

# CONNECTION

## Bishop launches NTC initiative for Africa University

By Bishop Alfred L. Norris  
North Texas Area



**Bishop Norris**

Please accept my gratitude for all the ways in which North Texas Conference congregations are involved in mission and ministry. Making Christ known by word, witness

and action deserves our best effort and highest devotion. Your commitment and leadership are bearing fruit, and for that, I am deeply appreciative.

This comes to announce and seek your support for an initiative being launched to support Africa University, our United Methodist sponsored institution in Zimbabwe. It is the only institution of higher learning on the African Continent that is owned and operated by our denomination. It has a student body of more than 1,300, is fully accredited, and offers degrees in theology, agriculture, education, business and management and health sciences.

Its students come from 26 countries, and most of them return to their respective countries to provide leadership after graduation. The University is already making a monumental difference in Africa, although it has been in existence for only 15 years.

As you can imagine, the needs of this young University are many and varied. Two of its most pressing needs are:

- A student health clinic and
- Endowed scholarships for students enrolled in the faculty of Health Sciences.

In I Corinthians 3:6, the Apostle Paul writes: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." (NRSV). Africa University has been built

## Perkins' Ministers Week Dr. Albert Outler and the Wesleyan Spirit

Perkins School of Theology, SMU, Dallas, will conduct its annual *Ministers Week* Jan. 28-30, on the topic of "Albert Outler and the Wesleyan Spirit."

This conference for scholars, pastors, church and academic professionals, and laity honors the centennial of the theologian's birth.

Heralded as one of the century's finest academic and theological minds, Dr. Outler not only influenced generations of pastors and academicians during his more than 25 years at Perkins, but became one of the most important figures in Wesleyan scholarship, as well as a leading theologian of the Methodist tradition and the ecumenical movement.

This conference will critically examine Dr. Outler's work and assess his contribution to Wesley studies, Christian history, Protestant theology, ecumenism and the church, drawing upon the wisdom of leading thinkers of both church and academy.

Lectures and workshops during the week will be conducted by several theologians and pastors, including Dr. Richard Heitzenrater, Duke University; Bishop Scott Jones, Kansas Area; Dr. William Abraham, the Albert Cook Outler Professor of Wesley Studies; Dr. Ted Campbell, associate professor of Church History; Dr. Bruce Marshall, professor of Historical Theology; Dr. Hugo Magallanes, associate professor of Christianity and Cultures, and Dr. Rebecca Miles, associate professor of Ethics.

During the event on Tuesday, Jan. 29, the school will award its Distin-

(planted), and I am hoping and praying that we, the North Texas Conference, will be Apollos, by watering the plant; but always mindful that it is God who gives the growth.

As an Annual Conference, we can do something to make a witness by contributing to the University's mission and stability. As one possible and practical method of doing this, I am asking that you and your congregation prayer-

fully consider participating in a Lenten Study and sacrificial offering for the University. We have established a goal of \$1,000,000, and we believe it can be achieved if every church in the Conference participates during the Season of Lent, 2008.

Additional information and materials for the Lenten Study will be forthcoming. As always, thank you for your joyful cooperation and participation.

guished Alumnus Award to Bishop John Wesley Hardt, Bishop-in-Residence *Emeritus* at Perkins.

Pre-registration ends Jan. 22. The cost is \$200. Discounts are available for retired pastors and members of various reunion-year classes.

For more information, visit [www.smu.edu/perkins](http://www.smu.edu/perkins), or call 888-843-6564, e-mail [perkins@smu.edu](mailto:perkins@smu.edu).

## Prothro Center has new executive director

The Board of Directors of the Prothro Center at Lake Texoma, chaired by Rev. Paul Goodrich, has recently named Cliff Dyer as its Executive Director.

Dyer, who has been a member of the Prothro Center staff for eight years, is already well-known and respected by those persons and groups who have recently visited the Prothro Center. He is passionate about the Center and its ministry of hospitality and is especially proud of the large number of repeat groups using the Center.

Cliff Dyer is a native of Pottsville and an active member of that community. He is involved with the local youth organization and Pottsville athletics and loves music. He is the single parent of a wonderful and energetic six-year-old son, Blake.

The Prothro Center is delighted to welcome Cliff to this new position of leadership.

Additional information and materials for the Lenten Study will be forthcoming. As always, thank you for your joyful cooperation and participation.

# INFORMAtion:

◆ **Sherman-McKinney District** held a district-wide youth “*Come Together Kickoff*” event on Nov. 11, with 102 youth and 22 adult sponsors gathered together for mission work, fellowship and worship. Participating churches included **First UMC, Bonham; First UMC, Gainesville; First UMC, Howe; First UMC, Sherman; First UMC, Van Alstyne; Grace UMC, Sherman; and Lakeway UMC, Pottsboro.**

◆ On Dec. 9, some 300 **United Methodists** meshed their native-land songs, dress and cuisines into the fourth annual **NTC Project Pentecost Fellowship International Christmas Celebration**, hosted by **Faith UMC, Richardson.** Christmas hymns were sung in English, Filipino, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, and Pakistan.

