

Volume 17 • Number 3

Summer 2014

UM MEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men



**I was in prison
and you visited me**

A letter from the General Secretary

What's holding you?

If you want to watch someone struggle not to look stunned or surprised, mention that you spent last night in prison. Or that you are planning on going to prison later this week.

I can assure you it is a great conversation starter and, more importantly, a way for you to describe a transformative ministry to the least, last and lost. Your presence in any type of prison ministry will be life changing for you and for those you serve.

Obviously this is the subject for most of this issue, but for just a few minutes I would like for you to consider a more personal issue. What holds you? What keeps you from freedom? Is it debt, a violent temper, addiction, lust, envy, work, porn, anger or . . . ?

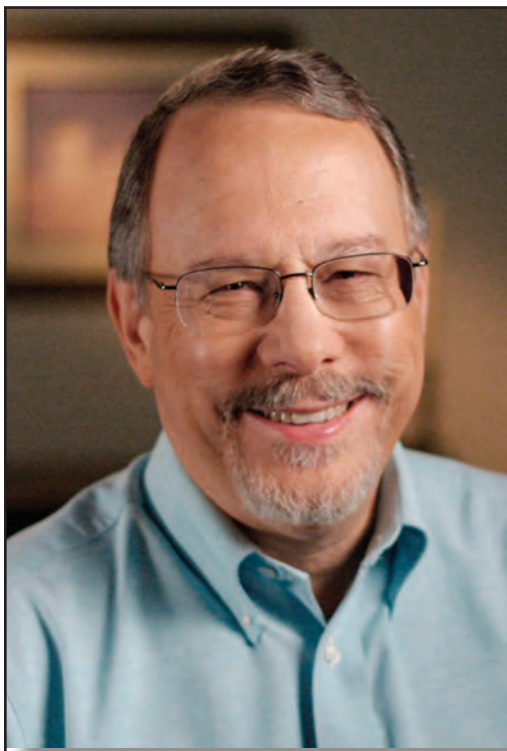
One of my favorite hymns is "Spirit Song" (UMH 347). The first verse challenges me each time I sing it: "O let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love. Let him fill your heart and satisfy your soul. O let him have the things that hold you, and his Spirit like a dove will descend upon your life and make you whole."

So what is "holding" you and me at this given moment? What separates us from that Spirit waiting to make us whole?

I invite you, as you read these articles, to join me in that question.

Yes, the men and women in prisons near you are held by walls and fences and they long for freedom.

And it is clear that their actions have caused this isolation. We are comfortable making that statement about "them." But we too are held; we



too can be set apart by ourselves by our actions. The irony is that what "holds" us, gets in the way of our accepting that full relationship with Christ who longs to hold us.

Stay in touch; please allow us to serve you, your men's and scouting ministries, your church, district and conference. Tell us about your successes and let us help you through your challenges.

Gil Hanke
General Secretary
General Commission on
United Methodist Men

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



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Vol. 17, No. 3 Summer 2014

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General Commission on United Methodist Men

UMMen magazine is published four times a year, winter, spring, summer and fall by GCUMM:
General Commission on United Methodist Men
1000 17th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37212
(866) 297-4312
Internet address: <http://www.gcumm.org>

Publisher: Gilbert C. Hanke
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Graphic Design: Parris Printing
Change of Address:
Send the mailing label with your new address to:
UMMen
1000 17th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37212
(615) 340-7145
Allow six weeks for changes.

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Advertisements in *UMMen* do not constitute endorsement by *UMMen*, General Commission on United Methodist Men or The United Methodist Church. Advertisers and their agencies assume liability for all content of advertisements printed or representations made therein.

Subscription: Subscriptions are \$25 a year (4 issues). Bulk subscriptions available.
Send check or money order to:

UMMen
Subscription Fulfillment
P.O. Box 440515
Nashville, TN 37244-0515
(615) 340-7145

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UM Men

Summer 2014

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



On July 18, 1738, Charles Wesley and a friend named Bray spent an entire night witnessing to prisoners who would be executed in the morning.

The pair told the inmates at Newgate Prison about the crucifixion of Jesus and the promise he made to the thief on a cross next to him.

The next day, Wesley accompanied the men as they were loaded onto a cart.

Ropes were fastened around the prisoner's necks so that when the cart was driven off, the men were left hanging.

"They were all cheerful; full of comfort, peace, and triumph; assuredly persuaded Christ had died for them, and waited to receive them into paradise," wrote Wesley in his *Journal* (Vol. 1, 120-123).

I can't imagine the courage it took for Wesley and his friend to spend the night with the prisoners. They were unsupervised and the inmates had nothing to lose if they killed one or both. Wesley also had no training in prison ministry and I have to believe he would have preferred to be home with his family.

It seems clear, God commanded Wesley to go to the prison, and God provided him with the words to say.

In 1778, the Methodist Conference asked every Methodist preacher to minister to those who were incarcerated.

Since that time, United Methodists have questioned cultural attitudes that make retribution the sole purpose of imprisonment.

Our Social Principles oppose criminal justice systems that are designed to

simply punish offenders. The principles call for the retributive system to be replaced by a restorative justice system that holds offenders accountable to those who have been victimized and to the disrupted communities.

"Through God's transforming power, restorative justice seeks to repair the damage, right the wrong, and bring healing to all involved, including the victim, the offender, the families, and the community. The Church is transformed when it responds to the claims of discipleship by becoming an agent of healing and systemic change." — ¶164 H of the 2012 Book of Discipline

The rate of recidivism shows the futility of retributive justice.

A report by the secretary of corrections in Pennsylvania shows approximately 6 in 10 released inmates are rearrested or re-incarcerated within three years of release from prison, and "overall recidivism rates have been stable over the last ten years."

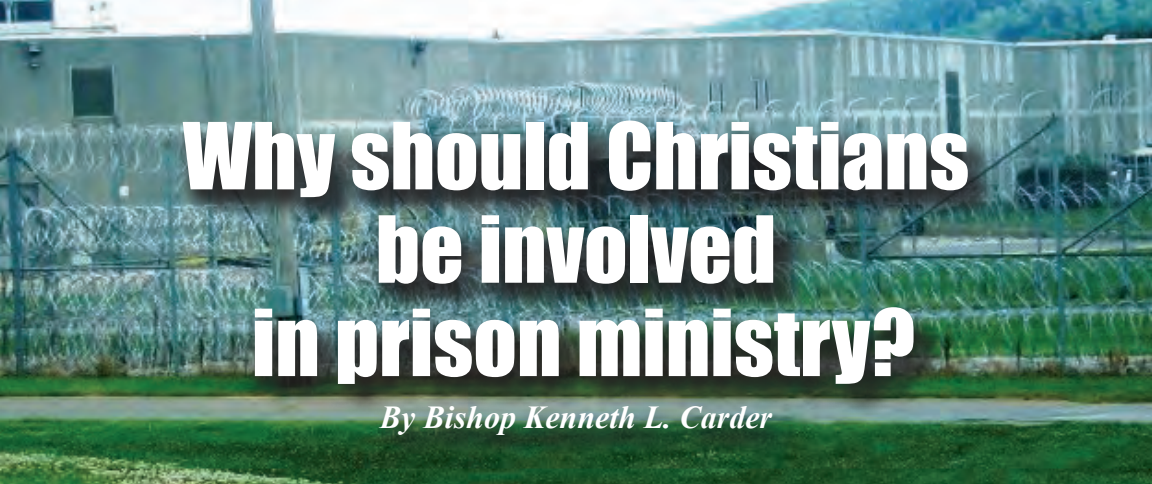
One of the main reasons for the high rate of recidivism is the absence of activities designed to transform lives.

UM Men participate in restorative justice efforts by participating in Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries, mentoring children of incarcerated parents through Amachi, and welcoming ex-inmates into their churches following their release from prisons.

The Commission on UM Men is the only agency in the denomination specifically charged with the responsibility to provide resources for men engaged in restorative justice and prison ministries (¶2302.4h of the 2012 Discipline).

We hope that this issue of *UM Men* magazine will serve as one of those resources.

Rich Peck



Why should Christians be involved in prison ministry?

By Bishop Kenneth L. Carder

Federal District Judge Frank B. Wilson, a widely respected jurist and an active United Methodist, delivered the laity address at the 1968 session of the Holston Annual Conference.

His address shaped my life and ministry over succeeding decades.

The judge, who sentenced scores of persons to prison, including Jimmy Hoffa, declared that pastors should be as familiar with the inside of the local jail or prison as with the local hospital. He added that patients in the hospital are surrounded by staff and equipment devoted to their healing and restoration to the community. On the other hand, inmates behind barbed wire and electrified fences are locked in cage-like rooms with limited visitation from the outside world.

Judge Wilson reminded the gathering that in the Parable of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-45), Jesus included the incarcerated among those in whom we meet God.

The judge hit a vocational nerve when he asserted that pastors routinely include hospitals and nursing homes in their daily or weekly visitation schedules. “Regretably,” he added, “few pastors include visiting jails and prisons as a pastoral responsibility; and congregations who have visitation programs for prisoners are rare.”

Nearby jail

As a young pastor, I had never been inside a jail or prison, even though the county jail was located within two miles of the church I served. I drove past it regularly on my way to the hospital. It was closer than the nursing home where I visited members of my congregation on at least a monthly schedule.

I practiced ministry as though Jesus’ list of identified people to be included in the circle of compassionate ministry—the hungry, naked, thirsty, sick, and imprisoned—represented multiple choice options for mission engagement. Food pantries, clothing closets, and attentiveness to the sick were integral to my congregation’s life, but not prisons.

Judge Wilson’s laity address convicted me!

I made my first visit to a jail in 1968. I assumed I was called to take Christ behind the barbed wire and concrete and steel.

Immediately I learned that the Risen Christ was already behind the walls waiting for me to join his reconciling and transforming presence among the incarcerated.

Captivity in the Hebrew and Greek testaments

According to Scripture, God has a special involvement with those who are in captivity.

God's decisive act of salvation in the Old Testament is the liberation of the Hebrew people from Egyptian forced confinement. Many of God's servants in the Old Testament were imprisoned, including Joseph and Jeremiah. When the Babylonians forced the people of Israel into exile, God visited and restored them. God is depicted in the Psalms and the prophets as setting free those who are in prison.

Jesus, the incarnation of God, announced his mission using the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives. . ." (Luke 4:18). His cousin, John the Baptist, was imprisoned and executed. Three years after launching his public ministry, Jesus was arrested, abused, and executed with two convicted felons. Among his last spoken words was a word of solidarity and promise to one of the condemned, "Today you will be with me in paradise."

Much of the New Testament was written from prison. Paul, the major author of the New Testament, wrote often from a prison cell or on his way to or from prison.

