



REPORTER

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'From Bogata to Burkburnett — Connected'

By RICHARD B. HEARNE
NTC Lay Leader

One of my favorite sayings is "it is an honor to be elected but then one has to serve."



Hearne

The NTC has honored the following persons as District Lay Leaders: Linda Parks, Wichita

Falls; Bonnie Donaghey, Sherman-McKinney; Ben Bennett, Paris-Sulphur Springs; Katy Kiser, Dallas-Denton; Richard Stanford, Dallas South; Alys Richards, Dallas Northeast; and me as the Conference Lay Leader. Now it is time for us to begin our service to the NTC.

By the Book of Discipline (§ 603.9 and 655) we are charged to "foster awareness of the role of laity... and support lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the annual conference, district and local church in cooperation with the bishop, district superintendents and pastors."

Your District Lay Leaders are already in action compiling a current list of Church Lay Leaders within their Districts as we await the arrival of Bishop Earl Bledsoe.

It is our goal to be ready to kick into action once we know how our new Bishop intends to utilize the District Lay Leaders and laity. We are hopeful that he will support a partnership between clergy and laity so that we all may be empowered to respond to the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation on the world.

See "Lay Leader ..." on Page 4A

Celebrating nearly 100 years of service

SCJ honors two retiring bishops

My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation, I hear the sweet though far off hymn that hails a new creation: Through all the tumult and the strife I hear the music ringing; it finds an echo in my soul—how can I keep from singing?

—Words & music by Robert Lowry, 1860

By JOE DAN BOYD
Special Correspondent

Those words of Robert Lowry, fresh and full, with no hint of antebellum origin, rang from the rafters of The Dallas Hilton Anatole Hotel's Texas-sized Dallas ballroom on July 18 during the retirement service of the 2008 South Central Jurisdictional (SCJ) Conference.

On this sizzling summer day, SCJ delegates and worship leaders celebrated 97 years of service by two retiring bishops

with this ancient song of assurance, led by the rich baritone of Rev. Marc Corazao, Floral Heights UMC, Wichita Falls.

Retiring Bishop Benjamin Chamness credited his 49 years of service, in part, to his parents for bringing him up in the Christian faith, and, in part, to his wife Joy for her love, her many sacrifices and her faith, which he described as even stronger than his own.

In addition, Bishop Chamness cited the early influence of his teachers and professors at Centenary College and Perkins School of Theology. "Without our Methodist institutions, I would not have had the tools to serve, or to carve out a path for abundant life, emphasizing the social gospel for transformation of the world."

He was introduced by fellow Bishop Woodrow Hearn, a previous retiree, who noted that Bishop Chamness was



The NTC clergy and music directors choir sings for the July 18 SCJ Retirement Service.

ordained to ministry during the 1960s, elected to the Episcopacy in 2000, and established a history of increasing membership and promoting 100 percent payment of apportionments everywhere he served. His years as an active bishop have been in Texas, including service as Bishop of the Fort Worth area.

Bishop Chamness ended his own remarks on a light note: "I

have heard numerous retirement speeches, but the one that is most memorable to me was just a single sentence by an African-American woman: 'The Good Book says to let the redeemed of the Lord say so.' Then she paused, added the word 'So,' and sat down.

"It has been a great journey and I would take nothing for it," he concluded.

See "Bishop..." on Page 4A

Denton Wesley students return to Africa

When Brittany Burrows and Christina Cavener, students from The Denton Wesley Foundation, which serves the University of North Texas, Texas Women's University and North Central Texas College students, committed to a mission to help Rev. Wes Magruder in Cameroon, Africa, they had no idea that it would change the course of their lives for the next two years. Now both are headed for mission service in the Congo.

Both young women found Africa to be an amazing opportunity for mission and a perfect place to offer their gifts and service. During these past two years both young women have told their story about serving at a youth camp in Cameroon and the needs of the young people they served.

Brittany Burrows, age 22, serves as youth director at Krum

UMC. She recalls guest preaching about her awesome experience to her congregation. "People really enjoyed hearing how their support changed the lives of the African youth. I think they want to invest in something that makes a difference in the world," Burrows said.

Her mission trips include: Juarez and Matamoros, Mexico; West Virginia, Arkansas, Texas, Alabama, Tennessee, and Cameroon, Africa.

