Haiti Update

It was heartwarming to observe the progress of our Haiti efforts since last fall. The schools are enjoying the introduction of computers. The solar and clean water systems are used daily. The enthusiasm of the teachers, kids and related communities is amazing. As Jean Claude, the principal of one school said, “It shows them that someone cares and it gives them hope.”

The January 2014 mission trip included a variety of objectives. One goal was to assess the progress of two recent deployments before we expand the new school cart program further. We also surveyed five additional schools as potential future sites. Each school would love to be selected. We delivered several hundred new handmade articles of children’s clothing, kitchen supplies, teaching aids, computer lab supplies and program operations equipment. We built one additional solar school cart and left a complete tool set for building the next few carts.

Much of our attention focused on Ecole de L’espoir, the school run by Jean Claude Degazon. This school provides free education to the kids of LaPaix, a very impoverished, rural village on a barren hillside above Thomas, Haiti.

Jean Claude funds this school out of his own money and whatever he can raise. This school is delighted with the new computers, solar and access to clean water.

We sponsored installation of a solar powered streetlight at Ecole de L’espoir. Installation of this streetlight immediately established a new community gathering place. Picture, if you will, a still, dark hilltop now lit with a “beacon of hope.” It even became an informal outside classroom for a couple of evenings. Students organized review sessions for upcoming exams. We planned and arranged for additional work on finishing two new classroom buildings started by other mission teams. These

(Continued on page 9)
How Do Churches Know Their People Are Growing Spiritually?

[Excerpted from MOVE—What 1,000 Churches Reveal about Spiritual Growth]

In 2004, the leaders of Willow Creek Community Church asked themselves that question. Though attendance and activity levels were high, they wanted to be sure the church was wisely investing its resources into what matters most. Using an innovative research tool that correlates behaviors with attitudes and beliefs, they made some startling discoveries. Although some common church activities did fuel spiritual growth, they discovered many did not.

Over the next six years, this same research tool was used with over a quarter million people in well over a thousand churches, diverse in size, denomination, and geography. The research resulted in a number of discoveries—including some that challenged conventional wisdom.

**It is possible to measure spiritual growth.** In analyzing the results of the first survey in 2004, a framework emerged—based on how people describe their relationship with Jesus Christ—that predicts spiritual growth (defined by increasing love of God and increasing love of others).

1. **Church activities do not predict or drive long-term spiritual growth.** Increasing church attendance and participation in organized ministry activities do not predict spiritual growth for people who are in the most advanced stages of spiritual development. Church activities have the greatest influences in the early stages of spiritual growth, but things like spiritual practices, including prayer and Bible reading, have far more influence later in the spiritual journey.

2. **Even the most devoted Christians fall far short of living out the mandates of Christ.** Mature believers serve the church, help the under-resourced, evangelize, and tithe more than other Christians. However, high percentages of them are still surprisingly inactive. For example, even though most (almost 80 percent) very strongly agree that they "love God more than anything," one-third do not serve the church and 50 percent do not serve the under-resourced on a monthly basis. In the past year, 60 percent had fewer than six spiritual conversations with nonbelievers and 80 percent invited fewer than six people to church. Forty percent do not tithe.

3. **Nothing has a greater impact on spiritual growth than reflection on Scripture.** If churches could do only one thing to help people at all levels of spiritual maturity grow in their relationship with Christ, their choice is clear. They would inspire, encourage, and equip their people to read the Bible—specifically, to reflect on Scripture for meaning in their lives. The numbers say most churches are missing the mark—because only one out of five congregants reflects on Scripture every day.

4. **There is no "killer app" for spiritual growth.** While the research did identify a number of churches that are spiritual powerhouses, no single "save the day" program that guarantees discipleship success was found. However, in the top churches, the survey did find four best practices, which we'll discuss in a future edition of Asbury Articles.

5. **Leadership matters.** The leaders of the more highly successful churches who participated in the survey have diverse personalities and styles—from quiet and reserved to self-assured and commanding. But they share one key attribute: an unrelenting, uncompromising focus and drive to help grow people into disciples of Christ. This matters because the strategies and programs they pursue are not radically different from those found in most churches. It's their hearts-consumed by Christ—that make the difference.