The Book of Revelation with its spectacular vision of "the new heaven and new earth" was composed while John was imprisoned on the island of Patmos.

Indeed, prison cells seem to be a prevalent location of God's redemptive presence and revelation.

Special need in prisons

People in prison uniquely need the presence of those who embody the good news of God's love, forgiveness, reconciliation and transformation.

A young man I met during my 1968 visit to the county jail had tattoos on both upper arms. One read "Born to Lose" and the other "Born to Raise

Hell." He saw himself as a loser with a life's purpose of creating pain and hurt. How could he accept his identity as a beloved child of God with the purpose of sharing in God's work in the world?

Prisons are filled with men and women who have known abuse, rejection, violence and vengeance. Yes, they have made wrong choices and need the message of forgiveness and redemption. But such concepts are pious abstractions unless they are embodied in persons who love them, forgive them, and share their journey toward a new identity, new family, and new future. We Christians call it "incarnation." We do in the prisons what God did in Jesus Christ for all of humanity; we become flesh (tabernacle) and dwell among the lost, alienated, and broken.

Our own prisons

We, too, are guilty, alienated, and guilty!

We are imprisoned by habits, attitudes, relationships, and actions which distort our identity as God's children, made in the divine image. We, too, need forgiveness. We long to belong! We want to make a difference!

We reach for a new future! In Jesus Christ, God has redeemed us all—prisoners and non-prisoners—and broken down all barriers, even between the incarcerated and the church visitors. Therefore, we are visiting family in prison.

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews expressed it best: "Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourself were being tortured" (13:3).

God goes with us

I recall my first jail visit more than 45 years ago. I was scared and inadequately equipped by temperament, training, or

experience.

I stopped by the church to pray for courage and guidance.

The sheriff provided an orientation, but I was still afraid and hesitant.


I entered the cellblock, naively assuming that I was bringing God into the jail. But I soon experienced what we Wesleyans call "prevenient grace". God was already present, waiting to bless me as I entered relationships with brothers and sisters whom God loves and for whom Christ died!

What God commands, God empowers us to fulfill! The admonition to visit those in prison is covered with the promise that we will be equipped to do so.

The answer

Christians should be involved in prison ministry because Jesus asks us to do so.

People who live in prisons are beloved children of God and our brothers and sisters who need the Gospel.

Jesus promises to meet us there. 



Bishop Carder was elected to the episcopacy in 1992. At the time he was the pastor of the Church Street U.M.C. in Knoxville, Tenn. He was assigned to the

Nashville Episcopal Area, and he was assigned to the Mississippi Area in 2000 where he served until retiring in 2004. He now serves as the Ruth W. and A. Morris Williams, Jr., Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the Practice of Christian Ministry, Duke Divinity School, Durham, N.C., and as Senior Visiting Professor of Wesley Studies at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC.

Incarceration in the United States

According to a federal report, the United States criminal justice system is the largest in the world. At the end of 2011, approximately 7 million individuals were under some form of correctional control in the United States, including 2.2 million incarcerated in federal, state, or local prisons and jails.

The U.S. incarcerates 6 to 10 times as many people as any other industrialized country in the world.


Racial minorities are more likely than white Americans to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted; and once convicted, they are more likely to face stiff sentences.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, African-American males are six times more likely to be incarcerated than white males and 2.5 times more likely than Hispanic males.

If current trends continue, one of every three black American males born today can expect to go to prison in his lifetime, as can one of every six Latino males compared to one of every 17 white males.

Ninety-four percent of inmates will someday return to their communities.

Since 1991, the rate of violent crime in the U.S. has fallen by 20%, while the number of people in prison or jail has nearly doubled. In the past two decades, more than 1,000 new prisons and jails have been built in the U.S. at the cost of billions of dollars while 14 million children live in poverty.

The U.S. criminalizes acts that in other countries require community service, drug treatment or are not considered criminal. Three-quarters of prisoners have a history of drug or alcohol abuse and one-sixth have a history of mental illness. 

How DISCIPLE Bible Study came to be and where it is going

By Bishop Richard Wilke

Years ago, when I conducted a funeral in my little country church, we would then go to the cemetery for the burial. I would look at the folks—Lutherans, Methodists, non-churched—and I'd suggest, "Let's say the 23rd Psalm together." And they'd do it.

Years later in the city, I quit that approach; folks couldn't say it. They didn't know the Psalm. Those who test college students today say that 70% of incoming students cannot name four of the Ten Commandments. A high majority cannot name the four Gospels.

When I first began to realize how ignorant of the Bible most American people are today, I started new adult Sunday school classes—23 of them. I asked a dedicated church member to teach a class, and he scolded me saying I'd have to spend a year teaching him the Bible before he would attempt it.

Delayed birth

So I had a great idea: go to the publishing house and propose a serious adult Bible study, the kind where you read at home daily and meet together for discussion once a week.

Guess what; they laughed at me. They claimed that Americans wouldn't study that hard—and Methodists weren't interested in the Bible. My wife and I drove home with tears in our eyes.

But, a decade later, they called us back, and DISCIPLE Bible Study was born.

With the help of scholars like Dr. Albert Outler of Southern Methodist University and Dr. Lee Keck of Yale, we tried to imitate John Wesley's "class meetings"—small study prayer-share groups—six to a dozen people, often

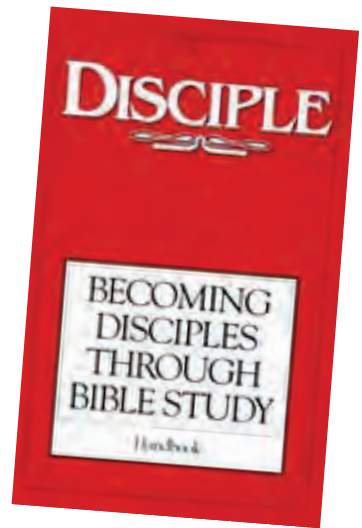
led by a lay person. We remembered Acts 2:42 where they met in homes and "devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings, the breaking of bread, the fellowship, and prayer."

DISCIPLE Bible Study has private daily readings in addition to group life where people share their hopes and fears, their failures and achievements. Fortified by videos and scholars but led by "facilitators" rather than teachers, the movement exploded.

We had a brilliant editor, Nellie Mosier; we worked hard writing a study manual, and we set up training events with Winnie Grizzle and others: we wanted prayerful daily Scripture readings. We wanted discussion in the small groups, not lectures.

Next chapter

After a couple of years, the publishing house called another consultation. People were asking, "What is next?" Good grief, we had studied the whole Bible! Then SMU Old Testament professor, Dr. Bill Power, spoke up and reminded us that the Jews divide their Hebrew scriptures (our Old Testament) into three distinct parts: The Law (Pentateuch), the Prophets, and the Writings. Suddenly the light in our minds went on. What if



we had three subsequent studies, going into more depth in those three areas! The results are phenomenal. About three million people around the world have studied DISCIPLE—many of them working through all four studies.

Around the world

I'll never forget going to Singapore. They were excited and claimed they could even translate the scholarly films using professional translators who translated the John Wayne movies. Later the folks in Singapore took DISCIPLE into Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, and even mainland China.

We went to Moscow. They welcomed us with open arms. They were quick to translate DISCIPLE into Russian. In a post-Communist society, they said small Bible study groups were the best evangelistic tool for them. German and Spanish translations also became available.

Great testimonies abound. Some people are going to seminary; some are teaching Sunday school or leading church ministries. A powerful witness came from a lawyer in Dallas. He looked me right in the eye and said, "I was baptized as a baby but never went to church until I married my wife. She dragged me to DISCIPLE, and when the leader said, 'Let's start easy; open your Bible to the book of Genesis' I thought: let's see 'genari' in Latin means 'to give birth to' and a 'generator' in my car helps get it started—I'll bet Genesis is near the front of the Bible." He became a faithful Christian.

Disciple in prisons

But wait a minute. One word was never mentioned—not in all the meetings and consultations. That word was PRISON. None of us—not one of the editors or leaders ever even thought of it.

But across the country, men like Darrell Hayden, a retired Coast Guard of-

ficer, and Darrell Sayles, a businessman, encouraged by their pastor, Dr. Mark Hicks, asked chaplains and wardens to let them lead a group in prison—and DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministry (DBOM) was born.



After serving several Kansas churches, the Rev. Richard Wilke was elected bishop in 1984 and served for 12 years in the Arkansas Episcopal Area. He now serves as Bishop in Residence at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kans.

It began as a grassroots movement—laymen going to local prisons. Now, DBOM trains lay persons in North Carolina (300 working each year in 70 prisons) and has become national in scope. DBOM helps guide the movement in half a dozen states and is reaching out to others.

In Winfield, Kan., Larry Schuster and Brian Buffum got permission to lead a DISCIPLE group at our Winfield Correctional Facility—a state prison with 800 inmates. They are now in their 15th year, and have helped lots of men find the Lord and straighten out their lives.

A while back, they asked me to help them. I said, "I'm pretty busy." "Come on," they replied. "It'll do you good!"

Let me tell you, my life will never be the same. One bitterly cold winter January night, I wore my overcoat, parked in the snow, heard the cold metal doors clank behind me, showed my driver's license, and sat down for the meeting.

Abruptly, a big African American



Life after prison

We are also learning that release is a critical time. Ex-inmates often have no place to live, no friends, no money, and no job. No wonder 75% of them—many with drug or alcohol addiction—return to prison.

In our church, we welcome former inmates to our worship services. Our men try to help them find jobs. We help them get driver's licenses. We are working right now to help provide places for them to live until they get on their feet.

Did you know that only 3% to 7% of DISCIPLE Bible Study inmates return to prison! That's because disciples have found the Lord Jesus, have given their hearts to Him, have studied His way, and have found Christian friends so they don't have to walk it alone.

United Methodist Men, under the direction of General Secretary Gil Hanke, have declared prison ministries along with scouting as an official ministry.

So, many men around the world are leading DISCIPLE and befriending inmates.

Two recent developments: some folks say, "I'm so busy. I just don't have time for DISCIPLE." So Susan Fuquay at St. Luke's UMC in Indianapolis, Indiana has developed "DISCIPLE Fast Track," a few lessons, shorter meetings—same DISCIPLE manual, same Bible. Contact: disciple-fasttrack.com

Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas is conducting DISCIPLE online: small groups and email communication—you could be in Afghanistan and be in a small group. Contact: beadisciple.com.

Would you and your church be willing to help? The need is overwhelming. There are millions of lost and lonely people all across the country and 5 million men and women in American prisons. You are needed!! Contact DBOM at disciplebibleoutreachministry.com.



inmate who looked like he could play tackle for the Seattle Seahawks, stood up, looked at me, and said, "Why are you here?"

