Diverse Group of Young Adults Considers God’s Call

VICKI BROWN

Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey prays with young adults who are considering God’s call to ordained ministry. Harvey preached during the commitment service at Exploration 2013 in Denver, Colo.

“Speak after speaker told the 429 young adults gathered to explore ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church that God is calling them to go change the world and the church.

“This is not your momma and daddy’s church. We have to be about making disciples, not members,” Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey told those attending Exploration 2013 in Denver, Colo.

Harvey, the episcopal leader of the Louisiana Conference, asked the diverse group—27 percent of young adults were racial-ethnic—what would happen if “we stopped worrying about saving the church and focused on saving souls?”
"I want you to be unleashed by the Spirit to listen to where God might be calling you. I’d love to see you all discern a call to ordained ministry, but I know discerning a call to lay ministry is equally important," Harvey said during her sermon at Saturday night’s commitment service.

“All God wants or needs is for you to be the best YOU that you can be,” she said. “Listen. God might just be calling your name.”

The Nov. 15-17 event, sponsored by GBHEM, aims to help young adults hear, discern, and respond to God’s call to ordained ministry and to explore their gifts for service as a deacon or elder in the UMC. Total attendance was 676 individuals, including chaperones, workshop leaders, speakers, and members of the planning team.

Trip Lowery, GBHEM’s director of Young Adult Ministry Discernment and Enlistment, told his own story of teaching high school, co-managing a surf shop, and playing professional soccer before he accepted the call to ordained ministry. “I wandered a lot, and I wish that as I explored and wandered around that I had reached out to someone. You are surrounded this weekend by people who want to help you.”

Lowery said he was pleased that the young adults who attended were such a diverse group and noted an effort was made to have speakers, workshop leaders, and small group leaders from all walks of life in the UMC.

April Casperson, co-chair of the team that plans Exploration, said she thinks those who attended Exploration 2013 came from more diverse locations than in years past. Casperson, who is also director of Enrollment Management and Scholarship Development at Methodist Theological School in Ohio, said she would guess that undergraduate colleges and universities, as well as seminaries, are becoming more diverse. “This means good things for the church. It is important to have leaders who can serve in different ministry contexts,” Casperson said.

Bishop Harvey, who attended a late-night gathering for young adults who self-identify as people of color to discuss issues they face in the UMC, said growing up in a barrio allowed her to keep a foot in two worlds. She told the group that she thinks they are uniquely placed to lead the church. “Most of you speak more than one language; you have an ability to keep a foot in both worlds. You are the best hope we have. If we can’t do it with you, we’ll never do it," said Harvey, who is the first Latina bishop elected in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Worship, small groups, and workshops were all aimed at answering questions young adults have about how God is calling them and what steps to take.

Bill and Lyndsay Cupp, a young couple who are youth leaders at Lehman-Idetown UMC in Lehman, Pa., said they felt the small groups especially were helpful.

"I definitely want to be involved in the church, especially youth ministry," Lyndsay Cupp said. But she added that she was thinking about certification and was not yet sure about ordination.

Bill Cupp liked the small, intimate setting of small groups. “It was nice to get with other people who are on the same track,” he said.

Sarah Craven, a pastoral intern at two United Methodist churches in Missouri, said she learned more about her options at Exploration. “I come from a small town, and I didn’t even know (continued on page 4)
More than one in four of the 429 young adults attending Exploration 2013 identified themselves as members of a racial-ethnic group. The jump from 18.8 percent racial-ethnic attendees in 2011 to 27 percent this year can be attributed to a number of factors, organizers said.

“We made a specific effort to have a diverse speaker list,” said the Rev. Juan Huertas, co-chair of the team that plans the event and pastor of St. John’s United Methodist Church in Baton Rouge, La. He noted that the planning team was diverse, he and his co-chair are racial-ethnic, and that the 13 United Methodist seminaries were asked to send diverse groups. Students from the seminaries answered questions during the ministry fair and served as small group leaders.

The California-Nevada Annual Conference sent the largest number of young adults. The 34 young adults from California-Nevada included 22 Tongans from Laurel UMC and Fale Maama Tongan UMC in Oakland, Calif. Some of the young adults were born in the U.S., while others were born in Tonga, a Polynesian nation that is made up of an archipelago of 176 islands.

This year, the young adult attendees included 42 African Americans, 9 Asian Americans, 27 Hispanics/Latinos/as, 5 Native Americans, 33 Pacific Islanders, and 306 Caucasians. Seven attendees did not identify their race or ethnicity, and no one identified themselves as biracial.

April Casperson, co-chair of the team that plans Exploration, said she thinks the colleges, seminaries, and campus ministries that Exploration draws from are becoming more multiracial.

Casperson, who is also director of Enrollment Management and Scholarship Development at Methodist Theological School in Ohio, said those institutions also have more women students.

Two Tongan United Methodist churches in Oakland, Calif., brought 22 young adults to Exploration in Denver, Colo. The churches are Laurel UMC and Fale Maama UMC.

Two gatherings were held for those who self-identify as people of color to discuss issues of race and ethnicity in The United Methodist Church.

Jessica Vasquez Torres, another member of the planning team, said those discussions included questions about how to deal with the history of Christianity, which involves slavery and genocide of Native Americans.

“We struggle with connections between class and race. How does that manifest in our connection?” she asked.

Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, episcopal leader of the Louisiana Annual Conference and the first Latina bishop elected from the South Central Jurisdiction, attended the second night of discussions after she preached at Saturday night’s worship service.

“I think the church is looking for some new leadership that has something new to bring — not cookie cutter leadership,” Harvey said, telling the group that they could be those new leaders who are comfortable in an increasingly multicultural world.

Valerie Boyer, a student at Howard University in Washington, D.C., attended both discussions and noted that African Americans like herself lean more toward the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

“It’s a problem when I walk into a church and someone asks me if I’m there to clean up. But I don’t think that’s a problem just for churches — it’s a problem for America. And some areas are embracing everyone,” she said. Boyer, a member of the Howard University Wesley Foundation, said she knew before she came to Exploration that she was called to ordained ministry.

Heilala Ahio, pastor of Fale Maama Tongan UMC in Oakland, Calif., said not all of the young adults who came from the two Tongan churches were considering ordained ministry. “But we wanted them to be inspired by the speakers and fellowship. They really get the idea of listening and discernment.”

Amanaki Lauti, one of the young adults from Fale Maama, said he had not been attending church much, but that attending Exploration had motivated him to come back. “I have more respect for The United Methodist Church now,” the 21-year-old said.
what a deacon was. I thought pastor was the only option you had.”

Joshua Shaw, a student at Bethel University and member at Alamo First UMC in Tennessee, said he most enjoyed being with people his own age who are discerning their own call. “They understand how hard it is to answer that call at this age,” he said. “My family supports me, but my friends don’t understand why I’m choosing this. They say I could be doing something else.”

Jorge Acevedo, lead pastor of Grace Church — a multi-site UMC congregation in southwest Florida — warned young adults that family and friends will question the choice to go into ministry. “They’ll tell you that you won’t make any money. They’ll tell you ministry is hard, and God won’t take care of you,” he said. “But I’m telling you that for every heartache, God will give you 10 explosions of joy. . . . If God has called you into ministry, you will be miserable until you say yes,” Acevedo said.

He told the group that Jesus’ favorite word was go. “If you follow Jesus, you are supposed to teach and make disciples. It doesn’t matter how many your church seats; it matters how many you send,” he said.

