

The Monthly Update

June 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This month's edition of the Monthly Update contains the beginning of the reports on the individual annual conferences held across our United Methodist Church. We ask that you be in prayer for what happens as they pass legislation and elect delegates for next year's General Conference.

We have just celebrated Memorial Day. I do hope that you took time out of your busy schedules to think about the significance of this time. My own father fought in World War II and the Korean War. To me, these were memories that permeated our home while I was growing up. Then when I became an adult and was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life, I decided on the military. After having served in the Army for over twenty years and retiring, I looked on what I happened during that interim: I had "helped out" during the Vietnam War, Operation Urgent Fury, Operation Desert Shield/ Storm – with numerous other "operations" in between. I just considered it as a matter of course that we did the things that we did. But the memories of my father's combat and others who fought in the pivotal events of World War II seemed to me the really heroic effort at keeping the Free World – free.

Joe Sturz, one of the people with whom we communicate, expressed his memories in a way that to me exemplifies the high cost of this time:

My wife Rachel Steinbeck Sturz remembers her father's younger brother, the third of seven children. His name: Edwin Dickson Steinbeck. She never met him. Uncle Eddy joined the United States Navy when he was in his mid-teens. (His dad had to give written consent). His gunboat was torpedoed in the South Pacific in March 1942. His body was never found. All but one of the eighty-six men who were on the gun boat that day were killed. The lone survivor died later in a Japanese prison. He was only one of thousands to remember this Memorial Day. And I honor our Uncle Eddy along with all the others [who] served and died.

- Living in freedom because of them,
Joe Sturz

I so much appreciate the many clergy and laypeople who are faithful to our traditional faith, yet face what at times seems to be a growing problem of leadership determined to take us on a course away from faithfulness to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Thank you again for the support you provide our ministry - both prayerfully and financially. We ask that you would continue to pray for the United Methodist Church, that we would stay centered on our orthodox Christian faith - as we here in Concerned Methodists are working as diligently as we can toward the General Conference next year in Fort Worth, Texas.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,
Executive Director

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June 2007 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

"I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. Yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means...."

~ Founding Patriot John Adams [Source: *Patriot's Post*]

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Memorial Day: The Cornerstone

On Monday, Americans celebrate Memorial Day. It is a time to stop and pray, as we reflect on the sacrifice of those who have laid down their lives so that we might live in freedom. Here in Washington, the day dawns as President Bush lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Those who attend the early morning ceremony will be able to read some of the words engraved at the heart of Arlington National Cemetery. There's a Latin inscription which, translated, says: "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country." This idea, which was written before the birth of Jesus, comes from the Roman author Horace. Clearly, patriotism goes a long way back. When the cornerstone for the Tomb was laid in 1915, a time capsule was placed within it containing several interesting items from our nation's history. Among the things our ancestors thought important for us to remember were a copy of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, a U.S. Flag (1915), and Pierre L'Enfant's map design of the city of Washington, D.C. But the first thing our ancestors placed in that time capsule was the Bible. That's interesting since the nation had been operating under the Constitution for 125 years by that point, and yet none of our leaders--Democrat or Republican--thought the inclusion of the Bible would present a constitutional problem. In that Bible, of course, we read Jesus' words: "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13) As a Marine myself, I feel a special bond with those who have served. When I served, we learned about the blood red stripe that runs down the length of a Marine's trousers, earned in Mexico's Halls of Montezuma. The Marine officer's sword, which is called the Mameluke sword, is curved, reminding us that President Jefferson ordered the Marines to storm the shores of Tripoli. He wanted to stop Muslim terrorists from kidnapping Americans. Sound familiar? "Where do we get such men," General Dwight D. Eisenhower asked in amazement when he saw Army Rangers scaling the heights of Pointe du Hoc in Normandy on D-Day. The truth is, we get them from the same places we've always gotten them--from the farms and factories, from villages, suburbs, and big cities, and from America's churches. That's why the Word of God is there, in that cornerstone. And that's why it is the cornerstone of our national life.

- Received by e-mail from Joe Sturz.

