

# The Monthly Update

January 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I want to personally thank you for your response to both of our appeals for support – not only financially but also prayerfully. Your participation in the ministry of Concerned Methodists is very reassuring to us in both of these areas. The finances enable us to continue publishing our information to over 17,000 people, families, and congregations; maintaining our website; preparing studies; publishing books; and participating in conferences that are important to our operation. Your payers are of crucial importance in helping us win the victories we have. Hopefully, they will continue – especially in 2009.

Speaking of 2008, may we provide a recapitulation of just some of the accomplishments of this past year? We did participate in various conferences to include the Congress on Evangelism, Pre-General Conference Briefing held in Ft. Worth, Texas, the General Conference also held in Ft. Worth and almost two weeks long, the North Carolina annual conference, the Aldersgate Renewal Ministries, the Southeastern Jurisdictional conference at Lake Junaluska, and visits to people and churches in Alabama, Georgia, Virginia and North Carolina. In addition, we were able to publish the **book *We've a Story to Tell...***, which was sent to over 850 of the General Conference delegates both in the United States and overseas, and the book ***Stewardship Perspectives – 2007***, which details finances of our denomination. All through our “volunteer” service we offer up to the Lord.

As we go into this next year we are anticipating having to deal with very important issues at annual conferences across our UM connection – especially the amendments on the table as a result of the General Conference. We shall be monitoring these events and moving ahead in advocacy over these issues, especially since they are so important to worldwide Methodism. As we have stated before, despite the apparent calm on the surface, there are concerns about some of the continuing trends in our denomination: homosexuality; the gradual secularization of the church; radical feminist theologies; and political activism.

Also as stated, “We so earnestly believe that if our church leaders and employees would get out of the business of helping the President run the country and get to what should be our overarching mission of winning people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, we would see revival in our once-great denomination. I pray that will happen.”

From all of us here, may I again say “Thank you” for your response to our annual appeal for support to this ministry?

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,  
Executive Director

## January 2009 Update

### Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

*"People often buy things they don't really want,  
with money they don't really have, to impress  
people they don't really like."*

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#### The Good Stuff

To help put things in perspective for the coming year, we offer the following:

Three things in life that, once gone, never come back

1. Time
2. Words
3. Opportunity

Three things in life that can destroy a person

1. Anger
2. Pride
3. Unforgiveness

Three things in life that you should never lose

1. Hope
2. Peace
3. Honesty

Three things in life that are most valuable

1. Love
2. Family & Friends
3. Kindness

Three things in life that are never certain

1. Fortune
2. Success
3. Dreams

Three things that make a person

1. Commitment
2. Sincerity
3. Hard work

Three things that are truly constant —

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit**

#### Of Interest

**+ *Military Chaplains provide 'listening ears,' 'tender hearts' and extend church's global outreach***

SEOUL, Korea (UMNS)—Military commanders stationed in countries along the Pacific Rim say they would not think of going into war without the chaplains who serve as their treasured "battle buddies." "I need chaplains to take care of the soldiers so I can take care of their training," said Col. Jeffery K. Ludwig, deputy commanding officer of the U.S. Army's 19th Sustainment Command in Deaju, Korea. While most military attention in the United States focuses on conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, thousands of young men and women serve in other dangerous and lonely places. Standing side-by-side with them today are 61 United Methodist clergy serving overseas. Overall, 339 United Methodist pastors serve as chaplains in every branch of the U.S. military worldwide—139 on active duty and 200 in the Reserves and National Guard. In a five-part series for UMNS, writer Kathy L. Gilbert travels to

military bases in Korea, Japan and Hawaii and shares stories about the role of chaplains and the importance of their ministry.

The Rev. John Lea is a senior officer in the U.S. Navy and a chaplain through The United Methodist Church. Now stationed in Tokyo, he wakes up every day, wraps himself in John Wesley's mantle and places tomorrow in the Lord's care. Chaplains care for the hearts and souls of the soldiers while other military commanders oversee their physical and mental preparation. "My job is to load the wagon, not worry about the horse," said Lea, a clergy member from New Jersey. He said chaplains fulfill three key roles in the life of the military. They serve as symbols of God; they provide listening ears for personal struggles; and they offer hands of comfort on matters of the heart.