**Spiritual growth occurs in stages.** The research also identified a spiritual continuum for people on the journey of faith that includes four stages and revealed that some practices are more stimulating than others for people at different stages of growth. Keep in mind that no stage is 'better' than another, any more than being 50 years old is better than being 15. What is important is that we are moving toward Christlikeness. Jesus is present and at work throughout our spiritual journey, so resist comparing yourself, favorably or unfavorably, to others.

As people grow spiritually they move from one segment to the next on the spiritual continuum.

**Spiritual Seekers:** “I believe in God, but I am not sure about Jesus. My faith is not a significant part of my life.”

**Key Question: What do I believe about Jesus?**

- Includes both skeptics and the spiritually curious
- Most do not serve within the church but may serve

(Continued on page 3)
How Do Churches Know? (cont’d)

(Continued from page 2)

elsewhere

• Generally view the Bible as irrelevant
• Pray in times of need

Believers in Jesus: “I believe in Jesus, and I’m working on what it means to get to know Him.”

Key Question: How do I build a relationship with Jesus?

• New or rededicated believers growing in their faith & beginning to engage personally in their spiritual growth
• Learning that everyone is broken and in need of a Savior
• Beginning to see connections between belief and actions
• Willing to participate in small groups and sometimes read the Bible or Christian books
• Some serve in the church, participate in local or short-term mission service
• Share the excitement of their new faith, or what God is doing in their lives

Followers of Jesus: “I feel really close to Christ and depend on Him daily for guidance.”

Key Question: How do I follow Jesus in my everyday life?

• Increasing devotion to Christ and ownership of their spiritual lives
• The Bible and prayer are central to their lives
• Authentic before others and recognize the need for heart transformation

• Proclaim and demonstrate the Gospel through their lives
• Meet the needs of others by regularly serving in or outside the church as an expression their faith

Companions of Jesus: “My relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship in my life. It influences everything I do.”

Key Question: What shall we do together, Jesus?

• Love God more than anything and are fully surrendered to Jesus
• Prayer and spiritual practices enable constant conversation with God
• Overflow with God’s love regularly through evangelism, service and mentoring others
• Steward personal resources and God’s world

1 Willow Creek Community Church is a non-denominational, evangelical Christian megachurch located in the Chicago suburb of South Barrington, Illinois that has for decades been demonstrating how churches can more effectively reach the unchurched. Willow Creek is one of the most influential American churches affecting how other churches do ministry.

2 Willow Creek’s working definition of spiritual growth is based on Christ’s teaching about the greatest commandment—growing more in love with God and extending that love to others.
Celebrate Community

Women's Retreat 2014
March 7-9, 2014
Pastor Kim Risedorph will lead our retreat at Westminister Retreat Center, Alamo. Our topic: Daughters of Eve: Cherished, Not Cursed.
Images and myths about Eve have not always been positive, and have not helped us know what it means to be God’s beloved daughter. We’ll look at the story again, to see what it really says. (Spoiler alert: there’s no apple in the story.) What else do we assume about Eve, and our identity as women, that’s not really true?
Join us for a weekend a meaningful and fun weekend, in a beautiful setting. Cost is $165, and scholarships are available.

Senior/Retiree Day Trip
Thursday, March 6, 2014
Seniors and retired members of Asbury will embark on a trip by bus to examine some of the most architecturally creative churches in the Bay Area.
Pastor Chuck will lead an exploration of four churches, reflecting four different Christian traditions. Starting with the Orthodox Cathedral in the Oakland hills we journey to the Lake Merritt region in downtown Oakland to see the new Catholic Cathedral along the lakeshore, then to Lake Merritt UMC for lunch and a tour, then across to San Francisco for a tour of Grace Cathedral.
The cost per person is $40 and this includes travel, lunch, some group contributions to the churches, and gratuity for the bus driver.
Sign ups have started and will continue until February 23. If seats on the 53 passenger bus are not full we’ll invite members of another local UMC congregation to consider joining us.
Sign up at Coffee Fellowship on Sundays or in the church office Contact Pastor Chuck for more information.

