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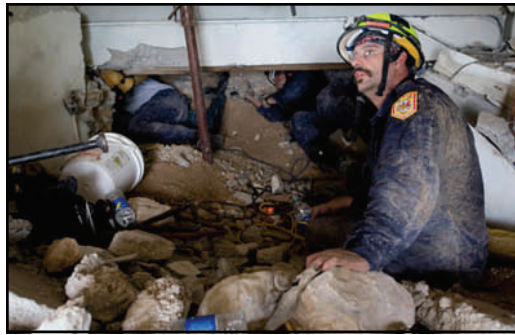
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Instant Connection

California-Nevada Annual Conference



February 11, 2010



One Great Hour of Sharing Is March 14: Order Resources Now!

When the first tremors of the earthquake in Haiti rocked that island nation, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) staff already were in country, strategizing how United Methodists could help improve the lives of the people there.

Their work is a direct result of the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, which supports the operating expenses of those who bring healing and help in our name. It makes it possible, when we respond to an emergency such as Haiti, to know that 100% of our gift goes directly to where the suffering is happening.

Every year, but this year more than ever, we hope that pastors in the California-Nevada Annual Conference will give their people the opportunity to join with the faithful across the church to support the One Great Hour of Sharing on **March 14**.

Call 888.346.3862 today to order envelopes and other resources so your congregation can participate in this churchwide offering. These resources will be sent at no cost to your church!

Find more at umcsgiving.org/specialsundays.

Churches Serving as Collection Points for Health Kits for Haiti

Several churches have joined Los Altos United Methodist Church in volunteering to be a collection point for health kits and health kit materials, which will be delivered to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) depot in Salt Lake City, for transport to earthquake victims in Haiti.

Please try to get your kits and materials to one of the following churches (listed alphabetically by city):

- Auburn, Pioneer UMC
- Bakersfield, Wesley UMC
- Galt UMC
- Hayward, First UMC
- Los Altos UMC

- Sparks UMC
- Stockton, St. Mark's UMC
- Winnemucca UMC
- Woodland UMC
- Oakdale, Community UMC
- San Jose, Almaden Hills UMC
- San Jose, Korean UMC of Santa Clara Valley (*one-time collection during SJ District Quarterly Conference, Sat. Feb. 13, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.*)

If there isn't a church near you on this list, think about creating a relay system, in which your church transports its kits and materials to another church on the route, and that church adds to the shipment and moves everything farther up the chain to another church on the route, which repeats the process – and so on until the shipment reaches one of the collection points.

Or try to reach out to other churches and groups in your community to put together at least 100 pounds of material. That will enable use of bulk freight to get the shipment to one of the collection points. (Please be prepared to contribute to the cost of shipping beyond the collection point, as well.)

If your church wants to be a collection point but *does not* appear on this list, please notify the Conference's United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Office by contacting Phil Bandy at philb@calnevumc.org or Eddie Frutchev at eddief@calnevumc.org.

The goal is to have a large truck make the rounds of the collection points on February 28. ("Plan B" is that the UVMIM Office will utilize the bulk freight shipping option to pick up the materials from the collection points.)

For more information contact [Phil Bandy](#).

San Jose District Health Kit Drop-off Instructions

There are several ways to drop off health kits for pick-up in the San Jose District during the month of February:

- Take them to Almaden Hills UMC Tuesday afternoons, 1-3; or Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (Call Almaden Hills UMC coordinators Gene and Elaine Hill, 408.226.6801, or Dave Wolf, 408.268.5806, to arrange other drop-off times.)
- On Saturday, February 13 take them to the San Jose District Quarterly Conference, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., held at the Korean UMC of Santa Clara Valley, 1001 Ginger Lane, San Jose.
- On Saturday, February 28 take them to Los Altos UMC.

Kits will be shipped on March 1. Read [Churches Serving as Collection Points for Health Kits for Haiti](#) and [Health Kits for Haiti Relay Scheduled for End of Month](#) for more information.

