

## **IX. DAILY PROCEEDINGS**

### **SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING**

**June 6, 2010**

#### **Laity Session**

**First United Methodist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, 3:30 p.m.**

The laity session of The North Texas Conference was held at First United Methodist Church of Wichita Falls. Conference Lay Leader, Richard Hearne, welcomed the lay members of annual conference and outgoing Youth Conference Lay Leader Ricky Harrison opened the session in prayer.

Hearne noted that 2011 will be an election year and that now would be a good time to consider who to support in next year's election.

The remaining time was dedicated to questions and answers regarding the proposed Strategic Plan, on which laity and clergy would be voting on Monday.

The closing prayer was offered by Rachel Magruder, incoming Youth Conference Lay Leader.

#### **Clergy Session**

**Floral Heights United Methodist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, 3:30 p.m.**

The North Texas Conference clergy gathered at Floral Heights United Methodist Church of Wichita Falls and Bishop Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. He recognized Bishop Sunday Onuoha of Nigeria and called on Kenny Dickson, host pastor, to give the opening prayer. Justin Miller, youth pastor, and Chiemi Watanabe, organist led pastors in the hymn, "And Are We Yet Alive."

Bishop Bledsoe called on Gary Mueller, chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, for the Board's report. (Note: The details of the complete report can be found in Section XI. BUSINESS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.)

The chairperson stated that the Board found all members blameless in their lives and official administration. He then referred clergy to the names of persons being nominated for the Committee on Investigation and the Administrative Review Committee under question 18 of the printed report. These persons were elected. Mueller, along with the committee heads of the Board of Ordained Ministry, walked the session through the reporting structure having to do with all matters of the clergy, as prescribed by the General Conference.

Edlen Cowley, candidacy registrar of the Board of Ordained Ministry, noted that the names of those who were certified candidates for ministry, question 19, were printed in the handout document and asked that any corrections to the list be submitted in writing.

James Minor, chair of the Committee on Certifications, presented those in specialized ministry.

Mike Miller, chair of the Local Pastors Division, presented the names of local pastors in answer to questions 20 – 23. The names, part-time and full-time, were approved unanimously.

Fred Durham, Assistant to the Bishop, presented the names of those appointed from other conferences and other Christian denominations as well as associate members and elders serving less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  time. The names were approved unanimously.

Donna Whitehead, member of Conference Relations (reporting for Dennis Wilkinson, chair) reported on all changes in clergy persons' relationships to the conference. The names of the clergy members who had died since the last conference session were read and Bishop Bledsoe asked Marji Bishir to lead a memorial prayer. (See also Memorial Service in Section IX. DAILY PROCEEDINGS for Tuesday June 8, and Section XV. MEMORIALS.)

Whitehead read the names of the clergy retiring this year, and each came forward. They were honored with applause and Bishop Bledsoe shook the hand of each retiree.

Mike Miller read the names of all local pastors retiring this year, and each came forward. They were honored with applause and Bishop Bledsoe shook the hand of each.

Todd Harris, chair of the Committee on Preparations and Qualifications, presented to the clergy session the candidates for probationary membership and commissioning. They came and stood before the Bishop and each received a favorable vote by the membership.

Kay DeBlance, Bethany Graham, Beth Lutz, and Ugonna Onuoha were presented for probationary membership and commissioning for the ministry of deacon in preparation for ordination.

The following were presented for preparatory membership and commissioning in preparation for ordination on the elder track: Sharon Clepper O'Connor, Jimmy Greene, Melissa Hatch, Cheryl A. Jones, Julie Macpherson, Mary Ncurubi Miriti, and Cheryl Murray.

The following persons were presented for election into full membership and ordination: As a deacon: Marjorie T. Bishir; as elders: Lyle C. Benson, Elizabeth Kellner, Walter Ray Butts, Jr., Marc Ivan Corazao, Nancy Morrison DeStefano, James Christopher Dowd, Gloria Young-Eun Kim Fowler, Daniel Alan Gurley, Derek Shawn Jacobs, John A. Johnson, Mai Ngoc Le, Dean Joseph Libby, Lisa Marshall, Marie Mitchell, Liz Moen, Dana G. Norton, Denise Peckham, and Rodney Whitfield. Bishop Bledsoe asked these persons the historical questions originating with John Wesley and then the votes were taken on each person individually. All were approved and greeted with an extended standing ovation by the pastors.

Mueller called for reports from Maxie Moore, Fellowship of Local Pastors; Debbie Chapman, Order of Deacons; and Billy Echols-Richter, Order of Elders, who announced the 2010 Clergy Retreat as October 18-20 and encouraged all to attend.

Gary Mueller moved passage of the entire report of the Board of Ordained Ministry and it was approved.

To conclude the meeting Bishop Bledsoe offered a word of thanks to the clergy and lifted up the Annual Conference address and Strategic Plan report for Monday morning. He then asked John Rosenberg to offer the closing prayer.

The full reports of the divisions of the Board of Ordained Ministry are printed in this journal in Section XIV. AGENCY REPORTS under the heading, Board of Ordained Ministry.

### **Worship Service**

#### **Kay Yeager Coliseum, Wichita Falls, Texas, 7:00 p.m.**

The Cuthand Creek Band, from Cuthand UMC, provided the gathering music as well as rousing gospel hymns throughout the evening. Hosts Linda Parks and John Rosenburg offered a welcome. Bishop Bledsoe introduced Rev. Gary Henderson, Executive Director of the UM Global Health Initiative, who shared the stage with a giant mosquito mock-up during the Imagine No Malaria Report. Henderson encouraged the North Texas Annual Conference not to sit there but to “do something!” The response from those present resulted in an offering of \$7,338.32, dedicated entirely to Imagine No Malaria, in effect saving 733.83 lives.

The anthem was “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee,” sung by the Wichita Falls District Combined Choir. Offertory music was provided by students from Midwestern State University Wesley Foundation, with campus minister Cheryl Murray directing. Communion music, written by Dr. Kiyo Watanabe, was played by Dr. Watanabe with Elizabeth Yeager, Flutist, and Linda Beltchev, Oboist, daughters of Kay Yeager, member of First UMC, Wichita Falls and a principal donor for the evening’s coliseum gathering place.

Bishop Bledsoe introduced and welcomed the night’s speaker and cabinet member, Rev. Dr. Clara M. Reed, and her spouse, Charles Reed. Dr. Reed’s sermon was entitled “Alignment for Divine Assignment.” Dr. Reed employed Joshua 1:1-9 to describe how God gave Moses’ right-hand man Joshua his divine assignment to lead God’s people into the Promised Land following Moses’ death. “Joshua was called to change his alignment for a divine assignment,” she said. “He had to change the direction of his ministry.” She went on to say that Joshua had to decide whether to be a thermometer – conforming to and reflecting conditions of the status quo - or a thermostat, which assesses conditions, then takes action and produces results! She reminded the crowd that demographers call for 1.2 million new residents in the mission field of the North Texas Conference during the next nine years. Even though there will be challenges and always a “back-to-Egypt” committee, Reed reminded the conference that God is calling the North Texas Conference to be not just a good conference, but a great conference. She concluded with words from Joshua 1:6: “Be strong and courageous. Rise up and possess the land!” There was an enthusiastic standing ovation.

Interns from C2K and Project Transformation assisted in serving communion to the conference members. Bishop Bledsoe presided over the service and led a blessing for the 99 interns who arrived via two buses and returned that evening to their summer’s assignments in Dallas and Sherman.

A reception following the service honored Bishop and Mrs. Bledsoe.

## **MONDAY MORNING SESSION**

**June 7, 2009**

**MPEC, Wichita Falls, Texas**

### **Organization of the Conference**

The business session of the conference began with Perry Crenshaw and Tim McLemore leading the hymn “Open Our Eyes, Lord.” Bishop Bledsoe gavelled to order the 40<sup>th</sup> session of the North Texas Annual Conference and called on Reid Fade for the opening prayer.

Bishop Bledsoe then called upon Conference Secretary Judith Reedy for the organizational motions. Reedy moved that the bar of the conference be the stage and all seats in front of the

platform and that the visitors' section be the seats to each side of the stage. The motion was approved. Reedy moved the election of persons to serve the 2010 business sessions as assistant secretaries: Todd Bristow, Kenny Dickson, and Marsha Middleton; head teller, Mike Miller; and the teller group as appointed by each of the district superintendents. They were elected.

Reedy moved the approval of legislative item number one in the conference workbook, [LA 1], for the equalization of clergy and lay members. The motion was approved.

Bishop Bledsoe then introduced John Croft, Conference Chancellor, also serving as parliamentarian for the conference. Croft greeted the Conference and stated that there are currently no lawsuits pending and the conference is in good legal shape.

