



colleague

GENERAL BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY

Preparing a New Generation of Christian Leaders

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Leadership Development

Wanted: Young Clergy Leaders

MEG LASSIAT

IT'S A PHRASE YOU HEAR A LOT these days: leadership development.

Bookstore shelves overflow with “how-to” guides for employees, managers, and CEOs. Service organizations, high schools, colleges, and universities profess leadership development as a core value in order to attract potential students. Even children aren't left out: I pass “Tomorrow's Leaders Pre-School” on my way to work every morning!

Equipping the right people with the right tools, and training them with the necessary skills to do a good job today and in the future has always been important. Samuel grew up in the temple, where he received training and guidance from Eli. When God called Samuel to serve, Eli taught him how to respond. Mordecai gave Esther the guidance, motivation, and instruction to confront the king at the right time and save the Jews from destruction. As a young man, Paul trained Timothy so that as he matured he would learn how to lead his faith community.

The church needs well-trained, well-equipped, effective leaders. That hasn't changed; but the world has. And the church is therefore challenged to

respond to today's culture in meaningful, relevant, and appropriate ways. Indeed, leadership development is the first of the four churchwide areas of focus for program development and funding for the next quadrennium.

In 2005, Dr. Lovett H. Weems Jr. reported that 850 of the 18,141 probationary or ordained elders in the United States were 35 years of age or younger. Only 4.69 percent of elders were in this age group—down from 15.05 percent of elders in 1985. This is an alarming percentage; the sharp decline in young adult clergy has helped to crystallize the church's need to critically reassess and retool its efforts to invite, train, and retain young adult clergy.

Today's young adults approach the world differently than young adults did 50, 25, or even 10 years ago. Programs and structures that may have worked in 1985 will not engage today's young adults in the life of a local church, annual conference, or even the general church.

At all levels (local church, annual conference, and globally), The United Methodist Church must ask itself: Are we prepared to respond to young adults

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Conferences Share Best Practices for Attracting Young Clergy

CONCERN ABOUT THE CRITICAL NEED FOR MORE YOUNG clergy in The United Methodist Church brought representatives from 13 annual conferences together to brainstorm ways to assist young people who are called to ordained ministry.

“We stand a better chance at success in helping people hear God’s call if we are intentional about fostering environments in our communities of faith that make the possibility of hearing God’s call more plausible,” said the Rev. Brandon Harris, associate pastor of Anniston (Ala.) First United Methodist Church.

Harris, of the North Alabama Annual Conference, is among representatives of United Methodist conferences already engaging in some of the best practices for developing young clergy. Leaders from those conferences gathered Oct. 28-30 in Dallas to share what works and map strategies for developing ordained leaders across the denomination.

Sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the meeting was organized because of the critical role that annual conferences play in inviting and developing young adult clergy, according to the Rev. Meg Lassiatt, director of Student Ministries, Vocation, and Enlistment.

“As young adults consider ordained ministry, enroll in candidacy and work through the process, their relationship with their annual conference is crucial for their future in ministry,” Lassiatt said.

The United Methodist Church has identified development of new clergy as one of four areas of focus for the denomination for the foreseeable future. A 2005 report revealed less than 5 percent of United Methodist elders are under age 35.

Attending the “best practices” event were representatives from the North Alabama, Baltimore-Washington, Central Pennsylvania, Central Texas, Florida, Holston, Minnesota,

Mississippi, North Carolina, North Georgia, Oklahoma, Texas, and Western North Carolina Conferences.

Participants said it was helpful to share good strategies from across the denomination.

“One of the deepest resources we have is our connectional system, which provides an organic opportunity to collaborate with others,” said the Rev. Bart A. Fletcher, pastor of Belgrade Avenue UMC in North Mankato, Minn.

Lassiatt asked each conference to send a description of what they do to invite and train young people in leadership and to help encourage young adults to consider ordained ministry. The feedback was compiled into a report, and representatives were asked to “think about how annual conferences invite, train,

and retain youth and young adults at all points along the discernment and candidacy process.” A compilation of their best practices is available at www.ExploreCalling.org.

Participants talked about identifying and creating ways to encourage each other and other annual conferences to be more intentional and effective in helping young adults and youth hear and respond to God’s call to ordained ministry.