Phil Bandy, Interim Director of the California-Nevada Volunteers in Mission Office, has written [10 steps to Haiti](#), which provides information about other ways to help.

For more information contact Becky Perry, UVMIM co-coordinator, San Jose District, at perry95006@yahoo.com or 831.338.4998.

Please note that you may donate complete kits, as well as raw materials for kits.

For complete kits, you are urged to **follow the instructions precisely and without exception**. For instance, the request is for one toothbrush in its original wrapper: do not include a package with two or more. The comb should not have a handle or be a pocket comb, but a sturdy comb 7" to 9" in length. No notes, or national or religious symbols can be accepted. Most of the items can be purchased expensively at stores such as Big Lots! or Dollar Tree.

The health kit, **packaged in a one-gallon zip lock bag**, should contain only the following items:

- 1 hand towel (15" x 25" up to 17" x 27"; no kitchen towels)
- 1 washcloth
- 1 comb (7" to 9"; no pocket combs or combs with handle)
- 1 nail file or fingernail clippers (no emery boards or toenail clippers)
- 1 bath-size bar of wrapped soap (3 oz. and up)
- 1 toothbrush (single brush in original wrapper; no child-size brushes)
- 6 adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages (often called Band-Aids)

UMCOR also requests – (separate envelope, not in bag)

- \$1 per kit to purchase toothpaste (UMCOR makes the purchase)
- \$1 per kit to help with shipping costs to final destination

Almaden Hills UMC is located at 1200 Blossom Hill Road, San Jose, CA. Drive one long block south of Hwy 85 on Almaden Expressway; turn left on Blossom Hill Road; drive three blocks; the church is on the left.

Black History Month: Songs of Protest

February is Black History Month, and this week marks the 50th anniversary of the start of non-violent sit-ins designed to desegregate Nashville, Tennessee, department store lunch counters. The student sit-ins and the arrival of Freedom Rider buses from the North (February 13, 1960) launched a chain of events which are detailed in a timeline on the General Board of Discipleship's (GBOD) [Worship website](#).

There were demonstrations, buses, beatings, arrests, jail sentences, speeches, and marches – but there also were prayers and singing from the jail cells.

During the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s, including those in Nashville, demonstrators often invented and sang songs in the moment that fit the occasion. You'll find two excellent examples on GBOD's Worship website:

- "[The Busses Are a-Comin'](#)"

In a television interview in Nashville on February 7, 2010, discussing the student protests, beatings, arrests, and jail sentences, one of those arrested – former freedom rider Kwame Leo Lillard – said that he and others began singing this song while in jail. It warns the jail-



ers that more buses, more freedom riders, more students, and more demonstrators are coming, and that they had better get ready because, "We're gonna keep on coming." It was adapted to the tune of the Christmas Spiritual, "Mary Had a Baby." This is the first publication of this song.

- "[I'll Go to Jail if the Spirit Says Jail](#)"

Another song that spontaneously sprang from the Civil Rights movement. Wherever students and leaders protested, they marched, sang, and demonstrated against segregation regardless of the risks, and many went to jail. Other verses were improvised to include "march," "sing," "shout," "vote," and "pray." This is the first publication of this song.

Learn more at GBOD's Worship website, www.umcworship.org, and at www.gbod.org.



[Israel-Palestine Task Force Joins Nonviolent Movement for Peace With Justice In Israel-Palestine](#)

**By The Rev. Michael Yoshii
Member, Israel-Palestine Task Force**

Many Christians feel hopeless when it comes to achieving a just peace in Israel-Palestine. However, as people of faith United Methodists are called to use non-violent methods to try and end the suffering in the illegally occupied Palestinian territories and to support the Palestinians' right

to self-determination, while also seeking peace and security for the State of Israel.

