

Monthly Update

March 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Billy Graham. He has become a household word. I remember when I saw a movie about a teen who had gone through some real hardships. Since he was not a Christian, life was confusing and he made decisions that only made his problems worse. Then toward the end of the movie's storyline, a friend suggested that they go to a Billy Graham Crusade that was in the area. The movie contained about five minutes' of Billy's message – not complicated, but rather simple yet compelling: we are all sinners, Christ died for our sins; and if we accepted what He did on the cross, we would have the promise of forgiveness and eternal life with Him. His message was uncomplicated yet crystal clear.

This edition of the Monthly Update contains a portion of my testimony "A Texas Mule" taken from the book *Gems of Wisdom*. It is appropriate in that Billy was so much a part of who I am as a Christian – it was through his preaching at a crusade in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida that I accepted Christ as my Savior. That first time decision and the three days I went to hear him preach have made such a dramatic difference in my life.

Billy has preached to more than an estimated 200,000,000 people in over 185 countries around the world, resulting in hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people making a first time profession of faith in Jesus Christ. I am just one of them. Billy has been named as "One of the Ten Most Admired Men in the World" a record-breaking 59 times in Gallup Polls, yet he was a humble man. He is remembered for saying repeatedly, "The Bible says..." Just some of his quotes are:

"The will of God will not take us where the grace of God cannot sustains us."

"God never takes away something from your life without replacing it with something better."

"I've read the last page of the Bible, it's going to turn out all right."

"It is the Holy Spirit's job to convict, God's job to judge and my job to love."

"God proved His love on the Cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, 'I love you.'"

"Suppose you could gain everything in the whole world, and lost your soul. Was it worth it?"

"There is nothing wrong with men possessing riches. The wrong comes when riches possess men."

Thank you for partnering with us in what God has called us to do. May I ask for your continued prayers, that God would continue to guide us? I pray that we would be found faithful – as Billy Graham assuredly was.

In His service,

Allen O. Morris,
Executive Director

+++++

March 2018 Update

Bits and Pieces from across the United Methodist Church

Anyone with less than an active prayer life has a withered hand. – Navigators commentary on Mark 3:5

* * * * *

The Good Stuff

A Texas Mule

...I planned to attend a Billy Graham crusade to be held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, after having seen a short clip of him preaching; it seemed that he had a way of explaining the Bible so that it “came alive” and I could understand it better. On February 19, 1985, the first night of the crusade, I sat on the top row far away from the speaker’s platform so that any “hocus-pocus” would not make me do anything stupid – like walk forward as I had seen people do at other crusades.

I listened to Billy’s message and when he gave the invitation to accept Christ as my savior, I realized that I had never done so and this might be what was missing out of my life. I was one of the first people to leave my seat in the top of the stadium and make my way to the area in front of the speaker’s stand. For the first time in my life, I publicly confessed that I was a sinner and wanted Christ as my personal savior.

The next evening I arrived early – about six. While sitting in the chair watching the stadium fill up with people, I started thinking about the past year, and how it had seemed like the Lord had worked a miracle in my brother’s life, how through nothing “more” than my praying for him a thousand miles away, he was able to kick his drug habit. It was like my brother had been dead mentally and he had been brought back to life. It was as if God had “given him back” to me. At that time I made the conscious decision that, “Since God had given my brother back to me, I would live my life for God.” In that instant, I felt a flush of heat all over my body and an unbelievable sense of peace. The feeling of peace was so great that if the ground had opened up and swallowed me, I would have felt absolutely no anxiety. Before, I had been trying to recapture that “old” feeling I’d had in high school, but this was a “new” feeling unlike anything I’d had before. This has been the third “club” God used to get my attention.

I had a tremendous desire – like an unquenchable thirst – to get a Bible and read it; just devour as many words in it as I could. As I read the Bible it was as if the words jumped off the page at me when I saw how they applied to my life; the message could not have been any clearer if it had been placed on a billboard in front of me. It was as if God were saying to me, “See, this is what I want you to understand.” When I read about being “born again” I realized – that is what happened to me at the crusade in Florida before I even read about it in the Bible. The more I read the Bible – the clearer I understood that most of the problems in my life had been caused by me.

