has brought on the Rev. Adam Bridell, a white pastor, who will work with the Rev. Ianther Mills, Asbury's new lead pastor. Epworth UMC in Gaithersburg has a new associate pastor, Carlos Ramos-Graulau, who will join the Rev. Jennifer Fenner in leading the church's developing Hispanic ministries.

And in Baltimore, four part-time associates will join the Rev. William Chaney at West Baltimore UMC. That team will utilize property from a closed United Methodist church on Johnnycake Road to create a new intentionally multi-cultural faith community along the Route 40 corridor.

Mizo: Fellowship focuses on community and mission

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assisting people as they make sense of American culture.

The Sunday afternoon worship service is in Mizo, although Chhunga will translate for visitors who speak only English. The prayers of the church are lively and loud, but the highlight is often the music.

There is an old saying from a missionary in India, said Chhunga, which goes something like this: "As long as the Mizo people keep loving to sing, the singing of gospel songs will never die."

Chhunga testifies to this love of music. Each week, 30 to 40 young adults meet in his basement for choir rehearsal. "They are wonderful," he said.



The Rev. Biak Chhunga, pastor of the Mizo Fellowship, greets new members of the congregation. The church began with 14 members nine years ago and now has more than 170.

Chhunga is a third generation Christian. His grandfather, he said, was an animist.

"Until the 1900s our people were uncivilized," he said. "They lived in the secluded mountainous area between Burma and India. They were known as headhunters."

Presbyterian missionaries came to Mizoram in 1894. "There was a Great Awakening in the land and, within 60 years, all Mizos became Christians," Chhunga said. Today, many people in the Mizo community hold strong, biblically based views about evil, salvation and the eschaton.

As a United Methodist, Chhunga also teaches them about grace, social action and creating God's heaven on earth. The congregation has become very mission-oriented, sending 10 percent of its funds to ministries in India, Thailand, Nepal, Burma and places across the globe.

Chhunga looks forward to a time when the church has a space of its own. Members are currently involved in fundraising efforts for their own facility.

Sometimes he looks at the events in Myanmar as a lesson in hope. In recent years, human rights and quality of life conditions have improved greatly.

In May, Thein Sein became the first president of Myanmar to visit the White House in 47 years and President Barack Obama praised the nation's efforts along the path to democracy.

This kind of hope may be a part of the Mizo spiritual character, Chhunga said.

In Mizo culture, there is a word that's a bit untranslatable: "*Tlawmngaihna*." It means an obligation of all people in a community to be hospitable, kind, unselfish and caring to others. It sparks service. It also can be a foundation for a fellowship of United Methodists committed to making disciples and transforming the world.

EDITOR'S NOTE: At the annual conference session in May, a resolution on Israel/Palestine came before the members. It called on the Baltimore-Washington Conference to promptly divest their stock holdings from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions and Hewlett Packard until these companies end their involvement in the Israeli occupation. The resolution was tabled. However, a request came from the floor of conference that a forum be created for those interested in sharing opinions and learning more about this topic. A discussion forum has been created at Get Social. Visit <http://getumsocial.com/chitchat> to join the conversation. For those considering this topic, the Mid-Atlantic Foundation reports that at the end of 2012, the equity investments for Baltimore-Washington Conference that were not held with the General Board included the following holdings: Caterpillar - \$60,043; HP - \$8,705; and Motorola - \$690. These investments come to about \$70,000 total.

When it comes to Palestine, ‘we are involved’