– United Methodist News Service (UMNS) Daily Digest; October 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

#### + ***Lowery to give benediction at Obama inauguration***

WASHINGTON—The Rev. Joseph Lowery, 87, a retired United Methodist pastor and stalwart of the civil rights movement, will give the benediction Jan. 20 at Barack Obama's inauguration as president of the United States. A congressional committee announced Lowery's participation on Dec. 17, in addition to the lineup of others who will be part of the ceremonies. The Rev. Rick Warren, a well-known author and leader of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., will give the inaugural invocation. In 1957, Lowery and the Revs. Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph David Abernathy and Fred Shuttlesworth founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Lowery served as the organization's president from 1977 to 1998. He retired as pastor of Cascade United Methodist Church in Atlanta in 1992.

– The United Methodist News Service (UMNS), December 18, 2008.

#### + ***Florida governor weds at United Methodist church***

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Florida Gov. Charlie Crist could have gotten married in the state Capitol. He could have wed in numerous churches that extended him invitations. Instead, the lifelong United Methodist opted for his home church when he married Carole Rome on Dec. 12. "Governor Crist has been a lifelong member of this church," said the Rev. David Miller, pastor of First United Methodist Church in St. Petersburg. "His family goes back at least four generations in this congregation." Miller officiated at the ceremony and said later he appreciated the governor's choice "because it would have been much simpler to do it at the Capitol or somewhere else... Carole and the governor visited the church many times, and both told me that they had a sense of God's presence here; they both really wanted to do this here." The evening event included a vocal but peaceful demonstration in a park across the street from the church. The protesters, who support gay marriage, voiced displeasure with the governor for his support of Florida constitutional Amendment 2, which defines marriage as between one man and one woman. Florida voters approved the amendment Nov. 4. Crist, 52, is the first sitting Florida governor to be married in 42 years, according to published reports.

– Erik J. Alsgaard, Florida Annual Conference, as reported in the UMNS, December 17, 2008.

#### + ***Prison ministry reaches out to those feeling forgotten***

[Note: With Jesus' command to visit those in prison, this is offered as a reminder to those called in this area. – AOM]

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — In a maximum-security prison on the outskirts of a major city, some inmates had not had a visitor in more than a quarter century of incarceration until members of a nearby United Methodist church stepped in. A pen pal ministry and visitation are among just a few of the prison outreaches to forgotten men at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution by members of Christ United Methodist Church in Franklin, about 17 miles south of Nashville. Church members exchange letters with inmates like Bill Pelfry. "Most of us don't like ourself," Pelfry said. "We need someone to instill some kind of love in us. ... Give us some hope."

– UMNS, December 3, 2008.

## **Abortion, Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia & Other Life Issues.**

### ***Religious Groups Want Obama to OK Tax-Funded Abortion, Zap Pro-Life Laws***

Washington, DC -- A coalition of pro-abortion religious groups and denominations has sent incoming president Barack Obama a letter asking him to promote abortion. The groups want Obama to okay forcing taxpayers to fund abortions and urge him to sign a bill overturning pro-life laws nationwide.

The letter is signed by the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and several Jewish and mainline Protestant bodies. They include the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (emphasis added since it is supported with UM apportionment money), and Jewish groups such as Hadassah, Jewish Women International, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the Union for Reform Judaism.

The letter urges Obama to sign the Freedom of Choice Act, the Congressional measure that would make unlimited abortions throughout pregnancy a national law and overturn hundreds of abortion reduction laws in all 50 states. The letter also urges Obama to repeal the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits the direct funding of almost all abortions and is credited with stopping hundreds of thousands of abortions since the 1970s.

In the letter, the religious groups also call on Obama to fund the UNFPA, the United Nations family planning agency that has been involved in the population control program in China that includes forced abortions and sterilizations.

They also ask Obama to repeal the Mexico City Policy, which protects taxpayers from funding groups that promote or perform abortions in other countries.

Mark Tooley, the director of the Institute on Religion and Democracy's UM Action section told LifeNews.com he's disappointed the religious groups would force their pro-abortion agenda on other Americans. "Many churchgoers in RCRC member denominations would be horrified to learn how RCRC is exploiting their church's name to promote unlimited abortion on demand," he said. Yet, "RCRC has long lobbied for unrestricted abortion on demand, with its member denominations acting as a religious veneer for its extreme abortion rights ideology."