Beth LaRocca-Pitts, senior pastor at Saint Mark UMC in Atlanta, told of watching a priest serve Mass in her father’s Catholic church. She suddenly realized “that I wanted no other life.” When that was followed by the thought — I’m a girl — which meant she could not become a Catholic priest, she got up and walked two blocks to her mother’s church, Athens First United Methodist.

“Don’t spend your life currency on anything less than what God has called you to do. Don’t just go work; answer the call,” LaRocca-Pitts said.

Eric Huffman, who with his wife and co-pastor leads a multi-site faith community of about 500 in Kansas City, urged the young adults to be utterly reliant on Jesus and said ministry is a “glorious and joyous” life. “I know you are being called to do great things, but don’t let it go to your head. My prayer is that you spend the rest of your life pointing people toward the only shepherd, Jesus Christ.”

**Listen. God might just be calling your name.**

Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation.
Anne Detjen heard God’s call to ordained ministry at an Exploration event in Germany, and that is one reason she is passionate about helping young adults discern their call.

Detjen, pastor at Immanuel United Methodist Church in Eberswalde, Germany, was one of three German clergywomen who attended Exploration 2013 in Denver, Nov. 15-17, to get ideas for their own event and bring greetings from Europe. Detjen also served as a small group leader for the Denver event.

“I was studying to be a teacher when my youth pastor asked me to go to Exploration. I told him I wasn’t going to become a pastor, but Exploration changed it all for me, so I know what it can do for some people,” Detjen said.

Once she heard God’s call, Detjen delayed responding because her grandmother did not believe women could be clergy. “But she changed her mind,” Detjen said.

European Exploration is scheduled for Nov. 7-9, 2014, in Hattingen, Germany, about an hour north of Cologne.

Detjen and the other two clergywomen who came to Denver — Franziska Demmler and Damaris Hecker — are all on the team that is planning the European event. The event is organized by the Germany Central Conference and is open to people throughout Europe. GBHEM provides financial support for the event.

The 2012 European Exploration event included young adults from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, and Serbia, as well as Ghanaians who live in Germany.

Detjen said the event is similar to the U.S. Exploration, with worship services, small groups, and workshops. The 2014 event will be the seventh Exploration event held in Germany.

“We are getting more used to the questions people ask, so that our programs can respond better,” she said. She also said she liked the U.S. Exploration worship service that focused on remembering your baptism and thought such a service might be included in the European event.
Applications for Young Clergy Initiative grants to develop innovative projects of all sizes that could attract young people to ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church can be submitted online at www.explorecalling.org/yci/grant.

“There are places in our denomination where imaginative ideas are percolating and good, effective work is being done around young people's discernment of a vocation in ordained leadership. The goal of the grant process is to support that work and hopefully find ways to spread the most fruitful efforts more widely throughout the church,” said Trip Lowery, GBHEM's director of Young Adult Ministry Discernment and Enlistment.

The goal of the $7 million Young Clergy Initiative, approved by the 2012 General Conference, is to increase the number of young elders and deacons in the UMC.

“Anyone from the president of the Council of Bishops to someone sitting in a pew in their local United Methodist church has a voice worthy to be heard in the young clergy conversation,” Lowery said.

The goal of the grant program is to get good ideas from all levels of the church about how to prepare young people to hear God's call to ordained ministry, assist young people in responding to God's call to ordained ministry, develop young people in spiritual and theological formation, and nurture young clergy for lifelong transformational ministry.

“We are looking for ideas that can be spread to create denominational change in the areas of call, vocational discernment, and young adults as ordained leaders,” Lowery said.

Applications must be completed by Feb. 1, 2014. A second round of grant applications will be accepted by June 1, 2014. GBHEM will monitor and evaluate funded projects through completion.

Grants will be invited that:

- prepare young people to hear God's call to ordained ministry
- assist young people to respond to God's call to ordained ministry
- develop young people in spiritual and theological formation
- nurture young clergy for lifelong transformational ministry.

Applicants should consider these priorities:

- engaging and empowering young people
- engendering imagination, creativity, and risk / innovation
- including diversity, especially ethnic and gender diversity
- encouraging cultural and systemic change
- facilitating experiences connecting faith commitments and the needs of the world
- including matching funds and / or creative partnerships.

Grants will be considered competitively in three categories: $5,000 to $20,000; $20,000 to $50,000; and $50,000 to $100,000.

— Vicki Brown

To learn more about the Young Clergy Initiative, visit www.explorecalling.org/yci.

For information about the YCI grants and the application process, go to www.explorecalling.org/yci/grant.
CCTE Commission Drafts Plan for $5 Million

A new commission that oversees use of the $5 million fund for theological education in the Central Conferences of The United Methodist Church plans to disburse grants totaling $1 million a year.

The Commission on Central Conference Theological Education, elected by the Council of Bishops, met in Copenhagen in August. Three of the participants from Africa who could not obtain visas met in Abijan, Côte d’Ivoire, and linked to the European meeting by teleconference.

“The need to improve theological education to enhance servant leadership in the Central Conferences is an imperative,” said Bishop John Innis, who was elected chair of the new commission. Innis, the episcopal leader of the Liberia Annual Conference and president of the College of Bishops of the West Africa Central Conference, expressed gratitude to General Conference 2012 for approving the fund.

The Rev. Sergei Nikolaev, president and E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at Moscow Theological Seminary, said the growth of The United Methodist Church around the world requires the training of pastors and lay leaders with sound theological education in the Wesleyan tradition.

“I am excited about the possibilities that these funds open up — particularly, but not exclusively — for our sisters and brothers in The United Methodist Church in Africa,” Nikolaev said.

The commission agreed that on an annual basis, half of the funds, or about $500,000 a year, would be distributed based on the number of episcopal areas in a conference. However, these grants are not guaranteed and will go to the best proposals. Regional screening committees will recommend which proposals receive funding.

Applicants can ask for grants in the categories approved by General Conference, which are:

- development of theological schools
- development of Courses of Study
- development of libraries and contextually developed resources
- scholarships and faculty development
- support for associations and networks of faculty and schools
- support for new and innovative approaches to theological education.

The commission agreed that 25 percent of the funds (about $250,000 a year) would be distributed based on the number of churches and active clergy. The delegates from Europe asked that their portion of those funds be distributed to the other Central Conferences because they believe the needs are greater in Africa and the Philippines.

Those funds will be distributed as follows: Africa Central Conference, 15 percent; Congo Central Conference, 35 percent; West Africa Central Conference, 30 percent; Philippines, 20 percent.

The remaining $250,000 a year will be available for proposals that go beyond a conference. Examples would be proposals by language groups, production of contextual materials, or new and innovative proposals that might affect more than one region.

Commission membership includes three from each Central Conference in the Philippines and Africa. Because the General Conference voted that the membership of the commission should be “proportionate” according to membership numbers, Europe has one member from each of its three Central Conferences. (See sidebar on page 10 for the full list of members.)

While General Conference approved the fund at $5 million, the money comes from the World Service Apportionment. That fund is expected to pay out at 85 percent, which would mean the actual dollars would be reduced to $4.2 million, or about $1 million a year for each year of the 2013-2016 quadrennium.

The commission also agreed that
priority would be given to those projects that build the capacity of an institution or ministry in an episcopal area, contextual resource development, innovative initiatives, and proposals that move toward sustainable theological education. Proposals will be accepted from theological institutions, Boards of Ordained Ministry, and organizations that are integrally related to United Methodism and theological education.