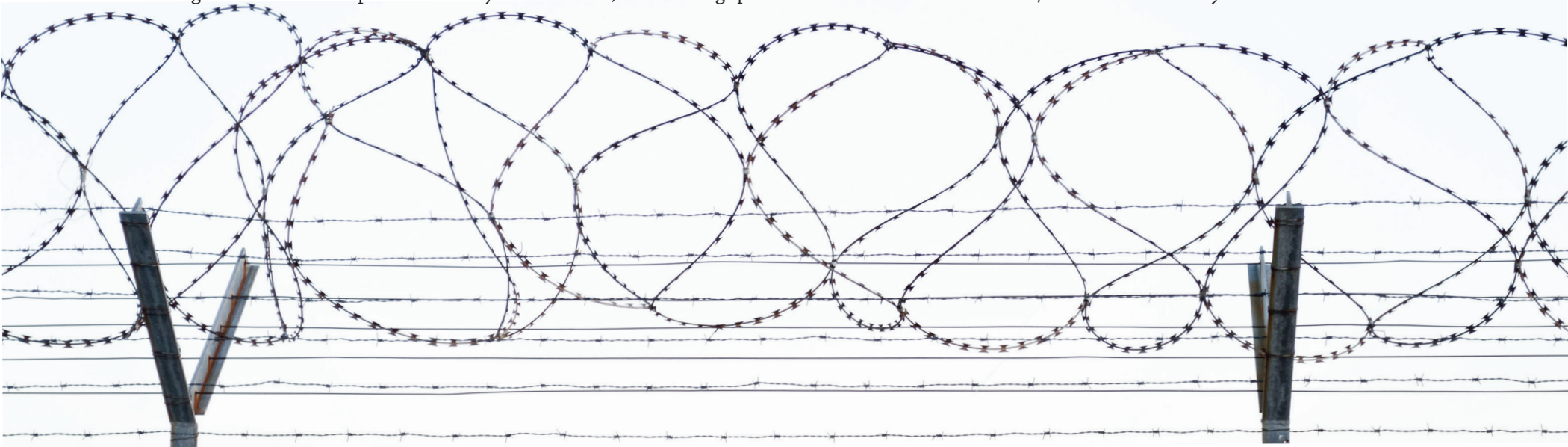
By DAVID HOSEY

I WILL NEVER FORGET her face. The youngest daughter of the Husseini family stood in the rubble of her family home on the Mount of Olives, clutching a stuffed toy. Her home had just been deliberately destroyed by the Israeli military. Her growing family — Palestinian residents of the city of Jerusalem — had been repeatedly denied permits to build a house. They knew why. They were Palestinians, an unwanted population in a city where demographics rule public policy. I had watched the demolition, helpless, just as I watched hundreds and hundreds of other human rights abuses in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Houses destroyed. Grandmothers pushed, shoved, yelled at, made to stand in line for hours at checkpoints to get home or get to a clinic. Farmers cut off from their land by the Wall. A child, shot in the streets of Hebron by the military. From my experience in the Middle East, I’m often asked to interpret why the situation for Palestinians matters to us as people of faith. There are hundreds of general things I could say. I could say that as Christians (and Muslims and Jews) we believe that we are all created in the image of God, and that when we see human suffering we are called to respond. I could say

that, as Christians, the Holy Land has a special place in our hearts, and we should thus take a special interest in this land of three peoples — Israeli Jews, Palestinian Christians, and Palestinian Muslims. I could say that our Palestinian Christian sisters and brothers have plead with us to act, in the Kairos Palestine document and in hundreds and hundreds of solidarity visits, pilgrimages, and fact finding missions. But here is the truth. We — and by we I mean we people of faith, we U.S. citizens, we United Methodists, we members of the Baltimore-Washington Conference — are part of the problem. The young girl standing in the demolished rubble of her home is casting her traumatized, accusing gaze our way, because the bulldozers and communication equipment and checkpoint technology that makes her suffering possible is made by companies from which we profit. And because the military technology that she and her sisters and brothers are terrified of is paid for, to the tune of more than \$3 billion a year, by U.S. taxpayer dollars. Now, I am used to hearing people tell me that my perspective is one sided, that I don’t tell both sides of the story. There is certainly plenty of pain to go around in the land called holy. There are, again, many general things I could say in response, about structural violence, oppression, and power dynamics. But what I want to say, instead, is something specific:

We are involved. We — United Methodists, faithful Christians — are profiting off of companies that actively violate the rights of Palestinian people. We—citizens of the United States — are sending our tax money in the form of billions of dollars of military aid to Israel each year. As if the Middle East needed more weapons. Our involvement is drastically one sided already, weighing the balance against the ability of people like the Husseini family to survive with dignity and abundant life. As United Methodists, as Christians, as people of faith, we should be praying for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine. But we ought not pray for peace while neglecting justice, one of the “weightier matters of the law” (Matt 23:23). To work for peace and to work for justice means to first recognize complicity. We ought not look to the specks in the eyes of “those” Palestinians or “those” Israelis without first examining the log of violence in our own eye (Matt 7:5). Because whether or not we think about it or even know about it, we are involved.

David Hosey is in minsitry at Metropolitan Memorial UMC in Washington as the Campus Outreach Coordinator for American University.



United Methodists should support reconciliation

By RABBI JOSHUA MARTIN SIEGEL

IN SEEKING TO react appropriately to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is important to remember certain often overlooked dynamics.

1. In the Holy Land the past is always present.
2. It is the area that formed Jesus’ teachings.

The “present-ness” of the past reminds us that the kinds of conflict Jesus dealt with (with Pharisees and Sadducees, Hebrews and Romans) are not so different

from those between Israel and the Palestinians. Today there are two peoples trying to co-exist. One, though powerful still feels oppressed because of a long memory of persecution. The other has been oppressed by their own Arab brothers and live in difficult economic conditions. Various oppressed and powerful groups lived in Jesus’ time in the same way. He sought to teach mutual respect, reconciliation and even love between those in conflicts. There are many groups in Israel and Palestine who,

often at great risk, are seeking to continue that work. United Methodists should support these groups -- the ones who are carrying on Jesus’ work in today Middle East where in a unique way, through them, Jesus’ presence can still be experienced. United Methodist investment should support these efforts at reconciliation.