### **Episcopacy Committee**

Scott Smith, chair of the committee, was accompanied on the platform by the committee members. Mrs. Bledsoe was escorted to the podium, and Smith acknowledged the blessing of having her as First Lady of the North Texas Conference. Smith then invited Bishop Bledsoe to join them at the podium. Smith expressed gratitude for their leadership in change when change is required and their courage to hold to the central truths of the faith. He then presented Bishop and Mrs. Bledsoe with a gift of tickets to the Dallas Symphony. Mrs. Bledsoe thanked the conference and spoke of the many ministries she has had the opportunity to observe within the Annual Conference. She called the conference to faithfulness. The Bishop greeted committee members as they exited the stage.

### **Episcopacy Address**

Bishop Bledsoe began his address by noting that September 1, 2010 will mark the completion of his second year as Bishop for North Texas. He acknowledged that this year has not been an easy one for many, and he thanked those who had done more with less. Again, he quoted Charles Dickens' antithetical opening lines from A Tale of Two Cities. "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times....." He recalled that many had asked him what his vision was for the North Texas Conference and that his concern had not been about his vision but about God's greater vision for the North Texas Conference made known through the clergy and lay leadership. The conference had thus been invited to share their hopes and dreams, out of which and through a process of prayer and discernment, God's greater vision began to take shape. It was obvious that the church longed for change that would enable the church to live out its calling to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Bishop Bledsoe acknowledged that we do not all hear the same things. As an example, he said that when we spoke about reaching a more diverse and younger mission field in the future, some people heard that we no longer needed older and Anglo constituents. He emphasized that when we hear different things, we need to talk more with one another to get a clearer picture of what is being proposed and to what we are being called.

Bishop Bledsoe paused for a power point presentation which highlighted some of the great things being done as a conference, from the Africa University ribbon cutting to the Alvord and Christ Plano new buildings to Youth Exploration 2009, the Munger Place project, and Imagine No Malaria.

Still, he said, there is a greater need, the need to overcome obstacles and persevere through the risk of change to be where God is calling us. He talked about his own personal struggles with change, beginning when his father answered the call to ordained ministry and his family was moved from

his home in Marlin, Texas to Georgetown. He concluded with the greatest change that occurred when Leslie lost her eyesight, but he emphasized that God did not abandon them and that their faith in God enabled them to get through that change. In conclusion, Bishop Bledsoe said that the time is here and now for change to take place. He asked for support of and prayers for the new strategic plan. The conference responded with a standing ovation.

### **Laity Address**

Conference Lay Leader Richard Hearne began his laity address to the Conference by referring to a scene from *The Titanic* in which the first-class passengers in the men's lounge smoking cigars, drinking whiskey and playing cards had no idea that they were about to die. Hearne called attention to the conference statistician's report and lifted up the key areas of continued decline. He suggested an ideal solution – declare bankruptcy and liquidate the assets. He wondered if the United Methodist Church would be missed. We would lose apportionments and our outreach all around the world. We would lose the Communion Table open to all and the church where laity have an equal voice and women and youth have an equal voice. How much of a concern are those things?

Then Hearne stopped and said he hoped that what he was saying offended people just a little. That was his purpose. He asked the conference to pray with him, and he began to speak again, this time quoting from *The Shack* by Paul Young, "Growth means change and change involves risk, stepping from the known to the unknown." Hearne said that now is the time to change. He reminded the conference that when a bishop was being selected, delegates were tasked with finding a bishop that would be a "change agent." He observed that the Strategic Plan Team is a cross section of the conference, has sought input from conference members, that the conference voted last year to move forward with the Strategic Plan, and that waiting a year to implement would be a year lost. Finally, Hearne lifted up the plan as a vehicle to reverse the negative trends within the conference. He encouraged the conference to be in relationship with one another and to move forward by passing the strategic plan. He challenged the laity to recognize that they are responsible for being change agents. He then asked the laity to stand if they were committed to working on being in relationship with others and working to reverse the trend. He asked them to be in prayer for their pastors, staff and congregations, his prayer being that future historians would point to Annual Conference 2010 as the time when the change began.

### **Red Cross Blood Drive**

Marji Bishir introduced Sheila Hanner, director of Southwest Region of the Red Cross. Hanner asked for a show of hands from those who had ever received blood, donated blood or blood products, knew someone deployed overseas, had taken a CPR class, swimming lessons, lifeguard certification, been a victim of a tornado, hurricane or fire. She responded that the Red Cross is "you." Hanner lifted up 8-year-old Piper Simon of Greenland Hills UMC. Piper was diagnosed in October of 2009 with stage-four lymphoma. Over the past year, Piper has been receiving treatment for the disease. Those treatments have included chemotherapy, radiation, and blood transfusions. This would not have been possible were it not for those people doing extraordinary things by donating blood. This past week, Piper finished her last treatment. Hanner asked members of the conference to help the Red Cross by rolling up their sleeves and potentially saving a life today.

### **Ordinand Presentations**

**Lyle C. Benson** is a graduate of University of Nebraska with a degree in business and is a 2007 graduate of Perkins School of Theology, with a Master of Divinity. Benson is

serving on the ministerial staff of Trietsch Memorial UMC, Flower Mound. He is married to Kris. They have two adult children, Lisa and Chris, and lost a son, Eric, to death in 2007.

Benson said he looks at Christianity as a relationship with Christ. He referred to the homeless man called Denver in Ron Hall's book Same Kind of Different As Me. Denver said, "I ain't going to any more Bible studies. When people start Bible-doing, then I'll be there." Benson's hope is that we will be out there Bible-doing, inviting people to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Marjorie T. Bishir** is a graduate of the University of Texas with a degree in Business Administration and a Master of Theology from Perkins. Bishir's husband Jody died in 2009. She has two young adult children, Pamela and Jack Bishir, and Steve, age 11. Bishir has been serving as an associate director of Connectional Ministries for the North Texas Conference.

Bishir explained the ministry of a deacon – to connect with the church and with the world. She observed that mission teams go all over the world in the name of Jesus Christ. She recalled a recent question from a fellow passenger on an airline: "What inspires you?" She responded that the missionaries she gets to be with throughout the world inspire her. Her hope and dream is that we will move beyond the pews and witness to what God is calling us to do.

**Walter (Wally) Butts** is a graduate of the University of Texas with a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Divinity degree from Perkins. He is married to Fiona Macleod Butts and they are parents of five-year-old William. Butts is serving as pastor of Cornerstone UMC, Garland.

Butts recalled an evening when he and his son William were watching a documentary on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Butts' explanation that some of the lighter skinned people did not want to share with the darker skinned people made his son sad. Butts said his dream is that when he is a retiree, some ordinand will say, "I heard that there was a time when there were factions and a lower level of trust in the conference, but I don't see that now." His hope is that the conference claims it the greatest honor and privilege to share in the redeeming love of Christ.

**Marc Ivan Corazao** is a graduate of Southwestern University with a degree in psychology and a master of Theology from Perkins. He is married to Michelle. Marc was born in Lima, Peru and is currently serving on the ministerial staff of Floral Heights UMC, Wichita Falls.

Corazao began by saying that he was tired – tired of mission efforts that keep those being helped at arm's length, tired of watching leaders who cater to a comfortable constituency, tired of hearing about a sinking ship, tired of his own participation in this. He envisioned a dream of holy conversations at conference, his own need to repent, working alongside those being helped so that people would ask, "What is it with those United Methodists?" Corazao said he did not want to miss it!

### Courtesies and Resolutions

Jim Pledger extended greetings to Bishop Sunday Onouha, who briefly greeted the conference. Greetings were also extended to Bishop Max Whitfield, whose son Rodney is being ordained

tonight; District Superintendent Sean Adair from the British Methodist Church; District Superintendent James Lambala and wife Anna of the Gumpa District in the Liberian Annual conference; Tim Brown, interim President of the Methodist Children's Home; and Ruth Robinson, Conference President of United Methodist Women. Robinson thanked the conference for their prayers during her illness and subsequent healing. Bishop Bledsoe called on Dr. Ron Henderson to pray before the break.

### **Statistician's Report**

Marvin Guier referred the conference to pp. 108-110 in the pre-conference workbook for the report of the statistician. Guier observed that virtually all data areas have declined in the past ten years. He cautioned that if the trend continues, we will reach a smaller and smaller percentage of the mission field; therefore, we must do some things differently, and we must take concrete steps to fulfill our mission. (See the full report in Section XVII. STATISTICIAN'S REPORT).

