

People

News in the [November 17, 2009](#) issue

Methodist pastor **Emilio Castro**, a former general secretary of the World Council of Churches, has been decorated by the government of Chile for his defense of human rights in that country during the rule of dictator Augusto Pinochet. The commendation for non-Chilean citizens was bestowed on Castro October 14 in Geneva by the South American nation's representative to international organizations. Pinochet, who died in 2006, led the September 1973 coup against democratically elected Chilean president Salvador Allende, and he continued as dictator until March 1990. Nearly 2,300 people disappeared and nearly 32,000 were tortured in the Pinochet years, according to reports from the National Council of Churches. Castro, a Uruguayan minister, was WCC general secretary from 1985 to 1992. A former *Century* editor at large and the author of such books as *A Passion for Unity*, he lives in retirement in Switzerland.

When **Eugene M. Frank**, an impassioned advocate for racial equality, was elected the first president of the United Methodist Council of Bishops in 1956, he was the youngest bishop in the denomination. When Frank died October 13 in Kansas City, Missouri, at 101, he was the oldest UMC bishop. In his 16-year tenure as bishop of the Missouri area, he oversaw the merger of the African-American Southwest Missouri Conference with the two predominantly white regional conferences in the state, said the United Methodist News Service. He saw evidence of "a new church" vision on race relations in 1968 with the dissolution of the African-American Central Jurisdiction and the merger of the Evangelical United Brethren with the Methodist Church. When Saint Paul School of Theology opened in 1959 in Kansas City, Frank was chair of the board of trustees and stayed in that role until 1972. In 2005, he was among 96 retired and active bishops who signed "A Call to Repentance and Peace with Justice" opposing the war in Iraq.