Rabbi Joshua Martin Siegel of Columbia served in recent years as the conference rabbi.

What The United Methodist Church says

IN THE 2012 Book of Resolutions, the United Methodist Church “opposes continued military occupation o f the East Bank Gaza and East Jerusalem, and the confiscation of Palestinian land, and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and any vision of a “Greater Israel” that includes the occupied territories and the world of Jerusalem and its surroundings.” Resolution 6111, on Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land, goes on to say, “we affirm the church’s commitment to nonviolent responses to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and acknowledge he need to hear the voices of all those -- Muslim, Christian and

Jewish -- harmed by the conflict. However, the church does not support a boycott of products made in Israel, nor does it support divestment of funds from Hewlett Packard, Motorola, or Caterpillar. As part of the conversations about divestment, the general boards of Pension and Health Benefits and Global Ministries are creating a Task Force on Human Right and Investments Ethics, to be chaired by Bishop Kenneth Carter. Part of the work of this task force will be to develop and promote a platform for dialogue, proactive investment and other appropriate responses for addressing human rights violations.



New ordinands reflect on prayers and challenges



SHARI MCCOURT – Westminster UMC in Westminster

The most interesting challenge facing The United Methodist Church is to connect and be relevant in people’s lives. At one time in our history the church was the center of the community. The church and its members are now challenged to go into the center of the community in order to relate and become relevant to people. The way we “do” church must change in order be a part of people’s lives and make disciples for Christ. In order to become fishers of people to win them to Christ we will have to cast our nets in places that people “hang out.” Shifting our thinking and net casting through the guidance of the Holy Spirit there is hope of a revival like we have not seen before this time.

I am looking forward to preaching: “The Door Is Open with Possibilities.” This sermon based on the text from Luke 11:1-13. God’s love is available to us like a door open with possibilities.

Today, I pray for God’s peace to surround us and fill us with light, and unconditional love so we as God’s people may be agents of transformation and change in a world so in need of divine grace.

ALICIA VANISKO – Calvary UMC in Annapolis

The most interesting challenge facing The United Methodist Church is discovering how to speak the Good News of Jesus Christ in a way that connects with non- and nominally religious people in a rapidly changing society and world.

The one sermon I’m most looking forward to preaching is a Christmas Eve message, providing the opportunity to help people understand why the incarnation of God is still relevant to their lives today.

Today, I pray that God’s will be done.

MARY KA KANAHAN – St. John UMC in Columbia

One of the greatest challenges facing The United Methodist Church at this time is the need to be relevant, relational and revelatory to all people who are in need of the Living God.

I look forward to preaching on the 17th chapter of John, verses 20 through 26, where Jesus prays for all believers and that his prayer is that “they all may be one.”

Today, I pray for Christ’s love to make us one.

AMANDA SAYERS – Covenant UMC in Montgomery Village

The most interesting challenge facing us is how to take greater risks, and greater leaps of faith, in loving our communities and living out what it means to be the church today. I think it’s not about “being relevant” (shudder) as much as it is really embracing the joy and the world-changing impact of the resurrection in a way that changes people’s lives.

I’m looking forward to preaching a sermon series on Sabbath in the fall, right when things get crazy in the overscheduled and swamped season of our church life (and our community’s life). Living differently as a Christian means embracing rest and renewal, because we can trust God to be God. If Jesus can sleep on a cushion in the back of a storm-tossed little boat, can’t we have a day to rest and honor God, and celebrate God’s gift of life?

Today, I pray for faithfulness.



HARRY SMITH — Oxon Hill UMC in Oxon Hill

The most challenging issue in The United Methodist Church is the continuing chasm that exists between our brothers and sisters regarding race, cultural diversity and sexual orientation. It is my opinion that the divide will continue and widen until we, as United Methodists, are willing to come to the table as the community of faith and engage in the difficult process of open communication, where all can be heard and the only agenda is to be led by God’s Spirit to a place where all of God’s creation are seen as valuable.

The topic of the sermon I’m looking forward to preaching is “Love Somebody.”

Today, I pray for direction in my new appointment.

MARIANNE BROWN – Brookfield Immanuel Charge in Brandywine

One of our greatest challenges is helping young people to recognize and respond to their God-given call to ordained ministry.

The topic of the one sermon I’m most looking forward to preaching is “God’s Gracious Welcome.”

Today, [on Father’s Day] I pray for a dad with brain cancer.