### **Strategic Planning Team**

John Fiedler, chair of the Strategic Planning Team, asked the members of the team to stand and then referred to Legislative Item #2 [LA 2], the proposal of the SPT printed in its entirety in the pre-conference workbook pp.2-40. Fiedler emphasized the comprehensive plan of the last six months to inform both laity and clergy of the plan and its implications. He did a brief walk-through of the basic components, including the observation that the General Conference is the only body authorized to determine denominational priorities and doctrine. He noted that the body had mandated in 2008 four focus areas which would require re-ordering the life of the church. Re-ordering, Fiedler observed, requires thoughtful planning. The resulting re-ordering of priorities required realignment of financial resources, and Fiedler pointed out that the Strategic Plan had not resulted in any increase in apportionments.

He then took the conference back to August of 2008 when someone asked our new bishop to share his vision for the future of our conference, and he replied that he did not know yet. Within months, Bishop Bledsoe had convened a 32-member diverse team of conference leaders to join with him and the cabinet to define that vision, a process that was endorsed by the 2009 annual conference. Fiedler reported that the effort was driven by paid facilitator Christie Latona and that the bishop had participated in the creation of the Strategic Plan.

In addressing the sins of centuries of institutional racism, sexism, ageism, classism, and clergy-centric decision-making, Fiedler said that sensitivity and commitment to the healing practices of inclusiveness and honoring diversity in all forms must be embodied in the very DNA of the conference infrastructure, in the core leadership rather than a single committee or task force. Such a commitment requires modeling from the top, Fiedler confirmed, saying that the team believes that Bishop Bledsoe has unique credentials to do this.

Fiedler observed that the most humbling realization of all, in considering the adoption of the strategic plan, had been that those in the North Texas Conference mission field only wanted to know, "Will we be there for them where they need us? Will we teach their children the great stories of our faith, provide Christian child care, biblical teaching and dynamic worship in the name of Jesus Christ? Will we actively embrace them as God has created them?" Fiedler concluded that the time to lead is now in order to reach the great influx of new people in the mission field with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fiedler's report ended with a brief slide show and an invitation for all members of the SPT to join him in preparation for answering questions. Fiedler noted that the slide show featured the new district superintendents and the directors of the new centers. He addressed the question of why



Bishop Bledsoe and the cabinet had made these appointments already. He talked about other options that included making appointments that would be invalidated if the plan were approved, making no appointments at all and getting out of cycle, or approving the plan and waiting in “Babylonian captivity” for a year; thus, the team believed they should err on the side of action.

Fiedler then announced that the work of the team was finished and that it was now up to the conference, that even though there were many different entities, many of which did not always trust or understand one another, all were called to unite in the name of Christ. The formula, he said, was simple: The cure for disconnection is reconnection. He then asked Bishop Bledsoe to lead the conference in prayer for a renewed spirit of connection in the North Texas Conference family.

Bishop Bledsoe prayed, and the floor opened up for questions.

Fiedler encouraged members of the SPT to answer the questions that fell in their field of expertise. Questions focused on how the plan would impact the work of the BOM and of the conference in areas of diversity, including the deaf and the youth. Team members responded the BOM will be trained in diversity sensitivity, that everyone is responsible for diversity, not one specific team, that the core leadership team will be “fruit inspectors,” and that both laity and clergy will serve on the core leadership team. In answer to the question of how the SPT sought the voice of God in the midst of process, the response was through prayer and seeking God in listening to others. A question about how rural areas would be assured that poor in their midst would be dealt with was answered by connecting gifts for ministry with the poor through the Center for Missional Outreach and through the four district superintendents who are experts on mission fields.

The Bishop announced that question time had been exhausted and that suspension of standing rules would be moved following the lunch break.

### **Courtesies and Resolutions**

Rusty Hedges reported for the courtesies and resolutions committee, announcing the presence of Reverend Jin-Hong Kim, from House of Prayer in South Korea, present for his daughter’s ordination tonight. Bishop Bledsoe recognized Reverend Kim, and he was greeted by applause. Reverend Larry Coleman, Saint Jo UMC, broke his kneecap last night and is preparing for surgery. Hedges then recognized representatives from Zoe Ministries – Reegan Kaberia from Kenya and Director of Strategic Planning for Zoe Ministries, Jackson Warner, from the Texas Conference. Over 4,000 orphans who are head of their household have now been helped to support their family economically, socially, and spiritually. Hedges requested prayers for Terry Hale Whitgrove’s parishioner at Byers UMC, Wichita Falls. Becky is a single mom of three whose home burned to the ground last night.

Charles Reed offered the closing prayer.

## **MONDAY AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION**

Ricky Harrison offered the opening prayer.

### **Texas United Methodist Colleges Association**

Bishop Solomon referred the conference to the workbook, to a list of six students in the North Texas Conference who have received Texas United Methodist Colleges Association scholarships. He brought greetings to the conference, emphasizing the importance of “informed minds and faith-formed hearts” and thanking the conference for their gifts.



### Strategic Plan

Bishop Bledsoe called on John Fiedler who called on Gary Mueller to help shepherd the conference through the process of voting on the strategic plan. Bishop Bledsoe stated that some had asked to vote by written ballot. He then called for a straw poll regarding a written ballot vs. a show of hands. A show of hands clearly passed.

Mueller introduced a plan to work the conference through the process of consideration.

- 1) How will we own the proposal? We will deal with the plan as presented with no additions or deletions.
- 2) We need to deal with the plan as the family we are. Concerns need to be heard and respected. Mueller suggested a period of holy conferencing up to 30 minutes with no one talking longer than three minutes.
- 3) Every person is free to vote his or her conscience without repercussions. The Bishop will call for a vote after the discussion time has concluded.

Mueller then moved that the standing rules be suspended in order to deal with Legislative Item #2 [LA 2] in the above manner. Motion was seconded by Susan Gross, Tinney Chapel. Motion carried.

John Fiedler moved the adoption of the strategic plan. There were four speeches for and two against. John Fiedler closed, emphasizing that there would be no vulnerability for anyone voting; that the plan is not a cure-all for every challenge ahead but it is a better way. Fiedler ended with words of Wesley, “Offer them Christ.” Bishop Bledsoe called for a standing vote of those for, those against, and those abstaining. Tellers counted and then went into the counting room.

### Ordinand Presentations

**Nancy Morrison DeStefano** received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Montclair State College, a Master of Arts from Immaculate Conception Seminary, a master of Social Work from Adelphi University, and completed the United Methodist Advanced Course of Study at Perkins. DeStefano is married to John Edmund DeStefano and they are the parents of three adult children, Kathryn, Megan, and Kevin. She has been serving as pastor of First UMC, Bells.

DeStefano said that she had become familiar with country roads and that country roads are nice; however, she said that churches are called to be more like urban traffic jams. Churches are called to bring everyone onto that road along with them. She thanked her family and the clergy who had helped her along the way, saying to all, “See you on the road.”

**James Christopher Dowd** is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame with a major in Russian and a Master of Divinity from Perkins. He is married to Whitney and they are the parents of a son, James Maxwell, born November 3, 2008. Dowd has been serving on the ministerial staff of Arapaho UMC, Richardson.

Dowd began by thanking his wife Whitney and the people of Arapaho UMC. He professed a love for the Wesleyan way, that justification is just the beginning of our faith walk and that the Wesleyan way is about personal holiness as well as social justice. Dowd hopes that we would never be complacent about our calling and that the church would have the courage to repent when we are wrong.

**Gloria Young-Eun Kim Fowler** is a graduate of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan with a degree in psychology and a Master of Divinity from Perkins. She and her husband, Abraham Fowler, are the parents of 7-year-old Ernest and 5-year-old Elizabeth. Fowler has been serving on the ministerial staff of First UMC, Grand Prairie.

Fowler was born in Korea and graduated from high school in India. She thanked the United Methodist church for showing her that even the young, minority women can serve. Her hope is that the heritage of the Wesleyan tradition will flourish for years to come, that the church will reclaim the tradition of small groups and hold each other accountable, and that all generations and cultures will worship together. Her dream is that all will dream dreams and make them become reality.

**Daniel Alan Gurley** is a graduate of Collin County Community College with a major in communications. Gurley completed the Advanced Course of Study at Perkins School of Theology. He and his wife Angela are parents of two young adult children, Daniel Alan Jr. and Khara Marie. He has been serving as pastor of Trinity UMC, Denison.

Gurley's hopes and dreams included growing the church by more professions of faith, that the church would make the world their parish, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and Wesley. He hopes that the United Methodist Church will continue to be God's hands and feet for the masses who are searching and that once again the United Methodist church will be on fire, a strong and actively growing denomination, part of the awakening for Christ.

