

2010 CHRISTMAS OFFERING for MARA

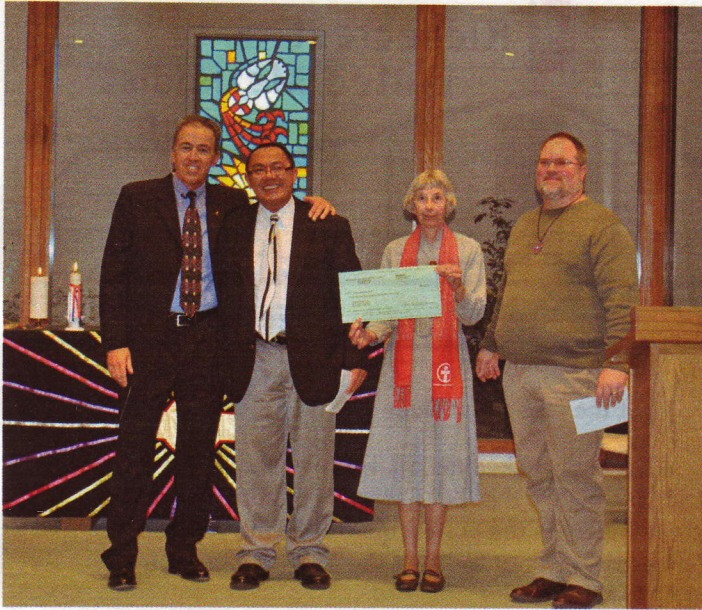


Photo by Dan Leveille, Right to Left:

Wes Hensley, Rev. Ilse Peetz, Superintendent DePano, Rich

Wes Hensley's Mission Moment on January 30:

"My inspiration for our Christmas offering to Mara District started at Annual Conference in 2004 when the Regent from Africa University spoke there. He talked about the awesome rate that the Methodist Church was growing in Africa. This was primarily due to the Pastors that were being born out of the Theology program at Africa University. The campus as of 2004 had thousands of students that grew from the mustard seed Cal-Pac had planted there. A choir of 11 had accompanied him on the trip to our Annual Conference and when they sang it filled the Chapel at University of Redlands. Their singing struck me as if a choir of Angels was singing from Heaven.

One of the songs they shared was the "African Alleluia" that our choir sang for the anthem today. I always wanted to do something to contribute to that awesome scripture based ministry that John Wesley would be radiant with pride over. When Skip Keating, our District Lay Leader shared the message of our District partnership with Mara, I saw our chance to join with them.

Our giving to Mara has been an example of grace like I have never witnessed before. Last year's offering was \$6402.52, and this year's was \$7108.00. That is \$13,510.52 from our congregation.

I would like to renew our challenge to the Pasadena District and hope to have this challenge presented at the upcoming How-To Workshop that the District is hosting at Covina. Using the member count from the 2009 Conference Journal for the District based on the 2008 District report, if each member of our District gave \$20 from our challenge last year, we could provide \$216,520 to Mara.

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Wes Hensley's Mission Moment Continued...

If the District was willing to challenge each member to last year's challenge of \$20 and this year's challenge of \$20, that would mean \$433,040 to Mara.

If the District is willing to meet the challenge of \$46 per member over RUMC's two years of giving, we'd deliver \$497,996 to Mara. A \$20 challenge is no more than asking each member to buy 4 fewer extra value meals at McDonald's or 4 fewer Starbucks trips for a month. The Spirit is alive and well in Mara. This is our God-sized goal for Mara."

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Did you know that our Mission Giving for 2010 equaled 24% of the size of our annual budget? That means we gave one-fifth of our total income to those in need. I personally view that as a huge success, indeed a victory for the Kingdom of God.

The United Methodist *Guidelines* book on Stewardship says that a local church should have a goal of giving 20% of their annual income. We are right on. Reviewing the list of mission projects accomplished through our giving reaffirms how God has blessed us as stewards: Habitat for Humanity, Mara District Tanzania Mission Assistance, UMCOR (Haiti and Chile relief), Relay for Life, Great Strides, Heifer Project, Sierra Service Project, support for our missionaries, Living Bread, Jim Lewis Scholarships, Rancho International Ministries, Holiday Food Baskets and many more.

Now some of you may be wondering how the other 80% of our income is used. Quite simply, it is used to execute the mission!

The mission of RUMC – "To share Christ's love with all, through our tradition of scripture, sermons, music and fellowship..." Also the mission of the whole United Methodist Church – "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs," (*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*).

Yes, the other 80% goes to our pastor, our staff, our facilities and our programs. These allow us to share Christ's love and enable disciple-making with worship, prayer, service and outreach to the local and global community. All of this is made possible by our generous giving.

As our Lord said, "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Mt 6:20 NIV) I invite you all to continue this trend during 2011. Next month I'll attempt to discuss some of the non-financial aspects of stewardship.

—Al Bradford