"Especially abhorrent is RCRC's advocacy of government funding for unrestricted abortions," Tooley told Lifeneews.com. "This mindset illustrates how RCRC and its member denominational agencies are morally vapid and divorced from traditional Christian and Jewish teachings."

Tooley says the letter proves that liberal Christians who promised Obama would reduce abortions and voted for him because of it were deceived or deceiving voters. "Many on the Evangelical and Catholic Left promoted Obama's candidacy, promising his administration would work to reduce the number of abortions in America," he said. "Such advocates should now work to counteract RCRC's squalid campaign."

– By Steven Ertelt, LifeNews.com Editor, November 18, 2008

## **(UM) Bishops.**

### ***+ Bishops affirm church's four areas of ministry focus***

The four centerpiece of United Methodist ministry for the next four years were affirmed by the denomination's bishops as "God's call to us" to lead the church into a new day. The four areas of ministry focus—developing principled Christian leaders, creating new churches and renewing existing ones, engaging in ministries with the poor and stamping out killer diseases of poverty by improving global health—"give us the leading edge of a plan for living out faith," said the Rev. Karen Greenwaldt, top executive of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship. "The four areas of focus are moving the church into the urgent work that Jesus wants us to do," said Kentucky Bishop Lindsay Davis. The ministry priorities are the result of four years of study, collaboration, partnerships and discernment. The 2008 General Conference approved the plan last spring to guide thwe denomination's future work.

– *UMNS Daily Digest*; November 7, 2008.

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### ***The Bishops and their Double Standard – A Commentary***

By Dr. Riley B. Case

On May 7, 1985, the Commissioning Service for the first missionaries of the new Mission Society for United Methodists was set for Highland Park Church, Dallas. The president of the Council of Bishops, Bishop James Thomas, had made arrangements for three bishops to participate in the service. The Mission Society had been organized as an evangelical supplemental mission agency to work with overseas bishops and churches in ways that the Board of Global Ministries was either unable or unwilling to do. At the last moment, Bishop Thomas apologetically reneged on his commitment. Strong voices in the Council of Bishops had prevailed against Thomas, arguing that the new Mission Society was divisive, not officially sanctioned, and was taking the church in a

direction they were opposed to. In the months and years to come, the bishops worked actively against the Mission Society, refusing to grant special appointment to elders wanting to relate to the Society, refusing to facilitate itinerating of Society missionaries, and discouraging overseas bishops from use of the Mission Society.

The Mission Society story serves as a good introduction to a curious event that took place at Mount Vernon United Methodist church in Baltimore on October 19 in which two persons were "ordained" by a group called "Church within a Church." While there is nothing especially unusual about a denomination or independent group ordaining, in this case there is much unusual because "Church within a Church" is basically a United Methodist group calling itself a "Church" and conducting "ordinations" apart from standing with annual conference.

This is, of course, about homosexuality. Both persons "ordained," one who claims to be a legally married lesbian, were denied ordination by conference Boards of Ordained Ministry. "Church within a Church" is so convinced that the refusal of the Church to ordain practicing homosexuals is wrong that it is using the "ordinations" to make a public statement in violation of church doctrine and polity. In addition, the location of the ordinations, Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church, was chosen because it has links with Bishop Frances Asbury. The "ordinations" were meant to connect the group's activities with the ordinations conducted by Asbury at the first Christmas Conference of 1784 in which John Wesley authorized an "extraordinary" ordination in America because the Bishop of London refused to ordain clergy for the Methodists. The 2008 "ordination" service was intended to represent a second Christmas Conference. All this is made more serious because two United Methodist bishops, Jesse DeWitt and Susan Morrison, participated in the renegade "ordinations." Three other bishops, Judith Craig, Leontine Kelly, and Yvette Flunders (UCC) sent affirming letters of welcome to the event.

Naturally, the event was highly publicized with both the secular and the religious media invited and present. UMNS, United Methodist Reporter (two major stories), and at least two major metropolitan dailies were among those who wrote up the event.

