

BICP

## TV fasting?

by The Rev. Robin Blair

The Bishop's Initiative on Children and Poverty in the North Central New York Conference invites you to join with the millions of people who are taking back the control of the media influence in their lives.

Participate in the national "Turn Off the TV" week as spiritual discipline for your family. We encourage you to participate as a church, small group, youth group, Sunday school class or family.

This effort is not about deprivation from news, events or entertainment, but rather to look closely at what you, your children and grandchildren are being fed on a daily basis by people who created TV programming and advertisements, and how we all respond to those creations.

"My brother and I participated in National TV Turnoff Week, and while he would probably hate me for saying this because he loves TV, when my brother isn't watching TV all the time, he's a lot more fun to be around. We actually hung out together and just talked, something we had not done in a long time," Beth Lubozhiski, seventh grader, Minneapolis, Minn.

"At the end of the week, a woman called me to say it had been a great opportunity to spend more time with her daughter. She had previously thought she needed TV as a baby-sitter and was delighted to learn that her four-year-old could help with daily household tasks such as setting the table, folding laundry, etc.," Anne Campbell, Portland, Ore.

Does watching TV fill time, make you laugh, convey messages of how to solve problems, inform you of what to purchase in the grocery store, control your life to get home to watch something, let you know about fashion trends and where to make purchases? We encourage you to think about TV and its programming as a great tool of communication; we ask you to prayerfully consider what is the substance of this communication and how influential it is your everyday life.

If you think that TV programming is benign in its influence on you and your family, think again. There are research studies that claim television in your child's bedroom undermines achievement and in general harms cognitive development, may increase risk of ADD, causes aggression and violence to escalate in relationships and adds to childhood obesity. For adults as well as children too much TV programming is linked to obesity in women and men, cardiovascular disease and the harm of stereotyping in gender roles. In other words this is serious. We

can do something about it; we are not powerless.

As people of faith, might you consider extending your fast into April and selecting a week to 'empty out' of mindless TV viewing to 'fill up' on what God has to say to you instead?

Signs you have heavy TV viewers in the house:

- children who insist on a certain brand of cereal (or any food) that is in a box of a certain color, probably watch too much TV.
- children who are disrespectful to loving adults and mimic dialogue and phrases from cartoons, probably watch too much TV
- children who are satisfied only with foods containing high salt, high sugar, no nutrition, but a 'fun' value probably watch too much TV
- children who think that violence is the only way to solve problems and who may be fearful of the world around them probably watch too much TV

There is a great deal of research to hold these claims. Go to: [www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org), or type in research TV viewing harm, into your favorite search engine, and you will be blessed with more than enough to read from ivy league institutions, American Medical Association, Surgeon General of the US, and more. The jury is in - we need to take control of the influence of harmful media in our lives.

We are all vulnerable to the negative influences of TV programming, but those of us struggling for identity and sense of self in our ever changing culture seem more at risk: people who live in economic poverty, and children. All are worthy in the light of the love of Jesus Christ.

We as the church must embrace those who struggle for a sense of self-worth, identity and healing as the violence of poverty assaults the vulnerable. With the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' widening every day, the sense of self in Christ is tested through polished and shiny media presentations not designed to invite you to loving God, self and neighbor. How can we as Christians make friends with media, have Godly households, participate in our greater culture and love one another? Let's pray about media influences together; let's start with a Turn TV Off week, a fasting, during the month of April. For information: [www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org)

Contact a member of the BICP team for a presentation in your church: Cassandra Salter-Smith, Trish Wright, Becky Laird, Jill Magnuson and Robin Blair; all are listed in NCNY conference journal.

## Garlinda Burton to speak at University UMC

M. Garlinda Burton, general secretary of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women for the United Methodist Church will be the guest speaker April 1 at University UMC, Syracuse.

She will speak on "Being a Congregation in Transition."

Burton was the editor of *Interpreter*, a 270,000-circulation national magazine for laypeople and pastors in local United Methodist churches from 1995 through 2003. She is a specialist in racial and gender issues in the media, academia, church and corporate life.

All are invited to a 9 a.m. light breakfast and presentation by Burton on being a congregation in transition.

She will be the guest preacher at the 11 a.m. service of worship.

Those planning to attend the presentation should RSVP to the church office, 315-475-7277, or [uumc@twcny.rr.com](mailto:uumc@twcny.rr.com) by Monday, March 26.

University UMC is located in Syra-



M. Garlinda Burton

cuse on the corner of University Avenue and East Genesee Street.

## United Methodist Men plan Aldersgate retreat in April

The third annual NCNY Gathering of the United Methodist Men will be held at Aldersgate Camp Center, Brantingham, April 20 to 22.

The speaker will be The Rev. Darryl Barrow with the topic, "Heart to Heart, Knowing God's Grace." Experience Jesus' parable of "The Prodigal Son," like never before!

Worship and praise with guitarist Louis DeAngelis.

Friday evening only including dinner and program, \$20.

Partial weekend including Friday dinner and three Saturday meals and program, \$40.

Partial weekend including Friday dinner and three Saturday meals and program, and room for one night, \$75.

Full weekend including six, program, and room for two night, \$100.

Discounts and financial aid will only apply to full weekend applicants..

Please send name, address, local church, district, phone and e-mail to 3343 State Route 38, Moravia 13118.

Pay by Master Card or Visa, check or money order. Credit cards should include type number and expiration date.

Include which plan is selected and amount enclosed

Check-in begins at 4 p.m. April 20.

## Time to register online for summer camp 2007!

Summer camp 2007 is on the horizon! Register online!

Summer camp brochures have been mailed to pastors, associate pastors, camping agents, and all campers who attended Aldersgate and Casowasco during 2005 and 2006.

Online registration is up and running and is the easiest way to register campers this year.

Check out [www.aldersgateny.org](http://www.aldersgateny.org)

and [www.casowasco.org](http://www.casowasco.org) where families can browse the summer camp offerings, register online, and also download a registration form.

Registration forms received/mailed by May 1 are eligible for an early bird discount.

There are several new programs at both sites this year as well as old favorites. Programs often fill quickly, so register early.