“As clergy, we often get so focused on our everyday ministry, where we are serving and what is coming up next, that we lose the ability to see in a wider context who God may be calling to serve in Christian

vocations,” said the Rev. Amelia Sims, director of Residency in Ministry for the North Alabama Conference.

“For ordained clergy and those in the ordination process, it is helpful to look again at our own call-to-ministry stories. Many of us can see not only the hand of God in our call but the work of the Holy Spirit through other persons—clergy and laity alike.”

—The Rev. Amelia Sims, director of Residency in Ministry, North Alabama Conference and Vicki Brown, associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation



Young adult seminarians at EXPLORATION 2006

in ways that invite them into meaningful service and allow them to learn new skills and hone their gifts and talents?

Furthermore, The United Methodist Church must be prepared to change outdated or ineffective practices in order to respond to the way in which young adults are leading in the church today.

As part of my work, I am regularly involved in conversations about the critical need for young adult leaders. The conversation often turns to the reasons we need young adult leaders in the church. More often than not, people will say we need young adult leaders so that they will be prepared to lead the church 20 years from now; they claim we need people who we can train to “take over the reins” from today’s leaders when they retire. While this may be a legitimate goal, they are missing the big picture. Young adults are not only leaders for tomorrow’s church—young adults are leaders in the church today.

If the church is to fully integrate young people in ordained leadership positions, all levels of the church must find new ways to invite youth and young adults to consider ordained ministry and then respond to the gifts and skills that young people already bring.

The first goal of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry’s Strategic Plan is to “reach young people to assist and support them in identifying and forming their vocations as Christians for leadership in the global church and the world.”

I work with both the Division of Higher Education and the Division of Ordained Ministry to address systemically how the UMC can invite, train, and retain youth and young adults as church leaders. In addition to several ongoing programs (EXPLORATION, Student Forum, the United Methodist Student Movement,

and the Young Adult Seminarians’ Network), three new emphases for engaging young adult leaders are currently being developed:

- www.ExploreCalling.org
- The National Leadership Development Advisory Team
- The Campus Ministry Internship Program

ExploreCalling.org is a Web site for youth, young adults, and those who work with them that provides tools for discerning God’s call to vocation.

The site has links to United Methodist colleges, universities, and theological schools; a resource page that contains current books and articles about vocation; information on loans and scholarships that are available for

United Methodist students; details about upcoming leadership development events; and links to other relevant sites. New, downloadable resources are added about every two weeks and news stories are updated weekly.

Additionally, visitors can e-mail questions about ministry and sign up to receive e-mail updates about new information and resources. This site is the one place in the denomination where information about vocational discernment and answering God’s call to ministry is centralized.

The National Leadership Development Advisory Team creates tools to train those who are involved in all stages of the invitation and candidacy

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New Program Aimed at Developing Young Clergy Leaders

A new campus ministry internship program and efforts to develop “best practices” for annual conferences will provide new and effective tools for those working with youth and young adults in vocational discernment and ministry development.

The Campus Ministry Internship Program, based on a program created by the Northwest Missouri State Wesley Foundation, will replicate nationally a program Missouri has found to be an effective tool for engaging college students in vocational discernment and ministry development.

Students will work with a team of other students and their campus minister or chaplain to serve a local congregation where they will lead worship and preach regularly. Each participant will meet weekly with their teammates and campus minister or chaplain for reflection, Bible study, and mentoring. By participating in this program, students will more clearly discern how God is calling them to serve, and they will have a better idea of what it means to serve a local congregation before they decide to attend seminary.

Through this process campus ministry units, local churches, annual conferences, cabinets, and bishops will then build relationships with student participants as they discern God’s call in their lives.

The National Leadership Development Advisory Team sponsored a meeting in October 2007 for representatives of annual conferences that are already effective at inviting and retaining young adult clergy. This group discussed “best practices” for how annual conferences can effectively invite, train, and retain young adult clergy. They began developing resources that can be shared among annual conference leaders who are involved at all stages of young adult clergy development.

