EXPLORATION Speakers Say Young People Must Lead UMC Now

VICKI BROWN

GOD NEEDS YOUNG PEOPLE TO HELP LEAD

The United Methodist Church now, speaker after speaker told 535 high school seniors and young adults attending EXPLORATION 2009, held Nov. 13-15 in Dallas, Tex. And over and over again, they promised God and the church would be with them as they answer.

“God is calling us to bring some freshness, some newness, to be innovative. God is calling you to lead us to that,” the Rev. Tyrone Gordon, pastor of St. Luke “Community” United Methodist Church in Dallas, said in his sermon during opening worship Friday night. “It doesn’t matter how old you are. And when you hear God’s voice
speaking to you, you don’t have to be afraid because God’s not going to leave you alone.”

And 170 of the 535 students attending the national event said yes to that call to ordained ministry. They signed commitment cards indicating they are ready to serve the church as ordained elders and deacons. Another 96 said God was calling them to ministry other than ordination, while 151 said they were unsure.

The event, sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, aims to help youth and young adults discern whether God is calling them to ordained ministry. The continuing need for young clergy in The United Methodist Church was highlighted again by the 2009 data issued by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington.

While the decline in the number of elders under the age of 35 has leveled off, the study found young elders are still not keeping pace with clergy entering retirement age, with just 906 elders under 35 in 2009. Young deacons now make up 8.42 percent of deacons, although there numbers remain small—77 out of 915 ordained deacons.

Bishop Sally Dyck, episcopal leader of the Minnesota Annual Conference, told participants they have plenty of other options and may get pressure from parents, teachers, and others who want them to make different choices.

Dyck, who preached from John 21:15-19 in which the risen Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?” said Christ was trying to make sure that Peter understood what it would mean to accept the call to “Feed my sheep.”

“But no one ever bothered my property or me. It gave me religion, I learned to trust in Jesus like I had never trusted in Jesus before,” she said.

“God calls us to care for the people,” said Dyck, who said that anywhere there is need is the church’s mission field, from the concentration camps of Nazi Germany to an inner city neighborhood struggling with poverty.

“There has never been a more exciting time to be in ministry,” she said. Any career path young adults choose today will be in an institution or business that is trying to rethink itself for the modern world. She said the church, at least, is clear about its purpose. “We’re not here to maintain an institution, we are here to love the people,” she said.

Participants said that while the preachers and worship were inspiring, the small group sessions and workshops on such topics as “How Do I Know God is Calling Me?” were the heart of the event.

“It was great to be in a community with people who are in a similar place, being able to discern my call with people in the same place,” said Kenneth Schoon, a senior at the University of Cincinnati.

The Rev. Meg Lassiat, GBHEM’s director of Student Ministries, Vocation, and Enlistment, said small groups were organized this year by age and understanding of commitment. “We thought it would be more helpful for people to meet with others who are wrestling with similar issues and the comments I’ve gotten indicate that worked well,” she said.

Many said the call can be isolating and that hearing the call stories of the preachers, elders, and deacons who gave testimony at each worship session—as well as the discussions in small groups—helped them realize they were not alone.

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Study Will Determine EXPLORATION’s Effect, Fine Tune Future Events

The Rev. Calvin Rich said the 1996 EXPLORATION in Dallas, Tex., was his first big step out of his local church and helped him see young adult leadership as a viable part of The United Methodist Church—a key piece of accepting God’s call to ordained ministry.

Rich, a provisional elder serving Catawissa First United Methodist Church and Rupert United Methodist Church in the Central Pennsylvania Annual Conference, said the connections he made in 1996 led to involvement in the United Methodist Student Movement, Student Forum, and the US-2 Program for mission work.

“EXPLORATION was all a part of that. It helped me to realize all the connections in our church, and I had growth serving in those communities,” said Rich, who was at the 2009 Dallas event with a group of young people.

Participants in past EXPLORATION events frequently tell stories about how the event helped them discern and accept God’s call to ordained ministry, but there has never been hard data to support that, said Michelle Fugate, director of Research and Data Management at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. This year, Dr. Fugate began a longitudinal study designed to better understand the influence of EXPLORATION 2009 over time.

The young adult participants will be followed over a 25-year period, a span that will allow an adequate amount of time for reflection, assessment, reassessment, and for examination of both first- and second-career clergy.

EXPLORATION is a national event designed to help high school seniors through age 24 discern whether they are called to ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church. The event involves worship, prayer, workshops, networking, and small groups.

“Understanding one’s call is often not a one-time event but a process, or even a lifelong journey,” Fugate said. “Personal understanding is shaped by life experiences, such as relationships, education, volunteer work, religious experience, prayer, Bible study, and numerous other activities, events, and social interactions.”

The study includes a survey before the event, one-on-one interviews during the event to gather qualitative information, a follow-up post-survey in January, then surveys every five years.

“Events that have little immediate impact may later have profound importance,” Fugate said. “Upon reflection, a particular piece of information, experience, or event may stand out as pivotal in their journey where once that same information appeared trivial.”

That makes examination of the discernment process at multiple points in time important, Fugate said.

The Rev. Meg Lassiat, GBHEM’s director of Student Ministries, Vocation, and Enlistment, believes big events are an important aspect of the decision-making process.

“But is EXPLORATION part of the process, or is it a turning point? This study will determine that,” Lassiat said. Data will also be used to make future events more relevant.

“If there’s no follow-up with the participants, we don’t know what worked—so we want to optimize the effect of the event by maintaining those connections,” Lassiat said.

—Vicki Brown
Amy Beckwith of Arlington, Va., said her small group was all recent graduates who are “trying to figure out what to do next.” A recent graduate of Longwood University in Farmville, Va., she said her group is going to try to stay in touch with each other after the event as they all continue the discernment process.

