Children greet visitors at the parsonage of Basoko Mapendo UMC of the East Congo Conference. This church property was destroyed during fighting over the last two decades. The church has been rebuilt with a new roof, brick work, and fresh paint; but the parsonage is still in ruins, with holes in the wall and little furniture.
The boy scouts of the East Congo UMC physically surround the bishop, pastors, and visiting church leaders during an Episcopal Center dedication ceremony. These boys stuck to their posts, standing for hours until their mothers gave the all clear to sit in the shade and drink some water. But they were right back up again to create a barrier when the bishops moved to bless one new building and then the next.

PHOTO: CHRISTIE R. HOUSE
BUILDING THE CHURCH TOGETHER

But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and you did not forsake them.

Nehemiah 9:17b NRSV

I had the opportunity to visit some of the towns and villages of the East Congo Episcopal Area earlier this year. I was fascinated by the way people live together communally. Women and children come out to portable water stations to fill their water containers and wash dishes. They gather at streams and at the river to wash clothes. They ride in long ferry canoes together, with an operator who stands at one end of the canoe and paddles while people sit with their family members and goods and packages, and sometimes with their bicycles and motorbikes.

As the sun starts to set, you begin to smell the smoke of wood fires, even though you might not see a fire in your vicinity. The whole community has returned home and people have gathered outside once again to cook their evening meals. The air becomes heavy with smoke.

Live events like church services are the place to be. People worship, sing, and dance together. There are churches of many denominations in the DRC—along with independent and Pentecostal churches—where hundreds of people gather. They come by foot, by boat, or on motorcycles and mopeds. A few who can afford cars arrive that way.

It is hard to imagine that one day, gun-toting men came over the hills into the towns and villages and shattered these rhythms of life. Men, women, and children had to drop whatever they were doing and run into the bush, fleeing separately, fearing for their lives. They left their homes, businesses, farms, schools, and churches to their fates. But the armed men didn’t come to take over these places and institutions; they came to destroy them—brining senseless violence, destruction, and killing.

Against that destruction stands the church—though torn down, it is now rebuilding. This issue of New World Outlook offers articles about The United Methodist Church in the East Congo Episcopal Area, but the majority of the articles were also provided by East Congo United Methodists. Most were written in French, translated into English, and edited for this publication (thanks to Robert Mpoyo for the translations). I hope this issue will contribute to the discussion about how the church can best serve the people of East Congo. May we respect their customs, cultures, and ways of life. May we contribute to their welfare in ways that build their own capacity to strengthen, heal, feed, and educate their communities. May we contribute to their congregations in ways that enable them to grow deep and wide, discovering a vibrant, relevant Christ for Africa.

Christie R. House

Dear Editor:

I saw the September-October 2014 issue of New World Outlook and thought I sure would like for my class members to have a copy of that. This issue has helped me to show them how the church is both global and local at the same time. Thank you for your work at Global Ministries.

Bishop Joe Pennel, Jr.
Vanderbilt Divinity School
Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Christie:

Thank you for your latest edition of New World Outlook. There are several interesting and inspiring articles in this periodical.

There is one priority issue I would like to emphasize. The cover focused on important concerns of our church—basic missions of our church—Justice, Freedom and Peace. These are central to our mission, but you did not include the primary aspect of our mission on which all others are derived—that is “faith.”

The fundamental goal of our church is to lead people to faith in Christ, from which all other aspects of our mission evolve and are enabled.

I hope we never de-emphasize this fundamental divine call for our church.
Letters from Readers

Thank you for all you are doing to enable us to be a faithful church.
God Bless!

Bishop Tom Stockton
United Methodist Church
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Glimpses of Sierra Leone in the Midst of Crisis

Because of the Ebola crisis in West Africa, the General Board of Global Ministries has asked us to delay our return to Sierra Leone following our annual leave until a date to be determined, depending on when airlines resume flights into the country. We miss Sierra Leone and keep close to our hearts and in our prayers the many friends and colleagues facing the daily threat of Ebola, economic distress, and hunger, along with uncertainty and fear.

We have been in regular contact with friends in Sierra Leone and see evidence of hope in the midst of chaos...church life is strong; care is expressed heart-to-heart rather than hand-to-hand. King Memorial UMC in Freetown contributed over US $2500 toward fighting Ebola and presented it to Sierra Leone’s First Lady, Sia Nyama Koroma, who is United Methodist. The First Lady is distributing water and basic food supplies to communities in need to alleviate hunger. Bishop Yambasu and his staff are out preaching, encouraging, and teaching prevention; the international community is responding as the crisis grows.

Travel is restricted and tightly controlled, with checkpoints to determine health of travelers; meetings and gatherings have been eliminated except as related to Ebola response; schools are closed (both government and UMC schools); Peace Corps workers (some of whom were teachers in UMC schools) and US embassy staff (except for essential personnel) have been withdrawn.

Bishop Yambasu continues to help lead the nation of Sierra Leone during the current crisis as he chairs the Religious Leaders Task Force on Ebola that includes representatives from the Roman Catholic Church, Muslims, and other Protestant denominations. Personal Protective Equipment kits have been distributed to all UMC health care facilities/workers. Training is ongoing. The UMC response is “Prayer, Prevention and Care.” The Bishop’s theme is Pray Until Something Happens—PUSH.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has issued emergency grants that support United Methodist hospitals and clinics across the affected region—facilities that are under enormous stress because of the crisis. Bishop Innis, of Liberia, and Bishop Yambasu, of Sierra Leone, have both requested that all aid to United Methodist churches, hospitals, clinics, and schools in their respective countries be directed through UMCOR. A gift to Advance # 982450, the International Disaster Response number, will ensure this happens and that funds will be used wherever they are most needed.