EXPLORATION Follow-up Nurtures Culture of Call

JESSICA HENRY FELT CALLED TO ORDAINED MINISTRY before she attended EXPLORATION 2006, but the national event solidified her feeling that the call was real. And the support she has gotten from her annual conference since the November 2006 event has been critical, she says.

After she signed a commitment card at EXPLORATION 2006 in Jacksonville, Fla., GBHEM staff sent her name and contact information to her bishop's office and to the chair and registrar of her annual conference's board of ordained ministry. Henry, a 20-year-old sophomore at Eastern University, soon received e-mails from members of the board of ordained ministry of the Central Pennsylvania Conference, offering support, encouragement, and expressing joy.

"I think it would have been discouraging if no one had contacted me," Henry said.

The Rev. Julia Piper, a local pastor in the Central Pennsylvania Conference who says her passion as a pastor is to nurture the call of young people, agrees. It's important for them to know that they are not alone in discerning and following God's call," she said. Piper, a local pastor who serves two churches, is currently in seminary herself, but volunteers for programs aimed at developing young clergy.

"Our conference has continued to meet in small groups since the EXPLORATION event. We have had discussions about the difference between the calls of an elder and a deacon, and we have had open forums for our participants to share their concerns and questions about the process of seeking ordination," she said. "That allows people from the board of ordained ministry to explain some things to eliminate some of the fear."

The Rev. Meg Lassiat said EXPLORATION can provide excellent resources as a one-time event, but the ongoing relationship that young adults have with people from their local church communities helps give continual encouragement.

"One of the most important things we've learned is that follow up at the annual conference and local ministry level is critical to the ongoing engagement of young adults in the discernment and candidacy process," she said. "As we begin preparing for EXPLORATION 2009, we hope annual conferences will identify one or two point people who will stay in contact with young adults who are considering God's call in their lives.

"These contact people have the opportunity to build relationships with young adults, address questions and concerns, and make sure they are assimilated smoothly into the candidacy process," she said.

She encouraged each annual conference to name a point person for working to invite and retain young adults and to e-mail that person's contact information to explore@gbhem.org.

For more information about discerning or answering God's call, visit www.ExploreCalling.org.

Two books can also help: *The Christian as Minister* and *Answering God's Call for Your Life*.

They are available from www.cokesbury.com.



Photo by Vicki Brown/GBHEM

Upcoming Events

Student Forum 2008

May 22-24
American University
Washington, D.C.

EXPLORATION 2009

Nov. 13-15
Dallas, Tex.

process for young adults. The team writes articles and resources that can be used to ensure that young adults receive the information they need as candidates and probationers.

These resources will be used by pastor/staff parish relations committees, district committees on ordained ministry, annual conference boards of ordained ministry, district superintendents, and bishops as they work with young adults in the candidacy and probationary processes.

The team also sponsored a meeting in October 2007 for representatives of annual conferences that are already effective at inviting and retaining young adult clergy. This group began developing “best practice” resources that can be shared among annual conference leaders involved in young adult clergy development. (See related story on page 2.)

The Campus Ministry Internship Program, based on a program created by the Northwest Missouri State Wesley Foundation, will replicate nationally what has already proven to be an effective tool for engaging college students in vocational discernment and ministry development. Students will work with a team of other students and their campus minister or chaplain to serve a local congregation where they will lead worship and preach regularly.

Just as the world has changed, the church must also change to meet the needs of the Millennial Generation, those born between 1982 and 2000. Most of us would agree: We need young adult leaders!

But how does the church accomplish this? We use the tools that work: Build relationships, equip and train young adults for leadership, find ways to assist them in the discernment and candidacy process as they explore ordained ministry, and work with annual conferences to find ways to retain young adult clergy.

You can make a difference as an individual. Find ways you can encourage young people and develop relationships with them as they discern how God is calling them to serve. Look at what changes you can affect as our denomination invites, trains, and retains its newest leaders.

Young people are ready to answer God’s call. Are you ready to help them?

Lassiat is director of Student Ministries, Vocation, and Enlistment at GBHEM.

Campus Ministry: Growing UM Leaders

College campuses are a marketplace of ideas, and students need The United Methodist Church as their “storefront,” says one campus minister.

