

MEMBER MISSION NEWSLETTER

#72 – “Sliding” Member Mission In

June 2009

**This summer, help the parents and teens you know
to work at becoming good friends.**

This month's features:

STORIES

- Marion “Slides” Plattsburgh UMC into Member Mission
- Doggedness and Faith in China
- Help to Plant Member Mission in Tanzania

FOR MEDITATION

- On a Hymn

RESOURCES

- Christians Living Like Christians?
- Buying Green is Tricky
- Justice Reinvestment

MEMBER MISSION PRESENTS

- Have You Seen these Members?

STORIES

Marion “Slides” Plattsburgh, UMC into Member Mission

On return from the October 2008 Member Mission Leadership Institute to her upstate New York church and after consulting with Vivian, her teammate, Marion selected sermons as the place to begin. She would "slide into" her sermons more and more talk about ministry and mission. “Ministry” is a familiar word among Methodists and is heard by them as “Ministers.” Marion uses mission more and more because her listeners hear a “mission” as "something I can do." She began with what people do around the church as ministries and then moved outside the church to home and the grocery store. A loving home and helping people in the grocery store she called "missions."

The Interfaith Food Shelf at Marion's church helped 450 households last month. Shown are Dot Crawford, chair, and Rick Pickering, a worker.



Since the core of her congregation is retirees, she emphasizes their ministries first. Then to reach the younger members who are working, she began to include work-centered illustrations. She told of giving someone a ride

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STORIES (continued)

home from work or visiting with a coworker you meet in the grocery store. She tells often about a person who was especially kind to other workers and this led to the other workers talking about how and where they might be kinder to each other.

For the children's sermons, she talks more and more about what they can do to help their brothers and sisters, to say thank you to Mommy, and to take care of their pets. Marion calls these simply doing "good things for others."

At an upcoming two day retreat for church leaders she will use Activity One from the new Guide for Small Groups and Seekers, "What I am doing right now to make the world a better place." She expects this to move them into looking at all the areas of daily life as she continues to talk about what they do as their missions.

When the 20 to 40 year-olds grew from 3 to 6 and more regular attendees, she called them together for the first time. She made clear to the Leadership Council (they make sure all activities stay within the congregation's vision and mission statements) that the group would do what they wanted to do in mission outside the church rather than be placed on committees. She asked the group to find a mission important to them.

Their immediate response was the environment. They took part in an environmental day at the local shopping mall where they offered canvas bags for shoppers – big ones for adults, little ones for children. The canvas and the ink used to label the bags were researched to be the least harmful to the environment. They continue to meet and are talking about concerns in their daily work for non-profits, schools, and services. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to meetings where all share in looking after them.

Marion comments, "I'm not moving fast but sliding into member mission."

A "Prophetic" Tree Planting



Those fence posts, that small shed, and supports for the barn (to the left and out of the picture) – all came from the same tree planting in 1967. My son, Burt, who cut and has used them the last three years, says: "It's almost prophetic the way those trees were planted long before I ever knew that I would use them. Little did I know how I'd use them, but the more I asked God to help me, the more He showed me. They came to such perfect use."

"And, what a joy it is to use them knowing that you planted them. They were never thinned as they should have been with the result that they are all different sizes. I have a great selection – too big and too small. It's exactly what I need."

When I built that barn, I had no idea how I'd do the roof. I used those red pines as supports to do it. I don't know where that came from and it worked. I do know – the Spirit's work. I had thought and prayed: 'What am I supposed to do? How will I build this? Please show me.' Now, I'm so glad I asked!"

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STORIES (continued)

In 1965, my wife and I (WS) purchased a reasonably-priced 1790 farm house situated on 125 acres for a vacation home for our family of four children. The land was good only for tree farming the New York State agents told me. So I had 10,000 red pine and white spruce planted and I pruned and cleared around them each summer for the next ten years. Today, Burt owns 3/4 of the old land.

Paraphrasing Paul, I say, “I planted and nurtured. Burt harvested and used. God made it all work.”
– Wayne Schwab

Help to Plant Member Mission in Tanzania

On February 26, Rev. Dundas J. Gamama in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania found our website and its notice of the Member Mission Leadership Institute in Santa Barbara, CA in October. He asked for help to come with a teammate. We need \$2300 to do it. The Tanzanians are doing their share. Can you help?

Dundas serves as a pastor at the Vision for Life Ministry Church with 56 members that was founded in 2000. Aged 47, married with three children, he worked as a manager for the Brooke Bond Tea Company before receiving an Advanced Diploma in Theology from studies at the Nassa Theological College (1998–2000) and has served in full-time church work since then. His continuing education includes a course in Discipleship and Church Multiplication in 2006.

Will you help? Send checks to Member Mission Network, Inc.; 10 Jubert Lane, Plattsburgh, NY 12901-6442 or [click here to donate online](#).