I became involved in various ministries where I felt I was needed. One evening, I had been invited to give my testimony in Sandhills Prison to the male inmates. I appeared in my Army uniform and told about my life – even the rough side. As I told about my last fight with Mike Edwards, I could see the men identifying with it. As I told about one of my men during the Vietnam war who had become addicted to “Red Rock Heroin” (an especially strong form that comes from the “Golden Triangle” where Laos, Burma, and Thailand meet), they became animated. I finished my message and when the invitation was given, 37 men accepted Jesus Christ as their savior that night. Only later would I read in the Bible that “The Lord will restore what the locusts have destroyed.” God can use even the bad things such as the fighting and partying in our lives to do his work.

Since my conversion I have had four close calls with death, but these were different from the times before I was a Christian. In all of these last encounters, there has been nothing but perfect peace.

In the second of these instances occurring in 1987 when I had been reassigned back to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, I had a series of medical examinations run after having experienced symptoms of a malignancy. A total of fourteen tests were run in Texas, at Ft. Bragg, and at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC;

any one could have determined that I did not have cancer. Each one came back showing the possible malignancy. Finally, the decision was made to operate. I had this strange feeling of peace, strength and that everything would be all right. The subsequent operation showed a complete absence of cancer, and I returned to duty at Ft. Bragg.

Operation Desert Storm

The last two brushes with death occurred during Operation Desert Storm. When I was about to deploy, I visited Grandma Rohrer in Houston; she had terminal cancer. I knew I would never see her alive. As we talked, she said that she was ready to go be with Pops who had passed away four years before. Right before I left, I knelt by her bed and prayed for her, “Lord, if it is Your will, take Grandma home. She is ready and wants to be with Pops.” Then Grandma, on her deathbed, prayed for me, that I would get through the war safely and come back home. I flew back to Fayetteville and deployed the next day.

When I landed at the airbase in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia and reported into the XVIII Airborne Corps headquarters, I was told to call Captain Green back at Ft. Bragg. I knew what it was. As soon as he heard my voice, he told me, “Your Grandmother passed away two days ago.” I felt as if I had been hit between the eyes with a club.” I hung up the phone, went outside, and as the sun came up over the desert, I just cried. My prayer had been answered.

Numerous school children wrote asking me if I were afraid. In November 1990, long before the first Scud missiles were launched against us by the Iraqis and the shooting started, I gave them my answer: “Don’t worry about me or my safety because, you see, I belong to God. He is my Heavenly Father, and this is His world; He owns it and He is in complete control. That means I can be at home anywhere I am. And don’t worry about me when the fighting starts. Have you ever heard of a ‘win-win situation’ – no matter how it comes out will be good? Well, that’s what I am in, here. If God should choose to let me die, then I will get to be with Him. Or if He should choose to let me live and go back to the States, then I’ll be able to work for Him. Either way, it will be good. So don’t pray for me or that I will be safe. Rather, just pray that His will be done in my life.” I survived combat operations to include numerous Scud attacks.

One time, another officer in our unit had just washed his socks and was outside starting to hang them up. As he looked up at the improvised clothes’ line, he saw three glows rapidly falling on us – Scuds! He said, “Oh, shoot!” (Not exactly how he pronounced the word) He grabbed the wet socks, ran into where we were, and yelled, “Hey guys, we’re under air attack.” We looked up at Major Smith (not his real name) when he burst through the door. When he said “air attack” we thought he meant that Iraqi planes had broken through our air cover – which we knew was unlikely. For some reason, looking at him with those wet socks and those saucer-sized eyes struck us as funny. We all burst out laughing. A few seconds later, we heard above us three loud explosions of the Patriot missiles impacting and taking out the Scuds. We stopped laughing and scrambled to put on our protective masks and chemical suits. The joke was on us after all.

The thing is – during all of the operations, there was nothing but perfect peace inside. I was “right” with the Lord – I just had inner peace about everything else that was going on and was able to do my part of the mission unhindered by paralyzing fear.

I later returned to Ft. Bragg in the Spring of 1991. Grandma’s prayer was answered.

– Allen O. Morris

+ + +

Life’s Lessons

From my life’s experiences:

1. About my near death experience: I did not want to go into that “dark hole” and tried with every particle of my being to not go in – but could do nothing. At that time I – was a captain in the 82nd Airborne Division, received good pay, spoke 4 languages, had a master’s degree, owned land and my house, had a sports car; and dated a beautiful girl. All of these did not matter one bit; what mattered was that I was sliding into this place that caused me pure terror. Without Jesus, I had nothing.