Kip and Nancy Robinson
Missionaries to Sierra Leone

Congolese nomenclature is in a state of transition, so it is sometimes difficult to distinguish a last name from a first name. In this issue, Congo names are listed in Western style, with first, middle, and last names in that order. In parentheses, the names are listed as they would be in the Congo, with the last name in all caps, in whatever order the individual prefers.
In 2012 the United Methodist General Conference approved a new episcopal area in Africa, and Congo Central Conference delegates chose its name: The East Congo Episcopal Area.

The area defined by this conference encompasses the provinces of Maniema and North and South Kivu to the east—bordering Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda—and Oriental and Equateur across the northern part of the country—which borders South Sudan and the Central African Republic. The episcopal offices are in the city of Kindu, the capital of Maniema Province.

From the start, I knew that serving this area as bishop would be a challenge. The area has impassable roads, and often the only reliable mode of transportation is by airplane.

Across the episcopal area, I see people traveling on foot with loads on their heads and shoulders. These are the people I have been elected to serve. In the last two years, I have traveled across the East Congo Episcopal Area and ascertained the needs of the various ministries of the church. In partnership with the global church, we have been finding creative ways to meet those needs for the development of the church in East Congo.
**Historical Background**

In 1922, the first entry of Methodists into what is now the East Congo Episcopal Area came from the Wembo Nyama mission station of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, established in 1911 by Bishop Walter Lambuth and Dr. John Wesley Gilbert. Ansil Lynn and his wife, bringing their child, were the first missionaries to settle in Tunda, being soon followed by Earl B. Stilz.

Writing about their first year for the September 1922 *Missionary Voice*, Ansil Lynn reported: “We arrived at Tunda March 10th, and the first work on the mission site was begun the next day, opening up a straight path from the native village to the center of the proposed [mission] grounds.” At first, Lynn conducted worship services in the dirt roads. Then, in just two months, the missionary residences were built, an open, roofed worship space was erected, and a school was opened. “During our stay of two months,” Lynn wrote in May 1922, “a goodly number of men, women, and children have learned their letters and some are actually reading in the first reader. The workmen are given 30 minutes instruction each afternoon, after which the women have their school. Mrs. Lynn enrolled more than 60 [students] during the past six weeks’ term. She is greatly encouraged with the interest they show in learning to read. We have eleven mission boys enrolled and expect more as soon as we can get a sleeping-house erected for them on the compound.”

Five years later, in September 1927, Bishop James Cannon, who had oversight of the MECS Congo Mission in the 1920s, recorded his observations for *The Missionary Voice* while visiting mission areas across the country. Cannon wrote: “The African people must be evangelized by Africans. The great work of the missionary is to evangelize and to train a sufficient number of African men and women, who can carry on the necessary work. Native teachers and preachers, native churches supported and governed by native members, must be the goal.”

Yet it would be 42 years before the first Congolese bishop was elected to oversee the Methodist Church in what is now the DRC. Bishop Cannon was followed by Bishop Arthur Moore in 1934, Bishop John Springer in 1940, and Bishop Newell Snow Booth in 1941. In 1964, John Wesley Shungu was one of the first two African Methodists elected to serve as bishop on the continent of Africa. The other was Escrivão Anglaze Zunguze of Mozambique. Edith Martin, a missionary in Lodja, DRC, said of John Wesley Shungu in 1964: “I sometimes think that Mr. Shungu thrives on being in troubled spots, helping to bring peace. He spends much of this time reconciling man to man and man to God.” Indeed, just months after his election, Bishop Shungu narrowly escaped death...
when he returned from Kananga to Lodja to rescue his wife, their 10 children, and a number of other children in the Lodja Methodist secondary school. They were threatened by rebel forces fighting for power in the early years of Congo’s independence from Belgium, but Shungu was a survivor. In 1973, Bishop Onema Fama was elected for the episcopacy in this area, followed by Bishop David Yemba, who served as bishop until 2012. That year, I was elected to serve as first bishop of the newly constituted episcopal area. Bishop Yemba continues to serve as bishop for the Central Congo Episcopal Area.

Eastern DRC’s Recent History
The history of the Eastern DRC and the Central African Republic (CAR) before 2012 is that of protracted war. Beginning in 1995, this area, extending eastward to Rwanda and Burundi, experienced fighting from rebel troops seeking to overthrow the government, government soldiers fighting the rebels, rebels from countries across the eastern borders, and independent militias seeking their own gain amid the general confusion. While Kindu is now relatively safe and in the process of rebuilding, other parts of the East Congo Episcopal Area are still experiencing upheaval and displacement from militias that continue to destabilize the eastern border region. The main social infrastructures—such as schools, health centers, and hospitals—were destroyed by armed groups and rebellions.

Since the beginning of the war, from the mid-1990s to the present, as many as six million people have lost their lives in this region. They were victims not only of direct fighting but also of displacement, loss of livelihoods, loss of agricultural production, disease, hunger, lack of health care, and severe poverty resulting from violent upheaval and the consequent abandonment of farming activities.