JEN ESCHLIMAN – Glen Mar UMC in Ellicott City

One of the most interesting challenges facing The United Methodist Church is how to offer the world a compelling witness for Christ in the midst of the growing theological diversity of our denomination.

I look forward to preaching a sermon on the politics of Jesus (not to be confused with the book, but I’m sure it will provide great material!)

Today, I pray for those wounded by the Church.

MARTHA MEREDITH – Severna Park UMC

I think our challenge is helping our people learn to tell the story of why following Jesus as Lord and Savior matters to them and to this world. How else will we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?

I’m always looking for how God’s grace answers the troubles of this world. Maybe that’s my one sermon!

Today I pray for God’s kingdom to come.

Copyright infringement can be costly to churches

BY MAIDSTONE MULENGA
UMConnection Staff

WHEN ST. MATTHEWS UMC in Bowie received a Copyright Infringement Notice, the pastor and the members were baffled. What did they do wrong, they wondered. All the pastor did was to include a poem in a sermon and then include it in the sermon transcript on their website. They even acknowledged the poem’s author and attributed it by including a link to her website. They didn’t break any rules, did they?

Yet the church was informed: “Unauthorized publication ... constitutes federal copyright and trademark infringement pursuant to the 17 U.S.C. - 202 and 15 U.S.C. -1111, et seq. It is also a violation of state unfair competition laws.”

Legal correspondence talked of heavy fines and law suits.

What is copyright infringement and what must churches do to avoid it? It’s the unauthorized use of works under copyright, breaching the copyright holder’s exclusive rights, such as the right to reproduce, distribute, display or perform the copyrighted work, or to make derivative works, without permission from the copyright holder.

“As a general matter, copyright infringement occurs when a copyrighted work is reproduced, distributed, performed, publicly displayed, or made into a derivative work without the permission of the copyright owner,” according to the U.S. Copyright Office.

In the case of St. Matthews, the pastor did acknowledge the author of the poem, but did not have formal authorization to put the poem on the church’s website as part of the sermon.

The author’s lawyers pointed out that the publication of the poem on the church’s website made it less likely that a potential consumer would visit the author’s website based on an Internet search for the poem. “In other words, it

diverts traffic and business that would otherwise go to the author’s website, to your website,” the notice read.

What are examples of copyright infringements? How can churches avoid the infringements? Some tips:

- Do not download and share files of music, videos and games without written permission of the copyright owner.
- Do not use other organizations’ logos without written permission.
- Do not scan pictures that have been published and use them without permission.
- Do not use other people’s full-text articles on your website without permission from them.
- Do not download licensed software without the permission of the copyright or license holder.
- Do not make a movie file or a large segment of a movie available on a website without permission of the copyright owner.

During a recent BWC workshop on “Putting the Wow in Worship,” presenter Jason Moore reminded the participants that while churches may perform contemporary songs, they should not reproduce the lyrics in any fashion from a copyrighted music work.

Moore also reminded the participants that the argument for fair use as a rule of thumb may not be the most prudent thing to do. He urged churches to obtain licenses such as CCLI or CVLI in order to circumvent the inability to show motion pictures or display song lyrics.

Yet there still can be pitfalls.

Dean B. McIntyre, the director of music resources at the General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn., has put together resources on how to avoid falling into the copyright trap. (www.gbod.org/lead-your-church/copyright-licensing)

Among the resources is a list of top-10 myths, false beliefs and misperceptions about church music copyright. Top on the list is: “We have a CCLI (other) license.” He

notes that the copyright citation often covers words and music, sometimes even the arrangement or adaptation.

“Users must check the copyright clause to be sure what is protected and what is not protected. ... The license may or may not allow for the reproducing of a copyrighted melody, depending on the desired use. If the song is covered by a user’s license, then generally the words may be reproduced or projected in worship, although not for concert or ticket-sale use,” McIntyre noted

Yet most churches ignore the law because they believe there is no penalty. That is perhaps the biggest myth of the copyright infringement. If a church is found guilty of copyright infringement, there are severe penalties.

St. Matthews was not only ordered to take down the poem and to destroy any marketing or literature regarding the poem, but also to pay a hefty compensation for the infringement in the thousands of dollars.

Federal law allows the copyright owners to automatically recover statutory damages of up to \$30,000 for each violation, and courts may add other punitive damages of up to \$150,000 if it is determined that the infringement was intentional or willful.

One way courts can find that the infringement was intentional is when a church continues to publish copyrighted material after receiving a letter from the copyright owner requesting the removal of copyrighted material from the publication.

So before you put that poem on the website or in your church newsletter, check on the copyright. Before you put those lyrics on the screen during the worship service, make sure it is covered in your license.