Any recipient of a grant will be required to give an update six months after the issuance of the funds. An annual report will be required and must include a demonstration of progress made toward achieving the aims of the original application, highlights with stories and photos, as well as information about difficulties and challenges. The commission also requires a report on what local or other funding is being used for the project, as well as projections for sustaining the project in the future.

Forms for grant requests are posted online at www.centralconferencegrant.dreamhosters.com with an application deadline of Jan. 30, 2014. The screening and approval process will take place in February, and funds will be distributed in March.

— Vicki Brown

Theological Education: Wesleyan and Worldwide

The decision to fund a $5 million theological education initiative has in many ways opened up a new day for the Central Conferences.

For the first time, the church is approaching the topic from a truly worldwide perspective. Earlier initiatives were limited to particular regions of the world. None of these earlier initiatives was built on sustainable ground.

The creation of a special CCTE commission and its composition is also a sign of a new day.

The commission has a truly worldwide composition which transfers ownership and responsibility into the hands of members composed of a large majority of persons living in Central Conferences.

The commission members are evenly spread among bishops, educational leaders from theological schools, and members of Boards of Ordained Ministry. Each of these three subgroups brings a particular perspective to theological education. They look at it from diverse but mutually enriching perspectives: the calling from God, the ongoing spiritual formation, the building up of character, the deepening and widening of knowledge, and the development of particular skills. All of these perspectives are needed to form the synergy of theological education in a Wesleyan spirit.

The commission is building on a wide range of learnings from earlier initiatives. And it received information from recent surveys on ministerial needs and potentials in each episcopal area, together with surveys on United Methodist theological schools outside the U.S.

Hopefully, this dawning of a new day for theological education in Central Conferences will grow into a valuable and fruitful initiative beyond one short, single quadrennium. Toward this aim, the commission has received a report from a project group about an endowment fund for theological education. Such an endowment, similar to the experience with the Central Conference Pension Initiative, would build long-term support for educating a new generation of pastoral leaders in The United Methodist Church outside the U.S.

— Bishop Patrick Streiff (Central and Southern Europe), CCTE Commission Member and Chair of the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, Council of Bishops

Preparing Leaders for Challenges

The Central Conferences constitute a vital part of our church. They have and continue to make immense contributions to the growth of United Methodism. Today, the church in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, is growing at a phenomenal rate. Therefore, raising the educational level of pastors in these...
areas, is necessary for developing church leaders for faithful service. If the fate of the Christian faith is being played out in these southern countries of the world, then theological education is absolutely necessary. And the Central Conferences have a responsibility to effectuate quality, sustainable theological education for our church.

While acknowledging the church’s phenomenal growth in the Central Conferences, we are not ignorant of the challenges that are visible. For example, in Africa we could talk about the widespread practice of prosperity messages along with disunity and syncretism in the church. These challenges necessitate that we double our efforts to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This is our role, and we must fulfill it!

In light of the importance of the Commission’s work, we have crafted policies that can be articulated to advance sound theological education. We believe these policies will make a real difference in transforming people and changing lives.

— Bishop John Innis (Liberia),
Chair of the CCTE Commission

The Task of Theological Education in the Philippines

When we talk about Asia, we are talking about the largest of the earth’s seven continents. It is the most populous continent and home to 58 percent of the world’s population. In this land of diverse peoples and cultures, only 4 percent are Christians.

Significant to the task of theological education in the Philippines is the consideration of the plurality and diversity in races, peoples, cultures, ideologies, religions, shared colonial past, and the experience of poverty that characterize Southeast Asia.

The Philippines Central Conference recognizes three theological institutions owned by The United Methodist Church in the Philippines: Union Theological Seminary, Wesley Divinity School, and Bishop Han Theological Seminary. Union Theological Seminary plays a historic role as the first and the only ecumenical seminary in the Philippines. It was established in 1907 and for the past 106 years, it has contributed significantly to the life and mission of the church.

Along with Wesley Divinity School and Bishop Han Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary strives to provide wholistic ministerial training to our pastors as they are expected to lead in fulfilling the theological task of the church.

The new fund allocated by the General Conference to the Central Conferences to develop theological schools, Courses of Study, libraries and contextually developed resources; provide scholarships and faculty development; and support for associations and networks of faculty and schools, and for new and innovative approaches to theological education will surely be a great help to our theological institutions not only financially but also connectionally.

This fund will help ensure the stability of our theological institutions as they respond to the call of the times, and as they grapple with the fundamental question of servant leadership in the Philippines and Asian contexts of what does it mean to be a follower of Jesus in the Philippines and in Asia today.

— Connie Semy Mella (Philippines Conference), CCTE Commission Executive Committee Member

Teleconferencing from Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

Remote conferencing between the delegates of the CCTE in Copenhagen and our group in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, is something we experienced for the first time in August.

An alternative was found allowing the African-elected delegates who could not travel to Denmark to participate from the headquarters of The United Methodist Church of Côte d’Ivoire in Abidjan.

Despite the two-hour time difference and some technical problems in our satellite Internet connection from time to time, this teleconference was for us an encouraging, impressive, and gratifying experience.

It was encouraging because had it not been for the teleconference, our absence at this important meeting would have reflected an unequal and lack of representation from some Central Conferences and episcopal areas, in particular those of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Teleconferencing allowed us, who were not able to travel to Copenhagen for reasons beyond our control, to actively participate in the same way as those who were there in Denmark. We could see one another on the computer screen; we had the right to speak; and we were voting members in the same way as our colleagues in Copenhagen.

We praise the Lord for this teleconference experience that we shared together and which surely confirms the connectional nature of United Methodist institutions in the world.

Nevertheless, our burning desire is to be physically present with all of the other Commission members at all future meetings.

— Daniel Lunge (Central Congo Conference), CCTE Commission Executive Committee Member
Global Theological Education Is a Churchwide Emphasis

One of the bright spots of the 2012 General Conference was the creation of the $5 million Central Conference Theological Education Fund.

Who will benefit, and where are our centers of theological education in the Central Conferences? There are currently 21 seminaries that give theological degrees. Additionally, there are 10 Pastor’s Colleges:

- Four in Africa, including a new one in Tanzania, and Uganda, Zambia, and Angola
- Three in Europe — Poland, Slovakia, and Germany
- Three in Asia — Cambodia, Vietnam, and Mongolia

The UMC also trains ministerial leaders in autonomous Methodist schools, such as Trinity in Singapore and Methodist Seminary in São Paul, Brazil, for building Portuguese-speaking leaders.

GBHEM also has close relationships with seminaries in Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Cuba.

We also lend support to a Course of Study in El Salvador in partnership with Duke Divinity School. We have met with Perkins School of Theology faculty about a Course of Study in Colombia (South America).

The center of Christianity is moving to the Southern hemisphere for the first time in 2000 years. That is for all of Christianity, not just United Methodism. Perhaps this was an influence in the election of Pope Francis from Argentina.

Recently there has been a lot of reflection on the legacy of Nelson Mandela. When the World Council of Churches met in Africa, Mandela greeted the gathering, gave a tribute to his early training in a Methodist Mission school, and thanked them for instilling in him a faith which nurtured him in those dark days in prison on Robben Island.