◆ Volunteers from **Munger Place UMC, Dallas; First UMC, Waco; and Highland Park UMC, Dallas,** participated together in the “*Nov. 17 Munger Place cleanup day,*” scrubbing, painting, and organizing storage areas. The event was led by Christian Education coordinator **Dr. Betty Anderson.**

◆ **UMC and City of Dallas** leaders gathered at One Arts Plaza on Nov. 29 to celebrate a comprehensive project to renovate and restore **St. Paul UMC’s** aging building, through a partnership between **St. Paul’s and Highland Park UMC,** which is donating \$3 million to the effort.

◆ **Perkins School of Theology, SMU,** is accepting applications from high school juniors in the DFW area for its **Youth School,** a two-year program to engage youth in community service through leadership development and theological reflection on their service work. For more information, please call 214-768-1333, or visit [www.smu.edu/perkinsyouth](http://www.smu.edu/perkinsyouth).

◆ On Nov. 17, **First UMC, Alvord, Wichita Falls District Superintendent Rev. John Rosenburg** and church pastor **Rev. Carroll Caddell** broke ground for a new building that will house a fellowship hall, kitchen, offices and classrooms.

◆ **International Child Care (ICC), Haiti,** hosted a series of events recently to celebrate the 40th anniversary of **ICC** and the **Grace Childrens Hospital.** Participants from Haiti, Dominican Republic, Canada and the United States appointed **Dr. Ellen L. Palmer, wife of Rev. James Palmer, NTC Retired,** as its **International Director.**

◆ An **Organizational Meeting for 2008 Amigos Days** is scheduled Jan. 17 at 7:00 p.m. at **Walnut Hill UMC, Dallas.** Two leaders from participating churches must be present to select their Amigos Project. For more information, call **Rev. Diane Presley, 214-906-7198, [dipresley@hotmail.com](mailto:dipresley@hotmail.com).**

◆ Participants from the **Central Texas Conference** and **North Texas Conference** gathered on Oct. 13 for a collaborative educational symposium titled, “*Immigration: How Will We Answer?*” The event was presented by **Justice For Our Neighbors,** a nationwide **UMCOR** ministry providing immigration legal services.

◆ Nov. 28 marked a milestone in the ongoing partnership of the **North Texas and Rio Grande Annual Conferences** as **NTC Bishop Alfred L. Norris** and **RGC Bishop Joel Martinez** led a daylong joint consultation on Hispanic ministries.

◆ The Dallas area and **NTC** have been selected for a special **Nothing but Nets (NBN)** visit as part of a multi-city, national grassroots initiative to engage groups and individuals on the importance of malaria prevention. **NTC** leaders are being invited to a Feb. 5 luncheon at **Christ UMC, Plano.**

◆ **Revs. Marji Bishir, Caroline Noll, Jo Biggerstaff, and Mike Wright-Chapman** attended the **2007 Deacon Dialogue** Nov. 28-Dec. 1 at **Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary** in Evanston, IL.

◆ On Dec. 9, **Kenneth Gwynn,** chairman of the trustee board at **St. Luke “Community” UMC,** burned the financial note presented by the **Rev. Tyrone Gordon** celebrating paying off the \$3 million sanctuary and other facility costs.

## Cameroon hymnal nears completion

By Rev. John Thornburg  
*NTC Extension Congregational Singing Ministry*

It’s a new world when a group of Africans record a eucharistic song written in German by a Swedish Lutheran with a bossa nova rhythm.

But that’s exactly what the Cameroon Hymnal Initiative team did during a two week gathering in Cameroon’s capital city in October. The team made all of the final decisions about what will be included in Cameroon UM’s first hymnal.

The hymnal initiative is a joint project of the Cameroon Mission, Greenland Hills UMC, Dallas, and the Ministry of Congregational Singing.

Work began in January of 2005 and will conclude with the publication of the hymnal in the summer of 2008. The project has been funded by individuals and local churches throughout the country, and by the General Board of Discipleship.

North Texans have given nearly \$50,000 to the initiative. The people of Greenland Hills commissioned me as their missionary to Cameroon and the church has acted as the treasury for the initiative.

The team of seven recorded 20 hymns, songs and choruses from all over the world, ranging from Charles Wesley’s “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” to the South African freedom song “Somlandel’u Jesu.” The recording will be given to every pastor of the 21 UM churches in Cameroon at the mission’s annual meeting next summer.

The editorial team has both French and English speaking members, and the hymnal will be bi-lingual...It’s a little Pentecost every time the team meets. We all speak in our first language, and only ask for the translator’s help when we need it.

The hymnal will have 110 hymns, songs and choruses in the bi-lingual section, and will also have sections that feature songs that are beloved in either the French speaking region or the English speaking region.

There will also be a few songs in Pidgin, the dialect that combines features of English and the local languages of Cameroon.

For more information call 214-802-0788 or visit [www.ntcumc.org](http://www.ntcumc.org).