Taken aback, I couldn't speak. Then a bit softer, he said, "Couldn't you be home, sitting by the fire, watching T.V. with your wife? Why are you here?"

I believe God gave me the words: "Well," I muttered, "I'm here because I love Jesus...and...I love you guys." The big man sat down, looked at me and said softly, "No one in my whole life ever said they loved me."

All sorts of inmates participate. One is a preacher's son. Another got his first Bible. One fellow, an uneducated man, said that it took him two or three hours each day to read his Bible assignment—then he laughed, "But I've got lots of time."

Wardens and prison chaplains tell us that some evangelical or fundamentalist groups often try to come in; they are literalists, they know all the answers and they allow little room for open discussion and heartfelt prayer. They also sometimes violate prison rules.

In DISCIPLE, we instead encourage honest viewpoints, heartfelt examples, and fervent prayer. It's ok to say, "I see it differently." When men are trained as DISCIPLE facilitators and trained for prison ministry (we also agree with all the prison rules and abide by them) we can change inmates' lives!

Walter's story—a former inmate and a DISCIPLE graduate

I grew up in a down-and-out African-American neighborhood. My father, an alcoholic, left when I was 2-years old. To survive, Mom had boyfriends and other husbands 'til there were eight of us kids.




I was a good student, but by the time I was a teenager, I was running with older guys—drinking, trying drugs, and stealing little things to get some money. We

got caught setting a fire, and I went to juvenile court when I was 12.

My first severe trouble came when I was 16 and half-drunk with some older guys. We were caught selling stolen goods.

I'm now in my mid-40s. I've spent nearly 30 years in and out of jail and prisons—never for a violent crime—just alcohol abuse, stealing and parole violations. In prison, I learned how to cook and how to supervise the kitchen.

For several years, I've taken DISCIPLE in prison. But only a year ago, I said, "Enough is enough. I will stop running from Jesus."

Now I'm free. I'm off alcohol and drugs—I go to A.A. I attend Sunday school and church—free of parole. I have a job supervising the meals at the college. I have "mentors" not just "friends"—men who talk to me almost daily. I pay my rent, pray, and have just accepted a new job as a restaurant supervisor. Jesus is my Lord and Savior. 

Accident Victim

A man was struck down by a bus on a very busy street.

As he was lying near death after being pulled up onto the sidewalk, a crowd of spectators began to gather around him.

"My God, a priest. Somebody get a priest!" the critically injured man gasped.


A policeman checked the crowd, and yelled out, "Is anyone here a priest?"

Out of the large crowd stepped a little old man of at least 80-years-of-age.

"Mr. Policeman," said the old man, "I'm not a priest or even a preacher, I'm not even a Christian. But for 50-years now, I'm living behind the Catholic Church on First Avenue, and every night I'm overhearing their services. I can recall a lot of it, in fact, most of it. So, maybe I can be of some comfort and assistance to this poor injured man here?"

The policeman agreed and cleared the crowd away so the old man could get through to where the injured man was lying.

The old fellow knelt down beside him, leaned over him, and said in a solemn voice...

"B-4, I-19, N-38, G-54, O-72." 

rumor

How I became involved in prison ministry

By Mark Hicks

I was raised in middle class America, and my life was fairly typical of a North Carolina boy growing up in the 1960s and 1970s.

I never gave much thought to the nameless men in green jumpsuits picking up trash on the highway. I assumed they had committed awful crimes, and television reinforced the notion they were dangerous.

They were people to keep at a distance!

Not on radar

In 1987, I completed my degree at Duke Divinity School and assumed my first pastoral charge in Cedar Falls, N.C., a rural community just outside of

Asheboro. In spite of the fact there was a county prison down the road, prisoners were not on my radar screen. I never went to the prison nor did I encourage my people to go.

I'm sure our little church would have responded to the needs of inmates had they been encouraged to do so. They were caring Christian people who were engaged in community ministries, including Meals on Wheels and ministries to children in the community.

Still, no one thought about the unseen population behind the razor wire and stone walls.

Looking back, I do not recall a single seminary professor who encouraged



Inmate Bill Pelfry attends a DISCIPLE Bible Study class inside Riverbend Maximum Security Institution in Nashville led by members of Christ UMC in nearby Franklin, Tenn. "Most of us don't like ourselves. We need someone to instill some kind of love in us. Give us some hope," Pelfry says. Through the church, Pelfry also has a pen pal, who became his first visitor in 27 years. Christ UMC also offers a Wednesday morning Communion service and a Sunday morning worship service. More than a dozen inmates are now members of the congregation. A UMNS video image.

students to visit prisoners, nor do I remember conference initiatives aimed at inmates and their families. If this did take place, I was blind to it.

Later I discovered there were a few pioneers like Bishop Kenneth Carder and Dr. Jerry Murray who were advocating church participation in prison ministry. Later, these two men became mentors to me.

Change in perspective

In 1995, I was serving as an associate pastor at Mount Pisgah UMC in Greensboro.

Our church was a large congregation with a vibrant ministry. DISCIPLE Bible Study was a central component of the church's ministry. More than 300 members had been through the DISCIPLE program and good things were taking place as a result. People were realizing God gives all Christians gifts for ministry to use in His service.

In May, 1995, two members, Darrell Sayles and Darrell Hayden, told me they wanted to do more with the DISCIPLE Bible study.

"Maybe," they said, "we can take this study to prison!" Though I knew little about prison ministry, I was captured by the enthusiasm of these men and their commitment to serve God in this way.

"Sounds like a good idea," I said. "I will help you."

After working through the bureaucracy at the local prison and being told "No" by a skeptical chaplain, Chaplain Mike Lee helped the two Darrell's find a place of ministry at Forsyth Correctional Center in Winston-Salem.

In the fall of 1995, they gave up their Saturday mornings to lead DISCIPLE Bible study sessions at Forsyth.

The first class went so well that the three of us worked together to expand the program to other facilities.



The Rev. H. William Green, a pastor of First UMC in Cary, N.C., for the last 25 years (right), first met Otis Hardy in 1999 while he was leading a DISCIPLE Bible Study in prison. Hardy and his wife are now active members of First UMC, and the former inmate leads the church's outreach ministry to southeast Raleigh. A proud member of UM Men, Hardy is a popular speaker and community relation's consultant. Green established DISCIPLE Bible Study at Wake Correctional Center for Men in Raleigh, in 1999.

Ministry expands

In 1997, we held our first training event for new volunteers and were overwhelmed when more than 70 persons stepped forward to minister to those in prison.

Moved by the power of God, doors began to open.

Soon the ministry had gone from one to more than fifty North Carolina prisons.

In 1998, a taskforce of the North Carolina and the Western North Carolina conferences established a state-wide mission to promote DISCIPLE in prisons and local churches.

In June, 1999, DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministries (DBOM) was officially chartered as a ministry of the two North Carolina conferences, and I was appointed the founding director.

The contributions of Darrell Hayden and Darrell Sayles cannot be overstated.

Darrell Hayden taught *DISCIPLE* in prison for a number of years, served on the organizational task force, and later worked closely with me as associate director. He died in 2011, but his inspiration lives on.

Darrell Sayles served on the organizational task force and was named chairperson of the DBOM Board of Directors. He still teaches *DISCIPLE* in prison every week. "The ministry has blessed my life," he says.

Increasing numbers of volunteers joined the movement, and, in 2002, DBOM and the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice created Rings of Fellowship, a Bible study program for young people in Youth Development Centers and local churches.

In November, 2010, the Connectional Table encouraged the expansion of DBOM ministries, and, in 2011, Ernie Pearson, a respected North Carolina attorney and a DBOM prison volunteer, created a plan that led to the creation of DBOM National.

Partnership with UM Men

While we had the plan, we needed the manpower to make this expansion a reality.

Gil Hanke and the General Commission on UM Men put wind in our sails.

Gil, Ernie Person, Bishop Kenneth Carder, Bishop Richard Wilke and I met at Bishop Wilke's home in Lake Junaluska to forge a "memorandum of understanding" between DBOM National and the commission.


After receiving grants from the Connectional Table and the General Board of Church and Society, DBOM ministries were chartered in Virginia, Tennessee, Louisiana and Illinois.

None of this would have been possible without the dedicated work of UM Men leaders like Gene Mims and Gary Fussy in Virginia; Jerry Nail and Charles Gilliland in Tennessee; Mike Grace, Gard Wayt and Mark Lubbock in Louisiana; and Mark Dehority and Steve Nailor in Illinois, just to name a few. Additional expansions are in the works.

This story of how a reluctant young pastor became involved in prison ministry shows God is in the business of changing lives of prisoners, volunteers, and yes, even pastors.

We don't know where God will eventually take us, but we do know we are clay on the wheel of the Master Potter, and "with God, all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

John Wesley visited the prisons weekly and Jesus reminds us: "I was in prison and you visited me." As Methodist Christians we are compelled by scripture, history, tradition, and love to offer grace to those behind the prison walls.

I call all men to join us in this ministry. Will you respond? 



Mark Hicks is founder and president of DBOM National.

Stereotypes and Surprises

By Gilbert C. Hanke

It is disconcerting

A series of iron gates slide open and close—accompanied by locking sounds.

The sights and sounds remind us we are farther into the prison and farther from the “free world.”

The progressive locking of doors is unique to each prison, and the sounds are always difficult to hear.

Just as unique are surprises that come from those we are blessed to serve.

I was working a Kairos weekend retreat (an Emmaus style retreat designed for prison ministry) in a maximum-security prison in east Texas.

I was struck by the age of the men. The oldest participant at my table was not yet 40 years of age; inmates referred to him as the “Old Man.”

I wondered if this should have been a Chrysalis weekend for youth rather than a Kairos weekend. As I recall that weekend, I now wonder if these young men had participated in a Chrysalis weekend earlier in their lives would they have ended up in this place.

Fresh fruit

One of my first surprises resulted from a tray of fresh fruit delivered to our table the first day.

“Oh my God, a banana, I haven’t had a banana in seven years,” said the Old Man in a hushed voice.

I was shocked by his reaction and assured him he should help himself.

“I will, but let me just look at it and smell it for a while,” he responded.

I have never seen anyone hold a piece of fruit with such care. It was as if he had found a precious treasure.

I later found out that a former offender, now a successful businessman, person-

ally makes sure there is fresh fruit at every table on every day of every Kairos weekend in every prison in the state of Texas.

Fresh fruit is something the business man no longer takes for granted following an extended stay in prison. It is now a gift he provides for all the men at each table.

It was hot, and noisy. I have sweated less on tropical mission trips.

As I continually wiped my face and hands with a hand towel, several of these men apologized that it was so hot—as if they had some control over the temperature.