What this means for The United Methodist Church on a social and humanitarian level is that there are still a significant number of vulnerable and internally displaced people, including orphaned children. Rape has been used as a weapon of war throughout this conflict, so we see many victimized women who are survivors of sexual violence. Amid this conflict perpetrated by outside forces, we also see interethnic conflicts and difficulties of cohabitation between different ethnic communities, even within the church.

The consequences of the social and humanitarian crises also affect the evangelization efforts of our church. We see a weakening of some local churches that lack consistent growth and close supervision. These social and economic realities have reduced the number of effective and committed church leaders in the conferences. Some leaders have even deserted their duties because of poor living conditions. They must find other work to support their families.

At present, we have a limited number of trained pastors. The years of war greatly disrupted daily life. People had to flee for their lives. Educational institutions were affected, and churches were destroyed. In addition, the churches in Bangui, Central Africa Republic, had to shut down because of civil conflicts erupting in that country.

Overall, we see that human development and public infrastructure in the Eastern DRC were both destroyed during wartime. Much of this degradation can also be seen in the destruction of our churches and hospitals, especially in one of our oldest strongholds in Kindu: the mission of Lokole. The East Congo Episcopal Area spans five different provinces—a broad region of activity that needs supervision but lacks roads and reliable public transportation. Travel by air is expensive and not always on a reliable schedule.

The rural population of Eastern DRC lives in a state of poverty, so people turn to rudimentary agricultural practices to survive. Health services, both public and private, are barely operational in this context,
so HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other tropical diseases thrive in this climate.

We also see a decreasing level of education, with a dilapidated infrastructure. Many Methodist schools on every level that were destroyed during the war can still be seen standing—without roofs, open to the elements, and crumbling as the years pass.

**Rise Up and Build**

Amid these sobering realities, we believe that God is present with us and seeks to transform this church into a place of abundant life. By faith we act in this spirit, depending on God's grace and promise to provide. Therefore, in this episcopal area, our leaders have called for a mobilization of all our congregations to rise up in order to rebuild the mission work of The United Methodist Church in this place. This is, without exception, a call to action for all of our members.

In the past two years, we have accelerated the training of pastors from a basic course to a higher level of advancement. In addition, I have appointed subject-matter experts to specific activities in the episcopal area, including agriculture, education, health services, leadership training, youth activities, women’s mission activities, evangelism, and higher education.

We have also sought to diversify our internal and external partnerships. We will partner in different areas of work with the DRC government, our global church friends, international NGOs, and private actors, where appropriate. So for Christian education, development of resources, United Methodist polity and teaching—church partners and UMC agencies would be appropriate. In developing health services or agricultural techniques, perhaps nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can be tapped for assistance. Likewise, the provincial or national government could be a likely partner for other programs or for building projects.

We seek to expand the work of our mission in those areas where evangelical expansion is possible and desirable. Particularly, the areas of Equateur and the Central African Republic are cutting-edge mission fields that can be better covered.

While we understand that the church is primarily a community of faith and that our strength is in our people, we also prioritize the modernization of our buildings and infrastructures. This effort includes not only the physical buildings but also the use of worship resources and new information and communication technology. We seek contact and relationship with the global church.

As East Congo moves forward with projects and empowerment programs, we also seek to consolidate our efforts and work on the continued development of faith communities where progress has been made. Chief among our priorities are strengthening and building the capacity of women for leadership in the conferences, providing resources for youth and preparing them for service, and inviting the UMC’s active participation in the health-care challenges that are prevalent among people in extreme poverty.

Bishop Gabriel Yemba Unda (Gabriel UNDA Yemba) is the first bishop elected to serve the East Congo Episcopal Area. He was raised by missionaries and by his extended family because his mother died when he was just 8 months old. Ordained in 1971, he has served as a pastor and a chaplain of United Methodist schools, sometimes facing the threat of violence to do his ministry. He and his wife, Charlotte Unda, had nine children, but Charlotte died of malaria in 2007. He has served as a board member for the General Board of Discipleship, and he speaks Swahili, Lingala, French, Otetela, and English.
The 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church voted to establish the new episcopal area of East Congo after a recommendation by the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. The East Congo Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church covers five provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Maniema, Oriental, Equateur, North Kivu, and South Kivu. The combined population of these five provinces is about 28 million people.

The East Congo United Methodist Episcopal Area is made up of three annual conferences: East Congo Annual Conference (Maniema Province), Kivu Annual Conference (North and South Kivu provinces), and Oriental and Equateur Annual Conference (Equateur and Oriental provinces). The United Methodist membership in this area is estimated as being more than 350,000. These five provinces are home to a heterogeneous community of

The five provinces represent an area of nearly 450,000 square miles, divided as follows:

Maniema Province: .................. 51,062 sq. miles
North Kivu Province: ................. 22,966 sq. miles
(This is the conflict zone)
South Kivu Province: ................. 25,124 sq. miles
Oriental Province: .................... 194,897 sq. miles
Equateur Province: ................. 155,599 sq. miles

Internally Displaced People, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers Residing in the DRC (as of mid-2013) according to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR)

Refugees .............................................. 183,244
Asylum Seekers ............................. 1,288
Returned Refugees ......................... 41,555
Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) .... 2,607,407
Returned IDPs ............................... 421,547
 Stateless Persons ................................ 0
Various Others .............................. 65,099
Total Population of Concern ........... 3,320,140
more than 100 tribes. The main ethnic groups are the Kusu-Tetela, the Rega, the Zimba, the Bangubangu, the Tsonge, the Shi, the Nande, the Hunde, the Banyamulenge, the Hutu, the Topoke, the Lokel, the Mbole, and the Twa, along with many other, smaller tribes. The eastern provinces of the DRC have been shaken by several armed conflicts over the past 20 years, endangering the lives of the people living there. By 2013, more than a million people in the North and South Kivu provinces and in the easternmost part of the eastern provinces had been displaced. Rwandan and Burundian refugees living in the DRC for more than 20 years are also found in that part of the country.