2. Being “born again”: At the time I felt the burst of heat all over my body and an unbelievable sense of peace at the Billy Graham Crusade, I “came alive” in that instant. I learned from my four close calls with death afterwards – that if you have Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have the inner peace for any situation – you belong to Him.
3. Maintain our relationships with others so that if one leaves this world, there would be no “unfinished business” that we would regret. “Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry.” (Ephesians 4:26).
4. “Payback”: “Treat others as you would like them to treat you” (Matthew 7:12) is good advice and true in a universal sense, as also, “Do not be deceived...a man reaps what he sows.” (Galatians 6:7b).
5. Judgment & anger: Matthew 7:1-5 – don’t judge others harshly. We don’t know all of the reasons for the decisions other people make.
6. Marriage and divorce: The Bible says that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). Also, “a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24) After my divorce, it felt as if my heart were being torn out of my body.
7. Suicide: God is the giver of life. Could it be that if we kill ourselves we might go to hell? Taking our lives can have spiritual implications beyond our understanding – a conclusion reached by a medical doctor, Dr. Raymond A. Moody in his book *Life after Life*. Of the people who had attempted suicide (and survived), all of them stated that they realized that at the moment of death that they had done something they shouldn’t have and were facing a great, terrible wrath.
8. The Bible is life’s roadmap. I saw my past life more clearly – and through reading the Bible had my problems mirrored back to me.
9. If I could live my life over again, one thing I would do is slow down and take more time to talk to other people to learn more about them.
10. Another thing is I would keep myself physically pure for the girl I would someday marry and on my wedding night. I did the opposite with my girlfriends. I speak from experience – with very much regret.

+ **Book explores hope, resurrection for church.**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – A new book by the Rev. William B. Lawrence explores the meaning of requiem as a voice of hope. In “A Methodist Requiem: Words of Hope and Resurrection for the Church,” the church historian writes that requiem heralds the promise of resurrection. He explores how this can help Christians be confident and remain unshaken by the challenges faced by faith communities and as a denomination. The United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry published the book.

– United Methodist News Service (UMNS) Daily Digest; Higher Education and Ministry; January 23, 2018.

+ ***Columbine victim Rachel Scott's dad***. 12 years later. Guess our national leaders didn’t expect this. Darrell Scott, the father of Rachel Scott, a victim of the Columbine High School shootings in Littleton, Colorado, was invited to address the House Judiciary Committee’s subcommittee. What he said to our national leaders during this special session of Congress was painfully truthful. They were not prepared for what he was to say, nor was it received well. It needs to be heard by every parent, every teacher, every politician, every sociologist, every psychologist, and every so-called expert! These courageous words spoken by Darrell Scott are powerful, penetrating, and deeply personal. There is no doubt that God sent this man as a voice crying in the wilderness. The following is a portion of the transcript:

“Since the dawn of creation there has been both good & evil in the hearts of men and women. We all contain the seeds of kindness or the seeds of violence. The death of my wonderful daughter, Rachel Joy Scott, and the deaths of that heroic teacher, and the other eleven children who died must not be in vain. Their blood cries out for answers.

“The first recorded act of violence was when Cain slew his brother Abel out in the field. The villain was not the club he used.. Neither was it the NCA, the National Club Association. The true killer was Cain, and the reason for the murder could only be found in Cain’s heart.

“In the days that followed the Columbine tragedy, I was amazed at how quickly fingers began to be pointed at groups such as the NRA. I am not a member of the NRA. I am not a hunter. I do not even own a gun. I am not here to represent or defend the NRA – because I don’t believe that they are responsible for my daughter’s death.

Therefore I do not believe that they need to be defended. If I believed they had anything to do with Rachel’s murder I would be their strongest opponent.

I am here today to declare that Columbine was not just a tragedy -- it was a spiritual event that should be forcing us to look at where the real blame lies! Much of the blame lies here in this room. Much of the blame lies behind the pointing fingers of the accusers themselves. I wrote a poem just four nights ago that expresses my feelings best.