Christina Cavener, age 23, works with youth at First UMC, Rockwall, and has always loved music and came home from Africa singing and dancing to their joyful songs. The freedom she felt to harmonize and be creative inspired the creation of a "Blue Grass" CD where both she and Burrows are featured.

Her mission trips include: Juarez and Matamoros, Mexico; Texas, Louisiana, and Cameroon, Africa.

Rev. Cammy Gaston, Campus Minister of the Denton Wesley Foundation, is very excited about the way her students have embraced mission work. "I say to my students, 'Thanks for saving the world today, we need all the help we can get.' How wonderful it is to have two talented, on fire young people who are stepping out to do something great!"

On July 26 The Denton Wesley Foundation hosted a concert benefiting their mission work in the Congo.

Burrows and Cavener are leaving this month for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to serve as United Methodist Individual Volunteers at the Jamaa Letu orphanage and the Methodist School in Lubumbashi.

For more information, or to



Brittany Burrows, left, and Christina Cavener, students at Denton Wesley Foundation, are now serving in the Republic of the Congo, Africa.

hear the "Blue Grass" music, visit: www.myspace.com/soggybottomsisters, or call the Denton Wesley Foundation; 940 382-3813.

Celebrating nearly 100 years...

SCJ honors two retiring bishops

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Bishop Chamness' wife Joy added her own touch of humor with the story of her husband's wedding promise to her: "Ben promised that he would always take me somewhere special on our wedding anniversary, and he never failed to take me with him to Annual Conference!"

In his introduction of retiring Bishop Joel Martinez, fellow Bishop Dan Solomon, himself a previous retiree, called Bishop Martinez an early leader for Christ as a three-sport athlete in high school, who would eventually graduate from the Lydia Patterson Institute and from Perkins School of Theology, which would later name Bishop Martinez a Distinguished Alumni.

"While serving churches in the Rio Grande Valley Conference, his arms of love and compassion have reached around a multitude of persons," added Bishop Solomon. "He has a passion for the kind of ministry that empowers people to be fruitful and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ."

"What a gift he has: A real Barnabas in our midst," emphasized Bishop Solomon, who described Bishop Martinez as having a passion for the marginalized and, especially,

for migrant ministry.

"His remarkable life is marked by the thread of mission in his ministry, including four years as president of the Board of Global Ministries. He is not simply a pastor in name, but he is also a pastor in his heart," concluded Bishop Solomon.

Bishop Martinez, during his own remarks, explained that the Spanish word for retirement is rooted in joy, just as his own faith journey began in the home of his parents and his two brothers: "There, the song was sung."

Ordained as a Deacon and an Elder in the 1960s, Bishop Martinez was elected to the Episcopacy in 1992, and has since served in both Nebraska and Texas.

"One of the first things I did after that election was to ask one of my former professors about the first duty of a bishop and was somewhat surprised at the answer," recalled Bishop Martinez. "He said the first duty of a bishop is to preserve the unity of the Church."

"Before I actually take to the rocking chair, I want to do further work on justice in society and on the issues of race and inclusion. What a wonderful gift the church of Jesus Christ has been to me for these 48-plus years. It's been a privilege, and

I thank you for that."

The Bishop's wife, Raquel Mora Martinez, an accomplished musician, composed and led the Hymn of Presentation for her husband's retirement segment.

"For us, it has been a journey of ups and downs, and we know God has great things ahead for us because the work of mission never ends: It just takes different paths," declared Mrs. Martinez.

As the retirement celebration drew to a close, Bishop Ann Sherer offered a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing:

"Bless now our beloved faithful colleagues who enter a new way of serving You. Thanks for tasks accomplished, love shared, the joy, fruitfulness woven into the fabric of their lives. We ask You to fill them with vision and a full measure of Your spirit that they may continue to serve the Church."

The benediction was by Bishop Joe Wilson: "May we seek the quiet and solitary places where we are filled with the Spirit, that we may love mercy seek justice and walk humbly with our God."

Other worship leaders included Bishops Charles Crutchfield and Alfred L. Norris.

The concluding hymn, especially appropriate, included these words:

Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what Thou dost love, and do what Thou wouldst do. Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly Thine, till all this earthly part of me glows with Thy fire divine.



Rev. Joe Stobaugh, music minister at Argyle UMC, leads retirement service music.

'From Bogata to Burkburnett...'