“One of the best things about this event was worshipping with a bunch of young adults. That is really hard to find,” Beckwith said.

Lassiat said that while much of the event focuses on ordained ministry, it is not just designed for those who decide they want to be ordained.

“We tried to make it a good chance for people to discern both ways, whether they are really perceiving that God is calling them to ordained ministry, or whether the call they are hearing is to lay ministry,” Lassiat said.

The Rev. Mary Ann Moman, associate general secretary of the Division of Ordained Ministry, echoed that sentiment in her welcoming remarks.

“Baptism is your certificate for ministry, and your task now is to discern if your call is ordained or lay ministry,” Moman said.

Stuart Jones, a student at Elon University in Elon, N.C., said he had considered religious studies with an eye toward seminary. “I’ve also thought about mission work, and I hope you find people to support you. There are many challenges in ministry, but there is so much joy to share,” Yamada said.

“People will tell you that they need you in the future, but we need you now. You are already doing ministry.”

Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation.
Ward said United Methodists in Mississippi are conscious of supporting and staying in touch with seminarians, too, since there is not a UM seminary in the state.

“When we make appointments, the young people are appointed first, and that may be helpful in keeping our seminarians in the conference,” Ward said. “Many of them want to be associate pastors so they can have mentoring by a senior pastor, but if they want their own church, we try to appoint them to one that won’t be so isolated.”

According to the Rev. Meg Lassiat, GBHEM’s director of Student Ministries, Vocation, and Enlistment, the annual conferences with the highest percentages of young clergy are those that, like Mississippi, have developed a multi-faceted program to invite, train, and retain youth and young adult candidates and clergy.

“Whether a candidate is involved in national programs, campus ministry, or a local church, we know that the district Committee on Ministry and the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry make the biggest impact on the experience of candidates for ministry,” said Lassiat, who organizes EXPLORATION. “Annual conferences committed to making the process welcoming, understandable, and focused on candidates’ needs are the most successful in engaging young people.”

Ward hopes to place more emphasis on youth programs and said the conference works on MP3—more people, younger people, more diverse people. The new conference lay leader was 34 when he agreed to serve for this quadrennium, and Mississippi’s United Methodist Men recently named a 26-year-old as the new president, she said. And, the conference is trying to bring down the average age of lay members to annual conference by a decade.

The Rev. Lisa Garvin, director of Ministerial Services for the conference, said campus ministry is now the third largest item in the conference budget.

“I think it’s paying off,” she said.

Garvin said she joined the conference staff shortly after the publication of The Crisis of Younger Clergy, a book by Lovett H. Weems Jr. and Ann A. Michael that highlighted the need for more young clergy.

She credited the doctoral work of a young elder, Karen Koons Hayden, who was a campus minister and a doctoral student at Wesley Theological Seminary in 2002, with raising awareness in the conference. Hayden’s thesis was on nurturing the call.

Hayden, now pastor at Centenary United Methodist Church in McComb, Miss., said the things the annual conference has done are not rocket science but simply a continued focus on the issue.

“I think it all comes back to mentoring and how seriously a church and pastor take their role in stewardship of the person.”

“Get your Ministerial Education Fund money in, sponsor a student to an event like EXPLORATION or a statewide calling event, adopt a seminary student, have a calling service in your local church every year,” Hayden said.

“Personally, I think it all comes back to mentoring, and how seriously a church and pastor take their role in stewardship of the person,” Hayden said. “We do keep reminding pastors that it is part of their job.”

Sticking with what you start is important, too, Hayden said. “We have had some little churches that have adopted a seminarian and kept in touch with them, praying for them, writing them,” she said.
Those connections may be one reason Mississippi does not lose seminary graduates to other conferences, Hayden said. She said there are a lot of hoops to jump through in the candidacy process and that “if you’ve got someone loving you, and supporting you, praying for you, and listening to you, it’s easier.”

Ryan Parker, a Duke Divinity School student from Hattiesburg, said his pastors and D.S. always took the time to talk to him as he was thinking about vocation.

“They would call and e-mail. They see it as a process of helping you to see what you couldn’t see,” Parker said.

Leadership Programs Transform Colleges, Students

Anna Connell says Centenary College’s Christian Leadership Center “definitely let me see where God is calling me to be.”

The 19-year-old member of University United Methodist Church in Lake Charles, La., said her internship at Common Ground, a non-profit that provides services in a low-income neighborhood in Shreveport, La., has convinced her she wants to work with non-profits after she graduates.

Many colleges and universities have leadership programs, but officials at United Methodist-related institutions say the church influence makes a difference.

“Typically, leadership programs are more power-based or political,” said Linda Salane, executive director of the Leadership Institute at Columbia College, a UM-related women’s college in Columbia, S.C.

“I think the Wesleyan concept of making a difference helps us view leadership not as the position you hold, but as the difference you make,” Salane said. “We believe everyone is going to be called to leadership: at church, home, work, in the community. The question is whether you think you are going to be ready to accept that call and have the skills to do so.”

Salane said the leadership program at Columbia infuses all the classes with the four C’s: courage, commitment, confidence, and competence. The focus on leadership has resulted in numerous programs and collaborations with government and communities—sending students out to work in the juvenile justice system, with middle school girls, and local businesses.

Salane says students are involved in all the collaborations and that one goal is to equip others to carry on the work once it is started. “We don’t want programs that are dependent on us.”

Angela Maselli, a recent graduate, said all classes at Columbia have a leadership focus.