Your laws ignore our deepest needs,
Your words are empty air.
You've stripped away our heritage,
You've outlawed simple prayer.
Now gunshots fill our classrooms,
And precious children die.
You seek for answers everywhere,
And ask the question “Why?”
You regulate restrictive laws,
Through legislative creed.
And yet you fail to understand,
That God is what we need!

“Men and women are three-part beings. We all consist of body, mind, and spirit. When we refuse to acknowledge a third part of our make-up, we create a void that allows evil, prejudice, and hatred to rush in and wreak havoc. Spiritual presences were present within our educational systems for most of our nation’s history. Many of our major colleges began as theological seminaries. This is a historical fact. What has happened to us as a nation? We have refused to honor God, and in so doing, we open the doors to hatred and violence. And when something as terrible as Columbine’s tragedy occurs -- politicians immediately look for a scapegoat such as the NRA. They immediately seek to pass more restrictive laws that contribute to erode away our personal and private liberties. We do not need more restrictive laws. Eric and Dylan would not have been stopped by metal detectors. No amount of gun laws can stop someone who spends months planning this type of massacre. The real villain lies within our own hearts.

"As my son Craig lay under that table in the school library and saw his two friends murdered before his very eyes, he did not hesitate to pray in school. I defy any law or politician to deny him that right! I challenge every young person in America, and around the world, to realize that on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School prayer was brought back to our schools. Do not let the many prayers offered by those students be in vain. Dare to move into the new millennium with a sacred disregard for legislation that violates your God-given right to communicate with Him. To those of you who would point your finger at the NRA -- I give to you a sincere challenge.. Dare to examine your own heart before casting the first stone!

“My daughter’s death will not be in vain! The young people of this country will not allow that to happen!”
– Darrell Scott, as posted on Facebook.

Of Interest.

+ Pastoring in partisan times.

COLUMBIA, Missouri – Preachers face a challenge during these highly polarized times in making worship a holy experience. Fred Koenig summarizes the advice shared during the conference’s webinar series, “Pastoring in Partisan Times.”

– UMNS, Missouri Conference release, Daily Digest
– January 25, 2018.

+ *How Marxism and Identity Politics Contributed to UMC Decline*. The United Methodist Church (UMC) began losing members in the United States shortly after its inception in 1968. Some United Methodists nowadays thus advocate for “getting back” to the status quo in the 1960s as a solution. But this fails to understand how rapidly changing American cultural and political ideas affected Methodism according to Dr. Kenneth Collins, professor of historical theology at Asbury Seminary and board member of the Institute on Religion and Democracy. Collins argued in a new academic paper that Marxism, identity politics, and other radical ideologies have altered society and infiltrated United Methodist institutions with ongoing implications for the denomination today.

In November 2017, Collins presented a paper entitled “The Missio Dei in the United States: The Challenge of a Baffling Cultural and Political Context” at an academic colloquium co-hosted by the UMC’s General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) and the Association of United Methodist Theological Schools (AUMTS) at Boston University. The paper will appear in the forthcoming book *Missio Dei and the United States: Toward a Faithful United Methodist Witness*, published by GBHEM later this year.

Collins presented a striking chart at the outset of his paper that chronicled the declining number of UMC adherents in the United States since 1970:

Much ink has been spilt attributing this troubling trend to a lack of faithfulness to orthodoxy and Wesleyanism, while urging the UMC to return “back to Wesley” in response. Others have advocated for a “sola sixties” fidelity to returning the UMC to its supposedly pristine state in the 1960s. But Collins said the causes of this decline, and thus the response, remain more complicated. He argued that reinvigorating Methodism and redeeming American society requires greater nuance. This must involve understanding the cultural changes prior to the UMC’s creation, the tumultuous social context of the 1960s, and the cultural changes that have occurred since then.

Collins wrote that declining UMC membership traces back to growing cultural hostility toward Christianity. This trend stretches back at least as far as the American Civil War, when the Methodist Episcopal Church – probably the most influential branch of Methodism at the time – essentially buckled under cultural pressure. He explained that “the Methodist Episcopal Church basically abandoned the intellectual defense of Christianity in the face of its emerging critics.” Methodism, reflective of Mainline Protestantism in general, began shifting its message from Gospel proclamation to promoting mere moral codes. But cultural acceptance of this morality began waning quickly. Collins identifies the moment when America began to reject Christian ethics in earnest:

By the time Prohibition was repealed in the 21st Amendment in December 1933, the nation had grown weary of this reforming cause, which had taken on ultraist proportions, and of those who had championed it. Indeed, Robert Handy in his engaging work, *A Christian America*, marks the year 1935 as the time when the cultural leaders of the nation, chaffing under the recently imposed Protestant morality with its array of taboos, set in earnest to remove Protestant leaders from cultural power.