Continued from Page 1A

A major goal of your Board of Laity, which is composed of the Conference and District Lay Leaders and the Chairs of the United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, Lay Speaking Ministries and United Methodist Youth, is to keep persons across the NTC informed about the successful programs and outreach ministries that are occurring. Our slogan will be **"From Bogata to Burkburnett – Connected."**

We want all to learn and be inspired by each other. We will be working to create the feeling of churches that share the same vision and mission regardless of whether the church is large or small or urban or rural.

Also, prayer will be a

major focus of your District Lay Leaders as we begin a program of praying, by name, for each church and pastor in their District. This is a result of the excitement that has been generated by the prayer support that was offered up for General and Jurisdictional Conferences where we were surprised by how many were honored to be asked to pray for the major events happening within our denomination and annual conference.

Over the coming weeks this column will contain the comments of the members of the Board of Laity as they seek to serve you. We welcome your input.

For more information, please call cell phone: 214-505-2324, or e-mail: rbhearne@sbc-global.net



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BY JOE DAN BOYD
Special Correspondent

"For the United Methodist Church to grow and move forward, it's essential that each Conference provide opportunities for youth to hold leadership positions."

That's the view of Andrew Ponder Williams, a Missouri Lay Delegate to South Central Jurisdictional (SCJ) Conference and Chair of SCJ's Jurisdictional Youth Team (JYT).

Williams described his recent experience, July 7-11, at the 2008 Jurisdictional Youth Ministry Organization (JYMO) Convocation (www.jymo.org), held at McMurtry University, Abilene, TX.

"Even I, as a youth leader, was overwhelmed by the passion that was present, and through the fellowship I had with other youth," Williams explained. "I know in my heart that there are youth across this Jurisdiction who are ready and waiting for a chance to be a leader in the United Methodist Church."

"Please work either to strengthen or establish Conference youth ministries in your area," added Williams. "Allowing youth to be leaders of the Church today will ensure strong leadership for the church as it moves forward."

Steve Heyduck, a Youth Adult Coordinator who assisted Williams during his Jurisdic-

tional Conference report, said that JYMO 2006, held at Centenary College in the Louisiana Conference, focused specifically on encouraging youth to be leaders in the church today, and not wait until sometime in the future to make themselves heard.

This year's JYMO theme, added Heyduck, focused on God's infinite love for all, via structured fellowship, discussion and passionate worship, including a powerful sermon by NTC pastor Rev. Kathleen Baskin-Ball, Suncreek UMC, Allen.

Williams said JYT, the Jurisdiction's youth team, features an executive group of four youth, two adult coordinators and an adult financial coordinator.

"This past year I served as Chair," explained Williams. "Jesi Lipp of the Kansas East Conference served as Secretary and Adam Silver of the Kansas West Conference, served as the Youth Empowerment Advisor."

Williams said that JYT, in conjunction with all SCJ Conference Coordinators, plans and leads JYMO as a camp/convocation for youth to grow spiritually and develop leadership skills through worship, mission projects, small groups, workshops and group-building activities."

JYT also sponsors Spiritual Life Rally (SpiLiRa), a big event held every four years to

assist spiritual growth of youth through concerts, large worship services and workshops.

"SpiLiRa 2005 was held at the University of Oklahoma at Norman, and focused on the disciplines of learning, living and leading," said Williams. "SpiLiRa 2009 will be held at the University of Missouri at Columbia, and will encourage attendees to sow seeds of love and peace. Information will be sent to Conference offices, and also be available online at www.SpiLiRa.org."

Meanwhile, Youth Adult Coordinator Heyduck reminded SCJ delegates that, at Youth 2007, an international gathering of United Methodist youth, the South Central Jurisdiction boasted the highest attendance of any Jurisdiction, despite the event's location at Greensboro, NC, which is in another Jurisdiction.



Steve Heyduck, left, and Andrew Williams, share good news about SCJ Youth Ministries.

TMF celebrates board members elected to the episcopacy

The Texas Methodist Foundation (TMF) recognizes three of its board members elected to serve as bishops for the South Central Jurisdiction. Bishops W. Earl Bledsoe, James E. "Jim" Dorff, and John Michael Lowry will continue to serve the TMF Board in an advisory capacity as they take their new offices on Sept. 1.