When in doubt, take this counsel, inspired by Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not think you have full understanding of the law. In all your ways acknowledge the author who has been blessed by God to produce such work, and God will make straight your presentations and publications.”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Neighbors share the stage together

BETHESDA – Bethesda UMC and its neighbor across Old Georgetown Road, Congregation Beth El, a Conservative Synagogue, have been friends for years. The Jewish congregation got its start, in part, while meeting in the church basement in the early 50s.

Recently they joined their music departments together to present “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.” Joseph was played by Beth El’s



Members of Bethesda UMC and Beth El Synagogue rehearse for “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.”

cantor, Hazzan Klein, who also co-directed the show with Bethesda’s Music Director, David Fanning. The cast and crew were evenly split between the groups and rehearsals moved back and forth between the two congregations.

When asked why they did the joint effort, Fanning and Klein enthusiastically embraced the idea and opportunity. “The animating principal in everything we do, behind every decision we make, is for this to be a shared experience,” they agreed.

The mixed cast performed twice June 2 on the stage at Bethesda UMC. The free will offering went to Bethesda Cares, an organization both congregations support throughout the year.

Church needs to interpret health care changes

BALTIMORE – The Rev. Janet Craswell, from Salem UMC in Brookeville, was one of about 150 faith leaders

who gathered for Maryland’s Health Care Summit this spring.

State officials and health advocates stressed the importance of the religious community in spreading information about how to get insurance under the sweeping changes. “Our faith communities could not be more important to this effort,” said Rep. Elijah Cummings.

Craswell agreed, saying, “We are dealing with people week to week and we’re also dealing with people at the point of crisis where they’re in hospitals and in hospice and having to deal with major life issues.”

She recommends church leaders learn more about Maryland Health exchanges, marketplaces where people and small businesses can choose among benefit plans offered by private insurers. The state expects to enroll 180,000 people into health insurance and an additional 100,000 through Medicaid expansion.

“We absolutely cannot do that without the support of the faith community to do the outreach, to educate all Marylanders on why it’s important for everybody to have health insurance,” said Rebecca Pearce, executive director of the Maryland Health Connection. Maryland currently has about 740,000 uninsured residents.

Camping kicks into high gear

KNOXVILLE – It’s summer camping time and the conference’s camps at West River, Harmison and Manidokan are ready. They offer many opportunities for chil-



The climbing wall is a challenge for boys and girls.

dren and young people to share in the outdoors, make friends and grow spiritually. Manidokan is offering a new zipline this summer, and all camps offer activities on the water. For more information, visit <http://www.bwcumc.org/camperships>.

Church equips trailer for disaster response

HAGERSTOWN – When the Otterbein UMC Church Council accepted Gary Wright’s proposal at the end of



Otterbein UMC’s new disaster response trailer is now ready.

January for the church to buy and fully equip an Early Response Trailer, the whole church got involved. It took only four months to raise the money to purchase the \$12,000 trailer and equip it.

The Early Response Trailer fulfills the conference wishes to have such a trailer in each of the four regions, said Cindy Brown, Otterbein’s program director.

The church set aside Tuesdays as work nights to frame and outfit the trailer. Denny Grove, a church member, worked with Lowe’s to get the supplies. The company is now requesting the corporate offices to consider it as a “Lowe’s Heroes” project.

Besides the trailer itself, the church has trained 26 team members to be ready as early responders when disaster strikes.

The trailer, emblazoned with Otterbein’s name and the United Methodist cross and flame logo, will get a test run when the church takes it on a VIM trip to Kentucky this month. “It will witness to many as the miles unfold to Kentucky and back,” Brown said.

Boy Scouts explore diversity, inclusion and faith

BY LINDA WORTHINGTON
UMConnection Staff

THE BOY SCOUTS of America approved a new policy May 23 to accept gay Scouts into their troops, a policy that takes effect Jan. 1, 2014. Repercussions are starting now, but a new God and World award, created by the Rev. Ken Lyons, is also teaching Scouts about diversity, inclusion and faith.

Locally, said Lyons, director of the Baltimore-Washington Conference’s Scouting Ministries, churches that sponsor Scout troops seem most intent on serving the youth and keeping the Scouting program focused on what’s best for the Scouts.

However, that’s not the case everywhere. One United Methodist church in Indiana decommissioned its Scout Troop because of the new policy. The Southern Baptist Convention delegates approved a resolution June 12, which expressed “opposition to and disappointment in the decision of the Boy Scouts of America to change its membership policy.”

At the same time, the General Commission on United Methodist Men, which oversees the denomination’s Scouting ministries, invited Southern Baptist church Scouts to find a home in United Methodist churches. “They are welcoming Scouts, leaders and their families to join existing or new Cub Scout packs and Boy Scout troops hosted and staffed in United Methodist churches,” said Gil Hanke, the GCUMM’s top executive.