“But each student is allowed to lead in the way they want—for instance, some may want to lead by example. It’s not as obvious, but it helps a lot of students find their own niche,” said Maselli, now a graduate student in arts administration at Savannah College of Art and Design’s Atlanta campus.

Kara Simmons, whose minor is leadership, says the college offers leadership opportunities, not just classes. This semester, she’s working with Trel-hom United Methodist Church, which helps house homeless people. Simmons works with other students to find household goods and furnishings.

And, she is working on getting more businesses to join the North Columbia Business Association, which promotes business in the area where the college is located. Her work, too, has helped her define career goals.

“Before, I didn’t have any plans. Now I know my place in society is to be a leader in different communities enhancing, developing, and planning for urban areas,” Simmons said.

Cheryl Rude, director of Leadership Southwestern at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kan., believes the program
begun in 1992 has changed the kind of student who is attracted to Southwestern.

“Our vision statement says that Southwestern is a learning community dedicated to ‘leadership through service in a world without boundaries.’ The president at the time was Carl Martin, a United Methodist elder who wanted to make that statement be alive and meaningful for the college,” she said.

The college developed a program based in service-learning that has evolved into a combination of classes, internships, and study abroad.

“The program has attracted a student body that has a service ethic,” Rude said. She estimates about one-third of the student body is involved in leadership programs, from taking one class or participating in the freshman service day to earning a minor in leadership or completing a senior project.

“One big thing is that the students know good leadership when they see it. It’s interesting to hear the graduates talk about their bosses. They have a better discernment about when people are doing things in a healthy and ethical way,” Rude said.

Ingrid McIntyre, director of Connectional Relations in the Division of Higher Education Institute in June 2009 at which nine colleges and universities made presentations about their leadership programs.

“Once we assess what’s being done at our 109 United Methodist-related schools, college, and universities, we will try to come up with some best prac-senior project that integrates two of the three areas: peace, social justice, and ecological sustainability.

Valerie Robideaux, theological studies coordinator of the Christian Leadership Center at Centenary, said one of the goals of the center is keeping students connected to the local

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Ingrid McIntyre, director of Connectional Relations in the Division of Higher Education, wants to find out what kind of leadership development is being done at United Methodist-related colleges and universities. GBHEM is the lead agency in helping The United Methodist Church develop principled Christian leaders for the church and the world—the first of the Four Areas of Focus affirmed by the 2008 General Conference. The first step toward doing that was a meeting held after the Higher Education Institute.

“The leaders program consists of the students meeting together for a one-hour class aimed at developing leadership. It’s a freshman-year experience only, but a number of those involved in it have gone on to be leaders in campus ministry and on campus,” Davies said.

The Oikos Scholars Program includes service learning, academic classes, and an international education experience. Each student completes a church. The program consists of large group meetings, small group meetings, and an internship.

“Undergraduate students need to be ready for church leadership, even if they don’t necessarily go for professional church careers,” she said. “We believe vocation and faith are integrated, and we want students to ask what God is calling them to do with their life.”

Meharry Receives $21.4 Million NIH Research Grant

The National Center for Research Resources (NCRR), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will provide $21.4 million over the next five years in support of Meharry Medical College’s research enterprise via NCRR’s Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMIs) Clinical and Translational Research (RCTR) program. The award is the largest NIH grant received in the College’s history.

The funds will benefit the entire institution and will be used to establish the Meharry Clinical and Translational Research Center (MeTRC) to further health disparities research already underway.

MeTRC is a “center without walls” comprised of the Center for AIDS Health
Disparities Research, the Center for Women’s Health Research, and the Participant and Clinical Interactions Resource. Under the MeTRC umbrella, doctors and scientists at Meharry Medical College will conduct health disparities research needed to take a basic discovery and use it to create new diagnostic tests or new drugs to help eliminate the disparities.

“Meharry has an exemplary record of addressing health disparities that disproportionately affect those from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Tennessee region as well as nationwide,” said NCRR Director Barbara Alving, M.D. “The RCTR program can help Meharry researchers build on existing strengths that can be further developed to advance health preventions, treatments, and cures.”

“We know that African Americans are disproportionately affected by diseases such as breast cancer, prostate cancer, and HIV/AIDS,” said Wayne J. Riley, M.D., MBA, MPH, MACP, President and Chief Executive Officer of Meharry Medical College. “MeTRC paves the way for researchers to determine why these disparities exist and to find new treatments that will close the gap. With this grant from the NIH, Meharry will be able to establish a national model for health disparities research making us a global leader in this area.”

MeTRC allows researchers to share information and resources that will help expedite the process of finding new and innovative medical treatments, treatments which can be further “individualized” or “personalized” to be safer and more effective, according to Russell E. Poland, Ph.D., Vice President for Research at Meharry Medical College.

Ayman Al-Hendy, M.D., Ph.D., and James E.K. Hildreth, M.D., Ph.D. will serve as the principal investigators on this institutional grant. Dr. Al-Hendy, a gynecologist, researcher, and an expert in women’s health issues, and Dr. Hildreth, a researcher and an expert in HIV and AIDS research, will oversee MeTRC research activities at Meharry Medical College.

The multi-million dollar grant will be used to fund community research, collaborative projects, and pilot projects. Any Meharry Medical College clinician or researcher with an interest in clinical and translational research will be able to compete for funding for pilot projects that allow investigators to test a hypothesis and generate preliminary data to determine if an idea has merit. This is a unique opportunity for Meharry Medical College to provide seed money for these types of pilot projects.

“This grant will not only allow Meharry to take its research enterprise to the next level, but it will also bring more minority scientists into mainstream research and enhance studies of minority health,” Poland said.