Against a background of extended war and the deterioration of public services, over 80 percent of the population lives on less than two US dollars per day. The population depends mainly on agriculture and informal activities, such as small trade and crafts, as its main economic activities.

Communication channels and transportation networks to link the five eastern provinces across this wide geographic area are almost nonexistent in the DRC. The only reliable means of transportation from one city in the region to another is the airplane, but the cost of airfare is very high. That leaves the majority of the population no other choice than to move from one region to another on foot or by bicycle.

The Rev. Muyombo Mande (MANDE Muyombo) serves as an Assistant General Secretary in Global Ministries’ Mission Evangelism program area. Originally from the DRC, he has also served as president of Kamina Methodist University. Dr. Richard Letshu is a medical doctor who has worked extensively with the development of health services in the East Congo area and currently works with the World Health Organization in the DRC.

Internally Displaced People, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers Originating from the DRC (as of mid-2013) according to the UNHCR

Refugees .................................................. 490,095
Asylum Seekers ...................................... 62,362
Returned Refugees ................................. 41,555
Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)..........2,607,407
 Returned IDPs ........................................ 421,547
Various Others ........................................ 82
Total Population of Concern .............. 3,623,048

Bishop Gabriel Yemba Unda (Gabriel UNDA Yemba) was elected by the Congo Central Conference as the first bishop of the East Congo Episcopal Area. The breakdown of the conferences, districts, and churches in this area follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANNUAL CONFERENCE</th>
<th>CHURCHES</th>
<th>MEMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Congo ..........</td>
<td>416 ......</td>
<td>310,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts: Kalima, Kibombo, Kasongo, Samba, North Kindu, South Kindu, Punia, Tunda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivu ..................</td>
<td>48 ......</td>
<td>8,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts: Beni, Fizi, Goma, Uvira</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriental and Equateur ........</td>
<td>253 ......</td>
<td>30,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts: Ikela, Kisangani, Lubutu, Opala I, Opala II, Isangi (missionary district)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ..................</td>
<td>717 ......</td>
<td>349,276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodist mission outreach in what is today the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) began in several different ways. In 1833, the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) sent out its first overseas missionary, Melville Cox, to the African nation of Liberia. Cox was already weakened by tuberculosis when he set out, and he lived only four months more. But during that time, he founded the first Methodist Episcopal Church in Liberia among a community of freed slaves on the western coast. He also established two schools before succumbing to malaria.

By 1844, irreconcilable differences over slavery and the role of the episcopacy split the Methodist Episcopal Church in two. From 1844 to 1939, two different branches of US Methodism developed and maintained separate missionary-sending agencies. Similarly, the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS) was founded in the North in 1869 and the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society, South, followed in 1890. At first, the MEC concentrated its missionary efforts in Asia. The MECS did likewise, while also beginning missions in Latin America.

William Taylor, MEC
Two famous missionary bishops of the MEC branches of Methodism were instrumental in establishing the first Methodist missions in the DRC. One, Bishop William Taylor, was a lay evangelist whose first missionary assignment with the MEC was to the western US territory of California. Taylor also organized evangelistic campaigns in Australia, South Africa, and the West Indies, in which thousands were converted to Christianity. In 1870, the MEC decided to send him to India.

Taylor believed in self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing Methodist Episcopal churches. He believed that, after sufficient education and training, the indigenous members of the church were perfectly capable of taking over the leadership of their own churches and institutions. His plan was to convert young children, separate them from their culture, and bring them up in a Christian environment. To accomplish this, he depended heavily on the women of the WFMS and on missionary wives, who established nurseries, kindergartens, and higher level schools for the children. Meanwhile, the MEC mission agency in New York was working under the premise that it should govern the mission churches,
causing the agency to regard Taylor—who considered this an intrusion into indigenous church affairs—as a controversial figure.

In 1884, Taylor was appointed as a missionary bishop to Africa, where he attempted to establish his self-supporting model in Liberia—with mixed results. The missionaries supervised by Taylor were expected to support themselves by establishing farms, coffee plantations, and other industries that could finance their mission efforts. Besides building up the Liberia mission, Taylor was expected to establish mission stations in Angola and in the southern basin of the Congo River.

He planned to follow the Kasai River from what is now Kinshasa. Dr. David Livingstone, a London Missionary Society doctor from Scotland, was one of the first Europeans to reach the central part of the Congo, all the way to Lake Tanganyika. A few years later, Henry Morton Stanley, a journalist and explorer, caught up to Livingstone. Stanley was later recruited by King Leopold II of Belgium to acquire as much land as possible for Belgium, ushering in the terrible colonial era of the Belgian Congo.