The $5 million allotted by General Conference 2012 delegates is both generous and limited. My hope and my prayer is that we understand the Central Conference Theological Education Fund is about more than finances or distribution of dollars. We are called to shape future leaders out of our Wesleyan tradition who care about holiness of heart and holiness of life.

The question is: How, as stewards of God’s gifts and the church’s offerings, do we invest in training the leaders who will follow in the footsteps of those such as Nelson Mandela and Pope Francis?

— Rena Yocom, assistant general secretary for Clergy Formation and Theological Education, Division of Ordained Ministry / GBHEM

Forms for grant requests are posted online at www.centralconferencegrant.dreamhosters.com with an application deadline of Jan. 30, 2014. The screening and approval process will take place in February, and funds will be distributed in March.

Membership of the CCTE Commission

Officers
- Chair: Bishop John Innis, Liberia, West Africa Central Conference
- Vice Chair: Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, Boston Area, Northeastern Jurisdiction
- Secretary: The Rev. Irene Kraft, Germany Central Conference

Other Executive Committee Members
- The Rev. Daniel Lunge, Central Congo Conference
- The Rev. Connie Semy Mella, Philippines Central Conference
- The Rev. Tsitsi Madziyire, Zimbabwe, Africa Central Conference

Other Members of the Commission
- Europe
  - The Rev. Sergei Nikolaev, Eurasia
  - Bishop Patrick Streiff, Central & Southern Europe
- West Africa
  - The Rev. Francis Charlie, Sierra Leone
  - The Rev. Brigitte Atsin, Côte d’Ivoíre
- Africa
  - The Rev. Michael Ssekandi, Uganda
  - Bishop Gaspar Domingos, Angola
- Congo
  - The Rev. Katchiko Furaha, East Congo
  - Bishop Nkulu Ntambo, North Katanga
- Philippines
  - The Rev. Roberto Ladia
  - Bishop Pete Torio

Representative nominated by GBGM
- The Rev. John Nuessle

Representatives nominated by GBHEM
- Dr. Douglass Lewis
- The Rev. Ianther Mills

GBHEM Staff Coordinator
- The Rev. Rena Yocom
First Wesley Foundation Celebrates 100 Years

PAUL BLACK

In the midst of celebrating 100 years of campus ministry at the Wesley Foundation on the campus of the University of Illinois, Illinois Area Bishop Jonathan Keaton challenged campus ministries everywhere, asking, “What good news of the gospel is available to students who live with their backs against the wall?”

Keaton was the preacher for the one hundredth anniversary celebration held Oct. 13 — exactly 100 years after members of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church in Urbana initiated an intentional effort to care for the religious life of a secular university. The first Wesley Foundation’s ministry model has inspired campus ministry efforts ever since — both in the U.S. and around the world.

“One hundred years ago, we learned afresh that the church ought to be anywhere the people of God gather,” Keaton said. “And so it happened. A new path over ‘the wall of separation between church and state’ emerged. As a result, the church sought to give Caesar what belonged to Caesar, and to God what belonged to God.”

Utilizing the Scripture text of 2 Timothy 2, Keaton said the narrative, like all New Testament books, was rooted in a dream.

“What good news of the gospel is available to students who live with their backs against the wall?”

The late Bishop James Chamberlain Baker identified the dreamer of the Wesley Foundation as the Rev. Willard Nathan Tobie, who was pastor of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church. In his book, The First Wesley Foundation, a history published in 1960, Baker wrote about Tobie’s work. “His compelling dream in the building of Trinity Church was that it might serve the students and faculty of the University,” Baker wrote. “I pay my wholehearted tribute to him because of his prophetic vision and undefeatable purpose.”

Doing Your Best for God

Quoting the late theologian Howard Thurman from his book Jesus and the Disinherited, Keaton said one of the major insights was that the church must answer the question, “What does the gospel have to say to the man or woman who lives with his back against the wall?”

“A question like that has challenged the very heart of campus ministry decade after decade,” Keaton said. “Given the freedom students feel entering college and the opportunities to make a gaggle of choices, they soon learn that expectations from home, the school, and the university plus the expectations they have of themselves have them against the wall. If they need help and the Wesley Foundation sees itself as one resource for students, are you really prepared to help?”

Keaton asked whether the ministries are shaped to reach the “Nones,” those that pray but do not believe in God; and the millennials, who are looking for a safe place to explore faith issues.”

Keaton noted that many millennials say, “We’re leaving the church because we don’t find Jesus there.”

Keaton said students are wrestling with personal problems, not denominational problems. He asked what the gospel has to say to these laments: I am struggling with my identity. No one really understands my faith crisis. I’m from Korea, and I feel lost in a strange land. I’m down to my last $20. My parents got divorced; then my mother died. No one wants to date me. I lost my boyfriend. My girlfriend broke up with me. Competing academically with so many smart people is difficult. Flunking out of school is a real possibility. How can I explain this failure and money wasted to friends?
and family? Can you keep a secret? I’m in love with my professor. What should I do with these feelings?

“Give of the best of your service. Love them as God’s children,” Keaton said. “Offer and find them food, drink, clothes, medicine, friendship, or visits if necessary. Be genuinely concerned about their welfare. Pray that when you do all you can, wherever you can, and as long as you can and it’s not enough, you’ll give it to God. For you will have done your best for God.”

University of Illinois student Hannah Rickey says the importance of a home away from home is huge. “It’s a wonderful community and a place to call home.”

Another student Reshmina Williams agreed and said the emphasis on social justice was one thing that attracted her to the Wesley Foundation. “I really love the social justice ministry [such as the food ministry],” she said. “And there are so many awesome role models here.”

**Feeding the Community**

The University of Illinois Wesley Foundation is unique in that a local congregation, Urbana Wesley United Methodist Church, shares the foundation facility. One of the major ministries of the church and foundation is a food pantry, which serves more than 1,200 persons monthly.

More than 600 volunteers — many of them with no other connection to the foundation and church — work in this ministry, which has continued to experience exponential growth over the past five years.

A 2010 article in the local newspaper told the story of how two dozen volunteers took Spanish classes in order to communicate with clients rather than expecting the clients to speak English.

The monthly food distribution has become a one-stop-shop of social services in which various agencies staff tables to assist clients while they wait their turn to receive food.

**Leadership Development**

Keaton noted the contributions of Baker, who served 21 years at the Wesley Foundation followed by Dr. Paul Burt, who served 31 years. “On leadership, especially gifted leadership, the present and future of numerous human enterprises hang in the balance. Said differently, every bishop and cabinet knows that appointing the right pastor to a church significantly increases the chances that ministry at a given church will flourish and grow like seed in fertile soil,” Keaton said, reflecting on the long tenure of the clergy at the Wesley Foundation.

Looking to John Wesley, Keaton noted, “Top down or bottom up, campus ministry can be successfully established. It may be said that Oxford University was the first site of a primitive version of the Wesley Foundation. It had no denominational impetus, funding, or facility. It was created ‘of, by, and for students’ as a way to care for their religious life.”

Keaton noted that the Holy Club met for prayer and Bible Study, Holy Communion, and fasting. Beyond the campus, they visited prisoners in jail; poor families received food baskets, and their children personal tutors. “If the Holy Club is not a spitting image of one aspect of the work of the Wesley Foundation movement, I don’t know what is.”

