# **Monthly Update**

May 2012

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

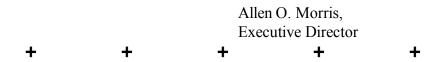
In last month's edition of the Monthly Update, we devoted a seemingly disproportionate amount of space to the Manhattan Declaration, a statement of values based on our orthodox Christian faith that was key in the founding of our great country. Let us not be deceived – our nation has been a beacon that has beamed the light of freedom and has served as an inspiration to those all over the world. Richard Wurmbrand commented on how priceless our freedom is viewed by people around the world. He himself was tortured and imprisoned because he would not recant nor compromise his faith, first by the Nazis prior to and during World War II, then by the Russians after the War. As far as freedom, he has seen prisoners who, during their most excruciating moments of physical pain, held on to the hope that the freedom in America would continue to shine – to not be extinguished. That was the thought they held as their lifeline to sanity. So, let us remember – we must guard these freedoms that have been entrusted to us. That is the reason that we devoted the space to republishing the Manhattan Declaration.

Again, in this Update we have devoted a disproportionate amount of space to the upcoming 2012 General Conference being held in Tampa, Florida. When you read this letter, I shall already be there along with other members of Concerned Methodists. This may be one of the crucial gatherings in the history of our church. Please keep us in your prayers – that God would give us discernment as to the important issues on which to focus. We believe that one is the proposed restructuring of the denomination. The CT-IOT plan is very problematic and will be a focus of our activism. As you can see from the reprint of the letter I sent to other renewal group leaders, I am urging them to stand firm against that proposal – as I did in the last issue of *The Christian Methodists Newsletter*. It is important that we "be wise as serpents and as gentle as doves." Please pray for our ministry there as we "contend for the faith" as He has called us.

You have been very supportive in your prayers and your support for us to be a presence and power at the General Conference – and for that I am immensely grateful. However, I would ask for your further assistance. This year – an election year – we believe will be a crucial one for not only our United Methodist Church but also for our country as well. It is essential that we have solid Christians in positions of national leadership. We would like to do all we can to get out the truth to the public that the people in the pews of our United Methodist Church do <u>not</u> support a radical left-wing political agenda, that ours is at its core a Bible-believing church that supports the foundational values on which our country was founded. In addition to the General Conference, we want to have displays at the North Carolina Conference in Raleigh, the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference at Lake Junaluska, the National Right to Life Conference in Alexandria, Virginia, and the Values Voter Coalition gathering in Washington, DC in the Fall. But to do this, we will need to have financial help – an estimated \$6,000.

Can we count on you to help us in this? I believe that this may be the most crucial election in our nation's history. We would earnestly ask you to pray about this specific request.

We would also ask you to pray – for the 2012 General Conference and for our nation. <u>Please pray</u>. In His service,



## May 2012 Update

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

If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except that little point which the world.[is] at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides,

is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point. — Martin Luther

### The Good Stuff

### + Jesus on the cover of Newsweek

You may have recently seen Jesus on the front of Newsweek with a cover story entitled "Forget the Church: Follow Jesus" from Andrew Sullivan. One of the best responses to the Sullivan intriguing essay is from Frank Viola, co-author with Leonard Sweet of *Jesus Manifesto* (featured as the *Good News* cover story July/August 2010).

One of the issues that Viola has with the Newsweek analysis is that Sullivan reduces following Jesus to merely following the teachings of Jesus rather than following, "embracing, loving, and giving one's allegiance to the Person who gave those teachings."

One of the main points that Sweet and Viola made in *Jesus Manifesto* is that you cannot separate Jesus Christ from his teachings. Nor can you properly follow his teachings without knowing the One who handed down those teachings.