In 1880, German explorers Paul Pogge and Hermann von Wissmann set out to study the southern basin of the Congo. Taylor followed their route. He sent two medical missionaries, Dr. William R. Summers and Charles Gordon, to Luanda, where they established a mission station in 1885. Taylor’s method was to take mission workers with him on his expeditions and leave them behind to establish a chain of missions as he traveled on. Accommodations and property would be worked out with government authorities or tribal leaders beforehand. Summers and Gordon left Luanda in May and had reached Malange, Angola, by September, establishing four mission stations along the way. Taylor stopped at Malange, but Dr. Summers continued all the way to Luluaburg (now Kananga) on the Lulubo River in Central Congo, setting up mission stations as he advanced. These missions became the Upper Congo District of the MEC.

Taylor considered the Congo to be a land rich in both natural and human resources. Given leadership and education, he believed the people could develop and utilize the indigenous resources of their own country. By contrast, King Leopold of Belgium wanted to pillage the natural resources and enslave the people.

By 1893, 11 MEC mission stations had been established along the Congo River and its tributaries, from Mamby to Luluaburg. Frustrated by an inability to gain passage for his missionaries on the Congo River steamboats, William Taylor bought a steamer for the mission, dubbing it the Annie Taylor, after his wife.

Yet, by 1897, when Bishop Hartzell—who took over the work from Bishop Taylor—made a tour of the mission stations, he found only two still functioning: Natumba and Vivi. Most of the missionaries had either died or returned to their home countries to recover their health.

Walter Lambuth, MEC, South
Walter Russell Lambuth was born in China in 1854 to two MECS missionaries, James William and Mary Isabella McClellan Lambuth. The Lambuths founded churches, medical missions, and schools in China and, later, in Japan. Walter Lambuth returned to the United States in 1871 to attend Emory and Henry College. He pastored Woodbine Methodist Church in 1875 and was
ordained as an elder in the Tennessee Conference. He then attended Vanderbilt University for degrees in theology and medicine. After he and Daisy Kelly were married in 1877, they traveled to China to begin missionary work there. Walter continued to study medicine and also helped to translate the New Testament into Chinese. The family then moved to Japan, where Lambuth founded Kwansei Gakuin University. In 1910, after working for a time for the MECS mission board, Walter Lambuth was elected to serve as a missionary bishop in Africa. In 1911, he set off for the Congo, accompanied by Dr. John Wesley Gilbert, an African-American professor at Paine College in Georgia. Dr. Gilbert was fluent in French, the language of the Belgian colonizers of the Congo. Like Bishop Taylor before him, Bishop Lambuth favored indigenous church leadership. In both China and Japan, identifying and educating potential leaders to take over the supervision of their own churches and institutions was an MECS priority and served to root the churches firmly in new territories.

Lambuth and Gilbert followed much the same route into the Congo that Taylor did, going east along the Kasai River, which was much easier to navigate than the Congo River. They traveled beyond Luluaburg, however, to Wembo Nyama.

Lambuth’s mission strategy varied quite a bit from Taylor’s, as he believed in putting time, energy, and personnel into a few mission stations, rather than positioning one missionary family at each station along the way. Luebo and Wembo Nyama were the first two stations established by the MECS in 1911-1912. By 1914, missionary C.C. Bush describes a mission with 67,000 adherents, 100 schools, and 103 Sunday schools serving 10,000 young students; but the MECS was working in partnership with the US Southern Presbyterian Church in all these enterprises, the Presbyterians having arrived first. Primarily, the Methodist missionaries involved were C. C. and Mrs. Bush, from West Virginia; John A. and Mrs. Stockwell, from Louisiana; and Dr. D.L. and Mrs. Mumpower, from Missouri. Two Congolese evangelists from the Presbyterian mission in Luebo—Mudimbe and Lufaka—moved with their wives and children to Wembo Nyama to help establish the MECS mission there.

**First Congolese Ordination**

The first Congolese man to be ordained a deacon in the MECS was from a village in what is now the East Congo Episcopal Area. Charles Kimbulu was caught in an Arab slave raid as a child and was transported all over the Congo region. He was liberated by Belgian troops but was then consigned to work for the colonial government. Eventually, he ended up at Wembo Nyama, working in the mission station’s carpentry shop. He was ordained deacon in 1930 and oversaw the work of the Congolese evangelists attached to the mission.

Overseas, the missionaries of the MEC and MECS started working together long before their churches reunited in 1939. It was difficult enough to establish Methodism in a different culture without trying to explain all the splits in the US context. The converts in other countries didn’t necessarily understand or recognize the differences, and English-speaking white missionaries across the world tended to seek fellowship and support from one another across denominational and ecumenical lines. These connections were reported and are easily discerned in the earlier Methodist mission magazines, *World Outlook* and *The Missionary Voice*. The MEC history presented here was taken from *History of Methodist Missions, Vol. 3: Widening Horizons 1845-95*, by Wade Crawford Barclay, Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, 1957.

*Christie R. House is the editor of New World Outlook magazine.*
General Education, Christian Education, and United Methodist Schools

by Michel Lodi

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me.

(Hosea 4:6a NRSV)

The education of youth is the engine of human development. It is the lever of development for the whole of society. In every work of United Methodist evangelism, education must come first.