### Imagine No Malaria

As Judith Reedy reported that Bishop Bledsoe wanted Imagine No Malaria to be a grass-roots ministry that would be allowed to bubble up in churches small and large, co-chair Richard Hearne waved a giant mosquito from a long pole in front of the podium to get the attention of the Conference. Reedy explained that sometimes we need to be reminded by the presence of a mosquito as large as the one on stage in order to realize that malaria kills a child every thirty seconds. She and Hearne observed that Bishop Bledsoe responded immediately to the invitation to join Bishops Bickerton and Dorff in the Democratic Republic of Congo where only one child in five makes it to the age of five.

The conference team of laity and clergy discovered that what raises the awareness of such a disease within the North Texas conference varies from church to church. For some churches, it is wristbands; for others, it is the Conference puppets Dr. Mal Aria and Dr. Nettie Goodwater, telling the story of the collaborative, global effort to wipe out malaria; for others it is planning a special INM event to occur during activities such as Vacation Bible School. Whether a church has 16 members or 1600 members, they can raise awareness and help reach the goal for the United Methodist Church of 75 million dollars. Reedy referenced Reverend Chali's statement that imagining no malaria would be like the Kingdom of God.

As part of the goal to eradicate malaria by the year 2015, the North Texas Conference has been privileged to have field representatives Maria Brocato and Wilson Mirimi working with churches in the conference on increasing the awareness. Brocato (Dr. Nettie Goodwater) and puppeteer Pix Smith (Dr. Mal Aria, now green from having fallen into an experiment to eradicate malaria) enacted one of the scripts written by Gloria Thomas, pointing out the importance of prevention, education, treatment, and communication. At the end of the skit, Wilson Mirimi spoke to the conference on video about his experience with malaria as a five-year-old.

Judith Reedy moved the approval of the report. It was approved.

### **Young Person's Address**

Ricky Harrison admitted that much had changed since he stood before the Conference last year. Having explored his call to ministry at Exploration 2009, he quoted one of his favorite speakers there – Bishop Sally Dyck. “We are NOT here to sustain an institution; we are here to LOVE the people!” Harrison echoed those words, stating that he had experienced the power battles that happen in the system and the gridlock that happens in committees that do nothing but argue and talk but will not act, the “business as usual” model under which we have operated. Looking back to the first Christians in the book of Acts, and speaking Paul’s words of caution as interpreted by Eugene Peterson, Harrison said that he sometimes comes out of church meetings, wondering if our hearts have grown dull, if we have stuck our fingers in our ears and shut our eyes to the world around us so that we can feel comfortable about living our lives with little or no regard to the poor. He admitted that young people share many of the same flaws but are on the right track with the theme of bridging the gap between clergy and laity, mega-churches and small churches, men and women, liberals and conservatives. He encouraged the Conference to work together as the body of Christ and left us with words from Martin Luther King Jr. “For many of our white brothers....have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny....their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.” He then introduced the new CCYM Chair, Rachel Magruder.

Magruder thanked Harrison for his support during the past year. She then defined support from dictionary.com: “to serve as a foundation for.” The first key term is serv(ing) in the name of Christ, locally and globally. The second key term is foundation, as in the partnership foundation between the lay leaders and youth. She told the Conference that youth like to talk and that they should be represented on the committees and teams of the church so that their voices can be heard. She then related a personal story which gave credence to her point. Her youngest sister wanted to know what Magruder thought of her dance recital performance, what she liked and what she didn’t like. She was excited to see what happens with her sister’s dancing after her input, and she admitted that soon enough she will need her sister’s help with her own dancing. Magruder’s hope is that clergy and laity will realize something they had never thought of had it not been for the young person in their meeting.

Bishop Bledsoe requested to delay “Order of the Day” by about 15 minutes. Motion passed.

### **Dallas Bethlehem Center**

Petrella Booker reported that the Dallas Bethlehem Center, a national mission of the United Methodist Church, began in 1946 at St. Paul Methodist Church by Ms. Alice McLarty and that it was designed to help persons of all ages escape the self-perpetuating poverty cycle and find satisfaction in the life of dignity which God intends for all. DBC serves children from six weeks to twelve years old, primarily African-American. During the school year they serve at least 95 children. Recently the DISD year-end assessments show that the majority of DBC children ranked highest of those tested in reading, math and social orientation and that Charles Rice Elementary looks forward to receiving DBC children into their program. Located in the heart of South Dallas/Fair Park, DBC is in one of the poorest areas in the city. According to the 2000 Census, there are 4,916 children in South Dallas between the ages of 0-9. Less than 25% are in some type of Pre-K program and most live in households with incomes below the poverty level. Booker shared statistics from the HighScope Perry Preschool Study which revealed that children from low income families who did not receive preschool were five times more likely to become chronic lawbreakers by age 27. She told the story of Jamar and implored churches to go back and talk about how they could partner with DBC to help Jamar and others like him stay in school and out of gangs.

Tellers reported the vote on the Strategic Plan. There were 709 votes for, 85 votes against, and 10 abstentions. Members then broke into their four new district conferences for the order of the day. There they nominated members to the new Conference Nominating Committee and elected lay members of the Core Leadership Team. The new districts adjourned at 4:30 to prepare for ordination.

## MONDAY EVENING

### Service of Ordination First United Methodist Church, Wichita Falls

Reverend Paul Goodrich welcomed the conference to First United Methodist Church, Wichita Falls for the service of ordination. Music was provided by youth choirs from FUMC, Duncanville and Floral Heights UMC, Wichita Falls. Following the processional hymn, Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe led the congregation in a remembrance of our baptism and a reaffirmation of the ministry entrusted to all God's people.

Reverend William Lawrence, Dean of Perkins School of Theology, preached from Job 32 under the title "Releasing the Silenced Spirit." He began with a test, explaining that Elihu is one of many angry people in the Bible. He then explained why Elihu matters. He was the youngest of the ordinands; he had listened to his elders and had had enough, had grown tired of their speeches. Lawrence said that we do not need to release newly ordained persons on the world who are angry at the world; rather we need to release on the world those who are dedicated to releasing the silenced spirit of God. The measurement for assessing their ministry will be what is happening outside the walls of the church. Are boundaries coming down? Is the church leading the world in transformation by their having been sent there? He lifted up three markers that indicate a true church: a worshipping community, an after-school remedial program, and some sort of ministry for civic improvement such as a clinic. He counseled the church to hold the ordinands accountable for pursuing personal and social holiness. Everybody there, he concluded, would be called upon to do terrible and powerful things, for example, marriage and divorce. The silenced spirit should be released not in anger, but in reconciled love.

After the offering plate was passed throughout the congregation in support of summer camp scholarships, Bishop Bledsoe stood up with money in his hand. "I appreciate that this is an equal opportunity church, Dr. Goodrich, but what happened to the offering plate? I didn't get an equal opportunity to put in my offering, and I wanted to give!" At that point, Goodrich took Bishop Bledsoe's money in his hand and began making his way around the chancel area, collecting from worship participants who wanted an equal opportunity to give. Goodrich assured them their money would get to the right place!

Bishop Bledsoe presided in the commissioning and ordination rituals. Bishop Max Whitfield, father of ordinand Rodney Whitfield, presided as well in the rituals. Four deacons and seven elders were commissioned. Those commissioned as deacon were Kay Lynn DeBlance, Bethany Sue Graham, Elizabeth Dorothy Lutz, and Ugonna Ndukwo Onuoha. Those commissioned for the work of an elder were Jimmy Decee Greene, Jr., Melissa Dawn Allen Hatch, Cheryl Anita Jones, Julie Mielke Macpherson, Mary Ncurubi Miriti, Cheryl Kaye Murray, and Sharon Clepper O'Connor.

One deacon and eighteen elders were received into membership in full connection. Marjorie Thompson Bishir was ordained deacon. Lyle Charles Benson, Walter Ray Butts, Jr., Marc Ivan

Corazao, Nancy Morrison DeStefano, James Christopher Dowd, Gloria Young-Eun Kim Fowler, Daniel Alan Gurley, Derek Shawn Jacobs, John Allan Johnson, Elizabeth Mary Kellner, Mai Ngoc Le, Dean Joseph Libby, Lisa Marie Marshall, Ardith Marie Mitchell, Elizabeth Ann Moen, Dana Grissett Norton, Denise Patricia Peckham, and Rodney Charles Whitfield were ordained as elders.

Bishop Bledsoe presided at communion and the newly ordained served the people.

A reception on the grounds followed the service.

## TUESDAY MORNING BUSINESS SESSION

June 8, 2010

### Opening Song

Karen Chraska and Tim Morrison led the members in “Standing on the Promises” and “Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore.” Chraska offered a prayer.