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**Ministry Study Group Seeks a Deeper Assessment of Ministry**

**PARA DRAKE**

For those looking for ground-breaking decisions early in the quadrennium from the 2013-2016 Study of Ministry Commission, the Oct. 28-30 meeting would hold no interest. Those looking for open, honest dialogue; a deeper assessment of ministry; and plans for further theological inquiry with other commissions of The United Methodist Church, however, would appreciate the foundation laid for later meetings and decision making.

Chaired by Bishop Grant J. Hagiya, episcopal leader of the Greater Northwest Area, and staffed by GBHEM, the commission met at Duke University to name issues facing the UMC and to plan their February meeting.

The ordering of lay ministry, confusion around the ministry of the ordained deacon, and the challenges inherent in two systems of pastoral education and formation emerged as themes for theological reflection.

Mary Elizabeth Moore, dean of Boston University School of Theology, asked, “Do we miss a fuller sacramental theology?” Taylor Burton-Edwards, GBOD’s director of Worship Resources, suggested an expansion of theological inquiry rather than focusing upon who can be ordained. Russell Richey, research professor at Duke Divinity School, pressed for considering the orders of ministry in terms of the Trinity.

Commission members heard presentations from Randy Maddox, professor of Methodist Studies at Duke Divinity School, and panels representing the three areas of study: the offices of ministry, theological education and

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the role of seminaries, and the Course of Study and licensing of local pastors.

The commission divided into three groups for discussion. The three groups dealt with the nature and grounding of the elder; Course of Study and education of local pastors; and education of clergy, including seminary reform, relevant curriculum, funding, and indebtedness of seminary graduates.

Marjorie Suchocki, professor emerita, Claremont School of Theology, and the sole layperson on the commission, pointed out the implied hierarchy of the orders in the denomination today. Suchocki expressed concern about the “clericalization” of ministry and suggested consideration of orders for laity.

The group discussed the challenge of maintaining theological reflection in the legislative process within conference, jurisdictional, and general meetings. Members were asked to consider how to reach across the legislative process to clarify the challenges and offer appropriate legislation.

Methodist Heritage

Maddox provided the context of ordination as he laid theological grounding within the historical context for ministry, ecclesiology, and the formation of pastors by differentiating “the traditional spectrum between a ‘sacramental view’ and a ‘functional view’ of ordination.”

Sacramental authority comes through the ordination rite, in which the work of the Holy Spirit is invoked as the hands of a bishop are laid upon the candidate. The “functional view” of serving a congregation authorizes a local pastor to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion by licensing.

Offices of Ministry

Citing the challenges of United Methodists to understand the ministry of the ordained deacon 16 years after its inception, Kim Ingram — a deacon and director of Ministerial Services in the Western North Carolina Conference — presented the similarities found in other orders.

She highlighted the language that also describes the ministry of the elder, and called upon the group to consider the deacon in terms of “call and identity . . . about who we are and less about what we do.”

Richey offered “Five Modest Proposals” concerning sacramental authority, the work and membership of the annual conference, a new look at extension ministry, and a proposal for the language of the “roles and responsibilities in our connectional system.”

The ordering of lay ministry, the confusion around the ministry of the ordained deacon, and the challenges inherent in two systems of pastoral education and formation emerged as themes for theological reflection by the 2013-2016 Study of Ministry Commission. The Commission, chaired by Bishop Grant Hagiya, episcopal leader of the Greater Northwest Area, and staffed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, met at Duke University in Durham, N.C., in October.
Edgardo Colon-Emeric, assistant professor of Christian Theology at Duke, reminded the commission that commissioning and licensing pastors with sacramental authority to serve UMC congregations creates a barrier to unity with other communions.

Tom Frank, university professor at Wake Forest University and a scholar of American religious history, noted the general lack of understanding of the orders of ministry and suggested these topics be offered to annual conferences for deeper theological discussion.

The Role of Seminary Education

Deans of two UM-related graduate schools spoke to the importance and critical value of uninterrupted residential pastoral formation.

Regardless of the trend in local congregations’ thinking that they do not want, or need, an educated clergy, an academic education is needed, said the Richard Hays, dean of the Duke Divinity School.

Hays also sees the role of seminary education as “. . . seeking to shape imaginative leaders who are deeply knowledgeable and rooted in Scripture.” He described today’s students as largely without experience of church and “not scripturally formed.”

Dean Moore of Boston University School of Theology described seminary as a “place to gather and think deeply . . . creating a ‘theological home’ for students.”

She spoke of the academy’s purpose as a “self-conscious gifting to the world God’s work in the same way that a local church sends God’s people into the world.” She named the challenge of culture’s pressure to “get it done fast” in a process that requires deeper reflection.

Hays said the nature of the elder’s responsibility is to order the whole life of the church and not solely the local congregation. With that in mind, the ordination process should prepare candidates for teaching, he said and cited the shortage of teaching elders.

Curriculum, residence education, online study, and the length of study for a Master of Divinity degree were discussed as challenges facing seminaries. And members noted that with M.Div. enrollments generally declining, many schools also face economic problems.

Lacey Warner, executive vice dean of Duke Divinity School asked, “How do we remain agile and responsive to the Holy Spirit in the midst of these challenges? How can we make use of tradition and technology? How may seminaries use resources to support the churches?”

Course of Study and Licensing Local Pastors

The commission discussed the value and effectiveness of residence, teaching, and community in pastoral formation for licensed local pastors.

Local pastors study at the 13 United Methodist seminaries, or eight regional schools with 15 extension schools for the Course of Study program. The Discipline allows for ordination and full connection after the Advanced Course of Study is completed through the regional schools as an alternative to residential seminary education.

Rena Yocom, GBHEM’s assistant general secretary for Clergy Formation and Theological Education, pointed out that up to 35 percent of congregations are led by local pastors. The number of full-time local pastors is decreasing while the number of part-time local pastors is increasing.

The UMC controls the formation of pastors in the Course of Study from the beginning to the end, observed Nathan Kirkpatrick, managing director of Leadership Education at Duke Divinity School, giving it the opportunity to shape that formation according to its mission.

Going Forward

Bishop Hagiya presented a timeline for their work, calling for responses from the groups. At the suggestion of Moore, the commission agreed to bring to the next meeting “provocative questions” and narrative stories that would tie into the theological underpinnings of their work. Each of the three discussion groups formed by the commission will write their own reports to be presented and collated at the next meeting for the purpose of gaining consistency in the writing.
The leaders of theological schools are facing new terrain — one that includes greater diversity among students and greater financial challenges for both the seminaries and their students.

How faculty and administrators deal with that, says Daniel Aleshire, has big implications for upcoming clergy leaders and the church.

Aleshire is executive director of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Commission on Accrediting, which provide programs, services, and accreditation to 268 seminaries, divinity schools, and graduate schools of theology. He shared long-term trends affecting theological education at a recent meeting of the GBHEM board of directors.

Some of the most noteworthy trends during the past two to three decades are in student body composition, Aleshire said.

The two largest groups of students in ATS schools are now students older than 50 and those younger than 30. While enrollment has been declining overall and among white students, enrollment among other racial-ethnic groups has increased. About 14 percent of students at ATS schools are African American. A little more than 8 percent are Asian American. And nearly 6 percent are Hispanic.

Other trends highlight the growing costs of a seminary education.

Average tuition for a Master of Divinity degree is between $13,700 and $16,900 per year, based on a full-time student load, while average debt upon graduation is $38,500, nearly a four-fold increase over 20 years ago. Most ATS schools provide significant scholarships, Aleshire said, so much of the debt is from loans to cover living expenses.