Education in East Congo

The East Congo Episcopal Area is clearly half the size of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The country itself is four times the size of France. But, unlike France, the DRC has no highway or road infrastructure.

Many schools across this eastern region—whether public, private, or church schools—were destroyed in the war. Today, however, school attendance is increasing every year. A very high number of children have entered United Methodist schools, and many classrooms serve as many as 50 students at a time.

But the government is not keeping up with this increasing enrollment. Instead, the educational profession has been devalued, with teachers’ compensation falling far short of their valuable contributions to society. While the government has a fund allocated to education, the church schools receive very little help. At the same time, the parents’ monetary contribution to their children’s education is insignificant.

Educating Girls

Statistics show that girls in the DRC receive less and less education as they age. In elementary school, the ratio of girls to boys is 51 to 49. But by the time the students reach secondary school, the ratio has dropped to 36 girls for every 64 boys. And in colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning, only 18 girls are educated for every 82 boys—and those privileged girls tend to come from a few urban settings in the country. The number of uneducated teenage mothers is very high, though, both in our churches and in our villages.

Those involved in education in the UMC are tasked with discovering how to train high quality local leaders—female as well as male—who are able to transform our church and our society while we are faced with increasingly scarce financial resources.

Professor Michel Lodi (LODI Michel) serves as president of the Methodist University of Kindu, the only university in the East Congo United Methodist educational system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United Methodist Schools in East Congo</th>
<th>Eastern Congo Annual Conference</th>
<th>Oriental / Equateur Annual Conference</th>
<th>Kivu Annual Conference</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschools</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Schools</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>14</td>
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The Status of Women and Children IN THE CHURCH OF EAST CONGO

by Thérèse Ombo Ndjou and Rose Nabintu

Children and women are the two major groups that make up our local congregations in the East Congo Episcopal Area. Accounting for up to 80 percent of our membership, they form the foundation of our local United Methodist churches. While our worship meetings are mainly prepared and co-led by members of the clergy and youth, we lovingly call women mamans, and our children take an active part in leading choirs, serving as ushers and guides, welcoming attendees, and providing hospitality. Because women and children are joining, we experience a steady membership growth in the church each year. For this reason, The United Methodist Church of East Congo has intentionally selected ministries targeting women and youth for empowerment and leadership development. Thus this article...
contains information about the social and cultural conditions of young women and youth in our society.

Women in the DRC
United Methodist women in eastern Congo mirror the status of women in Congolese society in general, but there are specific conditions that primarily affect the women of this region. Throughout the DRC, women have long been marginalized as members of society. A woman’s role used to be limited to household responsibilities—a role she was expected to embrace with joy, making her life a source of happiness for her husband and children.

Unfortunately, the social and economic breakdown that occurred within the Congolese population in the 1990s placed women in a state of increased vulnerability. The collapse of the Congolese economy was marked by a failure of both public and private businesses. As these companies and

Continued on page 19

Eastern Congo United Methodist Women
by Veronique Mwayuma

The purpose of the Women’s Desk within The United Methodist Church of East Congo is to promote evangelization among the women and to support their social service ministries throughout the structures of The United Methodist Church. We seek to initiate and lead mutual support activities on behalf of church women who are in need, regardless of their race, religion, or ethnic affiliation. United Methodist Women promote women’s leadership both in the church and within the community in general.

While the Bible embodies the principle of gender parity in Galatians 3:28 (“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”) and in Genesis 5:2 (“Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them ‘Humankind’ when they were created.”), women in the DRC are still journeying toward their rightful place in society.

During the pre-colonial era, women were completely dominated by men and likened to slaves in their service. During the colonial era, a woman was confined to her household as a mother, committed solely to the happiness of her husband and children. This limitation continued into the era of Congolese independence.

But today in the DRC, a woman must work in many areas just to ensure the survival of her family. She is like a person with many arms, each arm doing a different thing at the same time. Yet she is rarely adequately equipped for this world of multitasking. Literacy rates for women in rural areas are a third lower than rates for men. Most women have very little knowledge about their health, their legal rights, or their social value, and they are often victims of abuse. Though they became innocent targets of assault and gender-based violence during wartime, for many, their situation has not improved much during “peace.” And many women bear the shame of abuse alone. Survivors of sexual abuse must often raise their children alone, with no child support. Teens must drop out of school when they become pregnant, and innocent women in these situations have high rates of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Empowerment in the UMC
Against this backdrop of severe poverty, poor education, and a lack of opportunity, the UMC of East Congo seeks to empower women and support their aspirations to take leadership roles in the church. It is a long road for women to fill the gaps in their primary and secondary education and then study in seminary on a track to ordination; but some, with the help of scholarships, grants, and good mentors, have done just that.

Mrs. Omba Ndjovu (Thérèse OMPA NDJOVU) has written about the status of women in the East Congo Episcopal Area. The chart that follows indicates that, although women make up 58 percent of church members, they hold only about 8 percent of the conference leadership positions. The chart doesn’t show that a woman, the Rev. Kumbe, did serve as District Superintendent in Kindu, in the East Congo Conference. But she recently retired after her six years of service, the maximum a DS may serve in the DRC.
Current Mission Work

Currently, it is difficult to coordinate women's mission activities across the episcopal area because of distance, geography, and lack of transportation. Expensive air transport is the only way to reach some of the remote areas. What roads exist, when they are accessible, are not necessarily safe, especially for women. Unfortunately, the majority of our women have limited access to new technologies, such as a computer, a smart phone, or a connection to the internet. This also makes communication and coordination between the annual conferences difficult. We have limited financial resources to support our ambitious programs.