RESOURCES

Christians Living Like Christians? Member Mission Leadership Institute

Are we trying to be funny? Actually, no. We surely do lack for more Christians visibly and audibly working to make the world more loving and more just. Is there a way to help each other to move toward making the world better – visibly and audibly? There is!

Member mission continues to help church members to do just that – and do it with their churches’ support! Receive and practice the resources of member mission that work at the Member Mission Leadership Institute. [Click here for more information](#).

Come to the Member Mission Leadership Institute.

Dinner, Sunday, October 11 through breakfast, Friday, October 16, 2009. La Casa de Maria Retreat and Conference Center, 800 El Bosque Road, Santa Barbara, CA. Registration: per person \$350; \$300 in teams of two or three \$350; up to 50% travel reimbursement provided. Deadline: September 15, 2009



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[Reserve your space today!](#) Member Mission Network, Inc., Wayne Schwab, Coordinator, membermission@aol.com, 518-561-1184.

Buying Green is Tricky!

Everything we buy has environmental impact. Keep the impact down by using two web sites that give it numbers. [GoodGuide.com](#) draws on 200 databases to summarize the environmental, health, and social impact for a host of products. Find your category such as a laundry detergent and see the first page which grades 12 products from 1 to 10 with 10 for the least impact.

Skin Deep rates personal care items on chemicals of concern. Google Skin Deep and click on Skin Deep: Cosmetic Safety Database. There are 50 chemicals in shampoo! The most dangerous shampoo with the highest score costs the most. The least dangerous and the easiest on the planet has the lowest ratings and is the cheapest.

For a full discussion of why and how, go to: [How Green is "Green?"](#) from Bill Moyer's Journal of May15, 2009.

Justice Reinvestment

Our prisons had 200,000 inmates in the 1970s; now there are two million at a staggering cost to taxpayers. Research shows that most prisoners come from the same neighborhoods. In New York City, in 150 individual blocks we were spending more than \$1 million a year to remove and return people to prison and jail. The cost in damaged families, health care, and community decay adds to the cost.

When rehabilitation rather than punishment guides us, amazing things can happen. In some states, 60 to 65 percent of those entering prison each year enter because of broken parole and probation. So, in Kansas, legislators passed a new law committing taxpayer dollars to cities and communities that changed parole and probation regulations to reduce the prison population by 20 percent. Then states and cities can take the money saved and invest it in neighborhoods and their institutions whose decay has much to do with crime and drug use. Invest in better schools, better health care, better mental health support, and job training.

It's called "justice reinvestment." In many of the states where the justice reinvestment initiative has taken root, prison populations are either dropping or the trend line in growth has been radically reduced, and that's from Connecticut to Kansas — liberal to conservative.

From [Communities in Prison – Religion & Ethics Newsweekly](#), 5/22/09. For viewing in your area, go to <http://www.pbs.org/tvschedules/> and follow the links.

MEMBER MISSION PRESENTS



Have You Seen These Members on YouTube?

- [Marthe: processes complaints against lawyers](#)
- [Gary: explains customer service](#)
- [Charlie: church buildings on mission](#)
- [Sue: Member Mission made the difference](#)

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Click the links above to watch these stories and learn more about the personal impact of Member Mission. To see more [MemberMission Presents](#) videos, go to www.youtube.com/user/MemberMission. Visit www.youtube.com and type membermission.org into the search box on the upper right.

Get On Facebook Too!

On your home page, in the Search box at the upper right, type in Member Mission Network. Join me in sharing fresh insights arising from the member mission vision – all of the baptized on mission wherever they are.

FOR MEDITATION

On a Hymn

"Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love," is sung by Lutherans as #708, by Episcopalians as #602 – and by who else? It comes from Ghana.

For reflection on our historical and biblical legacy, inspiration, and a critical and ethical challenge, it is necessary to wed the text and tune of any of our hymns in order to meet the needs we have as a worshipping community of faith.

Such a hymn is Jesu, Jesu, which portrays the essence of Jesus' ministry not only for the Church of Ghana, using one of its native folksongs, but for all of us in our time. Because we are Christian, we follow that one around whom our faith centers. His ministry must become our ministry, otherwise we must be honest and drop that name identification. To sing the words, "Jesu, fill us with your love," is essentially a cry for help that we might live our lives in such fashion as did our Lord. This means pouring out our lives for others, receiving everyone as our neighbor and promising that we will find ways in which these expressions might be lovingly effected.

Lord, touch our lives with the power of your Spirit so that we might always reflect your love onto the lives of others. Amen.

(Rev. Paul H. Christensen, Retired, Red Wing, MN)

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Tell us about your work with member mission at membermission@aol.com or phone / fax (518) 561-1184. (You continue on this list because of past interest and / or work together with the member mission vision.) If you missed or lost any past newsletters, you will find them on the website under Making the Vision Work > Newsletters. To be dropped from the list, just write us at membermission@aol.com

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