A Tennessee prison

A few years later, I was helping with a *DISCIPLE* class in a Tennessee prison. Although this was a more open campus, the entry process still alerted me to where I was.

The buildings were newer and better equipped, but it was still obvious this was a maximum-security prison.

This night I was with a handful of men who were completing a lesson with readings from both the Old and the New Testament. We had a lively discussion and they welcomed me as a new participant.

As the session ended, one of the leaders asked for prayer requests.

Several had family issues that were way out of their control; others had aging parents whom they wished they could visit.

One of the young men looked at me with clear concern in his bright blue eyes.

“Gil, I am really worried about you,” said Jack (not his real name).

“You and I are both Christians, but I have a much easier time of it,” said Jack. “Hell, it’s easy to be a Christian in prison, there are some temptations, but by design those are limited. You live in the free world, and there are temptations every-

where, every day, anywhere you go. Man, I am praying for you this week, you really have it hard.”

That was clearly the last thing I expected. Jack was a 20-something man who by my standards had lost nearly everything. His only face-to-face relationships were with people who matched his ability to make poor choices. His family had more or less abandoned him, and the closest thing to “church” was two or three guys who come into the prison for a couple of hours each week. Yes, Jack prayed for his family and for those hurt by his actions. But, his immediate concern was for me, a well-healed, financially secure, employed, healthy, educated, married guy who, in less than an hour, would be sleeping with his wife in a nice, safe, house.

Jack was genuinely concerned for my soul and my well-being.

Many people who are writing in this magazine have more experience and can provide keener insights. But, I have been blessed by my limited experience in prison ministry, and I have always received more than I have attempted to give.

Both sides of the wall

There are many ways you can serve on both sides of the wall. Not everyone feels the need to go inside, and that’s OK. There is more than enough work needed to all who are impacted by the prison system.

One of our friends had a son who was in the county jail awaiting trial, and several of us went to bail him out. During that tense, tedious process, I saw others doing the same thing. I also saw people waiting for a short visit with a loved one where bail was not available.

They were folks who worked at the same hospital as me—folks I knew from a store where I shopped. I recognized them from a variety of places in town.

There was such hurt, such pain, and such embarrassment that most of us went through the process with our eyes down. “If I don’t see you maybe you can’t see me

But, I have the strong sense that though I did the “right thing” getting my friend’s son out of jail, I failed to take that opportunity to meet with, and pray with those others waiting in the Texas sun. I failed to spread some different “son light” into that hopeless, helpless environment. Why didn’t I come back the next week, with some cool water, a smile, and some words of hope and healing?

In your community and mine, the opportunities to serve on either side of the wall are endless.

I have friends who work in the Amachi program of Big Brothers Big Sisters. This program links an adult (known as the “big”) with a child (the “little”) who has one or both parents in prison. The program is challenging and successful, and many “littles” are waiting for “bigs.”

If you are a 13 year old boy whose father is in prison, the chances are enormous that you will follow him to prison. In fact, you are more likely to end up in prison than anywhere else. The cost of a year of prison is usually greater than a year attending Harvard University, so from a purely economic vantage point, the Amachi program makes sense.

Not a multiple choice

For those of us who are Christ followers, the reasons for any form of prison ministry are crystal clear. There is a rather uncomfortable message from Jesus when he answers the question:


“When did we give you something to eat or drink? When did we welcome you as a stranger or give you clothes to wear or visit you while you were sick or in jail?” The king

will answer, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me."

—Matthew 25 (CEV)

I do not think that that is a multiple choice or a one-time instruction. If I gave a can of soup to a food pantry in 1983, that does not let me off the hook. Because I give some money regularly to my local church which supports great causes also does not meet the standard that Christ illustrates in this parable.

Rather than seeing Matthew 25 as a list of options or items on your bucket list, I believe Christ is calling us to relate personally with persons in need.

It does not take a great deal of research to determine that the need for this ministry is great, and being a servant in this vital Kingdom work creates new relationships and most importantly renews and deepens my relationship with Jesus Christ. 



Gilbert C. Hanke is top staff executive of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, based in Nashville, Tenn.

Strange Noise

A man is driving down the road and breaks down near a monastery.

The monks graciously feed him dinner, house him, and fix his car.

As the man tries to fall asleep, he hears a strange sound.

The next morning, he asks the monks what the sound was, but they say, "We can't tell you. You're not a monk".

Years later, the same man breaks down in front of the same monastery. The monks again accept him, feed him, and fix his car.

That night, he hears the same strange noise. He asks what it is, but the monks reply, "We can't tell you. You're not a monk."

The man says, "All right, all right. How do I become a monk?"

The monks reply, "You must travel the earth and tell us how many blades of grass there are and the exact number of sand pebbles. When you find these numbers, you will become a monk".

The man sets about his task. Forty-five years later, he returns

He says, "I have travelled the earth and have found there are 145,236,284, 232 blades of grass and 231,281,219, 999,129,382 sand pebbles on the earth".

The monks reply, "Congratulations. You are now a monk. We shall now show you the way to the sound."

The monks lead the man to a wooden door, where the head monk says, "the sound is right behind that door".

The man reaches for the knob, but the door is locked. He says, "Real funny. May I have the key?"


The monks give him the key, and he opens the door. Behind the wooden door is another door made of stone. The man demands the key to the stone door.

The monks give him the key, and he opens it, only to find a door made of ruby. He demands another key from the monks, who provide it.

So it went until the man had gone through doors of sapphire, emerald, silver, and gold

Finally, the monks say, "this is the key to the last door".

He unlocks the door, turns the knob, and behind that door he is amazed to find the source of that strange sound. . . .

I can't tell you what it is because you're not a monk. 

Ministering in Illinois pews and prisons

By Mark Dehority

Pekin Federal Correctional Institution

I was introduced to DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministry (DBOM) in the spring of 2012, when the Rev. Mark Hicks, president of the national ministry, Bishop Richard Wilke and Bishop Ken Carder presented information about the transforming prison ministry to the Illinois Great Rivers Conference.

Our conference staff followed up with an organizational meeting where we agreed to invite Northern Illinois Conference to help us examine the feasibility of a state-wide prison ministry.

We organized a team to guide the envisioned ministry. This board included conference staff, clergy, lay servants, and representatives of UM Men and UM Women from both conferences. Hicks guided us through the start-up process

God provided our team with talented people, including a very capable lawyer.

He also provided us with a reluctant president . . . me. I agreed to lead the group if they did the work.

Howard Woolard called me after the conference newsletter published a report on our organizational meeting. He said he felt called to prison ministry after reading *Prison Ministry from the Inside Out* by Lennie Spitale.

Having grown up in Pekin, Ill., Woolard wanted to lead a DISCIPLE team to Pekin Federal Correctional Institution, a minimum security prison housing 1,200 inmates in central Illinois.

"All the training, planning, and preparation are paying off as we are now engaged with our first-class of 16

men studying *DISCIPLE I*," said Woolard. "None of this would be progressing well if it wasn't for the grace of God. The return on investment is high."

Woolard shares observations from sessions at Pekin prison:

- In the opening sessions, one inmate said, "Guys, as we get into this Bible study, and actually become disciples, how are we going to act differently toward each other—out there in the yard, or in the dining hall?"
- Another inmate said, "Fellas, I've learned new things about some of you today, some of you that I've known and worshipped with for years."
- When we talked about God's peace, one inmate asked: "How do I find that peace?". Another inmate answered, "Pray for it, and study God's Word... Keep trusting Him. It will be hard sometimes, but the more you trust God, the more you will see that you can trust God."
- Every week we begin and end the two-hour session with prayer and prayer concerns. It was humbling when inmates first said they wanted to pray for the sponsors of this study. They said they realize the material isn't free, and they thanked us for taking the time to be with them every week.

Prayer concerns offered by inmates

- “My mother is sick with complications from diabetes.”
- “We’ve been praying for my youngest daughter, a homeless drug-addict, but my oldest daughter recently moved back home (away from drugs and an abusive relationship). God works things out His way. I can’t help but wonder if my oldest daughter will be the one to get her act together first and then help her little sister get it together.”
- “We want to pray for our family and friends who may not have accepted Christ yet.”
- “We haven’t seen one of our brothers for two weeks. Let’s pray for him.”
- “I want to suggest that we all pray for our brother next to me, for help overcoming temptation and to stop making the same wrong choices over and over again.”
- “Please pray for my daughter, that she might be able to find a part-time job so she can help her mother meet expenses. She is a sophomore in college, so I know this is a lot to ask of her.”
- “Please pray for my daughter, as she prepares to give birth to a baby girl in seven weeks.”
- “Please pray for continued peace in the compound. This has been a nice stretch without any violence or unrest.”
- “Guys, I recently took the test for my GED and passed everything except the math part. ‘Story problems’ especially throw me. I need God’s calming help in understanding the math lessons.”


- “God answered my prayer from last week. You’ll recall I asked that we pray for God’s help to reduce the persecution from non-believers. This last week there was no persecution!”

Success factors

1. This is God’s plan. We are constantly in prayer for His leadership.
2. Two annual conferences provided staff and resources to get this moving.
3. UM Men provided leaders to move this forward.
4. We have great support from Mark Hicks and national DBOM Board of Directors.
5. We had members with solid prison ministry experience and members who were familiar with DISCIPLE BIBLE STUDY.
6. Two anchor churches provide financial support.

It costs \$100 to put each person through a DISCIPLE class. We provide the study manuals and a new Wesley CEB Study Bible. We also have to cover things like group liability insurance, an affiliation fee, and we put money into our general fund for future facility startups.

It is our job to tell the story. It is our job to ask for God’s guidance. It is our job to spread the “good news.” This ministry is part of the good news and Kingdom building. We are committed to grow both.

God called the current team members. Maybe He is calling you to use your time, money or heart to help this ministry. 



Mark Dehority is president of DISCIPLE Bible Outreach Ministry of Illinois and a deployed staff member of the General Commission on UM Men.



Across the Nation

MADILL, Oklahoma—
Men provide activities for youngsters

For the past three years, UM Men have been providing activities for children in the Madill Early Childhood Center.

The Rev. Brett Thomasson, pastor and seven UM Men facilitate the “Dad and Me Book Club” for 60 kindergarten and first-grade students along with 60 dads, granddads, and other guests.



Dale Coulson helps a father and daughter complete a craft during a meeting of the Dad and Me Book Club. Photo courtesy of the Oklahoma Conference Contact.

After reading books, the children and adults work puzzles on the center’s computer lab. They also create paper airplanes, make straw air rockets and assemble wooden airplanes.

MARSHALL, Texas—
UMM group provides venison to food banks

UM Men of St. Mark’s UMC provided more than 850 venison meals for local food banks.

