



an edition of The United Methodist Reporter

Official Publication for the Central Texas Conference



Good deeds ... 4A



Safe care for newborns ... 8A



Marie's story ... 5A

Rev. Roderick Miles is named to district superintendency

Bishop Mike Lowry completes the new Cabinet appointments with the addition of Rev. Roderick "Rod" Miles as superintendent of the Waco District. With his appointment, the Cabinet will have three new superintendents, and two of the three council executive directors who serve on the Extended Cabinet will be new to their posts.

(See previous announcements in the March 6 issue archived at www.ctcumc.org/page.asp?PKValue=036.)

Currently in his eighteenth year as senior pastor at Campus Drive United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, Miles is a second-career clergy who brings the advantages of business acumen and the heart of a pastor to his new leadership role.

A graduate of Lamar University in Beaumont, Miles went on to earn his master of divinity degree at Brite Divinity School and served one year at the Milford/Pilgrim's Rest charge — now combined to create New Beginnings United Methodist Church — before appointment to Campus Drive where the church has grown during that time from 153 to 428 members. A lot of his focus was on steering youth in constructive,



**Rev. Rod Miles
Waco District Superintendent**

God-led paths for their lives.

"Early in my ministry, God began to cross my path with preachers, ministers, pastors and people entering the ministry," Miles recalls. "Initially, I thought the Lord was just sending these persons to help me in my ministry. But after coaching the first 12 ministers and watching them move on, I came to realize I was placed here for them and not the reverse."

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Spring Summit participants waited in line for a moment to confer at the conclusion of keynote speaker Dr. March DeHaven's presentation (above left). At right, Rev. Bob Holloway led two consecutive groups in "Spiritual Practices for an Integrated Life."



Spring Summit informs, excites participants for health ministries

Keynote speaker Dr. Mark DeHaven, principal investigator for the Center for Disease Control & Prevention's The GoodNEWS Project, wowed his plenary audience with the connection between faith and health and how it is the people of faith who must take an active leadership role today in reducing the growing epidemic of chronic disease.

Comments on Dr. DeHaven's plenary session ranged from "Thank you! Connecting God, the Word, genetics — great concept" to "Thanks for challenging the church to take this responsibility."

About 300 participants in this day-long event, held March 21 at Central United Methodist Church

in Waco, continued with a choice of 10 health and wellness workshop sessions. Each person had an opportunity to attend four of the following workshops and many shared their comments:

Keeping the Flame Alive: How to Light a Candle Without Burning Yourself Out with Dr. Bill Crawford ("One of the best presentations with true application in all our lives." "Such energy! I learned so much about handling myself and my life!")

Growing Healthy Children with Rev. Robin Stevens ("Excellent insight and very appropriate to today's culture." "Good handouts and resource information.")

Living the Last Third Fully and

Ending the Race Well with Dr. Dan Bonner ("Very information, great ideas." "Too much to come close to covering in an hour.")

Spiritual Practices for an Integrated Life Revs. Bob and Judy Holloway ("...loved the husband and wife team because I got a lot of ideas to try to get my husband to start reading the Bible with me." "God has been leading me towards this area continually for the past several months. I am anxious to get spiritual practices in my life and in the life of my church family.")

Community Gardening: The Act of Inspiring and Transforming Communities Through Gardening

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2009 Annual Conference

Registration online at <http://ctsitereporter.com/page.asp?PKValue=1334>



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The Wilderness Way

By BISHOP MICHAEL LOWRY

11. As I traveled through the Temple District, I experienced a strange almost schizophrenic vision. It was like looking through binoculars one lens at a time and seeing different scenes.

Through one eye piece, there was a sense of vibrancy and growth that emanated from the Williamson County area. New churches were struggling at various stages of new life. Cedar Park Good News, Journey of Faith, Hutto Discovery and Rockbridge were bustling with new help and greater possibilities.

Others, for example St. Phillips, Grace Copperas Cove, First Round Rock, St. Johns in Georgetown and First Georgetown were all wrestling with various issues of growth and vibrancy. Each in distinctive ways was turned outward and trying to deal with growth on a variety of levels — missional (love, justice and mercy), evangelistic, spiritual formation.

Encompassing Temple, Killeen, Harker Heights and Belton, similar issues could be seen. By my count, at least four different churches in this area were facing questions of relocation. At Wellspring, they reported being a missional community reaching out to others. Those were common comments in a number of places around the Temple District.

Through the other eye piece, I could see a number of small congregations dealing with a declining presence and wondering if there was a future. At Bartlett, someone commented about the decline in the community and the need to reach younger adults. This was a common theme in many smaller churches. Repeatedly, I discovered wonderful, friendly places with a deep love of the Lord who were wondering how to reach out to others in Christ's name. The list is long: Holland, Bethel, Jonesboro Parish and Evant to name a few. There were also signs of hope.