Bishop Bledsoe congratulated the conference on the fine job done yesterday.

### Ordinand Presentations

**Derek Shawn Jacobs** is a graduate of Kansas State University with a degree in Family Studies and Community Services and a Master of Divinity from Perkins. He and wife Season Renee are parents of five-year-old Dayson Mykal. Jacobs has been serving on the ministerial staff of St. Luke “Community” UMC and is the campus pastor of the St. Luke “Community” South satellite ministry in De Soto.

Jacobs said that when he was growing up and people referred to him and other young people as the “church of tomorrow,” it bothered him. He thought, “Why can’t we be the church of today?” He said that the best is still to come. “Eyes have not seen, and ears have not heard the good things that are going to happen to those who love the Lord.”

**John A. Johnson** is a graduate of the University of Phoenix with a degree in Business Administration and a Master of Divinity from Perkins. He and his wife Linda have a young adult daughter, Kristen R. Johnson. A son, Brian A. Johnson, died in 2009. Johnson is pastor of Flower Mound UMC, Flower Mound.

Johnson thought back to a town he had served, a town that had experienced tragedy. The church came together within an hour of the tragedy which took a young man’s life. Recently people again found comfort in church when there was a mine explosion in Comfort, West Virginia. People still rely on church in times of tragedy. What if people relied on church in times of joy? Johnson dreams of a church that would be so strong that the thought of leaving would be simply unacceptable. He dreams of a conference that becomes a support center for all those churches.

**Elizabeth Mary Kellner** is a graduate of Southern Illinois University with a degree in management and a Master of Divinity from Perkins School of Theology. She is married to John Drummond and has a young adult son Allen Besterfeldt. Kellner has been serving as pastor of Friendship UMC, Sherman.

Kellner quoted John Lennon. “Life is what happens while you’re busy making other plans.” She said this is what happened to her. Her hope is that as we make decisions for our plans, we will not fail to see God’s vision for us. Her dream is that we will allow ourselves to hear and live into that call.

**Mai Ngoc Le** is a graduate of Case Western Reserve University. She earned a Master of Science degree in computer science from University of Texas, Dallas and the Master of Divinity from Perkins. She is married to Mark Tinker and they have two young adult daughters, Sarah and Samantha Tinker.

Le was born in Saigon, Vietnam and brought up in the Buddhist faith. She spent two years living under the Communist regime before she was able to leave and go to India with her mother. Le referred to Ephesians and said that we are created in Christ Jesus as His children. She said she rests assured that it is no accident that we are here; she rests assured that we will continue to proclaim the availability of God’s kingdom to all; she rests assured that we are to be the healing forces of love in this broken world.

### Creating Congregations

Richard Dunagin requested a point of personal privilege, saying that of the active clergy, he has the 8<sup>th</sup> longest tenure in the conference and that during that time he has seen many restructurings of the conference. He has served in areas that made him realize how crucial the planting of new churches is for the conference. His analysis in 1990 found that newer churches were far more effective at winning new folks, especially by profession of faith. Twenty years later, Jim Ozier has discovered that the trend still stands. While Dunagin was at Lake Highlands, they planted five congregations in their neighborhood. He believes that Bishop Norris’ most significant contribution to the conference was the reinstitution of the position of Director of New Church Development, especially with the appointment of Jim Ozier to the job.

As a result of yesterday’s vote, Dunagin believes that the conference is in the strongest position we have been in his tenure, because we have elevated creating new congregations to the priority it should always have had. If we are clear about this priority, we are poised to grow substantially, reversing bleak statistics. Dunagin then called on Jim Ozier.

Ozier, Director of New Church Starts and Transforming Congregations, spoke of his role in developing new churches and transforming established ones. He spoke of the “family tree” which enables churches to grow by planting new ones. Each church planted is a new branch on the tree of the Apostolic church. We have a part in making this “family tree” the tree of life. In the North Texas Conference, ours is a story of a distinguished family tree. One of our oldest churches, Grace in Dallas, grew out of the merger of two churches in 1903, and over the years, it planted new churches. Highland Park, St. Andrew and Grace Avenue are all three planting new churches this year. Oak Cliff gave itself over to becoming an Hispanic multi-cultural church under the leadership of Edgar Bazan. St. Luke has planted a south campus in DeSoto. Korean Central hopes to do the same. Christ’s Foundry is an example of many churches coming together to support a Hispanic church and there’s always room for more branches on the family tree. Adam Hamilton suggests that when you look at it differently, you see it not just as a family tree but as the tree of life, sharing the same trunk in Jesus Christ, having roots in Judaism, and sap of the Holy Spirit. Ozier encouraged the conference to dig into our mission fields and take advantage of MissionInsite, the new demographic provider. He encouraged everyone to be at the training provided in September.

### **Standing Rules**

Ann Todd explained that the strategic plan approved on Monday required suspension of and amendments (18) to the standing rules of the conference as listed in the 2009 journal. Todd moved that the annual conference suspend the current standing rules in order to deal with legislative item number three in the conference workbook, [LA 3], with the following provisions: No additions or deletions, no more than 18 minutes of discussion with a maximum of three-minute speeches for or against, and a call for an up or down vote immediately following the discussion. Motion was seconded and approved by the body. Bishop Bledsoe called for discussion. Bill Bryan attempted to make an amendment and was ruled out of order. There was no further discussion.

Todd moved the approval of legislative item number three, [LA 3], and it was approved by a show of hands.

### **Board of Ordained Ministry**

Gary Mueller reported that the Board of Ordained Ministry is charged with recruiting, credentialing and supporting those serving as pastors in the North Texas Conference from the time they sense God's call to their retirement and beyond. He thanked the BOM members who have given thousands of hours of work each year. He then introduced Todd Harris, Chair of Preparation and Qualifications. Harris called those ordained and commissioned to come forward for recognition. He indicated that standards of P&Q are high, but the work of ministry is difficult. Clergy must be clear about what they believe and why. Harris then spoke of the great diversity of the 2010 class – 50% male and 50% female, 26% non-Anglo, including one from Vietnam, one from Korea, and one of South American descent.

Harris called on Jan Davis, vice-chair, who asked the local pastors to stand and recognized those who had transferred in from other Methodist Churches and other United Methodist Annual Conferences, as well as those who had been certified as lay ministers. Davis commended Joan LaBarr and Wes Magruder as they prepare to go to Viet Nam and teach Vietnamese pastors in a Course of Study program.

Mueller reported that the BOM has worked with the chairs of the District Committees on Ministry to develop a common process that all district committees will use so that the process will be more transparent and consistent; that the BOM has developed a process for working with those being commissioned on the elder track so that if there is no availability, they can complete the process but forego commissioning until there is availability; that the new software package "Pathways to Ministry" will allow district committees and the BOM to partner with candidates to track their process online; that a website is being developed to provide clear and consistent information; that the BOM looks forward to working with the Director of the Center for Leadership Development; and that the BOM has worked with District Superintendents to develop the new District Committees on Ministry that will result from the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Mueller moved the election of the new district committees on ordained ministry as listed on the sheets placed on the tables. Bishop Bledsoe called for a vote by show of hands. Motion carried.

Mueller thanked members of the Board, as well as Duane VanGiesen and Janet Thompson for their support in the conference office. Bishop Bledsoe reminded the conference that members of the BOM are volunteers and do their work in addition to serving their churches or working in their secular jobs.



### **Southern Methodist University and Perkins School of Theology**

Dr. William B. Lawrence, Dean of Perkins School of Theology, referred to the texts of two reports in the pre-conference journal on pp.123-127. Lawrence highlighted the important connection between Perkins School of Theology and First UMC Wichita Falls' Perkins/Prothro families including daughter Elizabeth, after whom recent Prothro building was named; granddaughter Kay Yeager, lay member, member of the SPT and executive board member of GBHEM; and great-granddaughters Linda Beltchev and Elizabeth Yeager who provided music for Sunday evening's worship service. Lawrence emphasized the purpose of the family's gift in 1945, when war in Europe was not yet over and war in the Pacific was still inconclusive. The gift was given for theological education to train leaders for the purpose of building world peace.

Lawrence reported on new initiatives such as the Center for the Study of Latino(a) Christianity and Religions, the Leadership Center, and other initiatives which will help increase global awareness, including a diverse faculty, half of which are bilingual or multilingual, a successful internship program administered by Bill Bryan and financial aid to benefit students of theology. Lawrence expressed gratitude to Bishop Bledsoe for the invitation to preach at the ordination service.