Diverse audiences vie for students’ attention today, including different church denominations and faith groups, according to the Rev. Leigh S. Martin, chaplain at United Methodist-related Reinhardt College in Waleska, Ga.

“You have so many voices reaching for our students, and it can be overwhelming and confusing for all of them,” she said. This is a big decision time for them.”

Martin was among five campus ministers who discussed the scope and depth of campus ministries during a presentation to GBHEM’s directors in August.

While the number of United Methodist campus ministries is shrinking across the United States, leaders say their impact on the lives of college students and university campuses is as important as ever.

The Rev. Luther Felder, who oversees United Methodist campus ministries for GBHEM, calls campus ministry an extension of The United Methodist Church on campuses.

“This is particularly important for United Methodists because the most critical vocational discernment questions are being asked and values learned in that setting,” he said.

Extending the Church’s Presence

“Our students need The United Methodist Church as their storefront in this marketplace of ideas,” Martin said. Once a student enters the “storefront on their campuses, they are connected to the past, the present, and future of the church. We are growing United Methodist leaders today,” Martin said.

The Rev. J. Mark Forrester, UM campus minister at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, said United Methodist work on campus blesses both the church and the world.

“The school is poised to reach a new generation of students with the awareness of God’s calling unfolding in their lives,” he said.

Forrester said campus ministry prepares young people to do important things that are at the heart of discipleship.

Discipleship can be found among young men who come together each Saturday for fellowship, worship, prayer, testimony, and discussions on



Campus ministers discussed the scope and depth of campus ministries during a presentation to GBHEM's directors in August. From left, the Revs. Laura Kirkpatrick, Mark J. Forrester, and Leigh S. Martin.

spiritual matters at historically Black Howard University in Washington, D.C.

“What these men are doing is how Methodism began. This is how movements began,” said the Rev. Malcolm Frazier, United Methodist chaplain at the school. Frazier noted that many of the students partner with local churches and a coalition to help address homelessness in Washington.

Responsibility and Power

The Rev. Laura Kirkpatrick, chaplain at United Methodist-related Martin Methodist College in Pulaski, Tenn., called it a great responsibility to help students respond to God's call upon their lives.

The church, she said, “cuddles and coos” over newly baptized children and provides formation experiences for them, cheering and shepherding them through confirmation and graduation.

“Then the church's vow of responsibility tends to wane until the once youth comes back with their own children,” she said, noting that campus ministers work to “answer God's call in helping the church live out our baptismal vow of responsibility during these in-between years.”

A Global Community

An example of the global nature of the church can be found within the Wesley Foundation on the campus of San Diego State University, where the Rev. Beth Cooper serves a university community of nearly 40,000 people.

“We are a multicultural, global community with students from all over the world,” Cooper said of the school's nearly 75-year-old Wesley Foundation. “In a sense we are kind of like our own little city.”

Cooper said San Diego State has a reputation as a party school and noted that a convenience store two blocks from campus sells more alcohol than any other store in that U.S. chain.

“Being two blocks away, we are the only recovery group that offers recovery every day, . . . and we have anywhere from 15 to 50 students a day working on their 12 steps,” Cooper said. “We minister not only to traditional students but to nontraditional students; students that have been hurt and wounded. Open doors are what it is about.”

—Linda Green
United Methodist News Service

Extra Scholarship Money Available in 2008-09

Nearly \$2 million in additional funds for scholarships will be distributed to United Methodist students in 2008 and 2009, with most of the money going to graduate students and seminarians.

“These additional funds will allow us to offset the rising cost of seminary for students who are planning to seek ordination and will allow us to increase the money that United Methodist colleges have available for scholarships,” said Angella Current-Felder, executive director of the Office of Loans and Scholarships. “This money will further our core mission of providing educated leaders for the church and the world.”

The extra money comes from the Methodist Corporation Trust Fund, created by the 1976 General Conference from proceeds from the sale of real estate tied to American University in Washington, D.C.

In 1989, \$2 million was transferred to GBHEM for investment, with earnings to be used for scholarships, including scholarships to American University. Earnings on the fund have been used for scholarships annually since 1989.

However, the value of the fund increased to about \$5.3 million over the past five years because of accumulated earnings and market appreciation. With the growth in fund value, the Board approved additional distributions for scholarships to students enrolled in United Methodist-related academic and theological institutions.