Two years ago, hunter Dana Havron heard about “Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry.” He asked the men’s group at St. Marks UMC to help him create a chapter in Marshall.

Havron says the program harvests deer for the benefit of the herd and provides nutritious meat for the hungry. One deer can provide 150 to 200 meals of lean protein.

“I expect the venison ministry

to grow since this was the first year of operation,” said the Rev. Edward Blackstone, pastor of the 150-member congregation.

“My vision is to have UMM spread this ministry across the whole country,” says Havron.

For more information, contact Havron (Dhavron79@yahoo.com) (903/ 578-1687) or visit www.FHFH.org



Meat processors grind the venison and package the meat for local food banks and soup kitchens.

MONROE, La.—

Church donates \$23,000 to Children’s Home

UM Men of St. Paul UMC donated \$23,000 to the Louisiana Methodist Children’s Home in Ruston.



The money was raised in October at “To-Do at the Zoo,” an annual event featuring 20 of St. Paul’s chefs serving food from the pavilion at the Louisiana

Purchase Garden and Zoo in Monroe.

Live entertainment for all ages added to the fun of the event.

More than \$100,000 dollars has been raised over the past nine years.

UTICA, N.Y.—

Men hold ‘Stewfest’

UM Men of the Upper New York Conference hosted a “stewfest” at West Schuyler UMC.

They invited neighbors and friends to bring samples of their favorite stew and invited everyone to sample the stews.

A free-will offering provided funds for the Society of St. Andrew.

The men have distributed 40,000 pounds of potatoes to the Central New York area in each of the last three years.

BLACKSTONE, Va.—

Pastor challenges UM Men to stop the blame game

The Rev. Tom Berlin told 165 UM men gathered at the Blackstone Retreat Center they need to stop blaming others for membership losses.

“The good news is that we are no longer in denial (about our losses),” said Berlin, senior pastor at Floris UMC in Herndon, Va.

“But, we are not focused on our commitments. ...

If you can’t be committed to God you can’t be a true disciple.”

“Stop blaming the conference, stop blaming the bishop, the D.S., stop blaming everyone,” he said.

“We need courage and boldness in the UMC. God believes in you more than you believe in God. Remember in Romans Chapter 8 where it says ‘If God is for us who can be against us?’”



The Rev. Tom Berlin

MILTON, Fla.—

UM Men serve 200 meals

Men of Christ UMC served more than 200 meals to people in a nearby low-income neighborhood.

The pigs were donated by a church family whose daughter had raised them.

"It was a wonderful time of fellowship with the people and a blessing to all who served," said Arthur Frazier, a men's ministry specialist.



Men of Christ UMC get ready to roast some pork.

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—

Five youth receive PRAY Awards

Steve Bays, a scouting ministry specialist, presented Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY) Awards to five boys at Summit Heights UMC.

Bays served as the counselor for the classes in which four Boy Scouts received God and Church Awards and a Cub Scout received a God and Me Award on Scout Sunday.



Dr. Todd Benner (left), pastor of Summit Heights UMC, joins Steve Bays in presenting PRAY awards to five boys. On Girl Scout Sunday, the church presented an additional four God and Me Awards and one God and Life Award.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

Prison inmates provide funds for toys

Inmates in the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution donated \$1,161 to the Last Minute Toy Store, a free store operated for the past 20 years by Sixty-First Avenue UMC in west Nashville.



With gifts from a variety of sources totaling \$50,000, the church provided toys for 4,466 children from 1,600 families.

During the four-day December store operation, 500 volunteers helped parents select presents for their children.

The financial gift from the prison was arranged by members of Christ UMC in Brentwood, Tenn., which conducts services and studies in Riverbend. The prison houses 736 prisoners, 480 classified as high risk.

ANDERSON, S.C.—

Men supply firewood to help people through the winter

James Morrison and 35 volunteers work with Anderson Interfaith Ministries (AIM) to cut, split and deliver firewood to financially struggling people.

"Without the wood, people would have to draw from their slender food budget to pay for increased electric bills," said Ammon Palmer, who manages the AIM food pantry and provides wood vouchers to qualifying people.

The firewood service began 38 years



Photo by Danny Thompson

ago as a ministry of Trinity UMC where Morrison is a member.

Twenty-five years ago, he began working with AIM, and volunteers now come from Trinity UMC, Zion UMC, Concord Baptist, and New Spring Church.

The 70-year-old and four to six others chop, load and deliver wood on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A group of 25-35 people join Morrison on Saturdays. They bring their own hydraulic splitters and splitting mauls. After splitting the logs, they deliver the wood in trucks.

The team is invited to cut and split wood from fallen trees on private properties or timber taken down by tree services.

ATLANTA, Ga.—

Men host children at Braves baseball game

More than 300 UM Men of the North Georgia Conference hosted 40 children from the UM Children's Home at a Braves baseball game. One of the children threw out the first pitch.



Working through the Society of Saint Andrew, North Georgia men

gleaned over six tons of apples and distributed 50 tons of potatoes and beans through produce drops. Across the conference men packaged over 150,000 meals for Stop Hunger Now.

ELKART, Ind.—

Church presents Five PRAY Awards

The Rev. Mark Dicken, pastor of Trinity UMC



in Elkhart, Ind., presents PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) Awards to five Scouts and a Cross and Flame Award to Craig Fulmer (right).

ARLINGTON, Tenn.—

Scouts receive advice from Afghanistan

Phillip Knauss, scoutmaster of Troop 452, was unable to be present for Scout Sunday at Arlington UMC as he was serving with the U.S. Navy in Afghanistan.

Teresa Rector, chartered organization representative for the troop, read a Facebook message to Scouts seeking to attain the rank of Eagle.

In the posting, Knauss advised boys to select Eagle projects that will benefit the disadvantaged, hurting, poor, and invalid. He said such projects "have the greatest long-term impact on both the giver and receiver."

Troop 452 and Pack 452 engaged in service projects at Tennessee Baptist Children's Home in Bartlett; Habitat for Humanity's Youth United Program; FedEx Forum's Soup Sunday program; the food pantry at Highland Heights UMC, Memphis; and the Ronald



Fifteen youngsters receive PRAY Awards on Scout Sunday at Arlington (Tenn.) UMC. A total of 13 boys earned "God and Me" awards and seven received "God and Family" awards. Five boys were unable to attend the Scout Sunday service.

McDonald House. They also provided financial assistance to the Blood Water Missions an effort to end the HIV/AIDS and water crises in Africa.

GREENSBORO, N.C.—

Church honors first responders

Newlyn Street UMC presented *Strength for Service to God and Community* books to fire fighters serving McAdoo Heights.

The church thanked the fire fighters "for the souls you've saved, for the homes you protect, for the community you serve, and for your sacrifice and service."



Fire fighters honored at the Feb. 16 service include Captain Edwin T. Smithey, Christopher B. Koran, R. Brian Henson, Elizabeth J. Johnson and Charles Eller. Johnnie Cole, a retired fire fighter, and two EMTs were also honored.

VANDALIA, Ohio—

Nine men complete 12-hour study

Nine men completed a 12-hour study of "Understanding Men's Ministry," led by Leo Scholl, a men's ministry specialist. Four 3-hour sessions were conducted at Vandalia UMC, Feb 12, 19, 26 and March 5.



Following a 12-hour study of Understanding Men's Ministry, men gather for a graduation photo: From left: Norris Brown, Dixon UMC; the Rev. Steve Fisher, West Independence UMC; Charles Morton, Antioch UMC; the Rev. Steve Rinehart, New Jasper UMC and Lumberton UMC; Chuck Craynon, Antioch UMC and vice-president Miami Valley District UMM; Leo Scholl, Hope UMC; Jermaine Wilkerson, United Baptist Church; Robert Cannon, Jr., Hillcrest Seventh Day Adventist Church; Don Carroll, Faith Community UMC, Xenia and secretary Miami Valley District UMM; and not pictured the Rev. Cory Rowe, Hillcrest Seventh Dayt Adventist Church.

BEAVERCREEK, Ohio—

Five achieve rank of Eagle

It's not often that five young men receive Eagle badges at the same time. Troop 56 honored five new Eagle Scouts at a service at St. Andrew UMC.



Will Wilson, Jacob MacLeod, Mark Jabour, Mark Coberly, and William Jacob Jones are honored at an Eagle Court of Honor.

SWANSBORO, N.C.—

UM Men build handicap ramp

Eight Swansboro UMC men built a handicap ramp for Dorothy Couser at the request of the White Oak Ecumenical Outreach Ministries.

Swansboro men build several ramps every year; they also build Habitat houses, support scouting, and participate in other mission projects.



From left: Jim Scott, Clyde Keagy, Ray Bihary, Tim Whaley, Charles Johnson, Frank Cizerle, and Mel Guss join Ms. Couser on her new ramp.

TUCSON, Ariz.—

Scouts tour missile gallery

In February, some 400 people attended the 5th Raytheon Scout Day. At the annual event, Raytheon Company encourages young people to pursue college courses in science, technology, engineering and math. Scouts learned how to build electrical generators.



Doug Wright, a scouting ministry specialist (back row in Scout uniform), leads members of Troop 335 in a visit to the Raytheon Missile Gallery.

HOUSTON, Texas—

Church uses PRAY studies in Sunday school

Cornerstone UMC has been using Programs of Religious Activities for Youth (PRAY) awards for 10 years. Last fall, they incorporated God and Me and God and Family into the Sunday school curriculum for children in grades 1-3 and grades 4-5.



Recipients of PRAY awards gather at the chancel of Cornerstone UMC.

Scouts from the community were invited to the classes. As a result, two families joined the church.

“The PRAY program has a double benefit,” said the Rev. Dave Meadows, pastor. “We used it as a successful Sunday school program and an evangelism tool.”

DENTON, N.C.—

Scouts receive New Testaments

Men of Central UMC presented “Back Packing” New Testaments to Scouts on Scout Sunday.



Richard Wilson, president of UM Men of Central UMC, presents a New Testament to Cameron Swicegood while the Rev. Sharon Lee, pastor, observes.

WYANDOTTE, Mich.—

Church presents books to fire and police chiefs

UM Men of Glenwood UMC presented 12 copies each of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to the fire and police departments of Wyandotte.

Police Chief Dan Grant and Fire Chief Jeff Carley received the books at the annual UMM dinner in December.

CARMEL, Ind.—

Men provide fork lift to Red Bird Missionary Conference

In January, 2013, six men of St. Marks UMC in Carmel spent a week repairing cabins at Red Bird Missionary Conference. A forklift in the supply yard failed to work, so they loaded lumber by hand.

Later that year, the men learned the Dana Plant in Anderson, Ind., was

in the process of closing, and it had two forklifts in need of repair. They convinced the plant to donate the equipment to the church.