### **Advance for Christ**

Shawn Bakker, director of The Advance at the General Board of Global Ministries, declared this an exciting time for Global Ministries and for the church, as they address the four focus areas of ministry. Bakker defined The Advance as the official designated giving arm of the United Methodist Church, which funds over 1000 different projects in 100 countries. The most recent example was the \$728,644 contributed by the North Texas Conference for UMCOR's recovery efforts in Haiti. Sunday night's offering for Imagine No Malaria will go through The Advance. One hundred percent of each gift goes to the ministry of choice. The Advance supports over 300 missionaries serving in over 60 countries through covenant relationships between a congregation and particular missionaries. A video followed to explain the partnership and reference the packets at the table. Finally, Bakker described a new campaign called 10-fold, bringing global projects to the forefront through webcasts and social networking, launching October 10, 2010: 10 projects, 10 days, 10,000 advocates. She encouraged the conference to save the date!

### **Gulfside Association**

Mollie Stewart, president and CEO of Gulfside United Methodist Association, in Waveland, Mississippi, told of the destruction by Katrina of 12 buildings, including a 2.8 million dollar building, dedicated in the name of Bishop Alfred Norris and destroyed ten days later. A video clip was shown of the vision for land remaining, the Association's restoration ministry of the gulfside and the transformation of the church and the world. Stewart acknowledged Bishop Bledsoe as the long-range planning chairperson who had challenged Gulfside to a period of prayer and meditation upon the sacred land where buildings once stood before Katrina. Stewart quoted Romans 8:38. "For we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to God's purpose." Stewart said they asked for land and received special use of a new zone.

### **Wesley Rankin Community Center**

Kathy Stutesman and Sarah Squires addressed the conference. Stutesman reminded the conference that Wesley Rankin is one of only 99 General Board of Global Ministries mission institutions and one of two GBGM agencies in Dallas, a distinction shared with Bethlehem Center. Active in West

Dallas for over 75 years, Wesley-Rankin invited the conference to be a part of serving those in need and followed with a video demonstrating why. It featured a 9-year-old whose parents are on drugs and who has made great improvement at Wesley-Rankin, as well as an elderly woman who finds hope and happiness at Wesley-Rankin each week. Squires lifted up another young boy already at high risk of becoming part of a gang and dropping out of school, the norm for those in the Wesley-Rankin neighborhoods. Squires asked if the local churches would help sponsor a summer camp field trip or collect back packs or love a child or family in West Dallas through Wesley-Rankin or invite Stutesman or Squires to speak to classes or mission teams or congregations about the services they provide to at least 250 persons daily. She challenged the conference to consider a divine assignment and text her with a message that they will help a child or family right now!

### **Methodist Hospital**

Carole Somers-Clark introduced CEO and President Dr. Stephen Mansfield. Mansfield spoke of pastors who serve on the Boards of Trustees not only of the health system but of the hospitals within the health system. Mansfield highlighted wellness ministries such as mobile mammography and prostate screenings as well as the ministries of congregational nursing and Golden Cross services. The Methodist Health Care system has remained one of the highest quality hospitals by industry standards, and has been named one of the best places to work by three different evaluations. Customer satisfaction continues to be high and this year has been the best year financially in the health care system's history. There are currently seven hospitals with an effort to expand. Primary care clinics throughout south Dallas and other locations continue to be crucial. There are 1500 very good physicians involved with Methodist and 1200 volunteers. Mansfield's report was affirmed by acclamation.

### **Nominations Committee**

Vivian Crowson presented the revised list of nominations as legislative item #14 **[LA 14]** (see Section XIII. ROSTER OF CONFERENCE AGENCIES – Green pages). Crowson asked that any corrections to the report be written out and taken to the conference secretary's table. The amended report had one change on page 67, replacing Doyle Henderson with Rebecca Grogan as chair of the memoirs committee. No additional nominations were offered. The report was approved by acclamation.

Conference Secretary Judith Reedy reported members of the Core Leadership Team and Conference Nominating Committee from yesterday's new district meetings.

#### Core Leadership Team

East District	Dr. Tom Talbert
Metro District	Sally Vonner
North Central District	Alfred White
Northwest District	Linda Parks

#### Conference Nominating Committee

East District	Judy Gilreath
Metro District	Billy Ratcliff
North Central District	Rachel Magruder
Northwest District	Pat Deal

Reedy announced that last night's offering for summer camp scholarships was \$5,388.98.

### Courtesies and Resolutions

Kathy McLean-Davis presented courtesies and resolutions, asking for prayer for Denise Jacobs, pastor of Owenwood in the suicide of one of her members and for Susan Campbell, FUMC, Bowie, approaching the end of her life. McLean-Davis announced that this is the first time in conference history for election of deaf members to annual conference. She then announced that Buist Wilson, FUMC, Rowlett, has perfect attendance to Annual Conference since 1951. She congratulated Ann Johnson Barton on the birth of her newest grandson and recognized the presence of Bishop Whitfield, participating in last night's ordination service. Ray Karrer announced the School of Christian Mission and Cooperative Event which will feature Bishop Bledsoe and wife Leslie this summer. Jennifer Sample brought greetings from Methodist Mission Home, and Owen Ross lifted up a "rejected" cornerstone which he asked the Bishop to bless as Christ's Foundry plans to use it in its new construction this summer. Bishop Bledsoe invited Ross to come to the podium, and he blessed the stone and prayed for the mission of the church.

### Memorial Service

The 2010 Annual Conference memorial service honored the memories of twelve clergy and fifteen clergy spouses. Bishop Bledsoe led the Call to Worship and family members of those being honored processed to the hymn, "Marching to Zion" and took seats reserved for them in the front rows. Prayers were led by Reverends Jimmy Green and Albano Tayengo.

Scripture was read by Reverend Beatriz Pacheco, and then as conference secretary, Judith Reedy, read each of the names of the saints, an ordinand brought a white rose and placed it in the vase on the altar. With the reading of each name, persons in the congregation whose lives were touched by that minister or spouse stood in tribute. The persons being remembered were:

Clergy – Raymond Maurice Edens, Ashley Day Jameson, Royce Wilton Riley, Louise Banner Welch, Bobby B. Bryan, William W. Greenhaw, Joseph R. Saylor, Jr., Richard Howell, Eugene P. Browder, Philip Eugene Baker, William F. Upchurch, Joseph Madison Funk

Clergy Spouses – Judith L. Flach, Sarah (Bobbie) Flaherty, Libbie Reynolds, Ellen Cook, Opal Mae Nunley, Edna Faye Barcus, Christine Turner, Elsie Talbot Moore, Mary Sunshine Davidson, Doris J. Weaver, John Bishir, Onalee Wilkie, Helen Hoggard, Maurice Lloyd, Virginia Taylor

Reverend Pat Beghtel Mahle's memorial sermon, "The Saints" focused on John 11:17-27, the story of Mary and Martha in the death of their brother. She said that in times of loss, we wonder, as Mary and Martha did, "Where is Jesus? Is he not powerful or does he just not care?" She posed the question, "In the face of death, what can Jesus do for us? What does it mean that Christ is resurrection and life?" "It means that death is not the end, that we can experience new life here and now as well as eternally." She said that resurrection is a gift and used the analogy of a mother cutting her only rose and pinning it to her daughter's dress as she left for school, telling her that it was a gift. She recalled times when she had witnessed God's glory – one in a hospital when a young man awoke after a heart transplant, knowing that in order to live, someone else had to die.

Beghtel Mahle called those present to reflect on God's glory as seen in the saints whose lives were being celebrated in the service. She concluded, "We do not have to mourn without hope. In their lives, and even in their deaths, we see God's glory."

Following the closing hymn, “Walk Forth This Day in Beauty,” Bishop Bledsoe pronounced the benediction.

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION

### Opening Song

Karen Chraska and Tim Morrison opened with “His Eye is on the Sparrow” and “Trust and Obey.” Joe Pool offered the opening prayer.

### Ordinand Presentations

**Dean Joseph Libby** is a graduate of Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics and a Master of Divinity degree from Perkins. He and his wife Debbie are parents of a four-year-old daughter Caitlyn Anne and an infant son Logan. Libby serves as pastor of University UMC, Wichita Falls.

Libby thanked his wife and children and then referenced Donald Miller’s 2009 book A Million Miles in a Thousand Years. He said that as the book was being made into a movie, Miller realized that his life was no longer telling a good story, so he took steps to change it. He said, “We United Methodists have an opportunity to change and transform, an opportunity to make radical new stories happen and provide places where lives are transformed.” Libby’s dream is of a day when all United Methodist churches are known for their faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

**Lisa Marshall** graduated from New Mexico State University with a degree in psychology. She has a Master of Divinity from Perkins. Marshall’s two teenage children David and Drew are in college and high school, respectively. Marshall serves on the ministerial staff of First UMC, Denton.