Murder’s Bad, But Monday Can Kill You!
March 15, 16, 21 and 22, 2014
Don’t miss this wisecracking whodunit by the popular playwright Pat Cook. Watch the clueless Sam Spade-wannabe Harry Monday get totally committed to the case, when he gets called to Restful Glen after a patient is murdered. When Monday learns that two more victims were murdered at the same time, he quickly finds himself in over his head.
Help him out by solving the mystery yourself during the show. Like Monday says, “Clues are falling like cigarettes in the boys’ bathroom.” This show will keep you guessing until the last red herring is tossed out!
Performances at 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 15, Friday and Saturday, March 21 and 22 and at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 16, 2014.
$10 general admission at church, at the door or online at www.AsburyLivePresents.com.
For more information, or to be part of Asbury Players, contact Barbara David at home.
Make it a special night and enjoy a delicious dinner before the show on Saturday, March 22, for a $5 donation to the Fellowship Team. Dinner starts at 7:00 p.m. so you have time to socialize before the show starts at 8:00 p.m.
Sign up when you buy your ticket to the play!

Bob Cowgill as Officer Brogan needs serious help. To solve the mystery at Restful Glen, of course! What did you think?

Jazz at Asbury

(Continued on page 5)
Celebrate Community (Continued)

(Continued from page 4)

Saturday March 8, 7:00 p.m.
Jazz Guitarist, Terrence Brewer, is coming to Asbury in early March. A multiple-Award winning artist Terrence Brewer is a first-call and in-demand bandleader, record producer, concert performer, studio musician, and one of the San Francisco Bay area’s foremost and sought after music educators. Brewer has produced and released eight nationally acclaimed albums (two releasing in February 2014) on the record label he started in 2005. Those albums have had several top 15 and top 10 appearances on the national jazz charts. Brewer has also performed to sold-out crowds at the Monterey Jazz Festival, Yoshi’s, and the SFJAZZ Jazz Festival.

Concert tickets may be purchased following worship starting on February 2. Cost is $15 in advance (and for students and seniors) and $20 at the door. Information and online ticket purchasing can be found at www.asburylivepresents.com.

Ladies’ Night Out

Monday March 17, 6:30 p.m.
Ladies of Asbury, let’s get together for an evening out at a local restaurant. This month, we’ll be going to Strings Italian Café on the corner of Livermore Avenue and Las Positas Avenue. Please RSVP with Nancy Grover or Jo- anne Petty at home.

Oklahoma Mission Trip

We are well into filling the team for a mission trip to Oklahoma to assist with tornado recovery. We are going April 5-12, 2014. Time to decide if you are considering going. We have eleven people signed up already from Asbury and Lynnewood UMC.

We will be working in the El Reno Area, near Oklahoma City. We will be staying at the First United Methodist Church in Yukon, Oklahoma (near El Reno). We will be cooking our own meals. Registrations are due by March 9. After registrations are done we will provide another update on the plans and arrange a pre-trip meeting for late March.

The cost for the trip will be $600 to $700 per person, including airfare.

For more information or to signup for this trip contact Steve Elliott, Roger Everett or the church office.
Youth Happenings

What’s happening in March?

Mardi Gras Pancake Breakfast
Come to church ready to eat on Sunday, March 2! The Asbury Youth will be serving pancakes (and other breakfast goodies) from 8:00-9:00 a.m. and again from 10:15-11:15 a.m. Single tickets are $5 and a family ticket is just $20 (kids age 4 and under are free). All proceeds go to the Youth Missions Fund.

Youth Update – March 2014
• March 2 - Youth Mission fundraiser! Pancake Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall.
• March 16 - Youth Mission fundraiser opportunity! Asbury Players – snacks sales at intermission.