The other important financial trend is the “economic frailty of the institutions,” Aleshire said.

“They’re not going broke,” he said, “but . . . almost 60 percent of ATS schools had a deficit budget in 2011-12.”

Declining enrollment and financial problems drove the decision by Saint Paul School of Theology — one of the 13 United Methodist seminaries — to move to the campus of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kans. Myron McCoy, president of Saint Paul, said economic issues hit freestanding schools like Saint Paul — those not associated with a large university or college — particularly hard.

“We’ve gotten out of the housing and permanent buildings we own ourselves in order to navigate this new terrain,” McCoy said. “We saw our mission as not maintaining buildings and property but investing in our students.”

Aleshire said a reduction in revenue from church bodies has had the biggest impact, forcing schools to become more dependent on tuition and more aggressive about raising tuition rates. He said schools are recognizing the problem and trying to find alternative economic models. This can include adding vocational programs, such as counselor training, that are aligned with ministry. Some schools are considering mergers with larger institutions.

Many schools are adding online education and distance learning that allow students to stay where they are and maintain jobs, Aleshire said, significantly reducing expenses and related debt.

Impact on Education, the Church

Overall, Aleshire says, most schools are trying to meet the needs of the church.

“The churches need leadership,” he said. “It’s not a problem to be solved. It’s an educational capacity that needs to be expanded.”

To that end, he says, school faculties are working hard to determine how to meet the needs of a wide range of students.

“You have the diversification of gender, race and ethnicity, of age, and of denominational tradition,” he said. “The typical ATS institution is working far harder to educate students than it was 25 years ago.”

Despite efforts to meet the changing landscape, Aleshire questions whether the church will have an adequate supply of educated leaders and jobs for graduates.

Many mainline denominations, including The United Methodist Church, he says, have some oversupply of pastors. And many conferences are considering how many new pastors can feasibly be brought into the system, despite upcoming retirements. But the situation may change in the future, causing demand for clergy leadership to outweigh the supply.

“It may be that [seminary] enrollment is adjusting to the current situation but not the situation that is going to be out there in five years,” Aleshire said.

And the impact on students in the near future? “I don’t want them to go in debt going into three years of graduate
“study and then not have a job,” Aleshire said.

God in the Details

While the data highlights many challenges, it also provides “a necessary perspective,” said Gwen Purushotham, associate general secretary of GBHEM’s Division of Ordained Ministry.

“We are in a time of profound change, and that calls for a rethinking of what it means to be church and what kind of leaders we need to be that church,” she said. “That in turn calls for us to reexamine the assumptions that are implicit in our current practices around theological education, Boards of Ordained Ministry and measuring effective performance.”

And that, she said, is not all bad.

“It might be good for us to ask, ‘Where is God in this? What is the new thing that God is doing that involves this decline?’” she said. “We need to ask ourselves how God is present in the present trends.”

Parham is a freelance writer, editor, and communications consultant based in Apopka, Fla.

Related Information and Links

• Daniel Aleshire’s PowerPoint report is posted online at www.gbhem.org/article/data-gives-theological-schools-clues-change.

• The Lewis Center for Church Leadership releases an annual report on young clergy in the UMC. Read the 2013 report at www.churchleadership.com/research/um_clergy_age_trends13.html.

• Learn more about the Young Clergy Initiative at www.explorecalling.org/yci.

Moratorium, Study Urged on Online Communion

HEATHER HAHN

A group of 27 United Methodist leaders is urging the denomination’s bishops to call a halt for now on the practice of Holy Communion online and do further study of online ministries.

The recommendation — made just days before World Communion Sunday — came after more than 10 hours of discussion over Sept. 30 - Oct. 1 among an unofficial group of United Methodist theologians, bishops, church agency executives, and pastors. The participants at the Nashville, Tenn., meeting ranged from those who opposed the very idea of online communion to a pastor who already had offered the sacrament through his web ministry.

Their wide-ranging and prayerful conversation touched on the nature of worship, community, sacrifice, online engagement, baptism and the Eucharist. The conversation also encompassed objections raised by both individual United Methodists and the denomination’s ecumenical partners.

A number of United Methodists and others followed and joined in the conversation online via Twitter.

The majority of the group, by a show of hands, agreed with the statement: “Participation in the Lord’s Supper entails the actual tactile sharing of bread and wine in a service that involves people corporeally together in the same place.”

However, participants differed on whether communion truly requires celebrants to be in the same place.

“When you take communion to the homebound, are they participating in the Lord’s Supper? Yes; they are,” said the Rev. Gregory S. Neal, senior pastor of Northgate United Methodist Church in Irving, Texas, and founder of the online Grace Incarnate Ministries. After a request from a woman who watched his church services online, he began experimenting with online communion in 2003.

“Taking communion to people in
homes is critically important,” he told the gathering. Online communion could be an extension of that longtime practice, he said.

The Rev. L. Edward Phillips, a facilitator of the discussion, countered that communion must involve the physical sharing of the consecrated elements.

For example, he said, a pastor visiting a shut-in with consecrated bread and cup is fine. But that pastor mailing the same elements goes against the traditional understanding of the sacred feast.

“In other words, if you invite me to dinner, you can’t do that virtually,” he said. “If you bring me a hot dish, you can’t do that online.”

One thing, participants in Nashville agreed, the discussion is likely just getting started as digital media become increasingly interactive and more people have computers in their pockets and purses.

“It’s a necessary thing to talk about because this is an evolving part of our world,” said Phillips, an ordained elder and associate professor of worship and liturgical theology at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology in Atlanta.

He added that Christians like he who have serious reservations about communion and baptism mediated by a computer screen “need to make the case why that is.”

Phillips also served from 2001 to 2004 as chair of the committee that drafted This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion, adopted by the 2004 General Conference. The quadrennial assembly is the denomination’s top lawmaking body and the only body authorized to speak for the church.

Phillips noted that more official guidance will be important going forward.

“Sometimes, we think, ‘How great our ministries would be if we just didn’t have these horrible rules,’” he said. “But actually, the best of our rules and church laws represent the wisdom of the ages. They help us to be faithful and discern our present. They are a gift from God.”

Debate a Click Away

The meeting came about after Central United Methodist Church in Concord, N.C., announced plans to launch on Dec. 24 an online campus that potentially would offer the Eucharist. The online campus has the support of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference and the conference’s bishop, Larry M. Goodpaster, was among those at the Nashville meeting.

The meeting was sponsored by GBHEM, GBOD, UMCom, and the Office on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relations.

The Rev. Karen Westerfield Tucker, an ordained elder and professor of worship at Boston University School of Theology, said she suggested the gathering after learning in April about the proposal for online Eucharist.

“My concern and the concern of many who are here is: What do we tell people when they ask about this?” she said. “When a student asks me ‘what is the church’s approach on this’? — up until this point, I’ve had to say ‘I have no idea.’ Now at least, having gone through this meeting, we do have some direction. It’s still not finished, but we have some direction.”

Also present at the Nashville meeting was the Rev. Daniel Wilson, Central UMC’s online campus pastor, and the Rev. Susannah Pittman, the church’s associate pastor.

Both Wilson and Pittman said they would abide by the moratorium.

“Our goal in coming here was to reach happy ground that we could all live with to further the conversation — that it wouldn’t be just shut down and done with,” Wilson said. “I think we achieved that.”