Conference Resolution on Divestment

Toward this end the California-Nevada Annual Conference has charged the Israel-Palestine Task Force with responsibility for implementing "leveraging the power of United Methodist investment portfolios to affect faithful and positive change in the occupied Palestinian territories." This resolution calls on our Annual Conference agencies and local churches to examine the ways in which our financial holdings may be contributing to the violence and injustice fueling the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The 2008 General Conference resolution "Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land" among other things clearly states the opposition of The United Methodist Church to "continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and any vision of a 'Greater Israel' that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings." Our Annual Conference resolution on divestment moves us towards a deeper understanding of our own complicity in the dispossession of the Palestinians, and offers us a nonviolent way to respond to the situation.

We Are Complicit in the Violence

The underlying reality of the resolution is that, we, the members of the California-Nevada Annual Conference, often think the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is far removed from our own per-

sonal responsibility. But the truth is that we are contributing to the spiral of violence. American government policies, some of our corporate businesses, and our hard-earned tax dollars are enabling this injustice to continue. So we have a choice: We can continue to participate in the violence, or we can repent and move toward active nonviolent resistance to the long-festering injustice. Mahatma Gandhi coined the phrase "satyagraha" (out of a combination of the Sanskrit words for "truth," and "holding firmly") to describe an important principle underlying the power of non-violent resistance. Gandhi understood this principle to be the "soul force" that upholds truth, while changing minds and hearts through divine love. Dr. Martin Luther, King Jr. emulated Gandhi in promoting similar principles of non-violent resistance for the Civil Rights movement.

Our Conference resolution on divestment upholds the truth of Palestinian suffering, calling on us to act with "soul force" in withdrawing our consent to investments which support the ongoing occupation; i.e., the expansion of settlements, building of the separation wall, and other immoral, illegal, unjust, and unwise practices. Working collaboratively with other denominations and organizations in The United Methodist Church, our Israel-Palestine Task Force will be initiating correspondence with companies that:

- provide products, services, or technology that sustain, support, or maintain the occupation;
- have established facilities or operations on occupied land;
- provide products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, or maintenance of settlements on occupied land or settlement related infrastructure;
- provide finances or assist in the construction of Israel's separation wall or settlement infrastructure.

Following our correspondence we will be forwarding information to boards and agencies within our Annual Conference, as well as to local congregations for your review. Our task force members also will be available to boards, agencies, and congregations for consultation on how you might engage in a faith-based process for discerning your actions in response to information provided to you.

Read additional [background and supporting information](#) here (in PDF format).



[Blog Entries Report on Life in Occupied Palestine](#)

Doug Smith has been blogging on the Communications [Facebook page](#) on the California-Nevada Annual Conference website during his February 5-12 trip to Israel and Palestine.

A member of the Conference's Israel-Palestine Task Force, Smith is there to help implement the resolution to "examine and submit to investment managers for United Methodist congregations and institutions in the ... Conference a list of companies that support in a significant way the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories."

The resolution was adopted at Annual Conference Session last year. It further directs the task force to write to those companies requesting a change in their relationship to the occupation. If no change in policy is reported within 90 days, the company's name is to be placed on a divestment list – and all UM churches and investment managers will be urged to consider divesting from the companies on that list.

On Friday evening, February 5, Smith wrote:

The winter chill on this rainy night in Beit Jala, a suburb of Bethlehem, permeates the beautiful cinderblock three-story home of Muneer and Sima Al-Gahwali, their three children, [and] Grandma and Grandpa. Using wax shavings and a candle, Grandpa builds a fire as we pull our chairs close to absorb the heat.

As we warm ourselves, Nicolas, age 7, enjoys lighting the candle – and blowing it out and re-lighting it yet again. He tells us, in halting English, the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Nadia, age 14, tells us of her presentation in French that she will be making at school tomorrow. Grandma shows us the Communion bread she has baked for church services this weekend. There is a spirit in this home ... [of] a loving family filled with faith in God and hope.