"Aristotle said to his disciples, 'Follow my teachings.' Socrates likewise said to his disciples, 'Follow my teachings.' Buddha said to his disciples, 'Follow my meditations.' Confucius said to his disciples, 'Follow my sayings.' And Muhammad said to his disciples, 'Follow my noble pillars,'" writes Sweet and Viola. "But Jesus says to his disciples, 'Follow Me.' In all the religions and philosophies of the world, a follower can follow the teachings of its founder without having a relationship with that founder. But not so with Jesus Christ. The teachings of Jesus cannot be separated from Jesus Himself. Christ is still alive, and He embodies His teachings. This is what separates Him from every great teacher and moral philosopher in history." (Jesus Manifesto, Chapter 5).

- Good News magazine

- **+ The American Family Association.** I wanted to share...an incredible weekend of good news for Christians in America. Not only was it Easter Sunday when millions of Americans celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ that alone made the day special but then there were at least four national stories which I believe brought glory to the Lord.
- **#1.** Pastor Rick Warren did an outstanding job fielding questions from reporter Jake Tapper on ABC's This Week program on Sunday. Tapper asked Warren some difficult questions some "gotcha" questions -- which he handled as well as any interview I have seen. At one point Tapper asked Warren whether he believes only those who put their faith in Jesus will reach heaven. "I do believe that. And I believe that because Jesus said it," Warren said. "Jesus said, 'I am the way.' He didn't say 'I'm one of the ways.' He said, 'I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life.' I'm betting my life that Jesus wasn't a liar."
- **#2.** Football star Tim Tebow preached to over 15,000 people in Texas Easter morning. He talked about his faith in Christ and also the need for America to return to the God of our fathers. "First and foremost is what this country was based on: one nation under God," Tebow said to applause. God has truly given this young man a huge platform and the maturity to handle the attention. Please continue to pray for Tim.
- **#3.** Bubba Watson won The Masters the most prestigious tournament in professional golf on Sunday as millions of golf fans and non golf fans alike watched on television around the world. Watson hit what some observers called a "miracle" shot to set up his win. Watson is an outspoken Christian golfer and he uses his Twitter account along with his platform as one of the PGA Tour's magnetic personalities to share about his faith in Christ. "For me, it's just showing the Light," the 33-year-old said. "There's people who want to put down Christians. I try to tell them Jesus loves you. It's just a way to be strong in my faith."
- **#4.** Hobby Lobby once again ran a full page ad in newspapers across the country celebrating Easter. There is nothing commercial about the ad, it's all about the gospel of Jesus Christ. AFA commends Hobby Lobby for continuing to bring glory to the Lord with these annual full page ads.

It's rare we have so much good news to share, all happening on one day, Easter Sunday. But I just wanted to pause and thank God for this. For more information on what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ please visit the

– E-mail received from Tim Wildmon, President of the American Family Association.

#### **Of Interest**

#### + Hosanna in the Highest (Court)

[Editorial note: This is seen as being related to the case over church property. The government has historically taken the position that it will not interfere over internal matters of a church/denomination. Pray that consistency continues. - AOM]

Religious liberty has taken such a beating under this administration that people seem surprised when the principle is actually affirmed. And yesterday, the Supreme Court not only affirmed our first freedom, it sent a blistering message to the President to stop testing the churches' authority. In what some are calling the most important victory for religious freedom in a half-century, all nine justices agreed that the government does not have special power over churches--not in hiring decisions, not in firing decisions, and not in setting the criteria that decides either. In Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. EEOC, the Court weighed a case involving an ordained minister of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Cheryl Perich taught at the church's school but decided to take medical leave mid-year to treat a sleep disorder. Perich demanded that the school restore her position immediately, even though it had already hired a temporary replacement. When the school couldn't accommodate Perich, she threatened to sue--violating a longstanding Lutheran principle that "disputes over ministry be resolved [internally]... and not by civil courts." The church rescinded her ordination, disqualifying her under Missouri Synod rules from teaching at the school in the process. To fight back, she filed a complaint with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Ultimately, the issue before the Supreme Court was not whether Perich was wrongfully terminated, but whether she had the right to sue for employment discrimination in the first place. In matters of the church, the justices agreed that it would be an infringement of the church's authority to force the school to Perich back. It's what they call a "ministerial exception." Allowing the government's long arm to reach inside the church, Chief Justice Roberts wrote, "intrudes upon more than a mere employment decision. Such action interferes with the internal governance of the church, depriving the church of control over the selection of those who will personify its beliefs." For the Obama administration, which had argued that the churches have no special protections, this is a serious rebuke of its guiding philosophy: that government control always trumps religious rights. As the Wall Street Journal made clear, "Hosanna-Tabor is an important reminder that the core religious freedoms guarded by the First Amendment were not to protect the public from religion, but to protect religion from government. The case is arguably among the most important religious liberty cases in a half century, and the concurrence of Justices across the ideological spectrum will be felt for years." Hallelujah." Amen.