For their part, the other bishops speaking officially made a statement pointing out that the persons "ordained" had no standing in the church and were not qualified for United Methodist appointment. But this is obvious and as a reaction is hardly even a slap on the wrist. Calling oneself a "church" and "ordaining" with the presence of bishops is in direct defiance of church law and is a serious challenge to the discipline and order of the church. Ours is a church, remember, which has refused ordination to a number of persons for the sin of rebaptism. Representatives of the bishops evidently met twice with this "church." Whatever misgivings the bishops may have had did not keep some of their number from participation and encouragement of this act of defiance. Rather, bishops made statements about holy conferencing and being in conversation with all groups in the church. Bishop Linda Lee, commenting on the "ordinations," said, "I do not believe (this) is an indication of schism; I believe it is an indication of dissatisfaction."

The bishops portray their biases. The bishops are in conversation with groups highly critical of the church's stand on homosexuality. Indeed, bishops are themselves members of such groups. These are groups, which threaten civil disobedience if not allowed to demonstrate on the floor of the General Conference (in violation of the spirit of the rules of the General Conference). Their representative at General Conference, Bishop Melvin Talbert, is given permission to harangue the conference about the "wrong" action taken on the issue of homosexuality. At the same time, the bishops have denounced evangelical groups such as the Mission Society, UMAction, Good News, and The Confessing Movement. One can imagine the outcry if, for example, Good News suddenly announced it was going into the ordination business and would be starting new churches.

Despite the fact that individual bishops were supportive of the Mission Society, it took fifteen years before any bishop was willing to give special appointment to elders associated with the Mission Society. This was after tens of thousands of persons were won to Jesus Christ, the church was built up in partnership with overseas churches, and millions of dollars was raised for UM work.

The bishops have been particularly critical of UMAction (part of the Institute of Religion and Democracy). The General Board of Church and Society has spent much unnecessary time denouncing UMAction. Bishop Clifton Ives in one presentation went so far as to label UMAction the "enemy." On an earlier occasion, when some General Board of Church and Society Board Members thought that conversations might be a better way to work with UMAction, and passed a motion to that effect, the General Secretary at that time, Thom White Wolf Fasset, simply had the action excised from the minutes and the chair of the board, Bishop Charles Wesley Jordan never followed through. Before the 2008 General Conference, Bishops Kenneth Carder and Beverly Shamana allowed themselves to be filmed in a video sent to all delegates denouncing IRD.

The bishops speak a great deal about unity but they exhibit a double standard when it comes to groups they support and those they oppose, and between those they choose to have conversations with and those they do not. That does not bode well for the future of the church.

[Note: We heartily agree with Dr. Case's views. We are grateful for this timely commentary. Well said. – AOM]

– Received by e-mail from The Confessing Movement.

### **(UM) Finance.**

#### **+ *Economy's effect on church giving, budgets uncertain***

ST. LOUIS — Preliminary data shows that giving through local United Methodist churches has stayed generally on target for the first 10 months of 2008. However, the full financial picture won't become clear until November and December—when local churches, regional conferences and the general denomination typically receive 40 percent of their annual income. Volatility in world stock markets began at the close of September. —

UMNS, November 25, 2008.

#### **+ *Church economic advisers assess recession's impact***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The United Methodist Church faces significant challenges in 2009 under a U.S. recession, but financial leaders project a recovery to begin in the latter months of the new year. An economic advisory committee of the denomination's finance agency—made up of economists, financial analysts, researchers and church leaders—gathered Dec. 5 in Nashville to assess the church's financial status. "Each recession is unique, so predicting the duration of the current recession is inherently difficult," said Don House, an economist and committee member from Texas.

– UMNS, December 12, 2008.

### **(UM) General Board of Church and Society**

#### **+ *Case may decide direction of social action agency***

WASHINGTON -- A decades-old story of money, temperance and power is winding its way through a District of Columbia court and the ending may impact the future work of The United Methodist Church's social action agency. A superior court judge is weighing testimony and reading reams of historic documents to determine if donations given for the construction of The Methodist Building on Capitol Hill in the early 1900s were intended for work in temperance and alcohol only. A decision is not expected until the first part of 2009. —

UMNS, November 26, 2008.

#### **+ *Deadline to apply for Peace with Justice grant is Feb. 15***

[Note: This has traditionally be "problem money" that is used to support far-left political activism.]