Soon discussion turns to life under the Occupation. Muneer shares how he lived in peace and friendship with Jewish people before the year 2000 and the Wall. He would travel to Tel Aviv and Haifa often. He entertained his Jewish friends in his home, as they shared laughter, hopes and dreams. That all changed with the Wall. Now he cannot freely go to Jerusalem, which is just minutes away. He cannot visit his Jewish friends ... there is no dialogue. How sad that a sense of cooperation and friendship between Jews and Palestinian Christians has been deliberately destroyed.

Last year, Muneer had a meeting in Jerusalem to obtain a visa. Leaving his home at 9:30 a.m., after many delays and harassment, he arrived at 1 p.m., just in time for his appointment. That is more than three hours to travel less than 1 kilometer.

Sima tells of a meeting of Palestinian and Jewish women designed to re-establish some form of dialogue. Some of the Jewish women hold the position that all of the land belongs to the Jewish people, based on Scripture. Sima responds:

"... but you are not paying for the land now owned by Palestinians. You are stealing the land and sometimes killing to build on Palestinian land. God will punish you one day."

And so begins a dialogue based on fear, pain, and suffering. Yet it is dialogue, a way to rebuild communication between two peoples who must share this land.

The family has many questions about [President Barack] Obama and U.S. policy in the Middle East. They are encouraged to hear that progressive Jews, through J Street, are asking Jews to support Obama's position to end the settlement expansion now, and create a Palestinian state.

As conditions worsen each day they must live under Occupation, Muneer remains passionate when he says, "Only God can bring peace. And I remain hopeful because of my strong faith."

As Christians, let us join Muneer and his family in praying for peace, as we do all we can to be activists for a just and lasting peace. We must engage in dialogue between Christians and Jews in our own communities, rebuilding a sense of cooperation as we work together to restore civility, and peace with justice for all in this land we call Holy.

Doug Smith
Israel Palestine Task Force
Ca-Nev Conference, UMC

Catch all of Smith's blog entries and view his photos from Israel and Palestine by visiting the Communications [Facebook page](#) and clicking on the "Just Fans" button.

[The Migrant Christ: Blog Post From Immigration Task Force](#)

An Immigration Task Force delegation led by Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr. has just returned from a fact-finding trip to the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. Its objective was to learn about border ministries and to bear witness to Christ's love and concern.

The delegation documented the trip through blog posts. On Friday, February 5, the Rev. Brenda Vaca, chair of the task force and pastor of Ministerios Nueva Vida (New Life Ministries), or Nueva Vida United Methodist Church, in San Francisco, wrote about "The Migrant Christ":



With our first day behind us, it is safe to say that we are all overwhelmed. Overwhelmed with the unfathomable amount of need and desperation and death that happens here in the desert. But, more than being overwhelmed, we are filled with a contagious excitement and resurrection-hope.

Yesterday we were not able to reflect in writing in this blog because it was a very busy day of travel, witness, and learning. We woke early in the morning and left the comfort of our Phoenix hotel to head to Eloy Detention Center. Eloy Detention Center has been described as the hell of the immigration detention world. If you've ever been to a federal penitentiary, San Quentin, you know what it is like to enter. You have to be buzzed in and out, [and have to] leave everything in your car, remove your jewelry, bring your I.D., take off your shoes. We spent some time in the courtrooms observing bond hearings and deportation proceedings. The "detainees" were mostly men, Latinos, and very young. In particular, I was struck by the many faces that turned to see us come in as they waited in a common room for their consulates from their countries of origin. Lots of fear. Lots of hope.

We were struck by this announcement on one of the walls: "ICE Total: 1433." When we asked what this meant, we were informed it meant that there are currently 1433-plus (they haven't updated their figures in a while) detainees in custody at Eloy. This was shocking information, since Eloy supposedly is a 120-bed facility.

We then headed to Tucson to meet with Kat Rodriguez from "Derechos Humanos," a human rights coalition that documents abuses to the immigrant community from Border Patrol, ICE, etc. Kat shared information about the "funnel effect" strategy of the U.S. government (check out www.derechoshumanosaz.net for more info) along the U.S.-Mexico border. Building walls with the former landing gear from the Vietnam War and the First Gulf War (horrifying how it's all connected) along populated border cities such as Yuma, Nogales/Nogales, Agua Prieta/Douglas, etc. Forcing them into the most unforgiving parts of the desert: the mountains (deathly hot in the summer and freezing, snow-capped in the winter) of the Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge, and the home of the "Desert People," the Tohono O'odham Nation.