Abortion. Medical Students Weigh Being Next Generation of Abortion Practitioners

Denver, CO -- Taking the life of one patient and likely hurting the other isn't the idea most medical students have in mind when they're thinking of a specialty or career after college. But for some pro-abortion students, becoming an abortion practitioner is not only an option, but, they feel, an obligation because of declining numbers. Plastic surgeons are often looked down upon by the rest of the medical community but there are more than three times as many people doing cosmetic surgeries as there are abortion practitioners. That's how frowned upon the profession is within the medical world -- and the number is on the decline. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of Planned Parenthood -- the nation's largest abortion business -- estimates that there are about 1,800 abortion practitioners in the United States. But the number has fallen about 37 percent from 1982 to 2000 for a variety of reasons. Most abortion practitioners are older and retiring, many come from the bottom ranks of medical school and have had run ins with state health departments over botched abortions or health violations, others have converted to a pro-life position. Looking at the equation from the pro-abortion side, groups like Medical Students for Choice say the decline is the result of stepped up protests against abortion practitioners at both the abortion centers as well as their homes. And abortion advocacy groups say the decline has been caused by more state regulations on abortion facilities to ensure that women's health is better protected and to reduce the number of abortions. But two students at the very liberal University of Colorado in Boulder say they're likely going to enter the field.

- *LifeNews.com Pro-Life News Report; Wednesday, May 23, 2007.*

(UM) Bishops Congregation Responds to Bishop's Call for the Fundamentals

A call from Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker (Florida Area) in the fall of 2005 has led to an emphasis on evangelism, worship, and outreach. Responding to that call, congregations such as Bartley Temple UMC in Gainesville, Fla., are reaching into their community. Clifford T. Patrick, pastor of Bartley Temple, said he has informed his entire congregation about the fundamentals set forth by Whitaker; but only top leaders are fully aware of what they mean. He said the fundamentals have been preached from the pulpit, discussed in meetings, and published in church newsletters. In an effort to address the goals, Patrick said Bartley Temple this year held a Celebrate Jesus-type community block party. This party included the participation of a Baptist congregation and two non-denominational churches. In addition, Bartley's worship planning team began meeting last October. A membership care team has also been launched.

"The community block party was a great success," Patrick said. "It was attended by an estimated 700 people. A young man we met while distributing water came about three months later and joined by profession of faith. Since that time he has brought three friends that also made their profession of faith." Patrick said his church has met the 5% increase in membership goal but not the goal for worship attendance. He hopes the new membership care team, as well as new leadership in the church's evangelism and outreach ministries, will enable it to surpass the goal in 2007. "The church needs to overcome fear and make a commitment to continue to reach out [to] the unchurched," Patrick added. A report of progress will be made at the annual conference.

“For decades annual conference has been focused upon conference agencies instead of congregations,” Whitaker said. “We shall correct this imbalance in 2007.”

— *John Michael De Marco & Tita Parham, Florida UM News Service (UMNS), reported in UMNewscope, March 2, 2007*

(UM) General Conference. Georgia Lay Leader to Address at General Conference

A Georgia woman has been tapped to deliver the laity address at the 2008 General Conference. Lyn Powell, lay leader of the North Georgia Conference since 2004 and the first woman to hold that position, will speak when the church's top lawmaking body meets next year. “This is a humbling honor to represent not only the annual conference lay leaders of the denomination but all of the laity,” Powell said. Retired in 2003 as vice president of information technology for Associated Credit Union, Powell's church service began with her local church, Snellville UMC, where she has held numerous leadership positions and taught Disciple Bible study and Christian Believer. Powell served as a delegate to the 2004 General Conference and Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference and is a director of the General Board of Discipleship and of the executive committee of the World Methodist Council. In addition, she is president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders.

The theme of her laity address will be “Disciples Transforming the World,” in which Powell will emphasize the importance of clergy and laity sharing ministry. Powell was chosen for the speaking task by a five-member committee of conference lay leaders, chosen by GBOD, which reviewed manuscripts from speaker candidates. Her selection was announced during the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders meeting Feb. 15–18 in Minneapolis.

— *Alice M. Smith, Wesleyan Christian Advocate, as reported in UMNewscope, March 9, 2007*

The Good Stuff.