These trends only gained steam during the following decades. By the time the UMC came about in the 1960s, Collins wrote “revolutionaries and radicals” had hit their stride:

The United Methodist Church formally emerged during a decade in which the rise of a new movement was to have enormous consequences for American culture in general and for the political climate in particular. The moral and cultural space that Methodism had once enjoyed in the early twentieth century with its social principles and reforms was soon taken over during the 1960s by revolutionaries and radicals who were unceasingly critical of most religion but especially the Christian faith. The movement in question identified as the New Left. It embraced Marxist theory and developed identity politics as an extension. The movement targeted the Church and other pillars of traditional society in an effort to replace or co-opt them during “the move to a centralized state.”

Ultimately, Collins said “the embrace of identity politics” subsumed the New Left. This led to “a reworked leftism that hardened the distinctions of race and gender to set up a veritable tribal structure within American society.”

Not even the United Methodist Church remained exempt from this social transformation.

This ideology based on “the troika of race, gender and social class...and eventually sexual orientation” became “so culturally pervasive” that it infiltrated nearly every level of the UMC, from seminaries to annual conferences. Collins shared one rather shocking example from a workshop at the Kentucky Annual Conference:

During one of the sessions a sheet was passed out that contained the distinctions of white/black, male/female, gay/straight, rich/poor and numerical values of pluses and minuses were assigned to each category. Some of the ministers in attendance began to recognize that this calculus could easily result in racial and gender stereotyping, and even shaming, in which any given person was deemed guilty and blameworthy simply by being born into a certain group. Indeed, not even Jesus Christ would fare very well in such an analysis with two strikes, and possibly three, against him.

One tragic result of this worldview shift is that it has sidelined the Gospel. Both social engagement and individual sanctification become primarily viewed as political rather than spiritual. For example, Collins cited the example of prominent United Methodist minister Cedric Mayson who completely distorted the Christian theology of personal transformation. Mayson not only equated Christ’s work with that of other religious and political leaders, but described it in essentially communist terms: “Human renewal from Jesus and Mohammed to Marx and Castro has always been through small groups with a social purpose and a living experience.”

To reinvigorate the UMC’s Missio Dei (meaning “God’s Mission” for the Church), Collins offered three main recommendations.

- (1) Restore the Gospel to its rightful place: “First of all, the church must repent of its spiritual idolatry, on the one hand, in overvaluing the sinful and divisive narratives of American political and cultural life and, on the other hand, in undervaluing the gospel narrative...”
- (2) Recommitting to “loving persuasion” instead of “a frontal assault” against the opposition: “This means, of course, that ‘political’ means and other top down approaches (in which the will of one particular group triumphs over the other) should be broadly abandoned...”
- (3) Revamping the Church as a spiritual hospital for broken people: “to become a loving and healing presence among peoples who have suffered so greatly, who have become alienated from one another due to the ‘group speak,’ the divisiveness and rampant ethnocentrism of identity politics.”

While Collins wrote mostly with United Methodists in mind, surely his recommendations apply to the Church more broadly. All Christians ministering in America would do well to consider and take his observations to heart if they desire to reach their culture more effectively.

Responses to How Marxism and Identity Politics Contributed to UMC Decline:

William says: In the UMC, the progressives are in cahoots with the very secularists who are out to destroy them, and they seem oblivious to this phenomenal relationship. If there has ever been an example of infiltration for the purpose of destruction from within, look no farther than our UMC. Our mission — to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world — is little more than an empty slogan. Progressives have managed, with most not recognizing, to take the church in the opposite direction — to transform Jesus into a designer Jesus who loves and accepts everyone even in their sinful human condition WITHOUT the requirement of REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS, and a new TRANSFORMED life in him —a Jesus who is a social and political activist for the cause(s) of the day instead of the MESSIAH AND SAVIOR OF THE WORLD. My, my how our UMC has been taken for that proverbial ride by the great deceiver. Unless we rid ourselves of Satan and return to Jesus the Christ, we will indeed perish as a denomination. He would like nothing more than for us to support both positions under some sort of “big tent” or “local option” to deal with our current schism over sexuality and marriage and gleefully watch our UMC completely devour itself.