"The Foundation is richly blessed to have these talented and committed leaders af-

filiated with our board and our denomination. We have benefited from their creative leadership and know the depth of their experience and dedication to transformational ministry will only serve to strengthen The United Methodist Church," said Foundation President Tom Locke.

As TMF board chair 2000-01, during a time of revisioning, Bishop Bledsoe worked diligently to foster the critical transition from a financial institution to a ministry

offering financial services.

Bishop Dorff has been a valued conversation partner to Locke providing counsel and thought-provoking ideas on how TMF can most effectively use its resources to fulfill the needs of individuals and congregations throughout Texas.

Bishop Lowry has contributed significantly to the evolution of TMF's Grants Ministry by encouraging a more proactive stance in identifying the needs of UM ministries and exploring ways to address those needs.

Launching St. Luke "Community" South Extension



In preparation for the launch of the St. Luke "Community" South Extension Campus, Texas State Representative Helen Giddings recently hosted a gathering in her home to introduce the extension campus pastor, Rev. Derek Jacobs. Pictured are community leaders: Lloyd Treadwell, Superintendent of DeSoto ISD; Mayor Bobby Waddle of DeSoto; Rev. Tyrone Gordon, pastor, St. Luke "Community" UMC; Rev. Jacobs; Mayor Marcus Knight, Lancaster; and State Representative Helen Giddings.

Around the Conference

Birth

Samuel Joseph Stobaugh, son of **Sarah** and **Rev. Joe Stobaugh**, **Argyle UMC**, was born July 28, weighing 9 lbs. 1½ oz and measuring 20 inches.

Positions available

Agape UMC, Dallas, is seeking a **director for "Not Home Alone"** after-school program. Persons interested may call Rev. David Blanco, 214-826-8686, e-mail: revd-blanco@sbcglobal.net.

First UMC, Cedar Hill, is seeking two persons, a **director of youth ministries** and **director of music**. Persons interested may e-mail Rev. Mike House, mike@fumcch.org.

Plymouth Park UMC, Irving, announces its annual giant Missions Garage Sale—Aug. 8, 8:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.; Aug. 9, 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.; 1615 W. Airport Frwy. Furniture, house-

hold, kitchen, electronics, toys, books, clothes for all ages and much more. Proceeds are used for mission projects locally and around the world. for more information, call 972-255-4185.

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BY BILL MATTHEWS
United Nations Association

It was a calculated decision: to attend as a Texas delegate to the Conference of Chapters and Divisions of the United Nations Association of the U.S.A. meeting in Washington, DC, at the same time as the 2008 North Texas Annual Conference.

Norma and I have had many chances to serve as ambassadors, as “Christ’s representatives” to “persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God’s work of making things right between them.” (2 Cor. 5:19, The Message).

Working out our call to ministry 11 years after retirement, in the 52nd year since ordination, has taken us to far fields of concern and interest in God’s people, symbolized by our decision to work with the United Nations Association (UNA), the volunteer “auxiliary” that provides information, education and advocacy for the goals and achievements of the world’s foremost agency for addressing human need.

We add our motivation to that definition “in the spirit and name of Jesus Christ,” although for obvious reasons that’s not language of the Charter upon which the world body was formed in 1946.

High-level resource persons inspired us with optimism on international issues, showing about how we work towards solutions together. Mr. William K. Davis, Director, UN Information Center in Washington, noted new levels of optimism as the U.S. moves towards multi-lateral decisions in international affairs, from the Administra-

tion, through Congress and other government entities. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has called it the “new American realism.”

A strong emphasis of the Association comes on this 60th Anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights – patterned after our Constitutional Bill of Rights, the 50 principles assembled for wider world application, that has been the bellwether for international understanding and progress since its adoption in 1948.

The Preamble sounds familiar to Americans: “All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations is committed to upholding, promoting and protecting the human rights of every individual.”

As one speaker put it, we are continually “seeking to make a better world amid problems without passports,” to serve millions of people. As one example: UN agencies are currently caring for 36 million refugees world-wide: providing food, shelter, health care. It’s admittedly frustrating in situations like Darfur, where U.N. agents are asked to do the impossible, with under funded resources in a complicated political and economic situation, but then blamed for failure.