+ **Kevin Garrad** (3rd Infantry Division) was on a street patrol in Iraq (Tikrit I believe) and as he rounded the corner of a building an armed (AK-47) insurgent came from the other side. The two of them were within just a few feet of each other when they opened fire. The insurgent was killed and Kevin was hit in the left chest where his iPod was in his jacket pocket. It slowed the bullet down enough that it did not completely penetrate his body armor. Fortunately, Kevin suffered no wound. *- E-mail sent by Capt. W. E. Saunders.*

+ **Prayer and a ministry of presence** are the most important services that churches can provide for servicemen and women and the families they leave behind, says a United Methodist chaplain. Families need a visit from the pastor before the military member leaves followed by monthly visits in behalf of the church. “Deployments aren't sprints. They are marathons,” said Chaplain Gary Brown, deputy garrison chaplain at the U.S Army Garrison Grafenwoehr in Germany. “Too many times the church does all these wonderful things for a spouse within a short period of time after the soldier deploys. But five months, eight months into deployment, not much is done.” *- News In Brief, Mar. 30, 2007. E-mail sent by Capt. W. E. Saunders.*

The National Council of Churches.

[Note: This is another example of not only a misuse of your apportionment money in funding Robert Edgar's salary but also a UM official playing politics again, for which so many are so ill-qualified. It would seem that when we have a denomination that has been in decline for over forty years, we would try to concentrate on turning our denomination around. If we cannot fix the problems in our own church, how could we fix the problems in the international arena – one with many nuances and issues that are not readily evident. In addition, what Edgar misses is that past history demonstrates that having a strong defense and being ready to use it when necessary has saved countless lives.]

A coalition of national and regional religious leaders has launched a major initiative to “zero-out” funding for the production of new nuclear warheads. Robert W. Edgar, a UM pastor and general secretary of the National Council of Churches USA, kicked off the initiative May 10 at San Ramon Valley UMC in Alamo, Calif.

“We must ask ourselves why we would continue to spend billions constructing weapons that have the power to destroy us rather than build systems and structures that will save lives,” said Edgar. In January, 74 religious groups and denominations issued a statement opposing U.S. plans for a nuclear weapons build-up.

— *UMNS, as reported in UMNewscope, May 25, 2007.*

Of Interest.

+ **Bush nominates United Methodist as surgeon general**

A United Methodist physician from Kentucky has been nominated to serve as the 18th surgeon general of the United States. President Bush announced the appointment of James W. Holsinger Jr. as his nominee on May 24. Holsinger, who

is a professor of preventive medicine at the University of Kentucky, has led that state's health care system and taught at several American medical schools. He was appointed by President George H.W. Bush as chief medical director of the Veterans Health Administration in 1990 and became undersecretary for health in the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1992. He also served more than three decades in the U.S. Army Reserve, retiring as a major general in 1993. A member of Hope Springs United Methodist Church in Lexington, Ky., where he serves as administrative pastor, Holsinger has been an active at all levels of the denomination. He currently is president of Judicial Council, the church's supreme court. He also is treasurer of the World Methodist Council. "This is an honor for Dr. Holsinger and a fitting acknowledgement of his competency as a physician, administrator, teacher and leader," said the Rev. George Freeman, the council's executive director. Holsinger has a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky, master's degrees from both the University of South Carolina and Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, and his medical degree and doctorate from Duke University.

"As America's chief health educator, he will be charged with providing the best scientific information available on how Americans can make smart choices that improve their health and reduce their risk of illness and injury," Bush said in his announcement. "Dr. Holsinger will particularly focus his efforts on educating parents and children about childhood obesity, a serious epidemic that decreases quality of life and burdens our healthcare system. I am confident that Dr. Holsinger will help our Nation confront this challenge and many others to ensure that Americans live longer, better, and healthier lives."

- Linda Bloom, *UMNS*; New York; May 25, 2007.

+ Church Leaders Present Propositions to the UMC at Town Hall

[Note: In all of these propositions where does one find the overriding need to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ with the forgiveness of sins? Until we get the "essentials" right, we will not get much of anything else right and our leadership will keep floundering.]

Leaders of UM general agencies elaborated on their vision for the church last week as about 200 people joined the UM town hall by phone. The general secretaries and the Connectional Table have taken the seven vision pathways proposed by the Council of Bishops down to four "provocative propositions." Six general secretaries and Bishop Janice Riggle Huie (Houston Area), president of the Council of Bishops, discussed this vision in the town hall April 17. In short, these four areas of cooperative work are leadership, congregational development (new churches and church growth), elimination of poverty (ministry with the poor), and global health (eliminating the diseases of poverty). While multiple agencies will be working in each area, four agencies will lead the efforts for one proposition. Jerome King Del Pino, general secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, explained the first proposition, as GBHEM is the lead agency for leadership development. Del Pino said that the UMC must develop support for young clergy and other leaders, calling for "global leaders for a global church." He presented three characteristics of such leaders: 1) "They are guardians of the emerging global village"; 2) "they are bearers of a renewed vision for the church"; and 3) "global leaders for a global church are advocates for a learned leadership." To that end, these leaders will seek healing for a divided church and advocate for an educational system that goes around the world and supports the poor.