**GBHEM Can Be Source of Renewal, Growth for UMC**

Enabling and supporting the health and well-being of institutions, systems, and networks critical to the mission and ministry of The United Methodist
Church is the best way for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to be a source of renewal and growth for the church, the Rev. Jerome King Del Pino told Board directors.

“Institutions matter; they have power; they shape our lives. And they matter particularly during times of transition, change, and disruption, as the recent global financial crisis has brought home to us. Institutions in the church matter, too. They, too, have power; they, too, shape lives. And they, too, matter more than ever during times of transition and change, as the church is experiencing today,” Del Pino, GBHEM’s general secretary said.

Del Pino told members of the Board of Directors at the Oct. 8-10 fall meeting in Nashville that one example of how supporting institutions can be effective is the work on building a “culture of call.”

“We have expanded our capacity to provide Web-based and print resources, consultations with Boards of Ordained Ministry, theological schools, and Boards of Higher Education and Campus Ministry,” Del Pino said.

Del Pino cited the consultation on theological education in Africa in Kampala, Uganda, as another example. Participants at the consultation identified an urgent need for assistance in developing institutions and infrastructure for theological education that are “sustainable over the long haul.”

“These African representatives saw clearly what we in the church in the United States do not always grasp as clearly: Sound, healthy institutions matter, and they matter more than ever today, especially in places of volatility, transition, and instability,” Del Pino said.

Del Pino said staff and directors must wrestle with questions together in the years to come.

“In nurturing an educated leadership for the church, how do we keep ourselves open to new, creative ways of learning—ways that may take us beyond the classical means for attaining a theological education, perhaps at times beyond the academy?” he asked.

Del Pino, Bishop David Kekumba Yemba, and Bishop James Swanson Sr. reported in more detail on the Kampala event. GBHEM, United Methodist Communications, the General Board of Global Ministries, and the African College of Bishops collaborated on the event.

Participants were clear that theology schools in Africa need to collaborate more effectively in sharing the expertise of their respective faculties. “For example, a school in need of a trained New Testament scholar may enter into an exchange arrangement with another school that has a faculty member with the requisite training and scholarship,” Del Pino said.

Swanson, resident bishop of the Holston Annual Conference, said the church in the U.S. could learn from the Democratic Republic of Congo in conjunction with theological education.

Yemba, resident bishop of the Central Congo Area, said that in congregations in Congo, members seemed to think the pastor’s spouse had as much theological education as the pastor.

“Spouses are called on to lead Bible studies and do all kind of things. Because of that, we created a school for spouses,” Yemba said. They learn basic Bible study, how to lead a meeting, and other skills.

“It is now a tradition in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” he said.

During the opening worship on Thursday, Bishop Charles N. Crutchfield, resident bishop of the Arkansas Annual Conference, talked about Peter and the disciples returning to their fishing boats after Christ was crucified.

“For Peter, the Christ adventure is gone, vanished in the denial,” Crutchfield said. “Then, John sees Jesus on the shore and when they return, Jesus asked Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’”

Peter’s response that Jesus knows he loves him is “nothing short of a claim on the incredible grace of God,”
Crutchfield said. And when we make that claim, “We begin to understand that all our tomorrows belong not to ourselves, but to God.”

The Board heard a report from Bruce Blumer, chair of the Loans and Scholarships Committee, who warned that even as online applications have increased the number of United Methodist students applying for scholarships and loans, funds are expected to be down about $1.1 million in 2010 due to declines in Special Sunday offerings and investment declines.

“Those of us who have the privilege of reviewing the applications, know what amazing people we have in The United Methodist Church,” Blumer said. “Their activity in local churches and throughout the world is nothing short of stunning.”

Blumer said he is especially concerned about the Gift of Hope Scholarship, which provides a $1,000 scholarship to those students who show leadership in the church.

“We all have the opportunity to help,” Blumer said. He urged churches to observe United Methodist Student Day in November, and noted that contributions can now be made online at anytime through www.umcgiving.org/umstudentday. Another avenue to support loans and scholarship is through wills and annuities, Blumer said.

In other actions:

- Del Pino announced that the Rev. Randolph Cross, will join the GBHEM staff on Dec. 1 as assistant general secretary of Clergy Supervision and Accountability in the Division of Ordained Ministry. Most recently, Cross has been superintendent of the Lower James River District of the Dakotas Annual Conference, where he also served as director of connectional ministries/leadership development and dean of the cabinet.
- A 2010 budget of $39 million was approved. That puts planned expenditures down by 13 percent from 2009.
- The Board voted to hold a spring board meeting March 18-20, 2010.
- The Board elected the Rev. Ramon Evangelista to serve as chair of the Board’s Personnel and Policies Committee, after the resignation of the Rev. Jimmy Nunn due to scheduling and work conflicts.
- The Rev. Kim Cape was elected by the Division of Higher Education as the division’s representative to the Personnel and Policies Committee.
- Sam Taylor Fellowships were approved for 27 applicants, with a total of $53,100 awarded.

Vicki Brown

Ministry Study
Considering Changes in Guaranteed Appointment, Ordination Process

The Study of Ministry Commission is considering changes in the principle of guaranteed appointment and the ordination process, as well as clarification of the orders of elders and deacons, commission members reported to GBHEM directors at their fall meeting in Nashville.

Bishop Grant Hagiya, episcopal leader of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference and the Alaska Conference, said the goal of the commission, created by the 2008 General Conference, is to remove obstacles and rules to allow “creative ministry to thrive.” The commission, chaired by Bishop Al Gwinn, episcopal leader of the North Carolina Annual Conference, met Oct. 5-7 in Nashville.

Gwinn expressed excitement about the work the commission did during that meeting.