“Scouting’s policy prohibits any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of scouting age,” said Larry Coppock, director of Scouting ministry for the denomination, “and (it) requires all members to demonstrate behavior that exemplifies the highest level of good conduct and respect for others. If any inappropriate actions were to occur, the chartering church would deal with the individuals in accordance with Safe Sanctuary and/or BSA Youth Protection policies,” he said.

Scouting is a significant ministry in United Methodism, run almost entirely by volunteers. U.S. Scouting has 2.7 million youth members, with 70 percent of the Scout units chartered to religiously affiliated groups, such as 6,700 United Methodist churches. The UMC is second only to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) in the number of congregations that host Scout groups. United

Methodists have more Cub Scout packs than any other religious group.

Two Councils make up most of the Baltimore-Washington Conference – the National Capital Area Council and the Baltimore Area Council. Between them, there are approximately 400 units of Boy Scouts (including Cub Scouts) with 7,900 leaders and 12,500 youth. Parts of Southern and Western Maryland additionally have their own units and membership, according to Lyons, the voice of BWC’s Scouting ministry.



The Rev. Ken Lyons created a new God and World Scout award.

Some congregations or clergy may not approve of the new BSA policy while others applaud it. However, Lyons said, no Baltimore-Washington Conference church has withdrawn its support of Scouting,

“For good or ill, the new Scout policy resembles The United Methodist Church policy of welcoming homosexual persons into their faith communities while excluding them from the ordained ministry,” said Rich Peck, a UMM staff member.

Scouting ministries give local congregations the opportunity to mentor children and youth in the areas of spiritual and character development, Lyons said. One

way this is done is through the P.R.A.Y. awards, designed to earn emblems at four different age levels from grades 1 through 12.

The P.R.A.Y. groups (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth), formerly called God and Country, are ecumenical, as are most Boy Scout units, including those that meet within United Methodist churches.

Lyons is the new national president of P.R.A.Y. “We’re like one church, even though we’re many religious communities,” he said.

P.R.A.Y. is explicitly Christian and includes many lessons on the relationship of the individual to God and the church. For instance, in the Middle School level, Scouts will include a “journey to meet Jesus, worship God, and witness and minister for Christ,” says a program brochure.

The idea is to get to know one’s own religious community, which today is largely diverse. The Scouts meet each other – Baptist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Orthodox – and grow in understanding of how much they have in common, Lyons said.

Another religious-centered award is the Baltimore Area Council’s Interfaith Committee’s “God and the World” award. It was authored by Lyons. Its stated purpose is to help Scouts “gain knowledge, understanding and respect for the religious beliefs, customs and practices of others.”

The award is open to any Scout regardless of one’s faith or religious affiliation. It is “the only religious award that allows everyone, regardless of denomination or religion, to get together,” Lyons said. “That’s unique.”

Though currently any qualifying Scout can earn the God and the World award, it must be given by the Baltimore Area Council. But that may soon change, as more and more Scouts and Scout troops are asking to have it available; even the Girl Scouts are considering it. Lyons expects it to pass muster with the National Council of Boy Scouts at the next national Jamboree this summer.

One part of earning the award requires a Scout to visit religious places of worship or assembly not their own, and talk with the leader (clergy, rabbi, imam) about his or her faith and its beliefs and practices. Like the P.R.A.Y. award, but on an interfaith scale, the God and the World award opens the door to learning about the community in which one lives, and to “find out how much they have in common,” Lyons said. “You soon discover that all religions believe in love and peace.”

History commission reflects on church’s EUB heritage

BY MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

APRIL 23, 1968, was a memorable occasion for Bishop Joseph Yeakel, who at that time was serving as General Secretary of the Board of Evangelism for the Evangelical United Brethren Church. In one day, Yeakel jokes, he brought 10,289,000 United Methodists into the church.

Bishop Yeakel reflected on this historic union of the Methodist and EUB churches and the creation of United Methodism on June 22 at the annual meeting of the Baltimore-Washington Conference historical society.

The meeting was held at Otterbein UMC in Hagerstown, a former EUB congregation at which Yeakel preached his first sermon from the church’s pulpit 61 years ago.

The bishop discounted charges from some Methodists, who before 1968, predicted that the union of the two denominations would be “like a hiccup in a windstorm.”

Members of the EUB Church, made up of a merger between the Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in 1946, were often known as the German Methodists, said the Rev. Emora Brannan, director of the historical society.

As early as 1810, overtures were made about uniting, Brannan said. It wasn’t until Nov. 1, 1969, in this area, that a uniting session was held, joining the EUBs and Methodists into The United Methodist Church. Ninety-two EUB churches with 21,841 members were added to the Baltimore Conference, bringing the total membership to 256,060.