Yet we understand our call to mission from God, and we answer that call in many ways. Currently, each of the three annual conferences has created a ministry with teenage mothers. Both Kivu and the East Congo conferences support orphanages and ministries for vulnerable children. But though there is an Advance number for these ministries, currently only 10 percent of the operating costs are covered by Advance giving. The Oriental and Equateur Conference has a feeding program for malnourished children, and this ministry is supported solely by local congregations.

In the Kivu Conference, where so many rapes occurred, there is a safe house for the victims of abuse. This house is difficult for us to maintain, but it is important. The Kivu Conference also has an office of Health and Relief where we operate a section that monitors women’s rights. All three annual conferences offer training courses for women, who can learn how to knit and sew, how to become a housekeeper, or how to practice the culinary arts.

But given this time and place, we are also a community of women steeped in the traditional values of family, church, and community. We are virtuous women, and nonrevolutionary ones, following the guidance of Proverbs 31: 10-31. ([“A capable wife] girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong….Her lamp does not go out at night.” See verses 17-28). We see the empowerment of women as a necessary key to family survival. We believe in strengthening family values to preserve the Christian faith. We understand our acts of charity and social service as promoting evangelization. We give everything to God, and God blesses us with life in abundance.

The Rev. Veronique Yenda Mwayuma (MWAYUMA Yenda Veronique) is the coordinator for the Office of Women’s Ministries in the East Congo Episcopal Area. Mrs. Béatrice KIKUNI and Mrs. NGOMBE BONGO also contributed to this story.
agencies collapsed, public services deteriorated. This set of circumstances gave rise to a high unemployment rate among men, who subsequently lost the ability to perform their primary responsibility: providing for their families. Women then had to resort to subsistence farming and other informal activities, both for their own survival and to feed, clothe and educate their children.

Out of necessity, women found all kinds of work—just to maintain a basic dignity and quality of life for their families. Some work in the fields, while others may engage in small-scale trading or may garden, knit, or sew. Still others work as domestic servants for more affluent families or are paid to carry heavy loads on their backs, effectively becoming a means of transportation.

In some rare cases, women resort to providing sexual favors in order to obtain preferential treatment in their places of work. The consequences of a woman’s actions in such a case can cause a lot of sorrow for her family. Many young girls have a low level of education, which increases their risk for pregnancy outside of marriage.

In our churches, we have a large number of single mothers who find themselves constantly trapped in a vicious circle of vulnerability. Their lives are marked by the constant need to find some means of survival for themselves and their children. Often, they depend on men who are already married. Such young women may find themselves pregnant again, with no possibility of child support from their partners.

**Eastern Congo Challenges**

For more than 20 years, the eastern part of the DRC has experienced several cycles of armed conflict. Women have suffered year-round internal displacement, interruption of their farming seasons, loss of all their savings, and, worst of all, exposure to sexual violence.

Every year, even now, up to 10,000 women become victims and survivors of sexual assault in the five eastern provinces that compose our episcopal area. Perpetrators of these rapes are most often members of foreign armed groups, though women have also reported rapes perpetrated by members of domestic armed groups (DRC militia). Various agencies of the international community will occasionally organize interventions in support of these survivors. Nonetheless, the post-traumatic effects of such attacks have destroyed women’s lives, and, in some cases, the lives of their entire families.

**UMC Youth of East Congo**

Currently, young people in the DRC and in The United Methodist Church represent the hope and future of our ministry. They are the most optimistic people in the whole community. Despite the difficult conditions imposed on them, we adults appreciate their sense of entrepreneurship, which we see in our churches. Our youth have adjusted well to globalization and keep up to date on new technologies. They appear to adapt quickly to whatever life throws their way. Young men and women are ready to contribute financially to the building of our churches. It is also not uncommon for them to buy and maintain their church’s music instruments and equipment. However, young people are in need of positive role models to further develop their leadership potential. They are frustrated at times by the declining quality of our public education system. Our churches need to increase the level of support for Christian education and sex education to fill in some of the gaps.

The widespread nature of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa and the lack of employment opportunities are the two major issues that the church wants to address in preparing young people for leadership in our congregations.

Thérèse Omba Ndjovu (Thérèse OMBA NDJOVU) is responsible for Humanitarian Affairs and Gender Issues for The United Methodist Church in Bukavu, DRC. Rose Witendaye Nabintu (Rose NABINTU Witendaye) is a senior French lecturer at Uvira Secondary School for The United Methodist Church in Uvira, South Kivu, DRC.
In keeping with the social mandate of the East Congo Episcopal Area under the leadership of the Coordination of Women’s Ministries, two houses have been reactivated by our program to serve as shelters for orphaned children in Kindu and Goma. Both sites operated in the past at the initiative of UMCOR and the UMC in the Congo to protect unaccompanied children during the 1994-1999 war. However, the two programs were interrupted between 1999 and 2011 because of a lack of financial support.

During this interruption, the church found a way to train the older children in trades and craftsmanship. Meanwhile, toddlers were integrated into volunteer families who cared for them as foster children.