In addition to the two listed above, the Asbury Players have many ways you can help with the production (sound tech, lighting tech, usher, & ticket seller). Contact Barb David if you are interested in helping. Youth Missions will benefit from your hours worked!
• March 23 – Home Group dinner at the Canos from 5:30-7:00 p.m.
• March 2, 9, 16, 30 – Youth Groups meet at Asbury 5:30-7:00 p.m. We are still looking for adults to prepare meals for the youth groups in March and April. Please sign-up at http://www.takethemameal.com (last name = “Youth” / password = “4949”).

Spiritual Growth Group Leaders

Dick Crawford

Edie Lamb and Karen Bauman

Chuk Campos and Glenn Pomykal

Bill Groth and Larry Wiley
Children’s Ministry

CPR and First Aid Training

March 22, 9:00 a.m.

This training will take place on Saturday, March 22 starting at 9:00 a.m. There are only 10 slots available. All nursery workers are required to have this certification. If you are interested and have not signed up, please contact Tina. You will be receiving a letter from Tina the first week of March, verifying your participation. A big thank you goes out to Sharon Grant for facilitating this important session.

Safety Policy

Anyone working with kids or youth will be receiving an email from Terri Gamble, our church administrator. You will be asked to go online to complete a criminal background check, a DMV check and a Safety training. The process takes about 45 minutes. There are no fingerprints required. You will be asked to charge this to a credit card. You may submit your receipt to Tina or the church office for reimbursement or you may contact Tina, Terri or one of the Pastors to arrange a time to complete the activity at a church computer using a church credit card. Thank you to everyone for your quick attention to this matter. Thank you to the Children’s Ministry Committee and Church Council for your support in this effort.

Summer Church Camps

Please make note of the following summer dates:

VBS July 21-25: This is geared for those aged 4 to those just finishing 5th grade. I want you to know all are welcome. Our youth are wonderful volunteers for this week, as well as many parents, grandparents and friends. However, I would strongly encourage parents of those entering 3rd grade through high school to consider the following camps:

Lodestar
- July 20-26 for Grades 3-6 (entering)
- July 20-26th Grades 7-9 (entering)

Monte Toyon
- July 6-11 for Grades 3-6
- July 13-18 for Grades 7-9
- July 20-26 for Grades 7-9
- July 20-26 LIT (Leaders in Training) for 14 and 15 year olds
- July 13-18 IMPACT LIT (Leaders in Training) for 16-19 year olds

Family Camps
- June 15-22 at Silver Spur, Toulumne
- July 19-25 Shasta Camp

For more camp information see Tina or Tony Gnecco.

Summer Sunday School will be extra special. Please see Tina if you would like to volunteer.

Tina Morris
We grow food for those in need at the Garden of Grace all year long. Every week of the year on Tuesdays and Wednesdays we carry our harvests to the Asbury Fellowship Hall where the nutritious produce goes into Open Heart Kitchen salads, steamed or roasted vegetables and main entrees. The first photo shows a generous November delivery of bell peppers to OHK. Recently Fertile GroundWorks started providing some of the fresh Garden of Grace produce to low-income seniors who reside in American Baptist Homes of the West (ABHOW) low-income communities in Livermore. This produce is delivered to the OHK Operation Director on Tuesdays and is prepared for the ABHOW meals at the Ridgeview Commons Kitchen in Pleasanton. As soon as harvests become more abundant in the late Spring and Summer, additional produce will be delivered to the local food pantries.

So what kind of produce grows in Livermore in January and February? Dozens of varieties of cool season crops! Leafy green vegetables such as lettuce, collards, kale, Asian greens, spinach, and chard, etc. are regulars in our deliveries. We also deliver broccoli, head cabbage, radishes, carrots and beets among other things.

We pay a lot of attention to soil fertility in the wintertime and rotate in cover-crops such as fava, fenugreek, Crimson clover and a great “plow-down” mix that contains bell beans, Common vetch, Austrian peas and Cuyuse oats. The cover crops add nitrogen and organic material to the soil, which provide organic nutrients for the food crops that follow. Both food and cover crop roots help in the development of vibrant soil ecology and great soil structure, which are both vital for a great organic garden.