Yeakel celebrated the variety of people who served in the church over the years and the gifts they brought to United Methodism, creating a more diverse, richer connection.

He also challenged those present to be aware that the church is needed more today than ever, as increasing numbers of people identify themselves as “spiritual but not religious.” He urged all those present to help people accept the possibilities of Christ.

“If we ever lose touch with the centrality of Christ, we’ll be in deep trouble as the church,” he said.

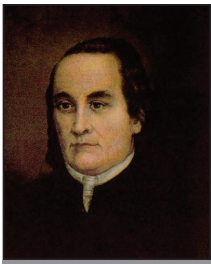
Those present at the historical society’s meeting also noted that this is the bicentennial of the death of Bishop Philip Otterbein, the founder and first bishop of the United Brethren in Christ and a good friend of Francis Asbury, who assisted at Asbury’s ordination at the Christmas Conference in 1784.

A formal celebration of Otterbein’s life will be held at Old Otterbein UMC in Baltimore on Nov. 17. Old Otterbein UMC is the mother church of the United Brethren in Christ and Otterbein is buried in the churchyard. The interior of the church, its website notes, has been remodeled at various times, but the sanctuary remains the oldest in continuous use in Baltimore and the only extant eighteenth century church in the city.

Members of the historical society also noted that next year will be the sesquicentennial of the creation of the racially segregated Washington Conference and the emancipation of slaves in Maryland.

In 2016, United Methodists will observe the 200th anniversary of the death of its first bishop, Francis Asbury, who is buried in the Bishop’s Plot at Mt. Olivet cemetery in Baltimore.

Following the meeting, members of the Commission on Archives and History took a tour of historic EUB sites in the area.



Bishop Philip Otterbein



Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel tells the story of the EUB and Methodist union at a recent Commission on Archives and History meeting.

God’s Project: Area church ignites a ministry of education

By LUKONDE MULENGA
Special to the UMConnection

IN A SMALL building in the Ngombe Township of Lusaka, Zambia, a country located in South Central Africa, God’s Project is in full swing. Laughter and learning erupt and confirm that something good is happening in that place, something that had its start 7,698 miles away in Silver Spring, Maryland.

In the past year, the Good Shepard School has brought the joy of learning to 66 students, instilling the same love of learning the school’s founder, Muchona Mangatila, had while he went through school and continues to have to this day.

Mangatila marvels that it all started when members of one church in the Baltimore-Washington Conference decided that they could make a difference.

In 2005, members of Glenmont UMC in Silver Spring started to sponsor the education costs for children in need in Ngombe Township. After starting the education sponsorship program, the members soon realized that there was a need for books, said Jeanne Niebel, who led the ministry.

To obtain enough reading material for the children they sponsored, the church had a book drive. Glenmont UMC received more books than expected as word of the book drive spread, getting the attention of organizations such as the Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation.

Niebel’s home, which served as a collection point, brimmed with books and when they were shipped to Zambia, it became clear that a place needed to be built to house all of them.

By God’s grace, Niebel said, Glenmont UMC raised enough money to build such a place, giving life to the Ngombe Township Reading Center.

The Reading Center evolved into a library, opening its doors for all to visit.

In 2008, Mangatila came by the Reading Center and loved what he saw; the fact that there were so many

books around amazed him. His love for reading made his visits to the center quite frequent, leading to his hiring as director of the Ngombe Township Reading Center.

As director of the Reading Center, he made the center come alive, helping many residents with their reading.

In 2011, Mangatila felt a stronger calling from God: he knew he had to do something about the high illiteracy rate in the Ngombe Township. With the help of members from Glenmont UMC, the director started the Good Shepard School in 2012 with 10 students,



Students learn to read in the Ngombe Township in Lusaka, Zambia.

eventually expanding as more children were enrolled in the school’s program.

The students, whose ages run between 3 and 13, are placed into one of the school’s four classes. Out of the 66 students that attend Good Shepard School, 30 of them are considered vulnerable or orphaned and attend free of charge. The other 36 students are required to pay some school fees as their families are able to afford them.

For the students that attend free of charge, their costs are offset from donations that come into the school. The classes which the students attend are filled with learning and fun and the teachers that run the classes are patient and encourage student involvement.

The director has plans to expand the school so that it has classes from the first grade to the seventh grade, making the school achieve full primary school (elementary school in the United States) status.

With 66 students in only a year, some might say that business is booming for the school already and an expansion isn’t really needed.

But Mangatila, speaking about his calling to help others, said, “Since I dedicated my life to Christ, I had stopped living my own life – doing the stuff that I want to do – but I wait upon the Lord to give me direction. I have dedicated myself fully to this project because it gives me an opportunity to serve others.”