– Email received from the Family Research Council.

**+** *Statistics* – The number of United Methodist churches declined by 267 (-0.8%), compared to a decline of 236 in the previous period (2008–2009). All jurisdictions had a net loss in membership [even the Southeastern], yielding a combined drop of 109,309 (-1.4%), compared to (-1.2%) in the previous period. — *UMNewscope*, April 11, 2012.

## + The revenge of the polar bears - a commentary on the effects of "Global Warming"

[Note: There are sincere people on both sides of the "global warming" issue. Dire predictions of harm to the environment often does have embarrassing results. Prior to the construction of the Alaskan oil pipeline, there were predictions that it would decimate the caribou population. In fact after provisions were made for wild animal crossings, etc. it turns out that the increased heat from the pipeline has spurred the fertility of that species and increased numbers among the herds resulted. Also, a conference on that subject in Washington, DC had to be canceled because of a blizzard. – AOM]

Let's face it. Times are getting rough for radical ecologists. It is bad enough that their global warming conferences seem to coincide with sub-zero weather patterns. And then there is the problem of fossil fuels. Just when they declare the world has reached "peak oil" production, the energy industry ruins everything and discovers another huge oilfield that pushes back the energy apocalypse another ten or twenty years. Now it seems the polar bears have turned upon the ecologists and thrown them under a biodiesel bus.

That's right. The polar bears, the poster beasts of the climate change lobby, have refused to cooperate with their own extinction. Reports from up north claim the polar bears are doing just fine.

In fact, their populations are exploding. Locals in Canada's Nunavut territory report the bears have taken to coming into towns, breaking into cabins and properties and generally wreaking havoc. The growing bear population is becoming a real problem as locals enjoying outdoor activities must be on the lookout for bears and often invite hunters along for protection.

Reports in more southern parts of the territory are finding bears appearing where they never have before.

With something like 25,000 polar bears roaming around the northern latitudes, even government sources are asking ecologists to tone down the extinction rhetoric. Nunavut Minister of Environment Daniel Shewchuk stated in a news release that polar bears are not declining, but "thriving," and that "no known environmental or other factors are currently posing a significant or immediate threat to polar bears overall."

And yet ecologists are still reporting declining bear populations and the mammal's impending doom. The Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) among others holds the party line that global warming will ultimately imperil their survival. Polar bear advocates claim that only one of 19 total polar bear subpopulations is currently increasing, three are stable, eight are declining and the remaining seven cannot be determined. The problem is the evidence on the ground supports a contrary opinion. The polar bears do not seem to care about statistics.

In fact, such statistics are being challenged by scientists and forecasting experts who note that the alarm about the future of polar bears is based on speculative computer model predictions projected many decades in the future and not on actual bear sightings.

Local wildlife management officials present estimates based on local hunters and harvesters who have a feel for how the population is faring and where the polar bears might be found. They question official figures, which are based to a large extent on quick helicopter surveys by scientists which are limited in scope and do not know all the places where the bears can be found.