Florence was beginning to make progress in brining in younger people. Mooresville is experiencing a Pentecost! Pidcoke, Purmella and Granger all reported conversion growth and missional outreach.

In observing the district, I could not help but think of Charles Dickens' famous phrase from the opening of *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." We are in the best of times. The land is full of people who are spiritually hungry and searching. It is the worst of times. Church as we know it no longer works. I have discovered churches on the same street from growing elementary schools that have no children. I have also had the joy of being in churches that had almost been closed but are now experiencing new life as the wind of the Holy Spirit blows through them.

At Holland, I encountered a church alive with strong lay leadership and Spirit-filled ministry. All this tucked back into a neighborhood where the location could, at best, be described as poor. Taylor United Methodist Church is thriving and reaching out. First United Methodist Church in Temple is a powerhouse. The winds of the Spirit are blowing!

What I reported about the Waco District seemed to hold true for many churches in the Temple District as well. It bears repeating. In the wilderness of the Temple District, we are engaged missionally but often lost evangelistically. We love the warmth of our own campfire, but are timid in trekking along new trails. I thank God for the Temple District and my time spent in your midst! The Lord **is** with you!



Meadowbrook UMC oozes acts of love

While it's easy to be discouraged by media coverage on the economic downturn, congregations in the Central Texas Conference are showing incredible acts of helpfulness and generosity to their neighbors. Here's what's happening at one church:

Over the last several months, Meadowbrook United Methodist Church's "mission team" has been reaching out to the community in big and small ways, all intended to provide a service that otherwise might not be available to those who are financially strapped.

The team has cleaned out house gutters, replaced an aging garage roof for a grateful woman, collected teddy bears for Alliance for Children, baked cookies for the Kairos Prison Ministry and reached out to the community with an Upward Basketball and Cheerleading League.

"Meadowbrook is growing into their mission

statement to be 'A Christian fellowship embracing our community with hope, acceptance and unconditional love,'" state member Dana Nance.

Meadowbrook regularly offers one-day mission trips for those who want to be in mission but don't have a week or more for the traditional mission programs. And their mission field is close by: their own community where many are feeling the impact of economic woes.

The one-day mission team assembles on occasional Saturdays for a quick breakfast and then moves on to the mission assignment for that day. Participants are warned ahead of time to be prepared "to feel good at the end of the day." Helping others can be real high!

Do you want to share your church, group or individual's story of good deeds? Please contact Carolyn Stephens at carolyn@ctcumc.org with a brief description and contact information.



Annual Conference offering supports the many “faces” of justice ministries

— This is Marie’s story of survival —

The Conference Mission Ministries Team selected a group of four ministries that comprise justice ministries for the 2009 Annual Conference offering.

This issue of *Central Link* focuses on the **Methodist Justice Ministry (MJM)** which provides free legal protection and representation, financial support and pastoral care for abused women and children in poverty. Also addressed are the homeless men and women being cheated and exploited by unscrupulous day labor operators.

Below is a story from the Methodist Justice Ministry as told by Rev. Brooks Harrington, legal director.

* * *

“Marie” was 16 when she became pregnant for the first time. The father of her first baby was 15. She had been held back in school because of repeated illnesses and the demands of her father that she stay home and take care of her younger siblings.

So she was only in the seventh grade when she discovered she was pregnant. She had been sexually abused by her father repeatedly, and had too much shame to believe that she could free herself from her trap in any other way than having her own baby.

She moved out of her father’s house and into the home of her boyfriend

and his parents. She lived with them for seven years, and conceived two more children before he married her.

Marie and her husband eventually moved into their own apartment. She bore him a total of seven children. It was when they moved out of his parent’s home that he started to beat her. Almost as bad as the beatings and vile names was that he did it in front of the children. He would come home drunk most nights, demand dinner and sex, and beat her if she hesitated for a moment or complained about his conduct.

He refused to let her handle any money, make any decisions, leave the house without the youngest children in tow, or try to find income of her own. He was violently jealous, accusing her of infidelity in front of the children if he found that she had even opened the blinds of their house. Once he choked her until she lost consciousness and then sent one of her daughters to the bedroom and “wake your slut of a mother up.” In short, she had married her father.

Her husband actually sued her for divorce at the insistence of his latest girlfriend as a condition of “being” with him. When the girlfriend dumped him, the husband demanded Marie take him back into “his” house and tried to dismiss the divorce suit.

When Marie went secretly to the family court judge to explain her plight, the judge referred her to the Methodist Justice Ministry. By the time she found her way there in June 2008, she was 41 with only a seventh-grade education, never held a job, had the responsibility of four children under 18, and doubted she could survive on her own.

After all, between her father and husband she only heard that she was “fat,” “lazy,” “stupid,” “worthless” and worse. By March of 2009, the MJM funded her move into an apartment with her four children. The ministry also helped her to find her first job ever and provided her with the funds to get past the many short-term economic emergencies she faced.