When asked how others can help their own communities prosper, Mangatila said, “People who want to help their own communities prosper must always put the welfare of their community as their number one priority by being ready to sacrifice their time and energies in finding solutions to the various challenges facing their communities.”

During the recent session of annual conference, Bishop Marcus Matthews called upon all the churches of the Baltimore-Washington Conference to strive to be prayer stations.

At Glenmont and in Zambia, they pray for the children, for the books and for the learning that unfolds as a result of their partnership.

But they’ve also learned that prayers can be more than words and good intentions. Being a prayer station can also be about seeing a need, seeking guidance and then acting upon the guidance received. You never know: your church could be the answer to somebody’s prayers.

To donate to the Good Shepard School, you can write a check made out to Glenmont United Methodist Church with a memo stating, “Good Shepherd School” Zambia. Checks can be sent to: Jeanne Niebel at 2001 Kings Forest Trail, Mt Airy, MD 21771. Lukonde Mulenga is a student at the University of Michigan.

Metaphors spice up message and put ‘wow in worship’

By MELISSA LAUBER
UMConnection Staff

W E NORTH AMERICANS live in a visual culture. On countless computer, television, cell phone and movie screens, Americans are confronted with an estimated 5,000 visual messages each day -- except on Sundays, when an ability to communicate visually often stops at the church door.

On June 14 and 15, Jason Moore spoke to local church leaders at the Baltimore-Washington Conference Mission Center in Fulton in an effort to help them understand visual culture and use it more effectively in worship.

“We in the church may have new media, but we have old mindsets,” said Moore, a founding partner of Midnight Oil Productions in Ohio. “We are still stuck in an old world of text and analysis. If we can discover the power and potential of story and metaphor we can transform how we communicate in worship.”

While not absolutely essential, a large screen and quality projector are vital elements to “putting the ‘wow’ in worship,” Moore said. But once a church invests \$4,000 or more in a big screen and related items, the realization dawns that creating image-centered worship involves the whole worship experience, from entering the church parking lot on through until Monday morning, and that the large screen demands new, fresh content each week.

To help provide a steady stream of creative content, Moore recommends embracing the idea of metaphor to illustrate each worship experience. Metaphor, he explained, “is a tangible way of expressing an abstract story, thought or idea.”

For example, there are cross roads, beacons of hope, open doors, bread for the journey, the ripple effect and a thousand other common spiritual images and illuminated ideas. Potential metaphors are endless.

Moore recommends finding the metaphor that fits that week’s Scripture passage or theme and developing compelling images that illustrate that metaphor for the screen and other aspects of worship in order to bring that Gospel message to life in new ways.

Metaphor, Moore said, makes the message easier to remember and when we encounter that metaphor again in our daily lives, we encounter the Gospel again. When everyday metaphors are redeemed, “the culture becomes a reminder of the Gospel.”

Some worship teams may encounter opposition to creating image-centered worship from individuals in their congregations. It’s important, however, to pick special Sundays to “raise the bar”; don’t expect to do this every Sunday; pick a Sunday each quarter, he said.

Other tips for developing congregational support offered by Moore include:

- demonstrate, don’t debate;
- hold mandatory, short technical rehearsals each week so that the equipment never detracts from the message and participants know how to make quick and smooth transitions;
- do one thing well and be diligent.

In addition to projecting song lyrics on the screen (with permission--see story, p. 6), preferably in front of an image that ties in with the theme of the morning, Moore recommends using the screen to display highlights of the Scripture passage; announcements, provided they are new and fresh each week; photos that serve as sermon illustrations; and video testimonies and

Resources for creating visual worship

Midnight Oil Productions – <https://midnightoilproductions.com/>

Software for worship presentations

ProPresenter worship software – www.renewedvision.com/

MediaShout – www.mediashout.com/EasyWorship

EasyWorship – www.easyworship.com/

Movie Clips for worship

Screenvue - www.screenvue.com

Wingclips - www.wingclips.com

Sermon Spice - <http://www.sermonspice.com>

Worship House Media - www.worshiphousemedia.com/

(As a general rule, don't play movie clips longer than two minutes, 30 seconds.)

Stock photography

iStock Photo – www.istockphoto.com

Dreamstime – www.dreamstime.com

PhotoSpin – www.photospin.com

Stock.XCHNG – www.Sxc.hu (free images)

Stock music

Audiojungle – <http://audiojungle.net/>

Shockwave-sound – www.shockwave-sound.com/

mission moments from members.

The sky’s the limit, but it’s important that worship leaders remember that the screen is not a giant piece of paper, Moore said. It’s a canvas to enable people to encounter a living God.

His company, Midnight Oil (<https://midnightoilproductions.com/>), provides media packages to assist churches. However, Moore also dismisses the idea that people can’t do this on their own. “If we are created in God’s image, he said, “then each of us is innately creative.”