While many locals acknowledge changes in weather, they claim it is not having negative effects on the polar bear population — and even is a positive factor in keeping bear numbers high. Many locals suspect that the polar bear issue is being used to scare the public about global warming. They complain about reduced hunting quotas that do not reflect the need to cull thriving bear populations.

The inconvenient truth is that polar bears are not endangered. What is endangered is real science which is increasingly becoming politicized science. Meanwhile, much to the embarrassment of the eco-radicals, the revenge of the free-ranging bears continues.

— http://www.tfp.org:80/tfp-home/news-commentary/the-revenge-of-the-polar-bears.html

+ Washington (UMNS) — United Methodist leaders were among the "faithful" who gathered outside the Supreme Court last week to show their <u>support</u> for the Affordable Care Act (known as "Obamacare"). As supporters rallied outside, court justices were on the inside hearing arguments about whether the law passed in 2010 is constitutional.

[Note: This is your denominational leaders engaging in political advocacy in support of socialized health care. – AOM]

- UMNS News in Brief; April 11, 2012

#### The 2012 General Conference.

This information is provided for your information on issues at the upcoming General Conference. The United Methodist News Service (UMNS) is reporting on activities related to General Conference 2012, the denomination's top lawmaking body, which will meet April 24-May 4 in Tampa, Fla. UMNS reports appear as they occur on umc.org and also can be found on General Conference 2012 at http://gc2012.umc.org. Commentaries are at: http://gc2012umns.blogspot.com.

- + Visitors to General Conference 2012, The United Methodist Church's top legislative assembly, may now preregister. General Conference will meet April 24-May 4 in the convention center in Tampa, Fla. Registration is \$10 per person and may be paid online by credit card or by cash in person. Visitor registration is not required to attend General Conference sessions. However, registered visitors will receive a name badge. Go to: http://www.umcevents.org/visitorregistration.
- + A petition before the 2012 United Methodist General Conference would require the denomination to back its opposition to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories by dropping investments in selected companies whose products are used in the occupation. What the legislation does not do, according to its supporters, is call for a boycott against those companies or for divestment from Israel itself. [Note: This is taking a pro-Islamic position. AOM]
- + Will small, rural churches have a voice in a reconfigured United Methodist Church? In its "values" statement for General Conference, the United Methodist Rural Fellowship declares that the health, vitality, and sustainability of each local congregation should be held as the primary value of the denominational structure. While the fellowship has not taken a formal position on the "Call to Action" report and its recommendations, its president, the Rev. Roger Grace, said the focus of these ventures "is almost always on the fast-growing areas where there are lots of people," leaving town and country congregations overlooked.
- + On behalf of the Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops, Phoenix Area Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño sent a memo relaying the bishops' concerns and suggested changes for the proposed consolidation of general agencies. The Western Jurisdiction is not drafting any legislation. "Our hope has been to contribute to a much-needed conversation about mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church," Carcaño said. "We have shared our proposals with the delegates of the Western Jurisdiction so that they are aware of our hopes and our concerns. We give our work over to the General

Conference delegates trusting that the Holy Spirit will guide them to do that which God has envisioned for The United Methodist Church."

- + Historically, the treatment of indigenous people by Christian churches including United Methodists has been good, bad and ugly. As The United Methodist Church gathers in Tampa, it will recognize that history and take steps toward healing with Native Americans and other indigenous people around the world. An Act of Repentance Service for the Healing of Relationships with Indigenous Persons will take place on the evening of April 27. [A frequent feature.]
- + You don't have to be in Tampa, Fla., or anywhere near there, to watch the proceedings of General Conference 2012. There will be live streaming of worship and conference sessions as well as news stories, photos and videos to your mobile devices. If you're planning on being at General Conference, there will be hands-on information, including maps of the convention center, locations of restaurants and local points of interest. You can download an app by going to http://gc2012.umc.org/app/

- United Methodist News Service News in Brief; April 13, 2012

## + Stressed out in Tampa

It came as a serious surprise to us that Tampa -- the home of the 2012 General Conference -- was just listed as the most stressed-out city in the United States by Sperling BestPlaces, a research firm specializing in livability rankings. A combination of divorce rates, commute time, unemployment, violent crime, property crime, suicides, alcohol consumption, mental health, sleep troubles, and the annual number of cloudy days put Tampa at the top of the chart.