According to Current-Felder, the additional funds increase the amount being annually distributed to American University and increase the annual scholarship allocation given to colleges,

universities, and theological schools and “to enable students under 35 to respond to their calling in going to seminary and directly allow for continued investment in the education of clergy as well as continued support of other graduate programs for United Methodist students.”

The additional funds will be distributed as follows: \$650,000 to the 13 United Methodist seminaries; \$420,000 to 84 UM-related colleges; \$120,000 to the Special Seminary Scholarships for students under 35; \$120,000 for the Journey Toward Ordained Ministry Program which provides scholarships, mentoring, and retreats for racial-ethnic students pursuing ordination; \$200,000 for the Gift of Hope Fund which provides scholarships for United Methodist students attending non-church related institutions; and \$220,000 for the Brandenburg scholarship for graduate students over 35 preparing for a second career.

To learn more about the UM Loans and Scholarships Programs, or to get application information, visit www.GBHEM.org.

Candidacy Applications Now Filed Online

A total of 1,465 ministry candidates completed their application online between Jan. 2 and Dec. 31, 2007, more than double the 626 applications received and processed using the old paper system during the same time period, Division of Ordained Ministry staff reported.

By January 2008, DOM staff expect that everyone who has access will complete the candidacy enrollment online.

“The Online Candidacy Application System is a major step in streamlining a complex and time-sensitive process,”

said the Rev. Sharon Rubey, director of Candidacy and Conference Relations. Rubey is responsible for the candidacy program for ordination and licensing.

“It should dramatically decrease the almost 25 percent of candidacy applications that are returned, delayed, or not completed because of lack of accessibility to required information or people,” Rubey said. “Each annual conference candidacy registrar has the ability to enter, maintain, and update their candidacy mentor file online, which should improve the response time to the candidates.”

Rubey said that in a “concrete way, the new system puts the successful completion of entering the candidacy process into the hands of those who are closest to making a difference in the life and decision making of the candidate: the candidacy registrar, the candidacy mentor, and the district superintendent.”

The online process was launched Jan. 2, 2007.

“One of the crucial pieces in addressing the graying of both the

clergy and the church is invitation to and development of young clergy,” Rubey said. “We belong to a connectional church through our people and programs, and we live in a connectional world through Internet and online capability. And young clergy candidates expect to be able to complete applications and paperwork online.”

While the total number of applications this year is comparable to previous years, the online process gives candidates the possibility of completing their enrollment and receiving their *Candidacy Guidebook* within half the time, according to Rubey.

“Each one of those applicants could someday be an elder pastoring your local church, or a deacon serving to connect the church to the needs of the world,” she said.

For more information about online ministry candidacy applications, call 615-340-7374, or e-mail candidacycoordinator@gbhem.org.

For more information about ministry, go to IsGodCallingYou.org and ExploreCalling.org, or order copies



Photo courtesy of Saint Paul School of Theology

Young adult seminarians, like these students at Saint Paul School of Theology, expect to be able to complete candidacy applications and paperwork online.

from Cokesbury of *Answering God's Call for Your Life: A Look at Christian Calls and Church Vocations* and *The Christian as Minister: An Exploration Into the Meaning of God's Call* (800-672-1789 or online at www.cokesbury.com).

Africa University Names Interim Leader

MUTARE, Zimbabwe (UMNS)—The directors of United Methodist-related Africa University have appointed the dean of agriculture and natural resources as interim leader of the pan-African school.

Fanuel Tagwira, 50, took the reins Dec. 1 to carry the university through a period of transition following Rukudzo Murapa's October decision to step down after almost 10 years as vice chancellor.

"I am humbly honored by the responsibility that has been put on me," Tagwira said at a university gathering that day. His announcement was met with a standing ovation and ululation.

"I take courage in knowing that God is on our side," Tagwira said. "I feel great to serve this institution because it has brought me up, it has made me who I am, and I want to give back to the institution by serving it in a higher capacity."

