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The United Methodist Church
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DISCIPLESHIP

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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*This is a periodic newsletter to resource
FaithQuest congregational leaders.*

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Special Issue for Leaders

The June 2002 *Interpreter* Magazine is full of planning ideas for church leaders. There is an article on budgeting by Dan Dick, author of *FaithQuest*. Tim Moss, a FaithQuest leader and trainer, writes about vision. There are articles on receiving visitors who have come in response to the Igniting Ministries ad campaign; improving

worship; and planning for singles and families. Due to cost, this special planning issue was mailed only to pastors and program leaders. However, a downloadable PDF version is available at www.interpretermagazine.org. For a hard copy of the magazine, call 615-742-5449, Ext. 3 (\$1.50 each).



Order FaithQuest
materials toll-free:
877-899-2780,
Ext. 7674.



Are you receiving
Leadership Lines and Links,
a new monthly e-letter for
congregational leaders?

Have you moved to a new congregation?

Remember to send your new email or ground mail address to
jnewell@gbod.org.

FQ NEWS & NOTES FOR FAITH QUEST

LEADER TIPS

THEME:
CONGREGATIONAL
LEADER TIPS
(add to Tab K,
Journey, in your revised
Leader Notebook)

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 4

AUGUST 2002

A Promise and a Challenge: Bless All the Families of the World!

I've been listening to a summer sermon series based on the family stories of Genesis. These stories clearly illustrate that God's plans for the human family are **not** what we humans expect. The promise in Genesis 12 is that Abram and Sarai will be blessed so that all the families of the earth shall be blessed. The promise is repeated to each generation. And it is repeated in spite of the shortcomings of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachael, Dinah and her twelve brothers. In each generation, God saw people who would be a blessing to all the families of the earth. The promise continues to God's people in this generation. What is it God sees in us that we can't see in ourselves? How is God calling our church family to be a blessing to all the families of the earth?

This promise/challenge comes just as the season is changing. Many congregations are beginning classes, projects, and perhaps annual fundraising. Are these activities a blessing to the families who participate? How do these activities bless all the families of the earth? The promise and challenge of Genesis is that God sees something more in us than we can imagine. We fall short of who we are created to be, just as Abram and Sarai, Leah and Rachel, Judah and Joseph did.

This issue of *FQ News and Notes* looks at practical ministry. God's challenge to be a blessing begins with our church families. Jesus promises to be present in each small group gathering – from administrative meetings and music rehearsals to worship and classes. God challenges us to be attentive to blessing in the midst of daily life so that blessing flows through us to all families of the world.



Betsey Heavner is Director of FaithQuest at the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, TN. You can e-mail her at bheavner@gbod.org.

Church Work as Worship: A Model for Meetings

- Begin meetings with a few minutes of silence. Ask people to be aware of God's Spirit and to focus on the task at hand. After silence, offer a brief prayer, asking for God's presence and guidance.
- Ground the business in Scripture. Read a selection related to the work of the meeting, a section of the lectionary, or a psalm of praise for the opportunity to work with God. Spend a few minutes sharing thoughts raised by Scripture.
- Close the Scripture reflection with a prayer, asking for God's guidance.
- Throughout the meeting, watch for indications of the Spirit's presence; ask others to do the same.
- Don't hesitate to suspend discussion for moments of silence and/or prayer if that seems appropriate.
- Close the meeting with a prayer of gratitude for the presence/guidance of the Holy Spirit and the contributions of the people present.

IN THIS ISSUE

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Tool for Transformation: Conversation

During a period of my life, I met a good friend for breakfast every Saturday. In those Saturday conversations, we both explored life issues, clarified values, and considered possible courses of action. The conversations were the means of grace that John Wesley called *conferencing*.

Recently, a district superintendent called members of United Methodist churches to dialogue, to engage in conversation that helps us grow in Christ-likeness. Dialogue is not about setting aside our differences so we

can get along, nor is it a debate with winners and losers. (See *Reasoning Together: Why should we have dialogue?*, by Gregory Stover, *United Methodist Reporter*, July 19, 2002 www.umr.org)

Paul writes to the Gentiles and Jews at Ephesus that Christ "has made things up between us so that we are

now together." Later in the same letter, Paul writes, "so stay together, both inwardly and outwardly...but that doesn't mean you should all look and act and speak the same." (Scripture quotes from *The Message*, Eugene Peterson [Navipress, 1993].)