WASHINGTON — Feb. 15, 2009, is the deadline to apply for a Peace with Justice grant from the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. The grants are awarded annually and, in 2008, totaled \$51,000. Funding is generated through the denomination's Peace with Justice Special Sunday offering, one of six Special Sundays in The United Methodist Church. In 2009, the Peace with Justice offering will be observed on June 7. —

UMNS, December 5, 2008.

### **(UM) General Board of Global Ministries**

+ New York Four staff executives of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries have new responsibilities related to four denominational ministry priorities, according to an Oct. 28 announcement by the Rev. Edward W. Paup, the mission agency's new leader. The Rev. Sam Dixon, the deputy assigned to the focus on global health, will continue leading the United Methodist Committee on Relief and its related health unit. The Rev. Edith Gleaves, deputy for leadership development, has oversight for mission personnel, which now will include mission volunteers. The Rev. Rachel Lieder Simeon, interim deputy assigned to ministry with the poor, will lead units on mission contexts and relationships and mission education. The Rev. Jorge Domingues, interim deputy assigned to new church development, oversees evangelization and church growth and will have general oversight of community and institutional ministries, with Jerald McKie continuing as a staff executive in that unit. Paup himself is assuming the full duties of administration, eliminating the post of deputy for administration. Deborah Bass, who held that position, has left the agency.

–UMNS Daily Digest; October 29, 2008.

#### **+ *United Methodists call for end to immigration raids***

NEW YORK – Some 100 United Methodist Women and United Methodists from across the church's New York Conference held a Dec. 13 vigil at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility in lower Manhattan. They called for an immediate end to raids, detentions and deportations of immigrants. Women's Division chief executive Harriett Olson and Bishop Jeremiah Park, New York Area, were among speakers at the Varick Federal Detention Facility. Participants gathered with signs and banners to commemorate International Migrant's Day on Dec. 10 and the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on Dec. 18. The event was organized by United Methodist Women/Women's Division, the Methodist Federation for Social Action and numerous groups within the church's New York Annual Conference.

The vigil recognized and lamented upon the recent murder of New York resident Marcelo Lucero, an Ecuadorian immigrant and victim of a hate crime. "My heart broke when I saw Lucero's little daughter crying through her father's funeral service. This horrible hate crime never should have happened," said the Rev. In Koo Chung, pastor of Patchogue United Methodist Church in Patchogue, Long Island.

– UMNS, December 18, 2008.

### **The National Council of Churches. Forced migration tops human rights violations list**

NEW YORK — While the world observed the 60th International Human Rights Day on Dec. 10, increasing waves of forced human migrations were cited by international humanitarian agency Church World Service as a major violation of human rights in the 21st century. The Rev. John McCullough, a United Methodist pastor and the agency's executive director, said the increase in large groups of people being forced from their homelands and dispersed "is by and large the result of human actions, whether due to conflict or climate change." During their combined Nov. 11-13 General Assembly, CWS and the National Council of Churches approved a resolution calling on all member churches to observe the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights on Sunday, Dec. 14, and to renew their commitment as Christians to the advancement of human rights.

– UMNS, December 11, 2008.

### **(UM) Youth. Young people grants support creative ministries**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. Young people of The United Methodist Church awarded more than \$200,000 in grants to their peers across the globe in 2008 to support innovative approaches and paths to ministry. The denomination's Division on Ministries with Young People oversees grant programs through its Youth Service Fund to encourage the church's youth to engage in service and support creative approaches to ministries for, with and by young people. United Methodist youth created the fund and determine who receives the grants.

– UMNS, December 18, 2008.

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*Without sorrow, he heart would never learn the meaning of joy.*

*Without tears, our eyes would never see what we hold inside.*

*Without darkness, we would have no reason to look to the light of heaven.*

– Irish Proverb

## **Global Outlook**

*Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited – until you try to sit in their pews.*

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### **Germany. German United Methodists re-elect Bishop Wenner**

DRESDEN, Germany — The newly re-elected United Methodist bishop of Germany declared that mission is the vocation of the church as she rallied its leaders to greater efforts in evangelism and starting new churches. Speaking during the Nov. 19-22 meeting of the Germany Central Conference, Bishop Rosemarie Wenner said that "mission is not one area or field of ministry for the church. Mission is its vocation. The church is mission." Wenner, 53, was re-elected to lead the church's 65,000 German United Methodists in 500 congregations. She received 90 percent of some 100 votes on the first ballot.