The Conference was conducted through an intense, three-day schedule of speakers and panels of experts and dialogue with local representatives, working around four key points:

1. Paying our fair share at the UN
2. Supporting human rights
3. Constructive US engagement in the UN climate change framework; and

4. Abiding by international rule of law

Fair share payments. US representatives at the UN have supported many worthy initiatives in the Millennium Development Goals, in peace-keeping, refugee services for food, shelter and health concerns. But crucial financial issues arise when our government gets involved in the budget process, where domestic concerns tend to offset the selflessness that seems all too necessary on the international scale. US arrears to the UN currently total over \$1.3 billion. Of this, \$612 million is payable under the Helms-Biden Act, legislation enacted in 1999. The remaining \$700 million result from various legislative and policy withholdings; at present, there are no plans to pay these amounts.

Human rights. The Assistant Secretary of State Jonathan Farrar reported in March, “The United States’ efforts to promote human rights and democratic freedoms around the world reflect the core values of the American people and also advance our core interests. Whenever human rights defenders are the targets of repression, our longstanding values and our long-term interests are best served when we and other democracies show the word -- show by word and by deed our abiding solidarity with them.” He cited numerous instances where ongoing review is indicated, as the US fulfills its support of these principles amid conflicting local situations with complex realities. Anticipated adjustments in the Human Rights Council of the UN may enhance the U.S. role.

Climate change. Under Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky spoke to us in Washington. “The US wants a successful and comprehensive arrangement on climate change for the post-2012 period. We want a deal by December 2009. We are actively engaged in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, we support the Bali Roadmap, and we want a new approach to address the key elements of the Bali Roadmap: mitigation, financing, adaptation, and technology. We also support action aimed at addressing deforestation and land misuse.” (text from June 17 report)

International law. A breakout panel reflected efforts to address various issues. A more recent follow-up conference in New York on June 11 revealed, “The United Na-



Richland College staff members join Rev. Bill and Norma Matthews of the Dallas Chapter of the UN Foundation, as the group is honored with the foundation’s “2008 Earl Eames Communication Award.” From left are Larry Levine, Diana Urrutia, Noeli Biggs, Jeana Remington and the Matthews. The award recognizes Richland College’s LeCroy Center’s effort in distributing model UN Training videos through its world-wide web distance learning service.

tions has greatly expanded its work on the rule of law, from strengthening police services to supporting constitutional processes, but the expansion is still not sufficient to meet the needs of Member States,” Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiroy said. She stressed that the UN’s primary role was to support national efforts to strengthen the rule of law and to secure sustainable justice at the country level.

On the third day in the nation’s capital, we visited congressional representatives in the House and Senate for scheduled appointments with them or their aides. We expressed localized concerns derived from the “talking points” above, urging support for the UN on a wide scale including human rights and peace-keeping. Proposals for restructuring to improve functioning of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council were conveyed by our joint group from Dallas and Houston Chapters of UNA.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were referenced in many presentations. Adopted by 189 nations in the year 2000, they are over halfway to the target date for accomplishment by 2015. The eight MDG – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and all the world’s leading development institutions.

Reports claim that the world has made significant progress in achieving many of the Goals. Between 1990 and 2002 aver-

age overall incomes increased by approximately 21 percent. The number of people living in extreme poverty declined by an estimated 130 million. Child mortality rates fell from 103 deaths per 1,000 live births a year to 88. Life expectancy rose from 63 years to nearly 65 years. An additional 8 percent of the developing world’s people received access to water. And an additional 15 percent acquired access to improved sanitation services.

Progress towards the MDG is too slow in many parts of the world. The crisis is most severe in sub-Saharan Africa where, despite some successes such as increased primary school enrollment, the majority of countries are not on track to achieving the MDG. Similar lags are noted in Latin America, east Asia and elsewhere.

At a global level, progress has been made but the gains are uneven. Small-island developing states and landlocked developing countries face severe challenges, while high rates of inequality in many middle-income countries mean that entire regions or social groups will be left behind. [MDG Support, 2007 Report]

The scope of concerns covered by the United Nations seems daunting, if not overwhelming, and yet the people and the organization offer great hope for the future. We work and pray for the day when “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Isaiah 2:4)

For more information, please contact Rev. Bill Matthews, 214-827-1047, e-mail: ycm@sbcglobal.net.



Rev. Bill and Norma Matthews stand with a fragment of the Berlin Wall, which was erected as a memorial near the entry to the John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington DC.