

United Methodist Church GLOBAL MINISTRIES TASK FORCE & UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Sponsor

SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN MISSION (SOCM)

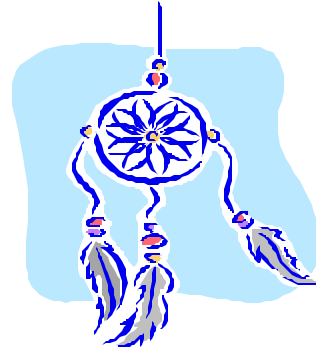
July 28-31, 2008 - Lovers Lane UMC
Dallas, TX

(CEU's and Childcare Available at School)

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WEEKEND COOPERATIVE MISSION EVENT (WCME)

August 1 -3, 2008 – Austin College, Sherman, TX

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“Living the Sacred”

2008 Schools of Christian Mission Theme

“God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good” concludes the unfolding story of God's creation of the earth and all its living creatures as revealed in Genesis, Chapter 1. How are we as God's people to understand the story in the midst of human acts of racism, violence, and earthly destruction?

Native American traditions teach us that creation includes all that comes from God and all that comes from the heart and mind of God is sacred. Native traditions call on its people to value life as God values life. To be a created people is to be relationally connected to all people everywhere, as well as to all God has created.

To believe in Jesus is to love as God loved and live as Christ lived, valuing all creation. To believe in Jesus is to live in the way of Christ, freeing the oppressed, healing the sick and wounded, clothing the naked, welcoming all. To believe in Jesus is to follow the sacred commandment to love as God loved. To believe in Jesus is to embrace the sacredness of life.

While God has given humanity the gift of life and relationship, too often we have created barriers between people and lands. We have acted in ways that violate the sacredness of life and do not make for peace.

As followers of Christ, as Christians in community, let us deepen our understanding of what it means to live in sacred harmony. Then, let us walk together in ways that lead to peace and reconciliation.

**“The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it”
(Psalm 24:vs1)**

GIVING OUR HEARTS AWAY: NATIVE AMERICAN SURVIVAL

2008 and 2009 General Issue Mission Study

Nowhere else in the theology and praxis of mission has there been more change in what was formally called "home mission" than the ways in which the United Methodist Church relates to Native American peoples. From a history of collaboration with war on native peoples and the attempt to eliminate native religion and culture, the United Methodist Church has moved to a spirit that strives for understanding and acceptance.

The purposes of this study are to learn about the inter-relatedness between the indigenous peoples and their land, to identify selected key issues affecting the Native Americans in the United States and to examine the root causes of these issues, to understand and appreciate the "Give Away" culture of the Native Americans in the areas of spirituality, ecology, language, storytelling, food, and to lead the participants to act as responsible US citizens and Christians in accompaniment and solidarity with Native Americans.

Some important issues to be discussed include: myths concerning Native Americans, sovereignty issues and definition of tribe, economic development and gaming, unemployment and alcoholism, and the place of the church in Native American spirituality.

Rev. Thomas Fassett begins our study book with, "The title of this [study] was inspired by a communication written by Ferdinand Columbus to his sovereigns on one of his four voyages to the "new world." He wrote that the natives were a kind, gentle and generous people who would give him their hearts if he asked them to do so.⁽¹⁾ At first it wasn't their hearts he asked for but their gold. But before Columbus concluded his excursions into the Americas, he set into motion such depravations as would astound modern readers of history by demanding both gold and the hearts and lives of the indigenous peoples. This process continues even in our own times as military forces, sophisticated weaponry and legal actions take the very hearts of Native peoples by claiming their land - the very center of Native spiritual reality."

The study will search for appropriate ways for United Methodists to be engaged in mission with Native Americans. What are contemporary needs and how best can those needs be met? How do we cooperate with tribal structures and be sensitive to cultural issues?

1. Although commonly used by Indian authors and others, this reference can be found in: Benjamin Keen (translator), The Life Qf Christopher Columbus by his Son Ferdinand (Greenwood Press, NY 1978).

Study Leaders include:

SOCM: TBA

WCME: Della Walkingsky

Youth and Children's Studies Native Americans

Study Leaders include:

SOCM: Pamela Pinkerton Davis

WCME: Barbara Weaver

I BELIEVE IN JESUS

2008 Spiritual Growth Study

The study deals with four key components, namely (1) the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, (2) the meaning of faith in Jesus, (3) whose faith counts and (4) faith in Jesus in a post-modern world.

The early Christians had to find Jesus for themselves. Those who were of Jewish descent had to address the fact that they could not depend on their ancestors for their faith. The community of faith informs one's faith and nurtures one in faith, but belief in Jesus is a matter of personal encounter with the Holy. Further, gentile Christians had to trust that the Good News of Christ Jesus was truly a world of redemption and hope for all. Faith in Jesus is a gift. It is the work of the Holy Spirit as God reaches out to the world through grace.

As the years passed since the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, preserving the faith as well as helping disciples to articulate the faith, led to the development of Christian doctrines.

Over the centuries faith in Jesus has often been co-opted by the ruling authorities. The conversion of the emperor Constantine, the Crusades, and the Conquest of the Americas are historical expressions of the co-opting of Christian faith. The transcendent nature of the reign of Christ Jesus and its implications for how we live out our faith in him has not always been clear in the life and mission and ministry of the church.

Knowing Jesus is not the task of a select few, but rather the work of the people of God. The Christian community is enabled to be faithful to Christ Jesus as it receives the witness of its many members.

In this new millennium, we again hear the voices of those who challenge any notions of knowing Jesus other than through their particular ways. The issue of how we discern what is faithful to the Gospel message is an ongoing theological task of the church. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral proves us a means for our prayerful consideration of who Jesus is for us and the world.

The post-modern world provides us opportunities to bring a word of hope to a world that, in spite of all its achievements and advancement, cannot fill the deep yearning of the heart.

Jesus is the name above all names; the salvation of the world. Intentional efforts to come to know the experience of God of persons from other living faiths of the world, however, affirm for us that God's mercy and God's mystery is beyond our understanding. The witness of Jesus, as someone who loved all persons, must be the model of our discipleship.

Study Leaders include:

SOCM: Rev. Ouida Lee

Rev. Jackye Waiters Lee

Marva Usher Kerr

WCME: Marva Usher Kerr

ISRAEL - PALESTINE

A Mission Study for 2007-2008

The purpose of this study is to help participants to learn about the history and complexities of relationships between Israel and Palestine. We will explore and understand the concepts of security and freedom that dominate the lives of these peoples. This study will challenge participants to move through tolerance and respect to achieve a just peace.

From the introduction **Israel - Palestine: 2007-2008 Mission Study** by Stephen Goldstein with study guide by Sandra Olewine, "Anyone who is involved with the struggle in Israel-Palestine understands that the interpretation of both history and memory will necessarily have to be at the heart of any new reality that comes some day to these two peoples. A new reality will also have to take into account an understanding of justice related to two people's histories.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem to the people's acclaim, the Pharisees rebuked him and demanded that he stop the clamoring of the crowds. Jesus' response was, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out"(Luke 19:40). In Israel-Palestine today, the history of the region infuses the stones themselves. Any understanding of what is happening there today demands that we listen for the voices that tell the story of how the past has shaped the present and will continue to shape the future. Because history is so inextricably bound to the reality in Israel-Palestine today, this study book focuses on that history. Participants in the study will find in the study guide information about the peoples who inhabit Israel-Palestine and the cultures throughout the lands.

Study Leaders include:

SOCM: Nelda Reid

WCME: Nelda Reid