Karen Greenwaldt of the General Board of Discipleship leads the emphasis on congregational development. She stressed that the UMC is not starting enough churches. In fulfilling the commission of Matthew 28, Greenwaldt said, "We will need to risk both our gifted leadership and our financial resources." Starting churches is one part, and the church needs to revitalize existing congregations also. In doing so, the agencies are working together to provide resources to churches outside the United States in languages they use. R. Randy Day of the General Board of Global Ministries is leading the focus on the elimination of poverty. He said the problem is that "there is a lack of access to the resources" and not to food. There will need to be many parts of a campaign to end poverty since there are many causes. Issues to be addressed include clean water, fair trade, war, natural disasters, and community development institutions and Shalom Zones. The church will need to find what it can do alongside the poor.

Larry Hollon and UM Communications are taking the lead on the global health campaign. According to Hollon, "the broken healthcare system in the United States" impacts people throughout the world. He said the church supports healthcare for all and that this is a justice issue. UM Communications will partner with other agencies as well as UM-related educational and medical institutions. In response to a question, Hollon acknowledged that global warming also plays a role in the campaign against malaria. The general church budget that will be submitted to General Conference will focus on these four areas. At that point, the UMC will decide whether to support these provocative propositions.

- As reported in *NewScope*, April 27, 2007.

+ [Note: the following is of interest because any time that someone burns a church, any church, it is an attack against all Christians. One of the most precious freedoms we have is – freedom of religion, to worship God.]

Matthew Cloyd and Benjamin Moseley pleaded guilty May 16 to burning a church in Pickens Co., Ala., a step that ends prosecution in a 2006 arson spree. The men will serve two-year state prison sentences to run at the same time as sentences previously handed down in three other counties. The state sentences will begin once they complete an eight-year federal term ordered in February. Another arsonist, Russell DeBusk, was involved in five of the fires and earlier pleaded guilty. In addition to federal prison, the three men must pay restitution and are to perform community service work at the churches once they are released.

- *UMNS*, as reported in *UMNewscope*, May 25, 2007.

Sexuality Issues. *Transsexual United Methodist Minister Reappointed to lead Baltimore Church*

Washington, DC-- A United Methodist minister in Baltimore who underwent a surgical change of gender identity has been reappointed, it was announced at the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, meeting now in Washington, D.C. The former Rev. Ann Gordon, now known as Rev. Drew Phoenix, told the annual conference of a "spiritual transformation" since the sex change procedure.

The decision, announced by Bishop John Schol, was not uncontroversial. During the closed conference, some ministers asked for a "ruling of law," that automatically takes the issue to the Judicial Council, United Methodism's highest court. The Judicial Council next meets in October. The United Methodist Church has not explicitly stated, official policies regarding sexual identity changes or sex change operations. The denomination does officially disapprove of homosexual behavior. Rev. Phoenix' congregation of several dozen people supports the "Reconciling" movement within United Methodism, which campaigns to overturn the church's official teachings on marriage and sexual ethics.

IRD Director of UMAction Mark Tooley commented:

"Gender is not a choice but a reality. The church's calling is to facilitate healing, not echo the secular culture's mantras about 'diversity.' The decision to reappoint the former Rev. Gordon to St. John's church in Baltimore, with no wider discussion in the church, sets a troubling precedent.

"Rev. Phoenix merits compassion for a lifelong struggle over gender identity issues, as related at the conference. But the church helps no one when it fails to faithfully transmit the Gospel of hope and transformation.

"Once again, liberal church elites, presiding over dwindling churches, are making decisions without regard for historic Christian teaching or a wider consensus among the church's membership. We hope The United Methodist Church will act, where the leadership of the Baltimore-Washington Conference has failed, by establishing clear ethical and theological guidelines about the role of gender in God's creation."