Marshall’s hopes and dreams include envisioning a church that is genuine, a church that addresses real needs locally and throughout the world. She applauded the young people who have a vision of the church as a doorway, opening into the world and offering the love of Jesus Christ to everyone. Marshall expressed her gratitude to all those who have supported her and to her sons Drew and David.

**Ardith Marie Mitchell** is a graduate of San Angelo State University with a degree in journalism and a Master of Divinity from Perkins. She has one adult daughter, Danielle Mitchell. Mitchell serves on the ministerial staff of First UMC, Duncanville.

Mitchell hopes that we will fall back in love with Jesus who said that the greatest commandment was to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind. She said, “Like Jesus, like Wesley, perhaps we can rekindle the flame and take it to others.”

**Elizabeth A. Moen** is a graduate of Sam Houston State University with a degree in education and a Master of Divinity from Perkins. She and husband, Richard “Rik” Moen are parents of a teenage son Caleb.

Moen looked backward before she could look forward. She found that her wounded spirit had been made whole through friends and ministries such as Emmaus. She recalled

the words to the song, “Something Beautiful, Something Good” and decided that God had called her to be an instrument of healing. “May our hearts, minds, and doors be truly open to those who do not know the healing work of God.”

### **Sending Servants**

Lori Stafford gave the Sending Servants report and asked us to engage with legislative item #6 [LA 6], a resolution to welcome the migrant. There were two speeches for and two speeches against. Henry Lessner, FUMC, Allen, proposed an amendment to be added to p. 54 as a sixth principle: “To treat the root of the problem. Migrants, many of whom risk their lives in the journey, come to the USA because our country offers hope and freedom, a chance to provide for their family, and an opportunity for a better future. The United Methodist Church and our national government should encourage the countries these migrants are leaving to eliminate endemic corruption, to implement rule of law, and to allow economic freedom for their people to pursue their needs and dreams.” The amendment was accepted as a friendly amendment by Stafford. Owen Ross said that there is no other controversial issue that is more clearly addressed than is immigration in the scriptures, over and over. Henry Lipstraw, Roxton UMC, proposed an amendment to delete lines 27 through 36. There were two speeches against the amendment and one for. A vote was called on the amendment. The amendment failed.

Returning to the original resolution, Stafford expressed concern that the system of immigration is broken. She stated that the resolution was intended to encourage the repair of a broken system.

Bishop Bledsoe called on Bill Bryan to pray before the vote.

The resolution passed by a show of hands.

### **Board of Ministry Report - Retiring Clergy**

Dennis Wilkinson, chair of the Conference Relations Committee stated that members of the committee would share in the introductions of those who were retiring. He recalled a time when a visiting bishop to a church he served reminded everyone that we are all beneficiaries of those who have served. Those retiring are Pat Beghtel Mahle, Willie Johnson, Larry Kruger, Richard Stark, and Robert Turk.

Donna Whitehead introduced Pat Beghtel Mahle, who was accompanied by her husband Jerry.

**Pat Beghtel Mahle** served 29 years. She served as chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry, as delegate to the General Conference, delegate to Jurisdictional Conference, was the third woman to be a District Superintendent. As Dean of the Cabinet, she led us through the grieving in the death of Bishop Moncure. She learned how to do ministry from men. Both her husband and her son have joined her in ministry. She spent five years studying Freedman.

Beghtel Mahle recalled the beginning of her faith journey when her mother and father and their five daughters began attending church in Andrews, Indiana, where all seven walked to the front, and six, excluding her father who had been baptized, were baptized at once. She still remembers worrying if the water stain on her new pink polished cotton dress would be permanent. She recalled the theme of her ordination service where she promised to sow seeds. She trusted the conference would allow her to serve and they trusted she would sow seeds of the gospel. She has found the conference to be a safe

community to proclaim God's love and risk sowing seeds. She promised to strive to carry out this year's theme for the rest of her life: "To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God." As she prepares to step into a new avenue of ministry with the Pastoral Counseling Center, she left the conference with a quote from a colleague, "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you and then you win." "I won," she said, "because of the abundances of Grace poured out by God and this conference."

Sally Vonner introduced Willie F. Johnson.

**Willie F. Johnson** has served 17 years. Before God called him to preach, he worked in the aircraft industry. He received his degree from Mid-America Nazarene University and attended the Course of Study at Perkins. Willie is married to Liz, his soul mate. They have four children, nine grandchildren and one great-grandson. Willie has pastored congregations in three districts, has served on both district and conference boards, and has been very active in the communities where he has served.

Johnson said that in his ordination speech he had used the scripture of the man whose friends had lowered him in to see Jesus by carrying him up on the roof, opening the roof, and lowering him down into the house. The United Methodist Church has opened its doors to me, he said, a physically challenged person, and allowed him to practice his call from God to preach. He observed that accessibility over the years has improved, that walls have even been moved in parsonages for him. We need to be reminded, said Johnson, that God calls and accepts us as we are. When he became a part of the United Methodist Church, he walked on crutches; by the time he was ordained, he was in a mobility cart. The church opened its doors, and now they have opened the doors for him to retire. He does so with mixed feelings. He thanked his wife and concluded that our real identity comes from accepting Jesus, the Christ and being his disciple.

Dick Wilson introduced Larry Kruger.

**Larry Kruger** is an elder retiring after 29 years of service. His appointments have included Prosper, Little Elm, Saint Jo/Forestburg, Valley View, Farmersville, Wesley Sulphur Springs, Sanger/Blue Mound, Nocona, and Blue Ridge. Larry has been married to Carla for 46 years, and they have three grown children: Karen, Kevin, and Kirk. Larry was not able to be present today. The conference thanked him for his years of service.

Sally Vonner introduced Richard Stark.

**Richard Stark** has served 33 years. He was ordained Deacon in 1977 in the Central Texas Conference and Elder in 1981 in the North Texas Conference. His appointments have been Sardin and Britton in Central Texas, Oak Lawn, St. Luke's North, Plano First, Lucas and Elm Ridge in the North Texas Conference. In the middle of those appointments, he served a 10-year stint with The United Methodist Reporter. He has served the past eleven years quarter time at Elm Ridge. After retirement as a pastor, he will continue to teach Mathematics at Allen High School. He holds both Bachelor and Master degrees from Baylor University and a Master of Theology from Perkins. His daughter Elizabeth is a Montessori teacher in Dallas and his son Peter is a senior at Centenary College of Louisiana. "I am grateful for the 33 years in ordained ministry and for the many people who have touched my life and helped shape who I am and who I will grow to be."

Vonner asked the conference to show their appreciation with a handclap.

Dick Wilson introduced Robert Turk. This is Bob's third retirement. He retired from the Air Force as a pilot in 1988; he retired from Texas Instruments in the defense sector in 1999. He completed his Master of Theological Studies in 2000 and the Course of Study School in 2007 at Perkins. He has served at First UMC, DeSoto, First UMC, Coppell, Anna UMC, and First UMC, Boyd. Bob and Pat, his wife of 43 years, have two sons and three grandchildren.

**Robert Turk** expressed gratitude that God has given him a time to serve in the church. He talked about the thrill of breaking the sound barrier and the thrill of making a mark on the forehead of those who came for Ash Wednesday. He recalled the time when he made the ashes from wood ashes and lye. He claimed that some of the kids still have that mark there! Early believers, said Turk, saw hope in the eyes of the other believers. "I don't know if I am going to make it with you, but I know that we are going to make it!"

Wilkinson announced that one more person would be speaking, not as a retiree, but as a clergy who had asked for the privilege to address this conference since he is going on incapacity leave and may not be able to address the conference again. Wilkinson introduced Lew Stokes.

**Lew Stokes** thanked the conference for the opportunity to address them. He explained that he has been diagnosed with cortical basal degeneration, a rare incurable and progressive disease that is robbing him of his motor skills and playing havoc with his golf swing. He thanked Bishop Bledsoe and Leslie for being a great example to him on how to deal with unexpected illness.

He gave thanks to Jesus Christ who never gave up on him. It is a testimony that if there is someone you worry about, pray for, feel is hopeless, remember Lew and know that if God can do it for Lew, God can surely do it for them. He thanked Oak Cliff Methodist, his extended family who raised him for 18 years. He said that Leighton Farrell had offered him the chance and the challenge to enter into the ministry. He had been speaking in rehab clinics, AA clubs and nursing homes for a number of years. Then he was elected lay leader, and had become involved with lay speakers, so he accepted Leighton's offer on the condition that he could afford the time and travel. He was shocked when Farrell said, "Hey, Lew, they pay you!"