Ramifications for Christian Unity

The Rev. Steve Sidorak, who leads the Office on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relations, conveyed some of the strongest challenges against online communion — the reactions of the denomination’s ecumenical partners. His office, part of the Council of Bishops, serves as a sort of state department for the denomination, fostering relations across the body of Christ.

If The United Methodist Church embraces online communion, he said, it would cause a diplomatic crisis.

He read detailed objections to the practice emailed by ecumenical representatives from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

He told those gathered that the practice of online communion could jeopardize The United Methodist Church’s six formal full-communion agreements and future bilateral conversations with other denominations.

“To our ecumenical partners, we would become not only a stumbling block but also a laughingstock,” he told United Methodist News Service.

The Rev. Karen Greenwaldt, GBOD’s top executive, echoed Sidorak’s warning. During a recent gathering of the World Methodist Council, she said a member of the Uniting Church in Australia told her, “You just mustn’t [support online communion]. You will not just fracture the larger ecumenical world; you [also] will fracture the World Methodist Council.”

Neal, the pastor who has offered
online communion, said he, too, would abide by the moratorium. He said the recommendation did not surprise him and noted that he also has concerns about the practice.

Eucharist requires education and proper respect for the moment. “You really don’t have any guarantee of that in the Internet medium, which is one of my primary issues,” he said.

He said he has heard from people who found online communion meaningful, those who found it meaningless and everything between.

“I’m pleased that we are going to be doing some intentional examination and study of the utilization of digital media in ministry,” he said, “especially to reach people who are not inside our normal circles.”

Before the gathering, participants altogether wrote some 200 pages about theological issues raised by offering online communion. The group plans to make those papers accessible online at www.umc.org/onlinecommunion.

Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for UM News Service.

Program Nurtures Girls’ Self Esteem

JOHN W. COLEMAN

Like too many girls, Ariel Gilliam, a shy 8-year-old, was used to being bullied at school. She would keep to herself mostly, but then “act out” with aggression when she’d had enough, according to her mother.

So it was no surprise that learning to understand and to resist bullying through assertive behavior was Ariel’s favorite lesson at Worthy Girls, Worthy Lives, a new, 10-week education and mentoring program in inner-city Baltimore.

Ariel’s shyness is giving way to growing self-expression. They’re teaching her to be more confident, and she’s even becoming a role model to her friends,” said Linnea Wayman, a grateful mom who uses Facebook and other social media to eagerly tell friends and family about this newfound blessing in her daughter’s life.

The aptly named Worthy Girls, Worthy Lives (WGWL) is one of two innovative local ministries launched in 2013 and resourced through a new collaborative initiative called Spark12. Spark12, a pilot incubator program, was a collaborative effort by several United Methodist agencies, including GBHEM, the GBCS, and UMCom. The Leadership Table, which authorized the first year of the program, also included GBOD and GBGM.

The Spark12 program helps emerging Christian leaders — mostly young adults — design, launch, and find sustainable support for start-up ministries that emphasize social justice and equal opportunity.

A second round of applications will be accepted early next year.

After months of training, selection,
and preparation, Kirstyn Mayden, WGWL executive director, and Ava Simpson, assistant director, welcomed their first class of 13 young girls on July 27. For 10 Saturdays, the girls, mostly ages 9 to 12, joined in creative activities to learn self-esteem, personal responsibility, service to others, spiritual growth, and leadership skills.

On Oct. 12, at Baltimore’s Eubie Blake Cultural Center, 10 girls received certificates and celebrated the completion of their first session with a banquet and visual and verbal presentations of what they had learned.

They had created colorful anti-bullying T-shirts and “vision boards” to illustrate their own hopes and dreams. They had visited museums, kept daily journals, and learned gardening, healthy nutrition, personal hygiene, grooming and exercise, restaurant etiquette, interpretive dance, and other self-enriching pursuits.

“It felt awesome to learn how to dance with feeling and express myself,” Samaya Johnson, 11, told the audience. She also assured them, “I’ll never be a bully.” Like other girls who spoke, she intends to bring a friend to the next session, beginning in January 2014, when program organizers hope to have 15 girls enrolled.

Samaya’s mother, Gwendolyn Johnson, one of several parents who also addressed the gathering, said she could tell her daughter was “learning to make good choices and decisions for herself...and having experiences that build character.”

Mayden and Simpson, both in their thirties, attend Celebration Church on Monroe Street, a Baltimore congregation and site of the Worthy Girls, Worthy Lives program. Through the church, the two friends have worked for several years with girls in the surrounding Poppleton community, an area rife with poverty, crime, teen pregnancy, poor academic performance, and poor health.

Mayden, a graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta, also earned a Master of Divinity degree from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. An intake counselor at a local adult education center, she has 12 years of experience as a tutor, summer camp teacher, counselor, and children’s program director.

Simpson, a Howard University graduate with a Master’s degree in Public Administration, has experience in nonprofit children’s programs and in writing and public speaking, which she teaches to the girls. Both partners speak of the importance of ardent commitment in this ministry and their “passion to help girls succeed in life.”

“A lot of these girls don’t have freedom or opportunities to dream and articulate their dreams,” said Mayden. “This is the age group that often doesn’t get enough attention or support; but they are vibrant and talented, and we’re trying to expose them to knowledge and life skills that can benefit them in this transitional period, as they begin to mature into young adults.”

Worthy Girls, Worthy Lives reminded...
Tracy Adams of her own difficult childhood. “I was always blaming my mother for everything,” she confessed to the audience. “But when I thought about it later, I realized I didn’t think much of myself as a child. I didn’t think of myself as worthy. I’m glad this program is helping and caring for my daughter.”

Spark12 provided Mayden and Simpson with a $10,000 seed grant and 12 weeks of coaching and bootcamp-style training in program and curriculum development, fund raising and friend raising, promotion through traditional and social media, and other basics needed for any start-up business or organization.

While its goal is to support innovative social justice ministries in the U.S., Africa, and the Philippines, the Spark12 program is also considered a means of developing principled Christian leaders, one of four areas of mission focus adopted by the 2008 General Conference, the denomination’s top legislative body.

Coleman is director of communications for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

New Edition of The Christian as Minister Now Available

NICOLE BURDAKIN

The revised and updated edition of The Christian as Minister: An Exploration Into the Meaning of God’s Call is an introductory book for people considering God’s call to ministry. The book also presents an overview of the avenues for ministry in The United Methodist Church.

Published by GBHEM, The Christian as Minister is required reading for anyone considering the call to ordained ministry.

“I hope the updated edition continues to be a helpful resource, as previous editions have been. The revisions reflect new opportunities for ministry in The United Methodist Church and also different types of ministry that people can pursue,” said the Rev. Meg Lassiat, GBHEM’s director of Candidacy, to candidacy for ordained ministry.”

The intent, however, is still to update The Christian as Minister regularly.

The eighth edition also features new “Reflections” at the end of each section that can be used in a group mentoring session, a Candidacy Summit, or an Orientation to Ministry event.

An E-book version will be developed in the hope that digital availability will make the resource more quickly accessible to a broader variety of people. The book is also being translated to Spanish.

The Christian as Minister: An Exploration Into the Meaning of God’s Call (ISBN 978-0-938162-63-6) is available for $9.99 through Cokesbury at www.cokesbury.com or call 1-800-672-1789 to order by phone.