“It is exciting to see how persons from all over the church with so many varied backgrounds and callings are finding energy and consensus around these important issues facing our church as we seek to be an effective partner with God in our day,” Gwinn said.

Hagiya stressed that while the commission wanted to give the Board members an idea of what is being considered, no formal recommendations have been proposed yet.

Several members of the commission, including two young clergy who communicated through video conferencing, reported on various aspects of ministry that may be changed.

The Rev. Jasmine Smothers, a clergywoman in Atlanta, Ga., said her small group has been looking at appointments and itinerancy.

“We believe that going forward, appointments should not be guaranteed, but should depend on missional needs, the health of the congregation, and clergy effectiveness. We believe this is essential for the continued health of our church,” Smothers said.

Smothers said her group does believe that itinerancy is a response to a particular call of God. “What we will recommend is an examination of itinerancy and how the process can work better across annual conference lines.”

She said there must also be an educational process about why The United Methodist Church has itinerancy and how it is integral to the mission of the church.

Several Board members expressed concern about the downside of removing the principal of guaranteed appointment,

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Board Members Consider New Models for Campus Ministry

The old model of campus ministries fully funded by annual conferences can no longer completely address the needs of ministry on campus, directors of the GBHEM’s Division of Higher Education (DHE) concluded last week.

Directors discussed what campus ministry does now, what new models might work, and identified campus ministries that are already doing new and creative ministry during a discussion at GBHEM’s fall meeting in Nashville, Oct. 8-10.

The Rev. Bridgette Young, assistant general secretary for Campus Ministry and College Chaplaincy, led the discussion and promised Board members that she plans to develop training opportunities for new campus ministers and share best practices among campus ministers and chaplains.

The Rev. Orlando Chafee, superintendent of the Mahoning Valley District, East Ohio Conference, reported that in a discussion about what campus ministries uniquely bring to the church, his group concluded that campus ministries cost money and that means people in the church want to see that they get something for their money.

“Campus ministry doesn’t do a good job of showing annual conferences how campus ministry makes a difference,” Chafee said.

The Rev. Jennifer Copeland, a Board member who is also the UM campus minister at Duke University, said she had surveyed her ministry’s alumni and found that 75 percent of them have gone into non-profit social justice work full-time, and 30 percent are in full-time service in The United Methodist Church.

James Swanson, resident bishop of the Holston Annual Conference, said it has been his experience that annual conference members are more attentive when students report on what their campus ministries are doing, rather than the campus minister.

Mike Sykuta, an associate professor of economics at the University of Missouri-Columbia, said that local churches could do most things that campus ministers do on campus, but he added that most local churches don’t have the desire, the wherewithal, or the passion to do so.

“And I’m not sure the church can provide the kind of 24/7 present and personal ministry that a campus minister can do.”

The Board members concluded that campus ministers need to be more evangelistic and visible and that they should work to empower students to tell the story of campus ministry.

Agreeing that the old models do not always work, the group talked about campus ministries that are doing new things.

The group discussed the new Wesley House at the University of California-Berkeley, which will feature “hybrid” dorm apartments to blend the personal space of a dorm room with community living areas. Upon completion in the fall of 2010, Wesley House will be home to 96 students.

The Rev. Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, DHE chair, said that building will generate enough revenue to fund the Berkeley campus ministry and to plant some campus ministries at other colleges and universities.

The group also said GBHEM needs to resource local districts and churches to encourage cooperative ministry between local churches and campuses. But Young added that “campus ministry is not an extended church youth group.”

“We are committed to developing training opportunities to help develop those cooperative models of campus ministry be effective in reaching students, as we form stronger partnerships with local churches and districts,” Young said.

“Churches need to understand the campus population and the specialized skills that are needed to serve students.”

Several people mentioned that campus ministries, except on the campuses of historically Black colleges and universities, tend to be largely white and said some attention needs to be paid to increasing the diversity of campus ministries.

– Vicki Brown
particularly the effect that would have on the appointment of women and racial-ethnic clergy.

Hagiya said the principal of guaranteed appointment began with the ordination of women because women who were being ordained were not always receiving appointments.

“What we want to do is retain protections for women and minorities. But guaranteed appointment is having the consequence of supporting mediocrity,” he said. And, he added, the reality is that the church cannot continue to afford guaranteed appointment.

Smothers said the members of the commission have been in touch with staff at the Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the General Commission on Religion and Race about how those groups have been marginalized in the past and how to work to keep what is good about guaranteed appointment.

The Rev. Kim Cape, executive director of New Church Growth and Transformation in the Southwest Texas Conference, said she was someone who had benefited from guaranteed appointment. She suggested that one option would be for an ordained elder to have the first two appointments guaranteed, then have subsequent appointments based on effectiveness.

Smothers said a trial period with security of appointment has been discussed.

The Rev. Meg Lassiat, director of Student Ministries, Vocation, and Enlistment for GBHEM, reported that another small group is examining issues related to candidacy, mentoring, licensing, provisional membership, and the steps related to each of those processes.

Lassiat said actions of the 2008 General Conference in decreasing the membership requirement from two...
years to one, decreasing years of certified candidacy from two years to one, and decreasing the provisional period from three to two years had effectively taken three years off the old process for ordination.

Lassiat said other parts of the process that could be eliminated or condensed have been identified. She said the commission is considering the effect of these recommendations and seeking feedback from the church before final decisions are made.

“We are also wrestling with the reality that the process is implemented by and participated in by a wide variety of people with varying degrees of effectiveness. . . . Most of the roadblocks are created by either the candidates themselves or those implementing the process who are ineffective in their assigned task,” Lassiat said.