Immediately after, we met retired Presbyterian pastor, Rev. Gene Lefebvre, one of the founders of No More Deaths (www.nomoredeaths.org) and one of the founders of the Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s. We all were struck by the countless stories of encounters with the Migrant Christ in the desert: young, old, female, male, unknown gender, child, Mexican, Guatemalan, Honduran, on and on. As my sister put it, "If the desert could talk ..."

This morning we are meeting with Rev. Delle McCormick of BorderLinks and Rev. Dr. Robin Hoover, pastor of First Christian Church (DOC). More to share later...

P.S. The Internet connections have been so slow when we've had access to it, that we have not been able to upload photos to this blog. Stay tuned!

Pastor Brenda

Editor's Note: Visit the [Cal-Nevada UMC for Immigrant Rights](#) site to watch for new posts and photos - and watch for a full report of the task force trip in the [Instant Connection](#).

Three Online Lay Education Courses Start Feb. 22

Do you wish you could deepen your faith, but you're just too busy to attend a class or join a small group?

Get connected with Wesley Ministry Network on line!

Through a partnership with The Richard and Julia Wilke Institute for Discipleship, Wesley Ministry Network is beginning to offer its acclaimed lay education courses on line. Three courses begin on February 22: *Simply Christian*, *Devotion to Jesus*, and *Religion and Science: Pathways to Truth*.

Each course features streaming video segments and online discussions with other students and experienced Wesley Ministry Network teachers. Courses are open to everyone, and Wesley Ministry Network makes CEUs available for pastors.

Connect with other Christians to deepen your faith and grow in discipleship. To learn more and to register, visit <http://www.beadisciple.com/wesleyministrynetwork.html>.

'Water: Sacred and Profaned' Conference Is March 6 in Nevada City

"Water is an integral part of God's radical expression of God's love for all humanity. Water cannot be monopolized or privatized. It is to be shared like air, light, and earth."

- 2008 Book of Resolutions, #1029, "Protection of Water"

Nevada City United Methodist Church will host a one-day Conference, "Water: Sacred and Profaned," Saturday, March 6 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The conference will focus on the growing scarcity of fresh water, water as a right, and the need to preserve water for humans and all living things. It will feature presentations, discussion, film, Native American drumming, song, and ritual. Speakers will include Nancy Price from Defending California Water for Life (Alliance for Democracy), the Rev. Sharon Delgado, and others.

According to Delgado, the world faces a severe shortage of fresh water. The situation is rapidly worsening due to pollution, diversion, rapid industrialization, over-pumping of aquifers, and climate change, she says.

"Around the world, conflicts have erupted over control of water," Delgado points out. "The struggle to control water has led to violent aggression, human rights abuses, and citizen protests. At the same time, global corporations are seeking to profit from diminishing supplies of fresh water. Many communities are rising to this challenge, calling for 'water justice' and organizing around the theme, 'water for life, not for profit.'"

"I lived five miles from Felton, in Santa Cruz County, when a large trans-national corporation took over the small town's water supply," Delgado says. "After six years of struggle, the community finally succeeded in getting the water back into public hands.

"Struggles to protect water are going on around the world. Some communities that have been successful in such struggles are within the bounds of the California-Nevada Annual Conference – including Felton, Stockton, Mt. Shasta, and Reno."

According to Delgado, United Methodists can support such struggles, be faithful stewards of God's gift of water, and advocate for the preservation of water as a right for all people and all parts of creation. "This day-long conference will help us experience the sacred value of water and begin to understand what it will take to preserve it in perpetuity," she says.