A Zimbabwe native, Tagwira joined the university in 1992 as the first full-time member of the academic staff in agriculture. He has made contributions to teaching, research, and community outreach efforts, as well as to the overall development of the school. He was awarded the Best Researcher prize during Africa University's tenth anniversary celebrations in 2002.

Never thinking that his tenure at the university would span 15 years, Tagwira said he is "delighted to be given this responsibility of being the

interim vice chancellor. I will try my best, but I know that you are all going to work with me to make sure that this work is done well and that the institution continues to run smoothly."

Zimbabwe's hyperinflation poses myriad challenges for the university, and Tagwira called on his colleagues to work with him to overcome them.

"I am passionate about this university, having grown so much in and with it," he said. "I caught the vision and passion that drive Africa University . . . so it is a privilege to be entrusted with its leadership."

Search Gets Under Way

A search committee, led by board chairman and university chancellor Bishop Nkulu Ntanda Ntambo, has been appointed to find a new vice chancellor. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni are expected to be involved in the selection process. The vice chairwoman of the committee is Johnnetta Cole, retired president of United Methodist-related Bennett College for Women.

"From its inception, Africa University has been blessed with energetic, visionary, and committed leadership at all levels, and in this time of transition, the board has found in Professor Tagwira someone of true commitment," said Ntambo, episcopal leader of the church's North Katanga Area in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

With the appointment, the board has reaffirmed its commitment to enable the university to pursue a vision of excellence as the anchor institution of The United Methodist Church's mission in higher education in Africa, according to Jerome King Del Pino, GBHEM's top staff executive.

"I am confident that Professor Tagwira will give collaborative and accountable leadership during this time of transition that will enable students, staff, and faculty to achieve a greater level of excellence in accomplishing the primary mission of the university: to educate transformative leaders for church and society in Africa and throughout the world, thereby



Linda Green/UMNS

Rukudzo Murapa, Bishop Nkulu Ntanda Ntambo, and James Salley congratulate Professor Fanuel Tagwira (second from right) on his election as interim vice chancellor of Africa University.

fulfilling the mandate of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church,” Del Pino said.

Zimbabwe Bishop Eben Nhwatiwa, chairman of the board’s finance committee, said, “There is no doubt that [Tagwira] will lead the university well, taking up what has been entrusted to him and giving priority to the welfare of students and staff, while pursuing excellence at every level.”

Setting Goals

In his new role, Tagwira will work closely with James Salley, the university’s associate vice chancellor for institutional advancement. Salley’s involvement with Africa University dates back to 1987, when he served on the site-selection committee that chose Mutare as the school’s home.

“It is my honor to serve the institution, and I frankly feel like it is my calling,” Salley said. During the transition, he is taking on an expanded portfolio, which includes overseeing the university’s church and external/international relations functions.

“Change is exciting,” Salley said. “We have a responsibility to build from the rich foundation that has already been laid here at Africa University.”

He and Tagwira will use a team approach, he said. “We will do the kind of things that will lay foundations and then turn them over.”

They have already identified student and staff welfare, infrastructure maintenance, and overall academic and physical capacity limitations as key concerns.

Tagwira has pledged to pursue collective decision-making processes that allow students, faculty, and staff to feel fully vested in the institution. “There are many things that need to be done, and having been on the

faculty since 1992, I know the issues that are critically important to the university community—especially those related to infrastructure, compensation, and professional development,” Tagwira said.

As Murapa turned the leadership over to Tagwira and Salley on Dec. 1, he told the Africa University community that his 10 years at the helm have been “perhaps the greatest honor in my life.” Speaking to board members, faculty, staff, and students, he said that regardless of the capacity in which one serves Africa University, “it becomes indelible in you. It does not, it will not, it shall not leave you, nor shall you ever leave Africa University because it will always be a part and parcel of you.”

He told Tagwira and Salley that as they navigate the obstacles ahead to remember that satisfaction comes from challenges. “Challenges are the essence of satisfaction. They are the ones that call out of you the best that you have to give.”

United Methodist-related Africa University is a private school that draws students from across the continent, regardless of race, ethnicity, social standing, or religious affiliation.

It promotes inclusiveness and tolerance in its programs, and focuses on improving access to professional training for women and other socially and/or economically disadvantaged groups.