As we navigate through an extremely dry third drought year, Fertile GroundWorks is striving to practice and teach all of the water-saving techniques that we can. We are selecting plants and plant varieties that use less water and are employing several water saving strategies that include, mulching, row/shade cover, bio-intensive planting and carefully monitoring watering times. We are sharing the cost with Asbury for a water meter for the well and are looking into how to check water levels in the well on a routine basis.

On a parting note, Fertile GroundWorks is reaching out to the greater community to share the knowledge and blessing of service with as many as we can. Currently, we are helping two high schools and two elementary schools to get their school gardens up and operating in a sustainable way. The second photo shows four members of our team on a February workday at Altamont Creek Elementary.
Haiti Update (cont’d)

(Continued from page 1)

simple concrete block structures are a vast improvement over the tiny thatched rooms used previously.

At the school in Arcahaie, Institution Mixte Foyerdivin, they are overjoyed with the cart we deployed there. “A dream come true,” the principal exclaimed. “It is truly a blessing from God.” Given the success so far, we hope to provide additional laptops to both schools. Even then, it will still be two or three students per computer. Gleeful cheers of “oui” (yes in Creole) echoed across the church sanctuary at the school assembly called in our honor. It is clear the computers foster a new excitement for learning. In addition, we hope to raise the money to buy tables and chairs to equip a better computer workplace at this school. It needs one.

At our anchor school, the Thomas Methodist School, the computer lab installed a year ago has become a part of the daily routine. Each class has access once per week. As with the other schools, the focus is on math and science. We watched a fifth grade class doing an anatomy lesson and a first grade class in math exercises. The lab is also used to teach art, French, English and geography. We look forward to providing more software options in the future.

The Thomas School now hosts periodic community education classes and the teacher training for all of our sponsored schools. We are particularly pleased with how this school shares its water purification capability with the nearby community. This is something we encourage each school to do. Clean water is difficult to come by in Haiti unless you can afford to buy it. The new Thomas school restrooms funded by our program are almost done. More hygienic, western style toilets will replace the nasty hole in the ground.

We wrapped up this mission with planning for additional facility improvements at all schools, preparations for launch of a school lunch program at Ecole de Lespoir (like we have at the Thomas School), scoping the next school cart deployment in April, estimating our next computer purchases and visioning more teacher training and community outreach. We have a strong core staff in Thomas and a couple of excellent in country teaming partners. We need to do some fundraising, recruit more mission teams and churches to sponsor schools and continue sustained incremental improvements at our program schools.

“Dear Lord, I hear your call. Send me.” It is a blessing to live our faith in this way.

Sincerely,
Steve Elliott and Phil Bryson, Asbury UMC
Warren McGuffin and Brad Stribling, San Ramon Valley UMC
Birthdays
Kathryn Atkinson
Margaret Baker
Paul Bauman
Rebecca Bernstein
Anne Bettencourt
Kim Braun
Peter Buckley
Aaron Burnham
Alex Cano
Preston Carter
Kim Christensen
Larry Clary
Christina Coll
Jennifer Danan
Sue Ellen Schell
Paul Epperson
Tim Evans
Roger Everett
Josh Fedder
Laurel Fedder
Martha Fields
Archer Futch
Lois Galetti
Britney Gamble
Austin Gnecco
Emily Gnecco
David Grant
Alexa Hart
Spencer Haugen
Daniel Howell
Noelle Item
Lou Johnstone
Kelli Kenward
Travis Koon
Diane Larder
John Lindberg
Kyle Lindsay
Jim Lyle
Joe Malski
Marilyn Miller
Aine Molvik
Art Molvik
Keith Nakanishi
Barbara North
Val Pace

Anniversaries
Dave and Christie Crozier
Don and Kathy Faul
Jean and Bob Howe
John and Laurie Linden
James and Billie Rigg
George and Carol Wilson