February 5, 2018 at 12:10 pm: It is like reading a roadmap for where the Southern Baptist Convention is headed with the likes of Russell Moore running things.

Judy Bailey says: How sad it is to have witnessed the UMC's fall from grace. And yes, she was taken captive from within by the evil that permeated within the leadership. Weak and spineless souls who could not take a stand for the Word of God and preach ALL of it for fear of hurting feelings...What about SIN? Is it ever mentioned and backed up by scripture from the pulpit anymore? Repentance? What about the sheep and the goats? My Bible says all will not enter. Will Jesus recognize us? Matthew 7:23 "Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Remember "Hearts on Fire" at Lake Junaluska? Open minds Open hearts Open doors? Satan walked right in... but he was here long before that. I remember being at a conference in Kentucky and seeing a little man holding a sign with a drawing of an unborn baby on it and the wording "UMW, why do you harm your sisters?" We have a lot to REPENT for. Amen.

Earl Schroeder says: I think this article is right on. Very simply there is a huge chasm between the ideology of the people in the pews and the leadership of the UMC. I can tell you there is another factor in the decline of membership. The lack of emphasis in youth programs back in the 60's. Youth Sunday School and Youth Group were neglected.

Donald says: Certainly true of Presbyterians as well. From a high of 4.1M to now at 1.4M since the 1960's. Compassion should be for the purpose of the Gospel, to bring people to God, not the other way around.

– The Institute on Religion & Democracy, 1023 15th Street NW, Suite 601, Washington, DC 20005

* * * * *

Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed over for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.

– President Ronald Reagan

Global Outlook

There is only one way to succeed in anything and that is to give it everything that you've got. – Vince Lombardi

* * * * *

Burundi. Agencies help fund Burundi reunification.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) – Two United Methodist factions that have long operated separately in Burundi plan to join for a special annual conference next month. The denomination's finance and mission agencies are helping to fund the meeting in a rare move since both agencies cut funding to the East Africa Episcopal Area in 2012 over still unresolved auditing concerns.

– Heather Hahn,

UMNS, Daily Digest; January 19, 2018

Laos. Bishop Jones and team visit Laos.

Houston – Bishop Scott Jones recently led a Texas Conference team on a trip to Laos. The Council of Bishops assigned him as episcopal leader of United Methodist mission initiatives in that country and Thailand. In the heart of Southeast Asia, Laos lies nestled between Vietnam and Thailand. It shares a border with both China and Myanmar to the north, and Cambodia to the south. Three ethnic groups, each with their own language, share the diverse landscape across 17 provinces. Laotians are 67 percent Buddhist, 30 percent Animist, and 2 percent Christian. It is this challenging mission field to which Bishop Scott Jones has been assigned to serve as the bishop of the Laos Mission Initiative.

Recently, Bishop Jones led a team to Laos that included his wife, Mary Lou, and four members of the TAC Board of Ordained Ministry: Rev. Romonica Malone-Wardley, Dr. Linda Christians, Rev. Dr. Jeff McDonald, and Dr. Jeff Olive. We are honored to hear from Bishop Jones about his trip, and why we should all be excited about God's work in Laos.

[Note: This was in our “area of interest” during the Vietnam War. I have a “soft place” in my heart for Laos. – AOM]

– By: Sherri Gragg, “Planting Seeds of the Gospel in Southeast Asia”; Date Posted on Facebook: 2/8/2018.

Zimbabwe. Church in Zimbabwe introduces kids to computers.

HARARE, Zimbabwe (UMNS) – The United Methodist Church has helped roll out a program that gives children access to computers at an early age. Murewa Day Care Center, the pilot school for the e-learning initiative, recently graduated 62 young students. The goal is to have computer laboratories at all United Methodist-run schools in Zimbabwe by 2025.

– Kudzai Chingwe, as published in the Daily Digest, UMNS; January 19, 2018.

* * * * *

The ultimate result of shielding men from the effects of folly is to fill the world with fools.

– Herbert Spencer, English Philosopher 1820-1903