The school has nearly 1,400 students in its programs, which cover the fields of theology; agriculture; business and public administration; education; health sciences; the humanities and social sciences; and peace, leadership, and governance.

—Linda Green, United Methodist News Service. Andra Stevens, director of Africa University’s Office of Information and Public Affairs, contributed to this story.

GBHEM.org Has New Look, Fresh Content

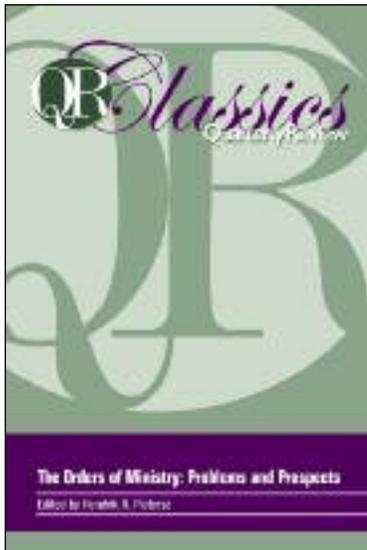
The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry will soon have a new face in cyberspace—a redesigned Web site that presents news, resources, publications, and other information in a more colorful, visual format, and with improved navigation and search tools.

“Our new ‘face’ is part of the churchwide, grassroots effort to literally make use of the connection by linking United Methodist Church sites and providing a seamless, cohesive experience for seekers,” said General Secretary Jerome King Del Pino.

The new four-column design allows more space for displaying up-to-date information on the home page. The site has a more logical arrangement that is easier to navigate, as well as a much-improved search engine.

“We are developing new, more visual, and more accessible content that will better serve to explain, promote, and carry out the Board’s mission on behalf of the church,” said Terri Hiers, executive director of GBHEM’s Office of Interpretation. Hiers led the Core Team that worked on the redesign. In addition to Hiers, other members of the team were Vicki Brown, Shelly Stem, Meg Lassiat, Gerlinda Roland, Ken Bedell, Marilyn Dunnaway, and Saul Espino.

A more prominent and user-friendly Web presence is an integral part of GBHEM’s Strategic Plan and is especially important for the Board’s efforts to develop young clergy, since Generation X and Millennials rely on the Internet for information, communication, and community.



GBHEM Publishes *QR Classics*

The first two volumes of *QR Classics*, a series of books produced by the Office of Interpretation that feature articles devoted to an important topic in Christian ministry, are available for order from Cokesbury.

The articles were originally published in *Quarterly Review*, a journal of theological resources for ministry published from 1980-2005 by GBHEM and The United Methodist Publishing House.

“Over the years, thousands of pastors, scholars, and laypersons have turned to *Quarterly Review* for incisive and timely theological analysis of church, ministry, and culture,” said Hendrik R. Pieterse, GBHEM’s book editor and director of scholarly research. Pieterse was also editor of *Quarterly Review* from 1999 to 2005. “*QR Classics* seeks to make many of the gems in these pages available to a new generation of pastors, scholars, and laypeople.”

In the first volume, *The Eucharist in a United Methodist Perspective*, five eminent United Methodist scholars provide theological and practical perspectives that

can help United Methodists incorporate the Eucharist more fully into their services of worship and their daily lives.

The second volume, *The Orders of Ministry: Problems and Prospects*, examines the ordering of ministry in The United Methodist Church, particularly in light of the 1996 General Conference decision to create two clergy orders, the Order of Deacons and the Order of Elders. The essays in this volume reflect on various dimensions of this important decision and discuss implications for the church’s theology and practice.

The books are priced at \$10.95 each. Order online at www.cokesbury.com, or call 800-672-1789.

GBHEM Names Treasurer/CFO



John Lesesne is the new treasurer and chief financial officer of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. The appointment was effective August 6.

For 20 years Lesesne worked for Oak Ridge Associated Universities, a nonprofit educational institution in Oak Ridge, Tenn. He has served the past 15 years as director of financial operations. His experience includes financial management, budgeting, payroll, accounting, purchasing and contract administration, human resources, and financial informa-

tion systems planning. He was also involved in strategic planning with Oak Ridge Associated Universities, where he led the institutional planning process for several years.