After securing money for the repairs the men delivered one forklift to Kid's Against Hunger in Noblesville, Ind., and one to Red Bird.



A newly repaired and painted forklift is ready to ship to Red Bird Missionary Conference.

**Send news of your men's organization
to Rich Peck (rpeck@gcumm.org).**

FOR SALE

When we were looking to buy property, an overzealous realtor showed us what can only be described as a totally worn-out old farm. I mean the land had just been worked to death. The weeds on the property were hardly even growing.

The smiling super salesman said, "Now really, all this land needs is a little water, a nice cool breeze, and some good people."

I replied, "Yeah, I agree. But couldn't the same be said of hell?"

**HOUSE
FOR SALE**

humor

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- What guides our actions
- What's new around the global church



In Memoriam

Tom Carter

CRESTVIEW, Fla.—

Thomas R. Carter Jr., 81, former president of Florida Annual Conference UM Men and a member of the John Wesley Society, died September 3, 2013.

“He is remembered, and always will be, for the love and devotion he had for United Methodist Men,” said Billye Carter, his wife of 57 years. “He was recognized not only in his local church for his dedication to any work of UM Men. He served the district and the conference as president. His greatest delight was involving young boys



Tom Carter

in the programs, both locally and otherwise.”

Tom was an Air Force veteran having served during the Korean War, and he was a 37 year employee of Sears, Roebuck & Company.

An active member of the First UMC of Crestview, he also served as president of Lions Club, Toastmasters, and Kiwanis. He served two terms as a city commissioner of Lynn Haven, Fla.

He is survived by wife Billye, three children, Thomas Reed Carter III, LaDonna Walsingham (Joe), and Nanette Davis (Brock); and five grandchildren.

In Memoriam

Gwen Peck Cole

NACOGDOCHES, Texas—

Gwen Peck Cole, 91, died March 3, following a life of love and compassion for her family, friends, and the UMC.

The name Gwen Peck Cole is well known by UM Men.

As the result of a \$500,000 gift, their mortgage-free Nashville building on Music Row is named the Ed and Gwen Cole Center.

"When presented with several ways to fund the building, it was Gwen that selected a plan.

As she stated, 'This just makes too much sense not to do this,'" said Gil

Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men. "Both Ed and Gwen have great business skills, but most of all, they love what they love—the UMC, Stephen F. Austin State University, and the city of Nacogdoches."

Gwen was born June 4, 1922, in Hamburg, Ark. "I've been a Methodist since I was six weeks old," said Gwen.

Her mother and father died at an early age and Gwen was reared in Shreveport, La., by her sister, Flora Temple, and family. She graduated from Byrd High School in Shreveport and Meadows-Draughon Business College.

She worked for 26 years at Home Federal Savings and Loan. "I did everything including dusting the boss' desk," said Gwen. She was named a vice president after working there for 20 years.

In 1965, Gwen was introduced to Thomas Edward Cole by his aunt who taught Sunday school with Gwen at Noel Methodist Church in Shreveport.

The couple was married a year later on Valentine's Day when they were both 43 years of age.

The couple later formed E Cole Rentals and named their 15 nieces and nephews as shareholders. Gwen had six brothers and sisters, and Ed had four. In 2008, the Coles had 92 nieces and nephews. "Some of them are great, great, great," said Gwen. "All of them are great."

They lived in New Orleans, La., until they retired to Nacogdoches in 1978.

Gwen was a devoted member of the First UMC of Nacogdoches where she was active in UM Women and many church-related

activities.

She was predeceased by her parents, Callie Sanford Peck and Emma Chavis Peck; sister, Flora Peck Temple; brothers, Cliff Peck, Richard Peck, Paul Peck, Milton Peck and Wilbur "Bud" Peck; and nieces, Sandra Peck Stevens and Aubrey Jean Tubbs.



Gwen Cole



Ed and Gwen Cole stand outside the Ed and Gwen Cole Center in Nashville following the Sept. 24, 2008 dedication service.

UM Men increase the number of chartered groups

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

There are now 3,745 chartered organizations of UM Men, an increase of 149 units over 2012.

With 313 chartered units, Virginia Annual Conference has the highest number, an increase of 18 units over the number chartered in 2012.

Baltimore-Washington Conference leads the Northeastern Jurisdiction with 138 charters; Missouri tops the South Central Jurisdiction with 102; Illinois Great Rivers caps the North Central Jurisdiction with 88 groups, and California-Pacific leads the Western Jurisdiction with 65.

North Carolina Conference increased the number of chartered groups by 23 to a total of 205, the highest numerical increase in the denomination. Northern Illinois topped the

North Central Jurisdiction with ten new units; New York led the Northeastern Jurisdiction with seven new charters, Missouri led South Central with 10 and California-Pacific led the West with six additional charters in 2013.

“We have groups with as few as five men that faithfully recertify their charter because of its importance, and we have groups with dozens of men,” said Joe Strausbaugh, charter administrator for the commission. “We had 73 first-time charters in 2013.”

“Men are responding in greater numbers to God’s call to make a difference in the church and a call to make disciples for Jesus Christ in this hurting world,” said Dan Ramsey, president of the National Association of Conference Presidents. “This is a great example of listening to and following that still small voice of God.”

Men continue to support prayer ministry

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

UM Men continue to be the foundation upon which the Upper Room Living Prayer Center is built.

In 2013, UM Men contributed \$25,688 and nearly \$10,000 has already been contributed in 2014. Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference contributed the highest amount with a total of \$3,025.

The funds enabled a total of 246,540 prayers to be answered by volunteers, including 148 prayer line groups and 242 covenant groups from around the world. Members of covenant group continue prayers for callers after being



Migdiel Pérez (right), manager of the Upper Room Prayer Center, presents an award to Chuck Christian (center), prayer advocate for the Southeastern Jurisdiction, and Dennis Brisolara, prayer advocate for the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference

answered by prayer line groups.

“Your partnership and commitment is invaluable,” Migdiel Pérez, manager of the prayer center, told prayer advocates and conference presidents.

“Certainly we highly value the financial contribution from UM Men, but we are equally thankful for the man-hours given by many groups across the UMM connection on behalf of our ministry.”

Pérez expressed special appreciation to the UM Men prayer advocates for the “great work that they do in promoting, recruiting volunteers and supporting this ministry.”

UM Men give devotional books to firefighters



Following two fire calls, conference presidents of UM Men and prayer advocates gather in front of two fire engines.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

Conference Presidents of UM Men and prayer advocates took time out from their Feb. 27-March 2 meeting to engage in three service projects.

Fifteen men took 30 copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to a Nashville fire station.

Kim Lawson, deputy chief for the Community Services

Bureau of the Nashville Fire Department, told the group that there are 39 fire stations to cover 533 square miles, and firefighters are cross-trained as emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

She said the each station is busy responding to all types of emergency situations; that point was clearly illustrated as both fire engines based at the station on West End Avenue were sent on calls during her presentation.



A fire engine leaves the Nashville station during a visit by UM Men

L.W. Smith, chair of the *Strength for Service* task force, told firefighters about the original book carried by U.S. troops during World War II, the subsequent reprinting of the book in 2000, and the 2012 release of the book for first responders.

A second 10-member group delivered *Strength for Service* books to “Operation Stand Down,” an agency that provides social services to veterans, including employment assistance, transitional

housing, mail service and clothing. “We toured the facility and I was

fascinated by how much work they did,” said Ken Tielke, president of the South Central Jurisdiction of UM Men.

A third group bagged 200 pounds of rice and 100 pounds of beans into one-pound bags for families of the 662 students at Tusculum Elementary School. The students come from 23 countries and 95 percent are on free- and reduced-cost lunch programs. Many of the children cannot speak English. The top six non-English languages

are Spanish, Burmese, Nepali, Arabic and Kurdish.

“You have made it so much easier for me to send food bags home to 100 families,” said Becky Hulse, family engagement specialist for the Nashville school. Two bags of rice, two bags of beans, six cans of vegetables and fruit, and two cans of chicken were sent to 100 homes prior to the spring break.



UM Men give \$191,000 to Meals for Millions

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

UM Men have increased their giving each of the last four years to a total of \$191,000, an amount that provided 8.9 million servings of food in 2013.

In 2010, UM Men gave \$168,196 to Meals for Millions; they increased giving in 2011 to \$171,223, and in 2012, they gave \$179,007.

Wade Mays, director of the Meals for Millions program for the Society of Saint Andrew, thanked the men for “their unwavering support of our ministry” and he presented awards to the top contributors.

Indiana Conference won the Meals for Millions Award for giving \$29,300 in 2013. Mays notes the conference increased giving over the last four years. In 2010, the conference gave \$10,423, that amount increased to \$19,932 in 2011, and \$26,735 in 2012.

In spite of the increased giving by Indiana Conference, Missouri Conference won the “Bud the Spud” award for a 255 percent increase in giving (from \$5,464 in 2012 to \$13,886 in 2013).

In addition, UM men also provided 2,401 volunteers who gleaned 1.2 million pounds of fresh produce for the hungry in 2013.



Wade Mays (left) presents the top award to Dave Martin, president of Indiana Conference UM Men.

Top 10 conferences providing funds for Meals for Millions in 2013:

1. Indiana	\$29,300
2. Detroit	\$23,710
3. Northern Illinois	\$21,101
4. Virginia	\$17,811
5. Missouri	\$13,886
6. Baltimore-Washington	\$13,382
7. North Carolina	\$8,759
8. Iowa	\$5,700
9. Oklahoma	\$5,340
10. West Ohio	\$4,547

Strength for Service becomes a non-denominational ministry

A six-chapter story

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

A Catholic Boy Scout's effort to republish a World War II book of daily devotions and expanded by a United Methodist group, has become a non-denominational ministry to all who give their lives in service to others.

On February 6, Internal Revenue Service officially granted *Strength for Service, Inc.*, status as a 501(c) (3) "public charity." Contributions to the organization are now deductible under section 170 of the IRS code.

Chapter one

The remarkable history of *Strength for Service* began in 1942.

Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war, the Methodist Publishing House wanted to do something to support the thousands of people enlisting in the Armed Services.

The Nashville-based publishing agency asked Norman Nygaard, a World War I Army chaplain, to recruit 365 church leaders of all denominations to write one-page devotions for each day of the year.

The result was the publication of *Strength for Service to God and Country*, a pocket-sized book of daily devotions distributed to more than 1 million military troops before it went out of print following the 1953 Korean armistice.

Chapter two

Eugene Hunsberger, a corpsman in the U.S. Navy, received a copy of *Strength for Service to God and Country* while serving in World War II.