Examples of that include district superintendents who do not respond to inquiring candidates or don’t respond in a timely manner; inadequately trained mentors who do not understand the online candidacy system; bad pairings between candidates and mentors, and redundancy in the work students complete in seminary and with their district committees and annual conference Boards of Ordained Ministry.

She said the group is proposing radical changes in mentoring, moving from individual mentoring to group discernment appropriate to the candidate’s context and location. She said annual conferences would have flexibility in how they did that and gave the example of Texas, which now has a candidacy summit each year.

The Rev. Taylor Fuerst of Houston, Tex., said her group was looking at sacramental authority, and she expects them to recommend little change. “We believe sacramental authority still resides in and is rooted in the elder.”

The Rev. Ianther Mills, superintendent of the Washington-East District in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference, reported on the need to clarify the orders. “We affirm the distinctiveness of the role of elders and the role of deacons. That is to say, elders are called to Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service, and deacons are called to Word and Service.”

But Mills said the commission believes confusion exists about the purpose of an order, so that will be examined further.

**Present Church Is U.S.-Centric, 1950s Model**

The United Methodist Church today is a U.S.-centric, 1950s model that is poorly structured for a transition to a global church, Bishop Grant Hagiya told members of GBHEM at the fall meeting.

Hagiya, resident bishop of the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference and
the Alaska Conference and a member of the Council of Bishop’s Call to Action Steering Committee, presented his doctoral research in organizational leadership and management and discussed what his research might mean for GBHEM as the leadership development agency of The United Methodist Church. He’s also a member of the Study of Ministry Commission and GBHEM’s Board of Directors.

“We have moved to a post-religious society,” Hagiya said, noting the recent research by the Pew Research Center that found one out of six residents of the U.S. has no religious affiliation whatsoever. “If you single out the age group of 18 to 29 year olds, this number goes up to one in four.”

In addition, The United Methodist Church is feeling the effects of the global economic downturn, he said.

“Only seven annual conferences out of 65 can fund their pre-1982 pensions, and 22 out of 65 annual conferences cannot sustain the current payment of pensions,” Hagiya said.

The present church structure is dominated by a programming mentality in the local church, a model that was then replicated with boards and agencies, jurisdictions, annual conferences, and the districts. Program churches provide a variety of services and programs that are designed primarily to meet the needs of the church members.

With program churches, Hagiya said clergy have run the machinery of the church: personnel, finances, administration, worship, and programs.

“We have trained generations of clergy into managers of our local churches, not leaders,” he said.

That comes from larger systemic problems, including the fact that boards of ordained ministry in annual conferences accept those who present themselves, rather than recruiting the “best and the brightest.”

The current candidacy process, which the Study of Ministry Commission is considering revising, discourages entrepreneurs and the system overall protects ineffective clergy, Hagiya said.

The result: reacting from crisis to crisis, and performing the same things over and over again in the hope that a new result will emerge.

Entrepreneurial leaders with a vision can change that, he said, citing Africa University as one example.

“Africa University caught the vision and imagination of the whole connection, and the result was a first-rate university for the continent of Africa,” Hagiya said.

What the church faces now, though, is an asset-endowed U.S. church with declining membership, and an asset-needing church in Africa and Asia that is growing in membership.

“Currently, we are poorly structured to transition to a global church,” Hagiya said. For example, it cost 25 cents a word to translate General Conference materials from English into any other language.

The Call to Action Steering Committee, a small group charged with making innovative recommendations for the UMC, is looking at leadership as a key area, he said.

“One major recommendation is to create a seamless and comprehensive leadership development process, where each system builds on the work of the previous one,” he said.

The current system is fragmented, siloed, and lacks cooperation and consultation between systems, which produces suspicion, competition, and non-alignment. That system includes children and youth ministry, campus ministry, seminaries, Boards of Ordained Ministry, GBHEM, and the bishops’ cabinets.
The Church and Its Institutions in Changing Times: Power, Promise, And Peril

JEROME KING DEL PINO

The financial meltdown over the past year has brought home to us in a dramatic way the indispensable role of institutions in our wellbeing as individuals and as a society. Perhaps equally compelling, we witnessed the significance of institutions for our flourishing as a global human community. In rather startling fashion we discovered the extent to which multinational and transnational institutions are weaving together our interests, hopes, and fortunes as individuals and as societies—indeed, our shared fate—into a common global project. And in the process we are exposed to both new opportunities and new risks and vulnerabilities. How many of us would have thought that unscrupulous decisions in what seemed an entirely domestic context—the U.S. sub-prime housing market—would precipitate a global financial crisis? Institutions matter; they have power; they shape our lives. And they do so for good or ill.

It is perhaps this power to impact our lives for better or for worse that explains, at least in part, our deep ambivalence toward institutions. We resent their power to shape and limit our opportunities, choices, and hopes—frequently without our input or consent; even as we recognize their essential role in providing the structures and means for individuals to pursue their dreams and for societies to advance and prosper. And when things go wrong, we are quick to lay the blame for our woes at their feet—and often for good reason—as the recent sub-prime debacle amply illustrates. Yet, particularly during times of upheaval and uncertainty such as we are experiencing today, we are tempted to treat institutions as such as the problem, perhaps begrudgingly acknowledging them as a necessary evil, but viewing them as encumbrances and impediments to our purposes, nonetheless.

The same ambivalence toward institutions and the same responses toward them manifest themselves within the church also. Perhaps this should not surprise us, since, of all Protestant denominations in the United States, the Methodists have been quintessential builders of institutions—from schools to universities to hospitals to nursing homes to churches to an elaborate infrastructure that reaches around the world, connected crucially by a set of institutions we call “general agencies.”