– UMNS, November 26, 2008.

### **Kenya. Church has role to play in fighting HIV/AIDS**

NAIROBI, Kenya — The church must work to de-stigmatize people with HIV/AIDS, a healing ministries leader told United Methodists recently. The Rev. Dan Mukhisa, director of Hope Healing Ministries in East Africa, spoke

at a HIV/AIDS Sunday service at Riruta United Methodist Church Dec. 7. Mukhisa, who has been in HIV/AIDS ministry for 12 years, said the Body of Christ has “been infected and affected” by the disease. Preaching from Luke 4:16-21, he emphasized that Christians should follow Christ’s example in providing healing, hospitality and service to those in need. Jesus brought hope to the brokenhearted and comfort to those who mourned, he noted. “This should be our burden every day to de-stigmatize our community.” The church also must educate people about AIDS prevention through the use of condoms and other means, he said. It should be on the forefront of teaching and preaching about AIDS, and helping people overcome the feeling of shame that contributes to inaction, he said. “The church has the answers and cure for HIV/AIDS through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Mukhisa anointed people affected by HIV/AIDS. He told the congregation not to stigmatize, discriminate or perpetrate any form of violence against people with HIV/AIDS, and to pass this message on in their communities. [Note: We believe that the best form of AIDS-prevention is abstinence. Why is this not communicated? - AOM] – The Rev. John Makokha, Kenya, as reported in the UMNS, December 16, 2008.

**Korea. *Large Korean Methodist Church built on prayer***

SEOUL, Korea — The spiritual foundation of the largest Methodist church in the world begins in a small dark room in the basement where two church members pray continuously 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Bishop Hong-Do Kim believes in the power of prayer and says the church’s success is based on the "saving blood of Jesus Christ." Kumnan Methodist Church has a membership of 120,000 and baptizes 2,000 people every year. More than 90 associate pastors and 800 Sunday school teachers help Kim "harvest souls for Christ," said Kim. "I depend on the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit." The 10-story church lies in the middle of Seoul but began as a tent church with 10 members in 1957.

– UMNS, December 9, 2008.

**Peru. *Peru seminary program to serve Andean region Methodists***

LIMA, Peru — A new theological program based in Lima will provide pastoral training for Methodists in the Andean region of Latin America. The program, which will include a seminary and a Center for Wesley Studies, was conceived by the Wesley Heritage Foundation of North Carolina and the Methodist Church of Peru, with support from The United Methodist Church. Classes are expected to begin in August or September of 2009, according to the Rev. Mark Wethington, the foundation’s president. The seminary is the response to the Peruvian church’s desire for a stronger theological program, he said.

– UMNS, December 5, 2008.

**The Philippines. *United Methodist bishops elected in Philippines***

MANILA, Philippines — United Methodists in the Philippines have elected two new bishops and re-elected a third while celebrating their 100th anniversary as an annual conference of The United Methodist Church. The Rev. Rodolfo Alfonso Juan was chosen on the seventh ballot, while the Rev. Lito Cabacungan Tangonan was elected in the 11th round of voting. Their four-year terms begin on Jan. 1. Bishop Leo Soriano was re-elected on the 22nd ballot early in the morning hours of Nov. 24. The elections occurred as the United Methodist Philippines Central Conference met in Manila, with 496 delegates equally divided between clergy and laity.

– UMNS, November 26, 2008.

**Rwanda. *ZOE helps AIDS orphans support families***

HUYE, Rwanda — The United Methodist ZOE Ministry is empowering AIDS orphans to provide for themselves and their families by growing rice and coffee. A cooperative of 87 orphan-led households tends to a coffee plantation in Huye. The first crop in the spring of 2010 is expected to bring in \$10,000. The orphans’ vision: Use a significant share of the income to help the most vulnerable in their community. “We will share anything we have,” says Alexis Twizeyimana, leader of the young farmers.

– UMNS, December 1, 2008.

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*“History does not entrust the care of freedom to the weak or timid.” - Dwight D. Eisenhower*