Stokes asked for a round of applause for all the spouses that do so much for so many, and he thanked his wife Marty, standing beside him. He thanked all those who had helped him and affirmed the Course of Study at Perkins. He was so blessed and thankful for the opportunity to answer a call that had come when he was 12 years old and that he ran from for 28 years. His parting words were those that Leighton Farrell had preached to him, "Love the people; preach the gospel." He added, "If no one's told you today, I love you. God bless one and all."

### **Board of Trustees**

This report was given by Conference Treasurer Marvin Guier on behalf of chair of trustees, Bill Avera. Guier brought good news, the closing of only one church. Guier moved the approval of legislative item #12 [LA 12], the closing of Nelta UMC and it was approved.



### **Ordinand Presentations**

**Dana G. Norton** is a graduate of Texas A&M Commerce with a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science from University of North Texas and a Master of Divinity degree from Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University. She and husband Andrew (Andy) are parents of six-year-old Naomi Danling Norton and four-year-old Anna L. Norton. Norton serves on the ministerial staff of Plymouth Park UMC, Irving.

Norton's vision is of a place where diverse groups of people come together, where barriers are broken down, where ministry is "with" rather than "to," where we are intentional in removing barriers, where people come to experience the powerful presence of God. That kind of church will not only be transforming but will open itself to God's transforming power.

**Denise Peckham** is a graduate of Manhattanville College with a degree in political science and a Master of Divinity from Perkins. She is married to John and they are the parents of two teenage sons, Nicholas and Thomas. Peckham has been serving as pastor of Button Memorial UMC in Little Elm.

Peckham envisions a place where people come together to learn what it means to love God with all their heart, to meet people at their point of need, to reveal to them the love of God in Christ for them.

**Rodney Whitfield** is a graduate of Hendrix College with a degree in business and a minor in religion. He received a Master of Divinity from Perkins. Rodney is married to Allison D'Auteuil. They have two children, two-year-old Grace and one-year-old Justice. Whitfield serves on the ministerial staff of First UMC, Richardson.

Whitfield dreams of a church without walls, of people going out into the world and seeking justice, sharing the good news of God's love and seeking Christ in new ways, of nurturing our children, growing them, helping them understand their purpose, who they are as children of God. He dreams of being in the world and sharing love so that we can continue to be united where Christ has brought us all together.

### **Board of Pension and Health Benefits**

Julie Gould gave the report for the Board of Pension and Health Benefits. She stated that legislative item #11 [LA 11] had been withdrawn. She then moved the approval of legislative item #7 [LA 7] regarding retired clergy housing. Motion was approved. Legislative item #8, [LA 8] regarding pre-1982 service rate was moved and approved. Legislative item #9 [LA 9] regarding pre-1982 pension funding was moved and approved. (See Section X. LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS)

### **Equitable Compensation**

Van Lazaroff moved the approval of legislative item #13 [LA 13], requesting an increase in minimum equitable compensation of 1.9%. Adoption was approved.

### **Council on Finance and Administration**

Bill Baxley explained that CF&A had four separate action items to present for approval: the 2011 Annual Conference apportionment budget, recommendation to use fund balances for a one-time

“jumpstart” of the strategic plan, legislation regarding calculation of apportionment decimal for the churches, and legislation regarding the auditing firm in 2010. (See Section X. All legislation was moved and adopted.)

### **Board of Pension and Health Benefits (continued)**

Julie Gould moved the approval of legislative item #10 [LA 10]. It was approved.

### **Resolution**

Bill Bryan took the floor and referred the conference to the flyer marked “North Texas Conference Anti-Racism Team.” The Bishop ruled that he was out of order.

### **Conference Council on Youth Ministries**

Ricky Harrison moved the approval of legislative item #5 [LA 5] to make the Book of Discipline available online free-of-charge. Motion passed.

### **2011 Annual Conference**

John Rosenberg moved that the 2011 Annual Conference business sessions be held at the Plano Centre and the Sunday evening activities, clergy session, laity session and worship return to the Dallas area downtown churches. Bishop Bledsoe deferred to the body for that decision. Motion was approved.

### **Courtesies and Resolutions**

Javier Escalera, member of the Higher Education and Campus Ministry Task Force, announced that the GBHEM scholarship for \$1,500 was awarded this year to Ricky Harrison, First United Methodist Church, Richardson. Harrison is the outgoing CCYM President. He is headed for McMurry University to study and major in Religion. When he graduates, he wants to work in the mission field!

Harrison received a loud round of applause.

Sally Vonner presented refugee certificates to Creekwood UMC, Allen, FUMC, Commerce, FUMC, Carrollton, FUMC, Howe, and Grace, Dallas, from UMCOR.

Rusty Hedges announced that Nancy Sherman is celebrating the birth of her first grandchild and that Trinity Wichita Falls is celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary (they are the only former EUB church in the North Texas Conference).

Rev. Faith Nyagato, an elder from the Zimbabwe Conference was recognized. She is working with the Zimbabwe ministry at FUMC, Richardson. Rev. Walter Lynn Zimmerman has attended 59 annual conferences.

Rusty Hedges then read the closing resolution:

WHEREAS, The North Texas Conference held its annual session June 6-8, 2010 at Multi-Purpose Events Center in Wichita Falls, Texas with the theme of “Do Justice, love kindness, walk humbly,”

WHEREAS, Rusty King, members of the Annual Conference Planning Committee and the conference staff worked faithfully in planning and preparing for this year's session of the Annual Conference, we, as an Annual Conference, have been blessed by the efforts of all who had a part in carrying out this year's session, providing a warm welcome and facilities for our time together, and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Leslie Bledsoe continues to be a part of our conference family through her vital spirit and indomitable faith, we acknowledge her in Christian love as the first Lady of our Conference; and

WHEREAS, we affirm and commend Bishop Earl Bledsoe as our Episcopal leader, he has charted a new direction for our conference and inspired us with his leadership as well as his challenging proclamation of the Word. We gratefully acknowledge Bishop Bledsoe's ministry as the Bishop of the Church and presiding bishop of our North Texas Conference; and

WHEREAS the 2010 Session of the Annual Conference adopted the report of the Strategic Planning Team that will focus our efforts as we move forward in mission and ministry, with faith in Christ, we embrace this new structure and direction in our life and work together; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. Clara Reed, Dr. William Lawrence and Rev. Pat Beghtel-Mahle blessed us with their powerful and inspiring preaching along with the challenges put before us in the address by our Conference Lay Leader, Richard Hearne, and

WHEREAS, the inspiration continued with worship services planned by the Conference Worship Committee chaired by Rev. Marti Soper. We thank the liturgists who led us in worship and the choirs, soloists and instrumentalists who moved us with their artistry; and

WHEREAS, The North Texas Conference received the reports of the boards and agencies which reported that the work of the church is going forward and is in good hands. We listened with thanksgiving to the comments of those who entered retired status at this conference session; and

WHEREAS, the mission and ministry of our conference has been faithfully supported by Rev. Fred Durham and Dr. Joan LaBarr and the other members of our conference staff. We acknowledge their exemplary service to our churches and the North Texas Annual Conference; and

WHEREAS, The North Texas Conference extends its thanks to the many people who unselfishly offered their time, skills and talents in the support of this conference session. This includes those who produced the displays, logos, worship bulletins, video and power point presentations. We thank the communications team of the Annual Conference who provided sound, lighting, photography, news coverage, and the video images for the conference and the taping of the worship services; and

WHEREAS, First United Methodist Church, Wichita Falls and Floral Heights United Methodist Church, Wichita Falls extended a warm welcome by hosting conference sessions or worship, providing childcare and through the efforts of their staffs and volunteers. We extend our thanks to the staff of the Multi-Purpose Center who helped make our conference run smoothly; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, as a covenant community having engaged in holy conferencing, will carry the theme of this 2010 Annual Conference with us into our mission and ministry. Together we celebrate the hospitality and openness of God that brings light and life to all God's children through Christ, our Lord.

Respectfully submitted,

The Committee on Courtesy and Resolutions

Rusty Hedges, chair

Shante Buckley

Kathy McLean-Davis

Jackye Waiters-Lee

Sharon Coleman

Jim Pledger

### **Reading of Appointments**

Bishop Bledsoe called for the reading of the appointments. Names were then read by district superintendents: Paul Gould, for the East district; Milton Guttierrez for the North Central district; Clara Reed, for the Metro district; and John Rosenburg, for the Northwest District.

### **Benediction**

After the appointments were read, Bishop Bledsoe, joining hands with everyone there and forming a circle, gave the benediction that ended the 2010 session of the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church.