"Phoenix" is not the first transgender clergy member in the Baltimore-Washington Conference. In 2002, the Rev. "Rebecca A. Steen" decided to leave the denomination after controversy over her desire to return to active ministry after gender reassignment. Prior to that time, Steen had been the Rev. Richard A. Zamostny.

- Lorelei Coyle, The Institute on Religion and Democracy, May 25, 2007. 202-682-4131, lcoyle@ird-renew.org

Website: ird-renew.org. Also, Linda Bloom of the *UMNS*{#269}; May, 25, 2007.

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Let me not mourn for the men who have died fighting, but rather, let me be glad that such heroes have lived.

- General George S. Patton, "Soldiers Prayer"

Global Outlook

*The most tyrannical of governments are those which make crimes of opinions,
for everyone has an inalienable right to his thoughts."*

-Baruch Spinoza

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China. *China's Southwest Provinces See Thousands Riot Over Forced Abortions*

Beijing, China (LifeNews.com) -- Thousands of Chinese residents have been rioting in southwest China over the last few days as citizens confront local officials over a campaign of forced abortions there. The protests began after family planning authorities began forcibly aborting women for violations of the nation's one-child population policy. As LifeNews.com has previously reported, Chinese family planning officials in Guangxi province forced at least 61 women in April to have abortions as late as seven and nine months into pregnancy. Women said were forced to have abortions because they were unmarried, while other women were married and pregnant with their second child. The abortions have all occurred at the Youjiang District People's Hospital of Baise City, where local officials denied the forced abortions were occurring. Because of the alleged violations of the family planning policy, officials in Guangxi recently increased fines for offenders and began seizing or

destroying the property of people who cannot pay the fines. Officials have issued fines from 500 yuan, or about \$65, to 70,000 yuan, or about \$9,000, on families who violated the policy at any time since 1980. But some of the citizens of the area say the fines were instituted even on people who had already paid them. However, failure to pay the fines is leading officials to destroy homes of those who don't cough up the money. Responding to the government's actions, local people in Guangxi overturned cars and set fire to government buildings and riot police entered at least four towns in the province to suppress the protesters.

- *LifeNews.com Pro-Life News Report; Wednesday, May 23, 2007.*

The Episcopal Church. Church schism set for Va. court

The mother of all lawsuits pitting Episcopalian against Anglican kicks off today in the red-brick confines of Fairfax County Circuit Court. The case has amassed numerous court filings involving 11 churches, two dozen lawyers, 107 individuals, the 90,000-member Diocese of Virginia, the 2.3 million-member Episcopal Church and the 18.5 million-member Anglican Province of Nigeria. The Episcopal Church and its Virginia Diocese are suing 11 churches, their clergy and lay leaders for leaving the diocese last winter in order to join the Nigerian province. Since the 2003 consecration of the openly homosexual New Hampshire Bishop V. Gene Robinson, conservatives have been fleeing the denomination.

Some of the nation's top law firms are involved in the fight, including the 750-attorney firm Goodwin Procter. One of its partners, David Beers, is chancellor for the Episcopal Church. Hourly rates for partners at the firm go as high as \$475, according to filings in a 2006 case in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The defendants are having to pony up huge amounts as well. The Falls Church, oldest of the 11 churches, has announced it will have a special collection June 10 to defray \$342,576 in unpaid legal expenses. Virginia Theological Seminary historian Robert Prichard said that in terms of the number of individuals and fair-market value of the historic properties, this may be the Episcopal Church's largest lawsuit ever. He declined to predict the winner of the dispute. "I've got better sense than that," he said.

Circuit Judge Randy Bellows, no stranger to high-profile cases, will preside. He's the former assistant U.S. attorney who was the lead prosecutor on the "American Taliban" case of John Walker Lindh, and the investigator called upon to examine how the FBI bungled its espionage probe of Taiwanese-American scientist Wen Ho Lee.

The plaintiffs' main complaint is not that several thousand people have exited the diocese, but that they took millions of dollars of church property with them. The suit also charges that members who wanted to stay Episcopalian -- mostly tiny minorities, but in two cases, one-quarter of the parish -- were not granted separate services on church property. "There were people who wanted to worship as Episcopalians," diocesan spokesman Patrick Getlein says. "They were denied that. That was really quite something for the bishop and the diocese to hear, that there were Episcopalians turned out of their churches."