The Conference is being organized by Earth Justice Ministries, which recently received a Peace with Justice Grant from the General Board of Church and Society to promote "water justice," with the goal of educating people in faith communities about the growing scarcity of fresh water and advocating for the protection of water resources. The organization is a recipient of Ecumenical Agency Grant funds from the California-Nevada Board of Church and Society, as well.

Suggested donation for the "Water: Sacred and Profaned," conference is any amount up to \$25.

To register, email water@earth-justice.org or call Brian Fry at 530.274.1320.

Download [flyer](#) here (in PDF format).

For more information visit www.earth-justice.org.

Sign up for Transformational Leadership Course This Spring

"Transformational Leadership is the art of developing teams of leaders who are fully alive in God." So reads a brochure from the Shasta District School of Witness and Service, hosting a two-weekend series of classes on Transformational Leadership in April and May at First United Methodist Church of Redding.

The course will be offered again in the fall, on the North Coast.

Presenter/instructor is the Rev. Dr. Anne Dilenschneider.

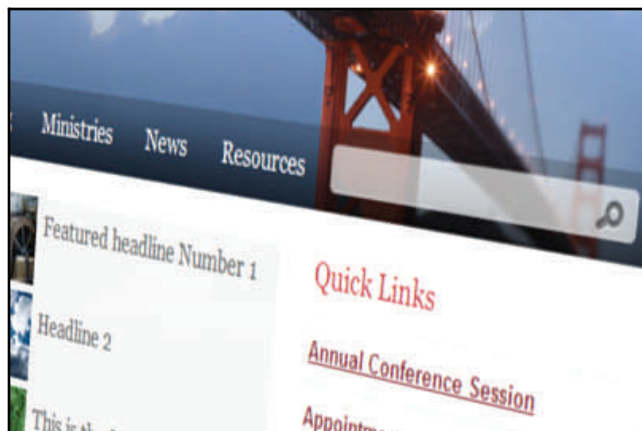
The first weekend (April 16-17) will cover the fundamentals of transformational leadership and developing a team of leaders and reframing ministry. The second weekend (May 2-22) will cover identifying spiritual and leadership styles and applying leadership strategies in context.

"The processes at the heart of this course have been 'road-tested' in both churches and secular settings," the brochure attests.

Pre-registration fee is \$75 for both weekends, made payable to Shasta District School (\$100 at the door), which covers course materials and snacks. Meals and lodging are separate.

[Download brochure](#) here (PDF format).

For more information contact Steve Pudinski, pastor of Smith River UMC and director of Shasta District School, at 707.726.9432 or 707.845.7556.



[Website Problems? Conversion to New, Better Functioning Site Is Underway!](#)

If you encounter a problem locating something on the California-Nevada Annual Conference website this week, we apologize and ask for your patience and grace - with the understanding that it's temporary and for a good cause.

We are in the process of converting to an improved website which will offer **much better function**, along with a refreshed design. Unfortunately, as much as we're trying to keep the

construction behind the scenes, some of the "bent nails" and "broken dry wall" are getting knocked onto the "sidewalk" from time to time. But we'll do our best to correct problems as we go along, and promise to do everything possible to complete this project in record time.

(If there's something that you simply can't locate, please [email us](#) and we'll try to direct you to it during the construction phase.)

Some of the things you'll love about the new website:

- No more annoying dropdown menus!
- "Breadcrumbs" feature that shows how pages relate to each other
- Google Translate feature built in!
- Google maps on church pages
- Blogs with commenting feature
- Photo galleries that let you download high-resolution versions of images for use in print publications, as well as smaller sizes
- Living out Our Faith section on the Home Page - with "click and type" capability so churches can add their own "faith in action" story right there
- "It Worked for Us!" section for churches to share their great ideas - again, just click and type
- Much more dynamic, graphically interesting inside pages

Watch for the launch of the new site – within days, we hope. In the meantime, thank you so much for your patience!

The Instant Connection is published each week by Jane Horstman on behalf of Cate Monaghan, Interim Director of Communications for the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

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