MJM obtained an order from the court forbidding the husband from coming within 200 yards of her, her new residence or her work place, from threatening her in any way and from criticizing her to the children. Further, MJM obtained a court order requiring the husband to pay \$1,100 in monthly child support and a fair property settlement freeing her from his many debts.



And finally, with Methodist Justice Ministries help, she was granted a divorce from her abuser and a new life.

“At every step we prayed with her, affirmed that Jesus loves her and is with her, and showed her in every way we could that she is of inestimable value and has never deserved the abuse and lack of love she has suffered,” Harrington states.

“This is not even one of our most violent cases,” he says. “But it is a representative one. We receive an average of 10 calls a week from new people seeking our help. This is what the Methodist Justice Ministry has done seven days a week since March 2006. Please pray for us and for our clients.”

Other ministries your Annual Conference offering will support: Tarrant County Restorative Justice Center/Home of Greater Joy, Parents & Children Together and Crime Victims Council.



Conference Calendar

- April**
- 18: Small Membership/Rural Ministries meeting at Conference Center
 - 20: Board of Ordained Ministry at Glen Lake
 - 20: Appointive Cabinet
 - 25: Conference Student Leadership Team meeting at UCF, Hill College
 - 25: Conference Student Leadership Team meeting at UCF, Hill College, Hillsboro
 - 26: China Spring UMC 125th anniversary celebration
 - 26: JFON (Justice for Our Neighbors) 10-year celebration at Polytechnic UMC, Fort Worth
 - 27: Mid-Cities Older Adult Retreat at Still Water Lodge, Glen Rose
 - 28: Temple District Clergy/Spouses at Troy UMC
 - 27-29: Mid-Cities Older Adult Retreat at Still Water Lodge
 - 28: Temple District clergy & spouses meeting at Troy UMC
 - 28: StartUp Seminar at Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center
 - 29: Glen Lake Camp & Retreat Center Board of Directors meeting
 - 30: Glen Lake Golf Classic tournament at Squaw Valley Golf Course, Glen Rose
- May**
- 3: Golden Cross Sunday /Mother’s Day
 - 3: 40th Anniversary Concert at Austin Avenue UMC, Waco
 - 7: CTMF Advisors Seminar at Conference Center

Spring Summit recap | Continued from page 1A

with Dr. Don Lambert and Rebecca Smith (“Good and unique topic to include.” “This is a timely project that every community needs ... Gardens and churches go together.”)

Feed the Body, Free the Mind with Sheri Zorrilla (“Exceptional! ... Interesting approach to normalizing eating habits and weight.” “Speaker shares real experiences and eye openers on dieting.”)

You Gotta Have Heart with Jim Reeves (“Excellent delivery based on personal testimonial.” “Reeves has a very compelling story and he is very informative in telling about his experience — helped me to understand the human perspective.”)

Special People, Special Needs with representatives from Aldersgate Enrichment Center, Methodist Mission Home and Advocates for Special People (“Good information about mission opportunities at Aldersgate and more.” “Much empathy for those with special needs.”)

When Winter Comes: Hospice and Palliative Care: Death Is a Part of Life with Chaplain Theresa Luby (“Very uplifting, comforting and encouraging to prepare myself and others to enter the final room.” “Permission to die ... great introduction.” “Exceptional and a blessing.”)

The Recovering Church with a panel from United Methodist congregations (“What better way to end a session!” “Thank you for sharing your stories.”)

Make plans now to attend the Fall Leadership Summit Saturday, Nov. 14. Please note, this is a change from the usual date in September. The focus will be on Bishop Robert Schnase’s “Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations” study program for local churches. Bishop Schnase will be on hand to lead much of the training along with best practices from congregations that are using the program.



Rev. Robin Stevens (above) talks about growing healthy children, and Dr. Bill Crawford (right) does three workshop sessions on helping clergy to “keep the flame alive,” without burning out themselves.



For the latest updates on the conference and youth calendars, visit regularly www.ctcumc.org

Conference VIM coordinator shares how Clean Delivery Kits can save mothers and babies lives in Liberia — YOU CAN HELP

BY JULIE WARREN
CENTRAL TEXAS CONFERENCE VIM
COORDINATOR

Each year in Africa, more than 600,000 women die from complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Approximately 9 million infant deaths occur each year. Of these, over half or 53 percent occur during the first four weeks after birth, and more than one third (3.2 million) occur within the first week of life.

Tetanus and other infections are among the leading causes of newborn mortality. Infants with neonatal tetanus often have concomitant cord infection caused by unclean delivery or unclean cord care practices.

Each year, 60 million women, or approximately one half of all births in developing countries, give birth with the help of an untrained traditional birth attendant (TBA) or family member with no help at all.