The United Methodist Church is, whether we like it or not, a multinational, transnational corporation, with all the possibilities and the shortcomings, the capacities and the foibles that accompany such an entity. Not surprisingly, then, during times of transition, uncertainty, and change, the church’s institutions—frequently its general agencies—bear the brunt of our discontent over what ails the denomination. And, at times, our dissatisfaction with the status quo leads us to question whether the problem is not “the institutional church” as such. After all, the “non-denominational” churches, notably the freestanding mega-churches, seem to flourish, while we denominational types, with our elaborate institutional machinery, suffer relentless decline.

In recent years, United Methodists’ ambivalence about their institutional life has taken on more subtle expression. Many now locate the problem in the relationship between the local church...
and the general church: The denomination’s woes, we are told, lie in an overburdened general church bureaucracy that siphons off much-needed resources required for local church ministry and impedes by precept, rule, and regulation the creativity and innovation they need to flourish. Often the unstated assumption that accompanies this view is that the local church is where real ministry happens, while general church work, removed as it is from the local context, is optional at best and redundant at worst. The decision by the 1996 General Conference to designate the local church as “the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs” (¶120, Book of Discipline) did much to encourage this drift toward localism—and the consequent devaluing and diminishment of the general church institutions.

At their best, certain institutions in society act as carriers and stewards of a group’s or a people’s collective memory, their values and traditions, and their deepest convictions. As such, these institutions provide the space and the infrastructure that allow people to negotiate the tension between tradition and change, inheritance and innovation creatively and productively in the midst of rapid societal change or disruption. I am persuaded that institutions such as universities and theological schools—and also, I submit, general agencies—may play a similarly crucial role in The United Methodist Church as it seeks to discern God’s will in these complex times.

And so the question confronts us as staff and directors of this great agency: How can the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry as an institution be a source of renewal and growth for the church rather than an impediment or an encumbrance in the years ahead? I suggest to you this afternoon that we do so best by enabling and supporting the health and wellbeing of institutions, systems, and networks that are critical to the mission and ministry of our church around the world. Our Strategic Plan clarifies this approach to our work: The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry assists The United Methodist Church in preparing global leaders for a global church by developing and supporting systems, institutions, and networks.

A few examples from our work over the past year will illustrate what I mean. In each case we have striven to assist in strengthening infrastructure, networks, and institutions. Take our work in ordained ministry. We have made great strides in working with individuals and systems toward a culture of call, with particular attention to youth and young people. We have expanded our capacity to provide Web-based and print resources, consultations with Boards of Ordained Ministry, theological schools, and Boards of Higher Education and Campus Ministry. This work has been strengthened, in part, as a result of our decision to develop two cross-divisional...
positions, providing for a rich intersection between the Division of Ordained Ministry’s work with the candidacy process and the Division of Higher Education’s work in campus ministry. Nurturing a “culture of call” calls for creative partnerships across the church as well as within the agencies. To call forth a cultural change in The United Methodist Church is properly our work. To engage this important and urgent task requires that GBHEM be and act as a catalyst with a clear plan to sustain its initial action even over several quadrennia.

Yet challenges remain. The cover story of a recent edition of The United Methodist Reporter illustrates one such challenge. Titled “New Monasticism,” the article begins this way: “Ross Reynolds, 26, felt frustrated with ministry goals after graduating last May from Perkins School of Theology.” It tells of his passion for ministry but as opportunities to listen afresh to the new thing the Spirit may be saying to the church. As our own history as a renewal movement within the “institutional church” of eighteenth-century England reminds us, movements and institutional church always stand in a certain tension. This tension can be destructive or divisive; or it can become the growing point of an institution—that place where new life emerges that eventually reinvigorates the whole body. The challenge before us, as a key institution within The United Methodist Church, is how to use our gifts and resources in such a way that this tension is creative and productive—so that young people like Ross Reynolds can find a meaningful place within the total ministry of our church.

Another example is our work in strengthening the development of leadership for church and world in United Methodism around the globe. We can celebrate great strides in a number of areas. The networking of international educational institutions is proceeding well as expressed in the clearer mission/vision and programmatic work of the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU). Efforts are well underway in creating mechanisms for sharing scholarship and scholars across institutions within the worldwide Methodist family.

The strengthening of infrastructure and institutions for theological education has also received sustained attention. A significant example is the convening of a major consultation on theological education in Africa in Kampala, Uganda, on August 19-20 this year—an effort of collaboration between GBHEM, UMCom, and GBGM, and the United Methodist bishops of Africa. The theological administrators and educators gathered there delineated a vision for doing what GBHEM considers its primary work: create and nurture structures and institutions of theological education capable of being sustained over time so that the burgeoning United Methodist Church on the continent of Africa will have the trained leadership it needs in the years ahead. Let me mention one observation that is particularly relevant to the point I am making here. Both in the needs and the challenges facing theological education in Africa that participants identified as well as in group conversations there emerged an important refrain—namely, the urgent need for assistance in developing institutions and infrastructure for theological education that are sustainable over the long haul. These African representatives saw clearly what we in the church in the United States perhaps do not always grasp as clearly: Sound, healthy institutions matter, and they matter more than ever today, especially in places of volatility, transition, and instability.

Experiences like these are important in affirming the value of our work as an agency in building, supporting, and nurturing effective institutions for The United Methodist Church around the world. However, they also challenge us to continually ask critical questions—the kinds of questions that will keep us honest, growing, and changing, when

“Institutions such as universities and theological schools—and also general agencies—may play a similarly crucial role in The United Methodist Church as it seeks to discern God’s will in these complex times.”
necessary, so that we may offer our gifts as an institution to the church in fruitful ways. I close my reflection with a few of the questions that I believe we—staff and directors together—will need to wrestle with continually in order to carry out GBHEM’s mission faithfully in the years ahead.

