



## Bishop's Perspective

## God, thank you for blessing the world

## Dear Sisters and Brothers,

My mother's favorite son is Bruce, my older brother.

If I begin with this very wrong assumption, it distorts everything I believe about both my mother and my brother. The truth is, my mother deeply loves each of her six children. We all share a common DNA heritage.

My mother is not content that we children all love her. She longs for, prays for, yearns for us to respect and love and care for each other.

I often think of the heartbreak of Adam and Eve. Cain murdered his brother, Abel. It must have grieved the parents to the core of their being to lose a son by the hand of another son.

God must grieve that we, sons and daughters, commit such violence against one another. God must weep because we

children, all of a common DNA, can't get along.

There have been so many misrepresentations of God. But God keeps trying to teach us how to live. In Jesus, God was magnificently incarnated and magnanimously grace-filled. Jesus clearly demonstrated how God embraces and loves and claims *all* of us, regardless of nationality, as precious children. Jesus showed us how to include all God's children.

My prayer is not, "God bless America," but "God, thank you for blessing the world. May we bless you by blessing — seeking to understand, love, forgive, respect, and embrace — all our brothers and sisters, even those most lost and farthest from you."

This understanding is just one beginning point for us to seek reconciliation for God's global family. God is not content

until all of his children are at peace with each other. God has no favorites, not even Americans. God is not provincial. So let us love one another, for as John tells us, "love is of God."

You are all in my prayers during these days of anguish and stress. The words of the hymn writer belong to us right now:

*We share each other's woes, each other's burden bear, and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.*

Grace and peace,

Ray W. Chamberlain Jr.  
Resident Bishop

## Commentary: Nothing is beyond the local church, pastor says

By Alvin J. Horton

Pastor, Virginia Conference

Not long ago, assignment of United Methodist clergy as hospital chaplains, campus ministers or missionaries was considered an appointment "beyond the local church."

Today, we call such assignments "extension ministries," which denotes our understanding that ministry of the local church goes into the larger community and world.

But the old definition is hard to discard. People still refer to these workers in the field as those whose hearts and talents have moved them away from the needs of the local church.

As I contemplate this denominational struggle for the right terminology to describe ministry settings, I find myself asking, "Just what is *beyond* the local church?" Is it beyond the ministry of the local church to care for people who are sick or in need of spiritual support during life's most traumatic moments? I don't think so.

When a student graduates from a congregation's youth group and goes away to college, have that student's spiritual needs moved *beyond* the concern of the local church? Absolutely not.

And is it beyond the will of the local church to reach out to persons in poverty

down the street, across the continent or around the world? I certainly pray it is not.

Every time a local church shares resources through what we have learned to call "appointments," the local church extends its ministry into areas of service within its scope of responsibility, not beyond.

The chaplain who prays with a dying patient or crime victim or prison inmate is as much a part of that local church's ministry as the pastor who visits the home of a member of that congregation.

Conference staff members who train Sunday school teachers, mission volunteers and church newsletter editors are just as essential to the ministry of the local church as those they train.

There is no "beyond the local church" once we realize the world is our parish.

When your church participates in such apportionments as the World Service Fund and conference benevolences, you extended your reach through others. Students hungry for spiritual direction, families hungry for their next meal and church leaders hungry for new ways to engage in ministry — none of these are beyond your reach when your ministry is extended in this way.

What kind of ministry is beyond the local church? Certainly none I can see when I look with the eyes of faith.

*The Rev. Alvin J. Horton is pastor of Mt. Pisgah Church in Midlothian, Va., and former editor of the Virginia United Methodist Advocate. Reprinted with permission from Interpreter, www.interpretermagazine.com.*

## In Memoriam

## E.A. Pierce

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn.—Elbert A. Pierce, 93, died Sept. 24, 2001, at Asbury Center in Johnson City. He was a retired Holston minister who served several churches in Greene County and Knoxville, Tenn.

The Rev. Pierce is survived by a son, Jerry Pierce, Concord, N.C.; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Sept. 26 at Trinity UMC, Greeneville, with interment in Oak Grove Cemetery. The Rev. Tom Lynch and the Rev. Robert Smith officiated.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Rev. E.A. Pierce Memorial Fund, Trinity UMC, 524 Tusculum Blvd., Greeneville, Tenn.

## Wanda Bohannon Luttrell

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Wanda Bohannon

Luttrell, 83, died Sept. 17, 2001, at Ft. Sanders Parkwest Hospital in Knoxville. She was the widow of the Rev. Samuel Maynard Luttrell and an active member of Fountain City UMC.

She is survived by daughter, LeAnn Luttrell Trotter, Knoxville; son, Samuel Maynard Jr., Knoxville; sister, Geneva Broyles, Morristown; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Sept. 19 at Fountain City UMC with the Rev. P.L. Rowlett, the Rev. E.A. Eldridge, and John Needy officiating. Graveside services were held Sept. 20 at GreenLawn Cemetery, Greeneville, Tenn.

Memorials may be made to Fountain City UMC, 212 Hotel Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37918.

Ray W. Chamberlain, Jr.  
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## Calendar

## 'Day of Understanding' on Oct. 19

Responding to the nation's Sept. 11 tragedy, the Wesley Institute announces a special clergy continuing education event on Friday, Oct. 19. "A Day for Prayer and Understanding" will be held at Trinity UMC, Morristown, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Wesley Institute Director Rev. Kim Goddard said the event will allow clergy to explore theological and political implications of the attacks, followed by worship and prayer.

"As clergy we confront our own grief, anger and fear, even as we minister to the answers," she said. "It is an especially challenging time to be ministry, yet with great opportunity to share the timeless good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

The agenda includes a "Conversation with the Muslim World" by Samir Saliba, professor of political science at Emory & Henry College. A panel discussion will include Saliba as well as Douglas Meeks, professor of theology and Wesleyan studies at Vanderbilt University; and the Rev. Ron Matthews, U.S. Army chaplain and Desert Storm veteran. Worship and prayer will be led by Bishop Ray Chamberlain.

Continuing education credit (1/2 CEU) will be awarded for participation. The event is not a regional clergy gathering and does not take the place of regional clergy gatherings, Goddard said.

Registration is \$10 and includes lunch. Pre-register by Oct. 17 by contacting Goddard at (423) 928-2156 or kimgoddard@Holston.org.

## Laity Sunday on Oct. 21

The third Sunday in October has been designated as Laity Sunday in the United Methodist Church. In many congregations, the worship service will be planned and led by laity. For more information and worship resources, visit the General Board of Discipleship site at [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org). Click on "Discipleship Ministries" and then "Ministry of the Laity."

UPDATE  
Legacy of Commitment

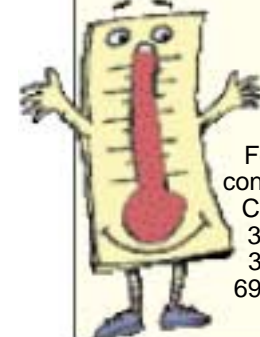
Goal: \$7.8 million

Pledges received: \$5,306,819

Percentage of goal: 68%

Source: The Legacy of Commitment campaign office, Oct. 2, 2001, figures.

For more information, contact: Pensions Campaign, P.O. Box 32939, Knoxville, TN 37930, phone (865) 690-4080.



## What's Your Size?

The Call uses the following symbols to identify articles about small, medium or large churches:

- Churches with average 85 or fewer in principle weekly worship service(s)
- Ⓜ Average 86 to 225 in worship service(s)
- Ⓛ Average 226 or more in worship service(s)