In a very challenging editorial, District Superintendent Laurie Haller (West Michigan) asks, "Will our grace and gratitude bless the city, or will the diversion of our demanding presence create more stress?"

Haller asks, "Will we bring joy to local hotels and restaurants whose coffers will fill with United Methodist dollars? Will the citizens of Tampa be blessed by our patience and good manners? Will the convention center workers be touched by the respect and honor that we show to those with whom we disagree and spread the news, 'See how they love each other?' Will the city of Tampa experience calm and peace during those 2 weeks, as United Methodists around the world bathe the delegates and the entire city in prayer?" Later in her commentary, Haller asks, "If the General Conference cannot find a way to incarnate Christ's love in this stressed-out city, what does that say about our denomination? Could our lack of foresight, inability, or unwillingness to relate to the city of Tampa be a metaphor for the loss of vitality and health in the United Methodist connection? Are we inadvertently modeling the paralyzing anxiety that results in local churches turning in on themselves when stressed out [about] their future?"

— Good News magazine

## + Your prayers

We ask that you would set aside time each day from April 24 to May 4 and lift up in prayer the delegates and observers to the 2012 General Conference in Tampa. We need your prayer support...

- Good News magazine

## + A letter to renewal group leaders and other members of the 2012 General Conference delegation.

[Note: Following is a letter I wrote to leaders of all of the other renewal groups and to selected members of the 2012 General Conference delegation. In it I expressed my views and concerns as to where we are in this very important legislation that will come before the General Conference. We have opportunities – and pitfalls, if we are not careful. It is included so that you may know what our primary concerns are. – AOM]

April 12, 2012

Renewal group leaders [In the letter itself, the person's name, title, and address were inserted.]

### Dear Renewal group leader,

I bring you greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I say, "Thank you for your serving as a leader in the renewal movement in the United Methodist Church!" I believe that the 2012 General Conference in Tampa in the United States may very well be one of the most important ones in the history of our denomination's long, fruitful history.

I read the recent letter by the Reverend Rob Renfroe when he expressed what was on his heart. He had written,

"I should be writing to you about General Conference. It's only a few weeks away....The future of the United Methodist Church is at stake...

"But I'd rather write to you about Jesus and Velma and Easter. Because that's really what Good News is all

about – a Savior who is alive and who transforms hearts and changes lives and overcomes fear....

"And the Gospel of Jesus Christ has taken care of itself for the past 2000 years and God will take care of it in Tampa later this month. And the most remarkable thing is that he will use ordinary people like me – and you – to do his work."

He expresses so well what we in Concerned Methodist believe. I would add that Jesus provides forgiveness for our sins and saves our souls. Just as the body needs oxygen, so does the soul need Jesus Christ. We are also fond of saying that we would like to work ourselves out of a job – that our heart's desire is that there would be a move of the Holy Spirit across the denomination and that every single United Methodist would be transformed into a modern-day John Wesley or a Susanna Wesley. Then the name of our ministry

would mean that we are concerned about everyone everywhere coming to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, I appreciate what Rob wrote, but I am also mindful of the phrase that was popular in World War II often repeated on the battlefield, "Praise the Lord – and pass the ammunition." A contemporary application of this idea to our situation today is, "Work as if it is all up to us, and pray as if it is all up to God." That is exactly what we need to do. This is where I believe we are at this point....