• How do we maintain a proper tension between innovation and inheritance, between “institution” and “movement”? Our fast-changing world requires institutions that are nimble, adaptive, and innovative—ready to try new ways to meet emerging needs and abandoning ways that no longer seem adequate. How do we listen deeply and responsively to our world while not abandoning our core values in efforts to be “relevant”? How do we honor our responsibility as a steward of the church’s heritage, values, and convictions while attending to what the Spirit might be saying to us in the ministries that emerge at the edges of our institutional life? How do we assist the church in connecting past and present even as we lean into the future?

• In our work within an emerging global United Methodist Church, how do we assess “success” in the development and nurture of institutions for leadership development? How do we separate cultural definitions of success from faithfulness to the gospel? How do we allow the voices of our United Methodist brothers and sisters around the world to challenge the predominance of (perhaps, at times, our captivity to) United States culture in our assumptions, values, and approach to our work?

Institutions matter; they have power; they shape our lives. And they matter particularly during times of transition, change, and disruption, as the recent global financial crisis has brought home to us. Institutions in the church, too, matter; they, too, have power; and they, too, shape lives. And they, too, matter more than ever during times of transition and change, as the church is experiencing today. May God grant us the grace to use our gifts as a key institution within the church to guide it in preparing the kind and quality of leader that can lead the people called United Methodists in faithful and prophetic ministry in the years ahead.

Del Pino is general secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. This Report of the General Secretary to the fall meeting of the GBHEM board of directors (October 10, 2009) is posted online under “Papers, Monographs, and Reports” on the Publications page at www.GBHEM.org.

Cross to Head DOM’s Clergy Supervision and Accountability

The Rev. Randolph Cross has joined GBHEM as assistant general secretary of Clergy Supervision and Accountability.

Cross’s appointment to the Division of Ordained Ministry was announced upon recommendation by the search committee and approval of his bishop, Deborah Kiesey, episcopal leader of the Dakotas Annual Conference.

Cross, who joined GBHEM on Dec. 1, previously served as superintendent of the Lower James River District, director of connectional ministries and leadership development, and dean of the cabinet in the Dakotas Annual Conference. Prior to his tenure...
as a D.S., he spent 20 years serving in pastoral roles in the North and South Dakota Areas.

“Randy’s experience as a district superintendent, combined with his education and experience in supervision, will serve the church well in this new role. Additionally, his diverse background and leadership qualities fit well with the direction and mission of the GBHEM, especially with implementation of the Strategic Plan,” General Secretary Jerome King Del Pino said.

The new assistant general secretary’s responsibilities will include the development of resources for supervision/accountability and providing resources for bishops and cabinets, including critical writing in the areas of supervision and accountability as it relates to appointive ministry.

He will work with church leaders to design and conduct a variety of training workshops on topics of supervision and support systems and assist with formation and positive growth for self-initiated support systems for clergy and their families.

Cross received his undergraduate degree at the University of North Dakota and a Master of Theology at Perkins School of Theology.

**Fenner Appointed Director of Extension Ministry, Pastoral Care**

The Rev. Bruce Fenner has joined GBHEM as director of Extension Ministry and Pastoral Care in the Division of Ordained Ministry’s United Methodist Endorsing Agency.

Fenner’s appointment, effective March 15, 2010, was announced upon recommendation by the Search Committee and approval of his bishop, Linda Lee, of the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

Since 1988, Fenner has worked in the Bureau of Prisons. For the past seven years, he served as the assistant chaplain administrator for the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Washington, D.C. Prior to his work with the Bureau of Prisons, he was a pastor in the Wisconsin Conference.

He received his bachelor of arts degree from Westmar College, master of theology degree from Perkins School of Theology, and master of science in counseling from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

“Through his experiences in senior level leadership at the Bureau of Prisons, the Rev. Fenner has gained extensive experience in administrative oversight of religious services programs, pastoral care, development of policies, recruitment of chaplaincy personnel, and training and education of staff,” General Secretary Jerome King Del Pino said.

At GBHEM, Fenner will serve as the contact person for extension ministry policy and information, including work with professional pastoral care organizations and endorsing networks to ensure standards for professional certification are understood and fit within the United Methodist understanding of ministry.

Fenner will also provide pastoral care for the endorsed community including counseling, individual spiritual retreats, and participation in retreat and convocation program design teams. Additionally, he will supervise the Journey of Shalom program for returning chaplains and their spouses and supervise and coordinate regular visits with endorsed persons and seminary communities through the volunteer visitors program and staff site visits.

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**Mark Your Calendar**

**Committee on Faith and Order**

March 15-17, 2010
Nashville, Tenn.

**Study of Ministry Commission**

March 15-17, 2010
Nashville, Tenn.

**Spring Board Meeting**

March 18-20, 2010
Nashville, Tenn.

**Native American Ministries Sunday**

April 18, 2010

**UMSM Student Forum**

May 27-30, 2010
Shenandoah University
“Jesus’ Story Empowering Disciples”

**Fall Board Meeting**

October 7-9, 2010
Nashville, Tenn.

For information on the Special Sundays with offerings and to order resources, visit [www.umcgiving.org](http://www.umcgiving.org).
On Saturday, December 5th, the inauguration of Bishop David Kekumba Yemba (Central Congo Episcopal Area) as the third Chancellor of Africa University and Professor Fanuel Tagwira as the third Vice Chancellor of the university took place on the AU campus at Old Mutare, Zimbabwe. In this photograph, Vice Chancellor Tagwira is robed by Chancellor Yemba (second from left) and Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa of the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area (right) while Jerome King Del Pino (left), General Secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry looks on.