A simple solution to unclean deliveries is the use of clean delivery kits that can be incorporated into the training of TBAs, like those at the Camphor United Methodist Mission Clinic I visited in Liberia.

Clean delivery kits are simple to assemble. They contain essential items for conducting the clean delivery of a baby, even in less than sterile conditions. The components of the kit are meant to improve hygienic birth practices following the World Health Organization's (WHO) principles for clean delivery and cord care.

In the last issue of the Central Link, Volunteers in Mission Coordinator Julie Warren shared her fact-finding journey to Zimbabwe and Liberia on behalf of the people of the Central Texas Conference. She recalled images of starvation and disease, but she carried with her medications for cholera and brought home a simple, inexpensive way United Methodists in Central Texas can help. As a nurse witnessing the conditions and working with the medical teams in Liberia, she explains the necessity for safer, cleaner childbirthing measures. The Clean Delivery Kit Initiative is one of the best ways individuals, United Methodist Women groups and churches can help.

According to WHO's Six Principles of Cleanliness at Birth: "The hands of the birth attendant must be washed with water and soap, as well as the perineum or birth area of the woman. The surface on which the infant is delivered must be clean. Instruments for cutting the cord and cord care (razor blade, cutting surface, cord ties) should be clean. Nothing should be applied either to the cutting surface or to the cord stump. The stump should be left uncovered to dry and to mummify."

One study in Tanzania concluded that newborns whose mothers did use the kits were 13 times less likely to develop cord infections than were newborns whose mothers did not use a kit. The mothers themselves were three times more likely to develop puerperal sepsis or genital tract infection after childbirth.

You Can Help

You can be a part of the Clean Delivery kit Initiative. Imagine a baby or a mother surviving because

of a simple kit you help put together — all for less than the cost of a cup of coffee and a desert at your favorite coffee shop!

The kits are based on research and field trials. It is essential for the contents of each kit to be consistent and re-checked for their content:

- One piece of soap (motel room size) — to clean the birth attendant's hands both before delivery and prior to cutting the umbilical cord, and to clean the mother's perineum. Soap enhances clean practices by motivating hand washing.
- One pair of clean latex gloves — to reduce disease transmission.
- One square yard of clear 4 mil. plastic sheeting — to provide a clean surface on which to deliver the baby.
- Three pieces of clean string, each 12 inches long - to tie off the



In Liberia, Julie Wilson met 42 traditional birthing attendants (TBAs) at the rural Camphor United Methodist Clinic. She was pleased to realize how the Clean Delivery Kits will make a difference in quality of care.

umbilical cord; the third piece is extra in case the TBA drops one.

- One clean single-use razor blade — essential for clean cutting of the cord. Carefully wrap the razor blade in paper and/or plastic to protect it from moisture or from causing injury.
- Two flannelette receiving

blankets, each one yard square cut with pinking shears to prevent fraying — one to dry and stimulate the baby and one to swaddle the baby. Even in tropical climates, babies quickly lose body heat.

- One gallon zip lock bag —

to package the kit and to be used post-birth to hold the placenta ready for safe disposal.

These kits will be distributed only to hospitals and clinics with the programs in place to provide education on how to use them correctly.

Thank you for being a blessing

to mothers and babies by supporting the clean delivery kit initiative and for promoting safe deliveries across the world.

Speaker Available
Julie Warren, professional nurse and Central Texas Conference VIM coordinator, is available to talk to your congregation about missions in Zimbabwe and Liberia and providing Clean Delivery Kits for safer births.

If interested, contact Julie at 817-453-2682 (home), 817-975-9216 (cell) or steadleaze@charter.net.

To make a donation for the kits, send check to Central Texas Conference Treasurer, 464 Bailey Ave., Fort Worth 76107.

Rod Miles, Waco DS | Continued from page 1A

Over the years, he has worked with students from Texas Wesleyan University and then from the divinity schools at Perkins and Brite, and then the conference Board of Ministry.

"It became clear that this was a part of the ministry God gave me," he realized. "So, I continued to invest my time in helping them develop an understanding of living out the call of God on their lives. I had no idea that God was preparing me to be sent by our bishop to

supervise the leadership, both lay and clergy, of the Waco District."

As part of the visionary role of a Cabinet member, Miles holds an historical perspective that informs his vision.

"It has been said by some that the only thing that will transform any culture is for the people to be awakened to God. Our nation experienced such a movement of God prior to the American Revolution and the Civil War," he states. "God stirred the hearts of

people in such a way that entire townships were recorded as coming to Christ during a single revival crusade.

"I believe we will see this vision replayed in our time. By God's grace, Christians will receive a new heart of compassion for the unchurched masses that takes us back to our roots of effective personal prayer empowered by a love for humanity."

The appointment of Miles and the other new Cabinet level leadership will be effective in June.