Leaders of the departing churches say no one has been made to leave and that the diocese has made it impossible for 21 departing clergy -- all under an ecclesiastical "inhibition" order -- to function as Episcopal priests. Mary McReynolds, chancellor of the Anglican District of Virginia, the new ecclesiastical body for the 11 churches, said the diocese and the churches hammered out a "protocol" allowing conservatives to leave. The diocese then appointed a property commission to look at the assets of each church and levy an amount each church must pay in order to leave. Then on Jan. 31, the diocese filed lawsuits against each of the 11 churches. "The members of the property commission were embarrassed by this situation," she said. "It was such an about-face. It took 13 months to negotiate that protocol." Leaders of the departing churches, she added, suspect the diocese was pressured by church headquarters in New York to fight for the property.

"The curious thing is, not only did [Virginia] Bishop [Peter J.] Lee do a 180-degree turn," she said, "but the Episcopal Church had a policy of all property matters deferring to the diocesan bishop."

Mr. Getlein said the diocese never agreed on the protocol. "It was a work product given to the [diocesan] executive board and the standing committee, but they never agreed to it," he said. "It was nothing official."

Opening briefs filed by both sides are expected to take up the summer; arguments may not start until the fall. The crux of the case is a state law that spells out that in a division within a denomination, the congregation can retain its property if a majority votes to disassociate. The diocese's position is that the properties are owned by the trustees as long as the congregation remains Episcopal. If it leaves the denomination, it forfeits ownership.

[**Note:** This is of extreme importance for what may very well happen in our own United Methodist Church. If the trend keeps going the way it has, we believe that the bishops will attempt to normalize homosexual practice across the denomination. If a local church objects, it will be faced with the prospect of having to go along with the hierarchy's "orders" or pulling out. If a local congregation chooses the latter course, there will be a fight over who keeps the church property. We see this battle as being key in future power across the denomination.]

- *By Julia Duin, The Washington Times; May 21, 2007. Received by e-mail from a contributor.*

Liberia. Bishop Arthur F. Kulah (retired) is inviting the UMC to provide assistance to Liberia's **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**. Kulah, a commission member since 2006, made the invitation at the Council of Bishops meeting April 29-May 4. He is soliciting a two-year commitment from individuals and organizations with expertise in financial management, communications, and investigations. The commission seeks donations of computers, video cameras and recorders, public address systems, generators, office furnishings, mosquito nets, flashlights, and cots or sleeping bags. For more information, e-mail aviku2002@yahoo.com.

- Linda Green, UMNS, as reported in UMNewscope, May 25, 2007.

Results from the Annual Conferences

Red Bird Missionary Conference met May 11-12 at Hope UMC in Frakes, Ky. Under the theme "Tell THE Story," the conference heard the stories of mission that are being written through the ministries of the churches, outreach centers, and mission institutions. Members witnessed a historic moment when Carol DeWitt Crawford became the first elder to be ordained in the conference. They further celebrated when Bishop James R. King Jr. appointed Crawford as a General Board of Global Ministries missionary to Angola. Members celebrated 20 years of service of Henderson Settlement executive director Tim Crawford and Carol Crawford as they depart for Africa in June. The conference honored the life of the late Don Penner, who served 54 years in pastoral ministry in the Red Bird Missionary Conference. Bishop King preached and led Bible study. Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference superintendent, David Wilson, also preached; and Red Bird collected a mission offering of \$14,253 for its sister missionary conference.

GBGM liaison Carol Thompson and Ken Sloane from UM Communications each brought greetings. The conference accepted a certificate of recognition for 100% payment of apportionments from the General Council on Finance and Administration. Carol Crawford (clergy) and Edna Hendrickson (laity) received the Harry Denman Awards for Evangelism. The conference presented certificates to 58% of chartered churches and outreach centers for "five-star mission giving" and 54% for giving to all six special Sundays with offerings. The 2008 budget was adopted with no increase in World Service and Programs. Members elected Sue Brunk of Booneville, Ky., as lay delegate to General Conference and Chuck Jack of Beverly, Ky., as clergy delegate. Members also supported a petition to the 2008 General Conference for full voting rights of local pastors and associate members. Membership is 1,425, up 19.

-Ruth A. Wiertzema, as reported in UMNewscope, May 25, 2007.

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Truth is so precious that it has to be surrounded by a numerous bodyguard of lies.

- Winston Churchill, during World War II, on the need to keep their plans from the enemy.