Dialogue, conversation, and conferencing – these call us

together to hold the bond of unity of the one body of the church, while we seek the truth of Christ. Each congregation needs people trained facilitating Christian conferencing. Each congregation must focus on establishing the ground rules, or covenant, by which they will stay in conversation.

Some of the tools to help congregations are found in *Behavioral Covenants for Congregations*, by Gil Rendle (reviewed in the August 2001 newsletter). Another help is a new book by Margaret Wheatley, reviewed in this newsletter.



Meditation . . .

A Reflective Moment for You & for the Groups You Work With

Picture in your mind's eye the person whose opinion of what's best right now for your congregation is most different from your opinion. If you don't know who that might be, imagine one of the church leaders. Take a moment to choose a specific person and clearly

picture that person in your mind. Now imagine you and the other person walking toward Christ. You are each carrying as a gift for Christ what you believe is best for the congregation. Imagine both of you standing before Christ, holding out your gift for him. Now see Christ hugging both of you. To Christ, both gifts are equally valuable. Then Jesus does something amazing. He takes both gifts and puts them together in a way you couldn't have imagined. It is so beautiful and so much bigger than what your two gifts

The Bookshelf



turning to one another: simple conversations to restore hope in the future

by Margaret J. Wheatley
(Berrett-Koehler, 2002).

Wheatley (see lesson 10 of FaithQuest) shares her belief that the world can change through honest conversation. She describes opportunities for truthful speaking and honest listening so that all can express their deepest desires, hopes, and fears. "Turning to One Another" offers fresh slants on the spiritual practice of listening, which is the key to what Wheatley calls our vocation to be fully human" (*Spirituality and Health* magazine, Summer 2002). Available from Cokesbury, www.cokesbury.com.

were alone. Now it is so big that, as Jesus hands it back to you, it takes both of you to carry it. As he hands it back, you can't help but notice the wounds in his hands and you remember he once gave his best, not just for one but for all. And now he sends you out into the world to carry the combined gift plus the gift of Christ to others who are waiting.

Submitted by Pete Kufeka, FQ leader; based on a sermon by Fr. Paul Garrett delivered June 16, 2002.

FAITHQUEST REDESIGNED TO MEET DEMAND



Coming January 2003

... a new one-day orientation to FaithQuest.

... Leader helps for FaithQuest will move to an updated website.

... Bible Study reprint

FaithQuest Bible Study will be re-released in January as an updated reprint. You will see the same 17 sessions with a new way of thinking about Luke, Acts, Ephesians, and the writings of John Wesley. You will also see some changes based on your feedback. Directions for some exploration exercises have been clarified, instructions for group discussion are more focused, and helpful editorial changes have been made. You will be guided to the web for the newest resources to help you know more about the lesson concepts. A new step is added to the design for each section. "Reflective Moments Along the Journey" encourages spiritual growth and acts as a

bridge between the biblical text and the FaithQuest concepts. FaithQuest participants will find that these reflections enhance their preparation and the leader can incorporate this material in the weekly meeting. The national FaithQuest trainers have considered requests for FaithQuest and have reviewed evaluations you have given us during the past three years. We applied FaithQuest principles for continuous improvement to the Bible study! A new one-day training event will be tested at four locations in the Florida Conference in September and October. One-day events are being scheduled around the U.S. for 2003.

A new price structure for FaithQuest will be announced later this fall.

Developing New Congregational Leaders

We used to call it the *nominations committee*. Now, United Methodist churches have a **committee on lay leadership**. The responsibilities and make-up of the committee are described in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, 2000. This group used to meet every fall to write names of people on a nomination report for charge conference. The new design gives this group responsibility for helping people identify

their gifts and skills for service, and for assisting in the nurture and development of Christian spiritual leadership. See *Guidelines for Leader Selection & Development* (Cokesbury, 2000). Share your knowledge of FaithQuest with the committee on lay leadership. It will help them do their job! In several congregations, members of the committee are leading FaithQuest groups for development and spiritual nurture of new leaders.

Many churches start new FaithQuest groups in the fall as a part of the congregational system of leader development.

To ensure that you have the materials on time and available for distribution at your orientation session, order by calling 877-899-2780, Ext. 7674.