He received an M.A. and M.E.M. from Duke University and his B.S. degree from Wake Forest University. He has been an active member of First United Methodist Church of Oak Ridge for 20 years.

Lesesne will provide oversight to the administrative, financial, human resources, and information technology systems functions of GBHEM. He will work closely with the general secretary, the executive management staff, and others in implementing the Board’s policies, creative visioning, and long-range strategic planning.

“John Lesesne’s diverse background and leadership qualities fit well with the direction and mission of the GBHEM, especially as we continue implementation of the Strategic Plan. We are excited about the many talents, skills, and abilities he brings to the Board and look forward to his guidance and leadership as we prepare for the General Conference of 2008 and the next quadrennium,” said Jerome King Del Pino, general secretary of GBHEM.

Movie Tells Story Of Wiley College Debate Team

United Methodist Communications and the Black College Fund partnered with Grace Hill Media and The Weinstein Company to hold special, advance screenings of the movie *The Great Debaters* in Atlanta, Houston, and Nashville in December.

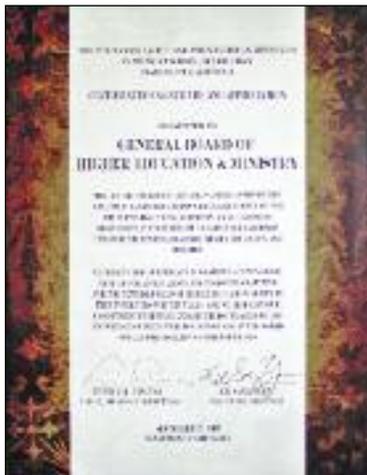
The drama, which was nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Picture, is based on the true story of Melvin B.

Tolson, a professor at Wiley College in Texas. He inspired students to form a debate team that in 1935 competed in the national championship. Wiley is one of the 11 United Methodist-related historically Black colleges. The UM-related historically Black colleges and universities are supported by the church through the Black College Fund apportionment.

The movie is directed by Academy Award-winner Denzel Washington and stars Washington and Academy Award-winner Forest Whitaker.

Washington recently donated \$1 million to Wiley College to re-establish its debate team.

The film, which is rated PG-13, opened nationwide on Christmas Day. To learn more about the movie and the Black College Fund, visit www.umc.org/greatdebaters or www.gbhem.org/bcf.



The Center for Pacific and Asian Ministries at Claremont School of Theology presented this plaque to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in appreciation of the Board's work with the center in leadership development. Ken Yamada and The Rev. HiRho Park accepted the plaque on behalf of GBHEM.



Henk Pieterse/GBHEM

Dempster Scholars

Pictured are recipients of Dempster scholarships. From left to right: Mary Kay Cavazos, Matthew Richard Schlimm, Carolyn Davis, Doug Tzan, Luther Oconor, Kenneth Loyer, Timothy Eberhart, with Robert Kohler, assistant general secretary, Division of Ordained Ministry.



Henk Pieterse/GBHEM

The Rev. Dr. Karen Collier (right), founding convener of the Women of Color Scholars Program, was recognized for the 19 years of leadership she has provided. Collier, the chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Fisk University, was presented a collage of the Women of Color Graduate Scholars. The presentation was made by Angella Current-Felder, executive director of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Office of Loans and Scholarships. The commissioned work was painted by Roseanne Giles, research assistant in the Africa University Development Office.



Photos by Terri Hiers/GBHEM

New DS/DCM Training Event

Left photo: General Secretary Jerome King Del Pino (left) talks with a participant after his presentation on Leadership Development during a plenary session at Lake Junaluska in August. Right photo: Division of Ordained Ministry staffer Gwen Purushotham signed copies of her book *Watching Over One Another in Love:*

A Wesleyan Model for Ministry Assessment during the event. The training for new district superintendents and directors of connectional ministries is an annual event sponsored by the Council of Bishops, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and the General Board of Discipleship.



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Nonprofit Org.
 U.S. Postage
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 Nashville, Tenn.
 Permit No. 11

President Gregory V. Palmer
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Produced by the Office of Interpretation

Executive Director Terri J. Hiers
Director Hendrik Pieterse
Associate Editor & Writer Vicki Brown
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