He not only read daily devotions for his own spiritual enrichment, but when words failed him, he would read sections of the book to sailors after attending to their wounds. He kept the book during his service in Korea.

Following his discharge, Eugene read the

book to his Scout troop at meetings and camp outs.

In his later years, he carried the book in his breast pocket to read to folks in the hospital as a volunteer guild member.

Chapter three

In 1998, Evan Hunsberger, the grandson of Eugene, noticed a tattered copy of the book of daily devotions on the bedside of his grandfather.

In need of an Eagle Scout project, Evan asked his grandfather if it would be a good idea to republish the book as his Eagle project. He thought he could provide copies to Camp Pendleton, the Long Beach Naval Station, and other military installations near their Orange County California home.

"That's not a good idea," said Eugene. "That's a great idea."

Chapter four

The General Commission on United



Methodist Men, the agency responsible for scouting ministries, helped Evan secure the publishing rights from the United Methodist Publishing House, and they assisted in adding 50 meditations from contemporary religious leaders to create a second edition of *Strength for Service to God and Country*.

The commission received the support of the Pentagon and launched a fund-raising campaign resulting in the publication and distribution of 480,000 copies of the updated book.

Chapter five

While distributing most of the 400-page book to military chaplains to give to their troops, some of the copies were also given to fire fighters and police officers. While these public servants were grateful, they were aware the meditations were written for the military. They asked if a volume could be written for them.

In 2013, the commission created *Strength for Service to God and Community*, a 365-page book of daily devotions for first

responders and all those in the service of others.

The commission also established the Eugene A. Hunsberger *Strength for Service* Endowment Fund at the United Methodist Church Foundation (<http://www.umcfoundation.org/>).

Chapter six

Noting that the book is designed for Christians from all denominations, the commission created a non-denominational board of directors and secured non-profit status from Internal Revenue Service.

The new board is now soliciting funds to publish both books and making proposals to various foundations to establish a permanent office and a professional staff. Board members want to ensure that the original book will never again go out of print, and that similar spiritual resources will be available to others.

The story begun in 1942, reintroduced in 2000 and expanded in 2013, has become a promise to future generations.

SFS books inspire multiple ministries by district leader

CROSSVILLE, Tenn.—

Don Kenne, a certified UM lay servant and lay leader of the Cookeville District, uses *Strength for Service to God and Country* for his personal meditation. He also uses the historic volume as a basis for devotions he gives to various church groups.

“Normally, I introduce both the little blue book and the particular writer as part of my talk and I find the people have a huge interest in both the story of the book and the richness of the writing,” says Kenne. “I take a devotion from the book and expand on it with my own insights. In no time, I have well-organized talk based on a 1942 meditation.”

Although intended for troops in World War II, Kenne says he finds the daily devotions to be both “timeless and contemporary.”

“It gives me great satisfaction to know we have sent nearly a half million copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to our fighting men and women. What a joy it is to see them treasure the book.”

Following the publication of *Strength for Service to God and Community*, Kenne says he now has a new job of providing the book to first responders in the Crossville community. “My church (Fairfield Glade UMC) will be at the forefront of supplying these books to police and fire personnel in Crossville,” he said.



Don Kenne

Remembering Gene Hunsberger (1925-1999)

If it had not been for Gene Hunsberger, no service men or women would have received copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* after 1953.

Gene received a copy of the book as a corpsman in the U.S. Navy during World War II. His daily reading of the devotional led his grandson, Evan, to republish the historic book.



Gene Hunsberger



Gene Hunsberger stands between sons Dennis and Don after all three were inducted into the Order of the Arrow.



Gene and wife, Maxine

UM Men Awards

Mack Richardson Retired Air Force navigator serves as president of UMM

PENSACOLA, Fla.—

Cokesbury UMC honored H. Mack Richardson, 75, with a Life Membership in UM Men.

Following his retirement from the U.S. Air Force, Richardson managed contracts for Dallas (Texas) County, and he served as lay leader of Trailwood UMC in Grand Prairie.

He moved to Pensacola eight years ago, and became active in Cokesbury



Mack Richardson, a former Air Force navigator, knows his way around a cooker as he helps prepare a meal for UM Women.

UMC, serving a 3-year term as president of UM Men, an usher, and a leader of the church's "Celebrate Recovery" program.

Richardson also cooks for several UM Men events including a Boston Butts sale, a chicken barbecue and a fish fry.

Warren Shoup Men honor treasurer

STRASBURG, Va.—

Men of Strasburg UMC honored Warren Shoup with a Life Membership for his devoted service to UM Men. Shoup has been a member of the Strasburg UM Men for nearly 20 years while serving as treasurer for more than six of those years.

"Warren has been a constant in our program, and he continues to help us meet our goals as we add to the rich history of the UM Men of Strasburg," said Dave Smallwood, president of UM Men.



Participants in a service honoring Warren Shoup include, from left front: UMM Past President Willie Mitchell, Lucille Shoup, Warren Shoup, and UMM President David Smallwood. Second row: Scott Terndrup, UMM treasurer, and the Rev. P. Douglas Martin, pastor.

Dr. Jerry Gill
Men induct former president into John Wesley Society

STILLWATER, Okla.—

UM Men inducted Dr. Jerry Gill into the Society of John Wesley during a Sweetheart Dinner on Valentine’s Day at First UMC.

In 1990, Dr. Gill led an effort to restructure and revitalize the UM Men’s organization, and he served two terms as president following the realignment.

The organization moved from monthly to weekly meetings. They added hot breakfasts, de-



Dr Jerry Gill (left) receives a John Wesley plaque from Richard Ayers, speaker at the Feb. 14 dinner. David Lane (right) is president of the UM Men organization.

votions and Holy Communion. Attendance has grown to more than 50 participants.

A 40-year member of First UMC, Dr. Gill led the congregation through two strategic planning sessions, chaired the Church Council, taught youth and adult Sundays school classes, served as a sponsor for the UM Youth Fellowship, coordinated meals for the needy in the community, and served on mission teams.

Martha Davis
Operations manager receives first Susanna Wesley Award

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

NACP presented the first Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence to Martha Davis, operations manager of the General Commission on UM Men.

“Martha’s skills include Human Resources, Information Technology, video editing, operations, systems organizer, meeting planner, hostess, Chief Financial Officer, accounts manager, supply coordinator, adviser, editor, registration guru, designer, data manager, musician, problem solver, mentor, artist and friend,” said Gil Hanke.



Gil Hanke congratulates Martha Davis, operations manager of the General Commission on UM Men and the first woman to receive the Susanna Wesley Award.

L.W. Smith and Larry Coppock Strength for Service leaders receive life memberships

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

L.W. Smith, chair of the Strength for Service task force, and Larry Coppock, staff director of the Strength for Service Fund, received Life Memberships in UM Men during the Feb. 27-March 2 NACP meeting.

The surprise awards honored the men for helping republish the first book for World War II troops and for creating a second devotional book for first responders.



Larry Coppock (left) and L.W. Smith receive Life Member Awards.

Ella Hand Confirmation class leader receives Susanna Wesley Award

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—

Hank Dozier, president of Western North Carolina Conference UM Men, and Terrence Little, president of St. Marks UM Men, presented the Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence to Ella Hand, an advanced lay speaker and district lay member of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference.

“For more than 40 years, Mrs. Hand has been very instrumental in my life,” said Little at the March 30 service. “She confirmed me into St. Mark’s about 37 years ago and would later do the same for all of my



Friends and family participate in the March 30 presentation of the Susanna Wesley Award to Ella Hand.

children.”

“For more than 40 years, she has taught United Methodist doctrine to hundreds of youth,” said the Rev. Jessie Keaton, pastor of St. Marks UMC. “Former students (some, now grandparents) recall fond memories of Mrs. Hand’s confirmation classes, competitions, cookouts, trips, and events that made learning Christian doctrine unforgettable.”

“Mrs. Hand is known as an authority on Methodism”, said Dozier. “Unlike Susanna Wesley, she was not the mother of 19 children but she served as a spiritual mother to countless members of confirmation classes.

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Scout leader prepares a 40-day spiritual-formation guide

AUGUSTA, Ga.—

A Scout executive developed a 40-day meditation guide to help people think theologically about their role in scouting and to sample various spiritual practices leading to closer relationships with God.

Ty LaValley, a UM Silver Torch recipient and scouting ministry specialist, developed The 40 Day Shepherd Challenge, a free spiritual formation e-workbook based on the aims and methods of scouting.

LaValley serves as the Scout executive for the Kiokee River District in the Georgia-Carolina Council. The district includes 1,800 young people and 700 adults in the eight counties.

The guide is his personal “Messengers of Peace Service Project,” a World Scout Committee effort to encourage young men and women in more than 220 countries and territories to work for peace.

“The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make moral and ethical choices over the course of a lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law,” says LaValley.

With a graduate certificate in Christian education from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, the Scout leader compares the BSA mission with the UMC mission “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

“The area where these two missions

intersect is the subject of this spiritual-formation workbook,” says LaValley. “Inside these covers is a buffet of spiritual-formation practices for you to try.”

Gregory Francisco, an archbishop in the Anglican Communion, wrote the foreword: “The most superb part of this workbook is that it does not water down the Christian perspective or the scouting perspective but gives each one a comparative complimentary observation. It is a workbook for all ages.”

Anyone interested in this free study may access a pdf version online at: www.diaconia.webs.com. Anyone

completing the 40-Day Shepherd Challenge may send in the form at the end of the workbook for a free 40-Day-Shepherd Challenge Patch.

LaValley is a recipient of the BSA Heroism Medal for saving two people who were drowning in a rip tide.

He is a former director of spiritual formation of Springfield UMC near Savannah, Ga. He also served as a UMC chartered organization representative and scouting coordinator for the South Georgia Conference.

He retired from the Army as a sergeant first class, in 1998, and he served Ashland Place UMC in Mobile, Alabama as youth and education director before he was recalled for duty in Iraq in 2004-2005.

Ty and wife, Cheryl, have two adult children: Dana, a college student, and Joey, an anthropologist.



How to work with your pastor to expand scouting ministries

By the Rev. Greg Godwin

The Methodist Episcopal Church affirmed as early as 1920 that “Scouting provides an additional opportunity for the pastor to enter into the every-day life of the boyhood of his community”¹

For 94 years, scouting ministries in the Methodist Church and later the United Methodist Church have offered pastors the opportunity to minister to children and youth in the community. These ministries enhance a pastor’s circle of contact and influence.

I have been involved in scouting ministries in the church for the last 20 years. I am one of five Eagle Scouts in my family and had a very positive experience in Troop 128 in my home church.

In spite of my past experience in scouting, I needed to learn new tools in building an effective program when the men of Lubeck (W.Va.) UMC decided to start a new troop.