Some weeks ago, at my request one of the leaders in the renewal movement met with me to discuss where their ministry was on some of the key issues. After he had outlined them to me, I responded to him, "It looks as [if]demographics are with us on the homosexual issue – that if the 'other side' does not work its will at this General Conference in Tampa, they may not get a chance again – their 'window of opportunity' will have passed for them. We need to oppose: 1) the 'IOT/CT' plan, 2) any idea of a 'set aside' bishop, and 3) the idea of ending Elder tenure at this point in time. Especially if 1 and 3 are approved, then we will effectively hand over what is tantamount to virtual control of the United Methodist Church to the Council of Bishops, some of whom have supported aspects of homosexual normalization in our denomination. That is something that we don't want to do. We will in effect 'snatch defeat out of the jaws of victory' – something that is inadvisable."

We do not want to give the bishops this power. They have not demonstrated a level of responsibility needed in the past that would warrant giving them more authority over and above what they presently have. Indeed, as we had published in our last edition of *The Christian Methodist Newsletter* – they have a leadership responsibility in our denomination's over-forty-year decline – yet they have not as of yet discerned the reasons for this decline, much less how to reverse it.

And while we are focused on these measures that have had high visibility, we don't want to take our eyes off the petitions that would overtly support aspects of homosexual normalization in our denomination. We must focus on these – and other issues as well.

As an active duty Army officer, in the 1970s I had discerned the potential for defeat by the way that we were organized and trained. Later as the head of a study group formulated to study combat doctrine, I guided our results that laid the basis for a winning strategy in combat. This recommendation was, against all odds, accepted, adopted, and implemented. The first time it was put into practice was in 1991 with Operation Desert Storm. Regardless of what one thinks of warfare, he could not argue with the success that exemplifies our recommendations.

In the same way, I see very negative consequences if we were to go along with any of the above-referenced proposals at this time. If these are worthwhile ideas, then let us take the time to consider them, refine them – and implement them later. But for now, the important thing is to not do anything out of a false sense of urgency. As far as the call that we "must do something now" to avert collapse, let us not be rushed into any hasty decisions such as supporting the "IOT/CT" plan. For over ten years, we in Concerned Methodist have warned about a coming crisis. If it is here, then we must keep our heads about us so that we can insist upon sound decisions that will be what our denomination needs to ensure that it has a future. It would be better to adopt no plan at all rather than a bad plan. But plan "B" is much better grounded in what is needed, so we do have choices before us. It <u>may</u> be that the present leadership is not what is needed at this time. Perhaps we need to examine our whole leadership structure.

That is what I am asking you to do – to oppose the passage of those measures: 1) the "IOT/CT" plan, 2) any idea of a 'set aside' bishop, and 3) the idea of ending Elder tenure at this point in time. Let us think carefully about this.

Ours is a battle that has been fought since 1972 and a victory is about to be won in the area of homosexuality if we do not make wrong decisions at this point in time. It would be tragic if those who would pass this agenda and met with failure for over 36 years should now achieve their goals by making an "end-run" in re-organizing our church.

During this General Conference, we pray that God will guide you in what you do and the decisions that you make. Let us not become "weary in well doing" as we press on to do what the Lord has called us. And above all, let us not forget to go

to Him in prayer – that He would continue to use us – and to give us wisdom and discernment in the decisions to be made. Let us pray that what happens at the 2012 General Conference in Tampa will transform the United Methodist Church so that it will be a denomination that He can use mightily in the future!

Your brother in Christ, Allen O. Morris, Executive Director

#### Sexuality Issues.

[Note: The below-referenced proposal is a subtle way to build support for normalization of homosexual practice. Note how it appeals to "fairness" while making the basic mistake of equating sexual practice with race. – AOM]

The Native American International Caucus of The United Methodist Church has joined a coalition advocating for the inclusion of all people — regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation. "It is time to join our brothers and sisters who continue to seek a place in The United Methodist Church and provide that space as we should for all people of God," said caucus chair Anne Marshall. The Native American group is the sixth caucus to join the Common Witness Coalition.