Burdakin is editorial and production assistant, Office of Interpretation.
Quelende Joins GBHEM

Adriano Quelende, an elder in the West Angola Annual Conference, has been appointed to GBHEM as director of Global Formation for New Spiritual Leaders in the Division of Ordained Ministry.

Quelende’s appointment was effective Oct. 30 and was announced with the approval of his bishop, Gaspar Domingos of West Angola, and on the recommendation of GBHEM’s search committee.

He will assist in fulfilling a vision of developing young ministerial leaders with a vocational commitment to serve the worldwide United Methodist Church. Quelende will work with the Young Seminarians Network, encouraging young seminarians to lead The United Methodist Church in a collegial way and to live out their faith beyond national boundaries.

A graduate of Africa University and former staff with the All Africa Conference of Churches, Quelende brings international experience to his new work. He will be the staff coordinator for the Sol-Africa Partnership, a program designed to support and gather resources for Portuguese-speaking theological education in Angola, Mozambique, and Brazil. He will assist Rena Yocom, GBHEM’s assistant general secretary for Clergy Formation and Theological Education, in working with the Africa Association of United Methodist Theological Institutions and the Commission on Central Conference Theological Education.

McCormack Is New GBHEM Researcher

Mark McCormack has accepted a position as director of research in the Division of Higher Education. He began work Oct. 1.

He will conduct research that can provide empirical evidence to assist GBHEM staff in making decisions, program planning and assessment, and strategic planning.

As a consultant for GBOD, McCormack worked on the “Toward Vitality” research project about how churches change. Before coming to GBHEM, he worked at Vanderbilt University as a co-principal researcher for Understanding Community Interfaith Initiatives and serves as a researcher for the Juvenile Justice Reform and Reinvestment Initiative at Vanderbilt’s Peabody Research Institute.

Survey Reveals Opportunities For Partnership

Leaders of United Methodist-related schools, colleges, and universities are ready and willing to form partnerships with the General Board of Global Ministries for service projects, internships, and student exchanges in Africa.

Members of the National Association of Schools and Colleges of The United Methodist Church were surveyed about their interest in partnering with the church’s mission agency after the Feb. 3–4, 2013, meeting of NASCUMC. Staff from GBGM discussed their work and how they might partner with educators at that meeting. NASCUMC is an association of schools, colleges, and universities committed to the historic and distinctive values of United Methodist-related education.

“I am more impressed than ever with what I hear my colleague presidents saying about wanting to be in an even closer connection to the church,” said Colleen Perry Keith, Spartanburg Methodist College President and president of NASCUMC. “We are all concerned about making disciples of...
Jesus Christ, and as United Methodist-related colleges, we are committed to being the hands and feet of Jesus in ways that make sense for a college to be. Our work with GBGM is one way that makes sense.”

At the meeting, which was organized by GBHEM and NASCUMC, members and GBGM staff discussed how to best work together to find new ways to do the work of the church. This discussion resulted in the partnership survey.

NASCUMC / GBGM partnerships discussed in this survey could advance the mission work of the church through service projects, exchange programs, and/or mission interns.

Eighty-four individuals responded to the survey, and more than half of the respondents were CEOs. Some highlights of the findings are:

- 82 percent of respondents are interested in partnering with UMCOR and other NASCUMC institutions on a coordinated spring, summer, or winter-break service project.
- 85 percent would like to promote the US-2, Mission Intern, and Global Mission Fellows programs on their campuses.
- 50 percent of respondents are interested in developing partnerships that enable student exchanges in Africa.
- 66 percent of respondents would like to partner with GBGM to develop a course or internship around cross-cultural learning.

“This survey will be the first in a series of partnership surveys GBHEM will administer to more closely link the work of our educational institutions and agencies,” said Melanie Overton, GBHEM’s assistant general secretary for Schools, Colleges, and Universities.

“82 percent of respondents are interested in partnering with UMCOR and other NASCUMC institutions on a coordinated spring, summer, or winter-break service project.”

Keith credits Dr. David Rowe, president of Centenary College of Louisiana and chair of the NASCUMC Program Planning Committee, with beginning the search for closer partnerships between general agencies and UM-related education institutions.

“The ideas that have spun out of that very first meeting, in which the presidents learned of the scope of GBGM’s work, are impressive,” Keith said. “And the possibilities for truly living into what it means to be a connectional system would make John Wesley proud.”

Overton and Keith look forward to the partnerships or programs that result from last February’s discussion and/or this survey. “I fully expect that going forward,” Keith said, “we will see such things as: rich and meaningful partnerships with agencies like UMCOR for service projects; mission fellows spending time on college campuses; or courses or internships that look at cross-cultural learning for college students. Truly the possibilities are endless.”

The general secretaries of GBGM and GBHEM viewed the survey results as positive.

“Our focus is working together to help young people discover that the yearning they feel to make a difference is the Holy Spirit moving in their lives, calling them into ministry. We are working together to help them connect their God-given passions with ministry opportunities,” said Kim Cape, GBHEM’s general secretary.

Thomas Kemper, general secretary of GBGM, agreed: “I believe it is another positive sign of growing collaboration and networking within our connection.”

The next NASCUMC partnership survey is planned for February 2014 following NASCUMC’s meeting with the General Board of Church and Society.

For more information on NASCUMC, please visit www.gbhem.org/nascumc.

— Nicole Burdakin
Books For Your Reading List

• **The Christian as Minister: An Exploration Into the Meaning of God’s Call**, edited by Meg Lassiat

• **Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling: Women Pastoring Large Churches**, edited by HiRho Park and Susan Willhauck
  This E-book is available from Cokesbury, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and iTunes.

• **The School of Dreams in the Valley of Hope** by Angella Current Felder
  ISBN 0-9786343-2-2 • Price: $24.95 (shipping included)
  To order online with a credit card, go to www.support-africauniversity.org
  or call 615-340-7438. All proceeds from the sale of this book go to support Africa University.

• **Grace to Lead: Practicing Leadership in the Wesleyan Tradition** by Kenneth L. Carder and Laceye C. Warner
  ISBN 978-0-938162-76-6 • Price: $12.95

• **Ordained Ministry in The United Methodist Church (Revised Edition)** by William B. Lawrence

• **Watching Over One Another in Love: A Wesleyan Model for Ministry Assessment (Revised Edition)**
  by Gwendolynn Purushotham
  ISBN 978-0-938162-72-8 • Price: $12.95

Unless otherwise noted, these books are available from Cokesbury at www.cokesbury.com or toll free 1-800-672-1789.

Upcoming Events

**Ministry Study Commission**
February 24-26, 2014
Nashville, Tenn.

**GBHEM Spring Meeting**
March 17-18, 2014
Mutare, Zimbabwe

**Joint AU/GBHEM Board Meeting**
March 19, 2014
Mutare, Zimbabwe

**Native American Ministries Sunday**
May 4, 2014

**IAMSCU International Conference**
“Peace, Reconciliation, and Environmental Responsibility”
May 24-28, 2014
Hiroshima, Japan

**Consultation on Theological Education and Ministry Formation**
July 22-24, 2014
Chicago, Ill.

**BOM Mid-Quadrennial Training**
“Excellence in Ministry”
August 12-15, 2014
Miami, Fla.

For information about the Special Sundays with offerings and to order resources and make online donations, visit www.umcgiving.org.
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

— Isaiah 9:6

May the peace of Christ be with you.

Bishop Jim Dorff, President • The Rev. Kim Cape, General Secretary
and the Directors and Staff of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry • The United Methodist Church