Keep in mind, when working with your pastor, each pastor will differ on her/his level of experience and understanding of scouting ministries.

While every pastor has valuable insights and leadership skills for ministry to children and youth, a first step, is to give your pastor a copy of the 2013-2016 Guidelines edition of Scouting and Civic Youth-Serving Ministry.

We live in a world with individuals looking for places to do harm to children, and UM Men can help the pastor provide a safe place for children and youth.

Safe Sanctuary/Youth Protection policies need to be in place and observed. Youth protection training is essential for all those involved in scouting ministries. Invite parents and guardians to complete the training in order to build strong barriers against those who want to do harm to children.

While youth protection is important, a safe physical ministry setting will directly enhance a fun program while teaching the values of scouting.

The men of the church can help the pastor make sure the physical environment is safe for children and youth. They may need to renovate a base-

ment room or even build a new facility.

Also, they can assist the pastor identify and recruit people of faith to lead the program with integrity. They may find willing and skilled volunteers outside their own faith community.

UM Men can also help in connect scouting to mission/service opportunities in the life of the congregation.

The local church scouting coordinator is a linchpin in in this important task. Remember, women can serve in this capacity as well as give leadership to effective scouting programs. Building relationships in the life of the congregation with participants of scouting ministries provide inter-generational opportunities while deepening the congregation’s relationship with the community.

All the items mentioned so far will provide opportunities for a pastor to expand his/her circle of influence in the community. But, direct contact opportunities with children and youth from the community will deepen relationships.

Help the pastor establish and lead the P.R.A.Y.(Program of Religious Activities with Youth) program. If the pastor does not have the time to lead one of the PRAY courses, help him/her recruit teachers and establish a service to recognize young people who complete the course.

Having your pastor on the scouting ministry team will enhance its effectiveness and service.



The Rev. Greg Godwin is pastor of Concord UMC in Athens, W.Va., and vice chairman of the Scouting Ministry Advisory Standing Committee.

¹ “Scouting in Methodist Episcopal Sunday Schools,” The Board of Sunday Schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Chicago, Ill., 1920.

Scout leader and former fire fighter joins *Strength for Service* team

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—

Jim Jeffery, a Scout leader, an Eagle Scout, and a former fire chief, has agreed to serve as a member of the Nashville-based organization promoting *Strength for Service* books.

“I read the devotions from *Strength for Service to God and Country* prior to the release of the *Strength for Service to God and Community*,” said Jeffery who served 22 years as a captain with the Los Angeles Fire Department and 10 years as an assistant chief for the state of California.

Noting that he had been shot at on six occasions, Jeffery said the books helped him cope with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

“I was shot at while in an ambulance more than once and once shots were also fired at our station,” said Jeffery. “We have no weapons with which to defend ourselves. Our only recourse is to get out of the situation as quickly as possible.”

Retired from the fire department in 1997, Jeffery says he is still haunted by former experiences.

“I remember a Christmas Eve when we were called to a home when a 4-year old

girl died. As I was later sitting alone at the station, one of the men asked me, ‘What’s wrong?’



Jim Jeffery

“I had to pronounce a 4-year-old child,” I responded. ‘Oh,’ said my colleague, ‘that explains what’s wrong with Frank,’ my partner on the call.”

Jeffery says he is pleased to become part of the *Strength for Service* team.

“I believe spiritual support is a great help in dealing with the things police officers and firefighters see and experience and with the resulting post-traumatic stress.

“I would love to see this book in the hands of every firefighter and police officer in America.”

Jeffery, a longtime Scout leader and past president of a Scout Council, attended the Nashville meeting of Boy Scouts in May, and he made a major contribution to providing *Strength for Service to God and Community* books to Scout leaders attending that national meeting.

“Linking Scouts to the effort to provide spiritual comfort to fire fighters and police officers is a perfect combination,” said Jeffery.

Scouting Awards

Barry Bray

Arkansas scoutmaster receives rare valor award

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.—

Barry Bray, 55, scoutmaster of Troop 12 at Pulaski Heights UMC, received the Honor Medal with Crossed Palms, scouting's highest award. Bray is credited with maneuvering ahead of an elderly motorist to get him off the wrong side of an interstate highway.

A 90-year-old widower did not realize he turned in the wrong direction on a major highway. Bray was heading the same direction in the correct lane when he saw the cars swerving away from the confused driver and honking their horns at him.

Bray drove next to him on the grass median between the roadways. He yelled at him while flashing his lights to warn oncoming traffic.

"To my dismay he wouldn't pull over," said Bray. "So, I pulled in front of him and began braking to slow him down."

Bray then led him across the median to the proper side of the highway. Miraculously, no accidents occurred.

Bill Price, program director for the Little Rock BSA Council, said this was the first time the Cross Palms had been given during his 18 years of service with the council.

"This was not just helping an old lady across the street," Price said. "He put his life in danger to save someone, and he kept a bigger catastrophe from happening."



Lynnse Terhune

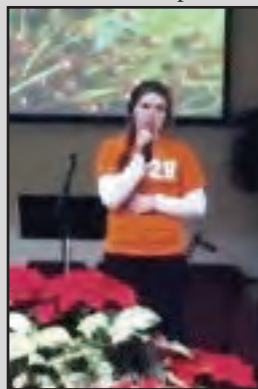
Super girl raises \$3,500 for Souper Saturday

BENTON, La.—

UM Men of Benton UMC presented Lynnse Terhune with a Good Samaritan Award following a four-month effort to raise \$3,500. The money was used for Souper Saturday hot meals for 75 seniors, an emergency food pantry, and providing 7,699 pounds of food to 127 families.

To raise funds, Lynnse designed and sold 95 t-shirts with a "Stand Up to Hunger" logo. She also produced a video and sold wristbands for the church's "Advent Conspiracy" giving campaign.

Benton UMC serves as a distributor for the Northwest Louisiana Food Bank.



Lynnse Terhune addresses members of Benton UMC wearing a "Stand Up to Hunger" t-shirt.

Don Cole

Church honors scoutmaster

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.—

Don Cole is an active member of St. James UMC, but he received a Cross and Flame Award from St. Paul UMC as the scoutmaster of Troop 30.

Cole has been involved in scouting since his twin sons joined Cub Scouts in 2005. During the next five years, he served as assistant pack leader and assistant Webelos leader of Pack 30. In 2011, he became assistant leader for Troop 30 and became scoutmaster in May, 2012.

Skyler Zunk
Scout creates outdoor worship center

CHESTERFIELD, Va.—

Bethia UMC presented a Good Samaritan Award to Skyler Zunk for creating an outdoor worship center on a slopping hillside near the church.

Skyler raised \$3,400 to fund his Eagle project, and he secured an additional \$6,600 in building materials from local vendors. Most of the money came from a spaghetti dinner he organized.

Skyler recruited more than 50 workers who provided 500 man-hours of work.

With three rows of stone seating areas, the worship center includes a cross behind a stone altar. The center is dedicated to Julie Fuss and Bruce Coal, founders of the 60-year-old Troop 2822.



Skyler Zunk stands next to the cross at the outdoor worship and learning center at Bethia UMC in Chesterfield, Va.

John McDivitt
Church honors scoutmaster

ZELLWOOD, Fla.—

John McDivitt, a 14-year veteran of scouting, received a Cross and Flame Award from Zellwood UMC, on Feb. 9, Scout Sunday.

He started with Cub Scout Pack 639. When his son, Johnson, became a Boy Scout, McDivitt became committee chair of Troop 639. He later became scoutmaster, a post he has held for the last eight years.

The veteran scouter helped nine boys attain the rank of Eagle.

McDivitt serves on the Eagle Board of

Review for the Apopka Shores District and for three years, he served on a board for the annual Scout Show at the University of Central Florida.

“Under his leadership the troop has made many improvements here at our campus,” said Dwight Doggett, Scout coordinator.

The troop redid a room to serve as a substation for the Salvation Army, and they built benches for the church cemetery. For his Eagle project, one Scout put a solar light to shine on the flagpole and the entire troop participates in annual Memorial Day services.

“On top of all the good things they do, every December they put on a ‘thank you meal’ for the community,” said Doggett. “It’s a time of good food and good fellowship.”



From left: The Rev. Nadine Richmond, pastor of Zellwood UMC, presents a Cross and Flame Award to John McDivitt. Scouting Coordinator Dwight Doggett prepares to present the scoutmaster with a medallion.

Megan Hamilton
Scout creates garden to honor veterans

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—

First UMC presented a Good Samaritan Award to Megan Hamilton for creating the “Garden of Sacrifice, Service and Hope.” A total of 950 hours was devoted to the project, with Megan working 205 of those hours. She raised \$12,691 for



Megan Hamilton



The Garden of Sacrifice, Service and Hope at First UMC in Columbia, Tenn.

the project by selling laser engraved pavers.

Megan says the garden was designed to tell children about the sacrifice of Christ, the service of church members and veterans, and the hope Christ gives us.

Justin Werner

Cub Scout receives God and Me Award
CHESTERON, Ind.—

Cub Scout Justin Werner was presented with the PRAY God and Me Award during Scout Sunday services at First UMC.

Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts participated in all three services. Members of the pack and troop chartered by Chesterton UM Men told the congregation about their scouting experiences.



From left: The Rev. Scott Tyring, senior pastor, and the Rev. Cathy Allison present Justin Werner with a God and Me Award. They are joined by Greg Schoeneck, a scouting ministry specialist and president of Chesterton UM Men.

Jerry Seber, John Tapley, Hayward Altman, Tim Goodman and Jack McLeod

Five Scout leaders receive Cross and Flame Awards

SWAINSBORO, Ga.—

Five leaders of Boy Scout Troop 75 received Cross and Flame Awards during Scout Sunday at First UMC.

A 28-year veteran Scout leader and barbecue beans expert, Jerry Seber, serves as assistant scoutmaster. He attended summer camps, backpacked on the Appalachian Trail, and he participated in white-water canoe trips. He also took an Adventure Crew to the Philmont Scout Ranch in 1991.

Former Scoutmaster, merit-badge counselor and 20-year Scout veteran, Hayward Altman, holds the official Troop 75 backpacking speed record on the Appalachian Trail. He also helps with annual barbecues.

Assistant scoutmaster and past district commissioner, Tim Goodman, attended many Boy Scout camps and backpacked with the troop.

Jack McLeod received the honor posthumously. Daughter Ann Rogers received the award on behalf of the McLeod family. Jack served as assistant scoutmaster for more than 28 years, attended Wood Badge training, participated in summer camps and camporees, and attended a



Back row from left: Hayward Altman and Tim Goodman; front row: Jerry Seber, Ann (McLeod) Rogers, and John Tapley.

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