Anniversaries
Cameron Paiso
Nancy Pauliukonis
Alex Piscotty
Juliana Raskauskas
Amber Rice
Emily Rice
Robert Roorke Mills
Sarah Rudd
Jimmy Rynders
Maclaren Schell
Aaron Siegel
Aidan Taylor
Erik Taylor
Laura Ullrich
Michelle Ullrich
Sunny Webb
Arthur Weiss
June Weiss
Lauren Weiss
Mike Whipple
Steve Worth
March Calendar

Weekly Recurring Events

Sundays
- 9:00 a.m. Worship, Sunday School, Sanctuary
- 10:15 a.m. Butterfly Gardens is open
- 10:30 a.m. Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
- 10:30 a.m. GIFT, Fireside Room
- 10:45 a.m. Children and Youth Choirs
- 10:45 a.m. The Gifts of Imperfection, Fireside Room
- 3:00 p.m. Financial Peace University
- 5:30 p.m. Club 45
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Group
- 7:00 p.m. Asbury Ringers, Rooms 11-12

Mondays
- 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall

Tuesdays
- 11:00 a.m. Loose Canons
- 12:00 p.m. Open Heart Kitchen, Fellowship Hall
- 3:30 p.m. Worship Service, Rosewood Gardens
- 7:00 p.m. Disciple Bible Study, Conference Room
- 7:00 p.m. Alanon/Alateen, Rooms 13-15

Wednesdays
- 9:30 a.m. Mom’s Bible Study, Fireside Room
- 12:00 p.m. Open Heart Kitchen, Fellowship Hall
- 4:00 p.m. Arthritis/Chronic Pain Group, Room 10
- 7:30 p.m. Faith Choir, Sanctuary

Thursdays
- 7:45 a.m. Men’s Bible Study, Room 11
- 10:00 a.m. Bible Study, Heritage Estates
- 10:30 a.m. Women of the Spirit
- 7:00 p.m. SGG, Room 6
- 7:00 p.m. Asbury Band, Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m. AA, Rooms 11-12

Saturdays
- 8:00 a.m. Lawn Crew
- 9:00 a.m. AA, Rooms 11-12

March 1, 2014 (Saturday)
- 8:30 a.m. DAR, Chapel

March 6, 2014 (Thursday)
- 12:00 p.m. Senior/Retiree Luncheon, Fellowship Hall

March 9, 2014 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. SPRC, Room 13
- 10:30 a.m. Finance, Conference Room

March 10, 2014 (Monday)
- 9:30 a.m. UMW Morning Glories Circle, Fireside Room

March 11, 2014 (Tuesday)
- 11:00 a.m. The Long Good-bye, Fireside Room

March 13, 2014 (Thursday)
- 8:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry, Room 8

March 17, 2014 (Monday)
- 6:30 p.m. Ladies’ Night Out, Strings Italian Café, Corner of Livermore Avenue & Las Positas Drive

March 21, 2014 (Friday)
- 1-7:00 p.m. Livermore Community Blood Drive, FH

March 22, 2014 (Friday)
- 9:00 a.m. CPR & First Aid Class

March 27, 2014 (Thursday)
- 9:30 a.m. Sewing & Quilting Group
- 8:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry
Asbury United Methodist Church
4743 East Avenue
Livermore, CA 94550

Time Dated Material—Deliver Promptly

Address Service Requested

Asbury UMC Staff
Pastor
Chuck Johnstone
Pastor
Kim Risedorph
Children’s Ministry Director
Tina Morris
Interim Youth Director
Tony Gnecco
Music Director
G. Allen Schell
Choir Coordinator
Jean Braun
Secretary
Terri Gamble
Nursery Coordinator
Pam Tegge

Livermore Community Blood Drive
Friday, March 21, 1:00-7:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
In the Bay Area only 3% of eligible donors ever give blood. Bay Area hospitals need over 300 units of blood every day, 7 days a week, to keep up with demand. With the harsh winter, hundreds of blood drives have been cancelled across the country. Please contact Tom Petty for more info, or sign up online at www.redcrossblood.org Sponsor Code: ASBURY925

www.AsburyLive.org

Church office hours are:
Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Closed for lunch.

The deadline for the next Asbury Articles is Thursday, March 20, 2014.