- United Methodist News Service News in Brief; April 13, 2012

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

The United Methodist Board of Church and Society is among the 13 national interfaith organizations that sent a letter to President Obama, asking him not to go to war with Iran. The letter supports the Obama administration's efforts to employ diplomacy to resolve the issue of Iran's nuclear program and resulting tensions among Iran, Israel and the United States. "War would be a disaster of global proportions," the letter reads. "Military repercussions would directly affect many countries, and soaring worldwide energy costs would impose a crippling tax on the poorest nations." [Note: Once again, our church officials are attempting to guide the president in how to run the country. Would we not think that it might be best for our church employees to "get their own acts together" before giving advice to others?

- United Methodist News Service News in Brief; April 13, 2012

It matters not what someone is born, but what they grow to be. – J.K. Rowling

#### **Global Outlook**

We should not forget that the spark which ignited the American Revolution was caused by the British attempt to confiscate the firearms of the colonists. — Patrick Henry

#### Malawi.

- + Nearly every part of the moringa tree is edible making it nothing short of a miracle for the impoverished people of Malawi. The Malawi United Methodist Church and the Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan., have teamed up to produce a nursery of these trees, hoping to inspire whole forests in this east African country. "If people add the moringa leaf powder to porridge or stir it into any other meal, they can prevent malnutrition," writes Mercy Chikhosi, health coordinator of the Malawi church.

   United Methodist News Service News in Brief; April 13, 2012
- + Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa of Zimbabwe has offered his "sincere condolences" to the people of Malawi over the recent death of President Bingu wa Mutharika, The 78-year-old Mutharika, who had governed Malawi for eight years, died of cardiac arrest April 5. "This is a loss to the nation of Malawi and to the whole of the continent of Africa," said Nhiwatiwa, whose Zimbabwe Episcopal Area includes the Malawi Missionary Conference. "We who have churches ministering in Malawi experienced all the support we needed from the government of Malawi and it is our hope that this cordial relationship will continue. May his soul rest in peace." Malawi Vice President Joyce Banda was sworn in April 7 as the country's first woman president.

   United Methodist News Service News in Brief; April 13, 2012

## Sierra Leone. Artificial Limbs Change Sierra Leone Lives

Juana Kamara, who now lives in Mattru Village in southern Sierra Leone, recalled the incident that led to the loss of his right leg during the early days of the Sierra Leone civil conflict that lasted 11 years. Kamara, a former tailor who is now a radio mechanic, is one of the hundreds who benefited from the Artificial Limb Fitting Center in Bo that has been giving hope to persons who lost limbs during the Sierra Leone civil strife. He got his first prosthetic limb from the center, which is funded by the UM Committee on Relief (UMCOR), in 2002 when the Sierra Leone war officially was declared ended. Kamara and his family now stay in a camp in Mattru that a Norwegian organization built. His prosthetic limb care is

provided by the UM Artificial Limb Fitting Center, managed by Lappia Amara. The center receives financial support from The Advance. Donations can be made through the Landmine-Prosthesis Program, Advance #982580. Amara runs a mobile clinic for those who have lost limbs. On average, he treats more than 30 patients a month throughout the country. The clinics last for two weeks in each location. Another group, The Norwegian Friends, built camps in most district-headquarter towns after the war to serve these victims of war.

The recipients fend for themselves after receiving the artificial limbs from The UMC. Amara says the prosthetic legs last much longer than those provided by other organizations around the country, and they are provided free from funds received from UMCOR. Amara's dream is to have a vehicle to take staff and materials to organize more mobile clinics each year. Now, he can organize the clinics only in the dry season when commercial vehicles do not charge as much as much as they do during the rainy season when the roads are bad.

Theodore R. Warnock, a missionary for special projects with UMCOR Health, said the program hopes to expand its services by visiting amputees who cannot afford to come from their villages to the center, providing artificial hands to those who have lost arms, issuing wheelchairs to polio victims and offering limb-fitting camps.

– Phileas Jusu, UM communicator based in Sierra Leone, as reported in UMNewscope, January 25, 2012

Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each new year find you a better man.

- Benjamin Franklin