Currently, our new national DRC social policy recommends the provision of a home for every child and assistance to orphans in foster families. In line with that policy, our two shelters can host only children for whom we have not yet found volunteer caretakers. All additional support for the program (help with school fees, health care, and food) is provided to the majority of children who live outside the two shelter sites in collaboration with their foster families.

Between the Kivu and Eastern Congo conferences, 40 of our local church families have taken 54 orphaned children into their homes. The church’s education and health ministries have been able to provide free education and health care for the children. A few local partners outside the church have been able to offer material goods, such as clothes or bedding for the children.

However, we have experienced certain inadequacies in the involvement of the Ministry of Social Affairs, which requires a lengthy administrative procedure to recognize our orphanages as social structures deserving of government subsidy. In Goma, the government actually dispossessed us of the land for the orphanage without offering any compensation, forcing us to find a new shelter. Meanwhile, as a result of the war, our shelters have become deficient, so we now need better facilities to care for the orphaned children.

We still experience insufficient funding, which jeopardizes our ability to sustain the protection of the children into adulthood. And unfortunately, even in foster care, some of the children still experience poverty and a struggle for survival.

Because of these problems, the office of Women’s Ministries has been working to finalize the administrative procedures required by the DRC Ministry of Social Affairs to access government subsidies for the two orphanages. Our dream is to construct new buildings and acquire a reception center to serve as an office where we can work to secure funding for the orphanages.

Philomène Kahenga Nyande (Philomène KAHENGA NYANDE) serves as Deputy Director for the Orphans and Vulnerable Children’s ministries of the Office of Women’s Ministries, East Congo Episcopal Area of the UMC.
A Recovered Life

by Mukandirwa

My name is Mukandirwa. I have been a member of The United Methodist Church for more than 20 years now. Amani UMC is my local church in Goma, DRC. I sing in my church choir, named “Hodari.” I am a carpenter, the job that has enabled me to make a living and support my family. My wife and I and our two children are happy to live in the United Methodist faith community as full members because of God’s love for us. I will share the story of my life with you as a witness.

I came to The United Methodist Church in 1995 as an unaccompanied child when my home village, Mahanga, located in the territory of Masisi, was attacked by armed groups. My whole family fled—all in separate ways. My father was killed. My mother and other family elders fled in a different direction, and to this day, I do not know which way they went. They may no longer be alive, because even though peace has returned to our territory, I have never seen them again.

Some good people led me to The United Methodist Church’s Maman (Mother) Ekoko Orphanage in Goma, about 80 kilometers (close to 50 miles) from my village. When I entered the orphanage, I was identified by a photo, my name, and my age, 10.

A New Christian Family

I found other children in the orphanage and was happy because they became a new family for me. We were raised in the Christian faith and were educated through the third level of junior high school. In 2001, since the church elders were no longer able to provide us with school fees, they offered an opportunity for us to choose between a professional trade or craftsmanship training. I opted for woodworking, which required a 24-month training period provided by a Goma association called ETN. After I learned this job, I started doing my professional internship.

Since 2005, I have worked as a certified carpenter. I am independent and God has blessed me by giving me a new family. Because of my ability to earn an income, I was able to marry. Now my wife and I have two children. With my job, I can feed my family and can also contribute to the life of my local church.

I love singing for God because that was something I learned in the orphanage. Each time I sing, I am reminded of the more sorrowful moments of my life. The United Methodist Church has given me everything: a recovered life, despite the loss of my biological family, and a new family of my own.

Thankful for God’s Grace

My ambition is to be useful to other children who may find themselves in the same situation as mine during the 1995 attack on my village. I am very grateful to all, far and near, who have contributed to give me a second chance at life after the loss of my biological family.

To the United Methodist Christians in the United States, who funded programs at the orphanage in Goma, this is my prayer—May God fill you abundantly with God’s blessings.

Mukandirwa continues to live in Goma, DRC, with his family. He works as a carpenter and belongs to Amani UMC in Goma.
In the villages and even in the United Methodist churches of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we see a high number of disaffected and unemployed youth. Most are currently faced with poor living conditions, and, as they grow older, their social environment continues to become less virtuous and more violent.

As a result, we are faced with some major risk factors associated with youth in the DRC. Because youth unemployment is so high and since the young people wish desperately to improve their status and their living conditions, they will sometimes join armed groups in pursuit of easy money. Some fall into prostitution. Others sell their labor unwisely, getting involved in such risky businesses as artisanal mining, smuggling, and drug trafficking—which all too often results in their own consumption of illegal drugs. Many drop out of school and end up living on the street, which puts them at a higher risk for contracting HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

Youth ministry activities that the church coordinates aim to counteract these kinds of challenges in all the annual conferences and local churches of the episcopal area.

Coordinating Youth Activities
In the East Congo Episcopal Area, we seek to promote Christian virtues and peaceful coexistence among the young people of our communities, and we try to assist them as they work toward their own preparations for the transformation of the world. To this end, the three conferences organize and support youth activities at annual conference and in their local churches.

On the episcopal level, we generate and disseminate educational Christian literature to facilitate young people’s preparations for adult life. The youth office coordinates the dissemination of youth activity reports in each annual conference and serves as liaison with the leadership at the conference center (episcopal office).

By promoting youth fellowship in our local churches, we provide a good Christian community for youth. The youth come together to learn about healthy occupations and the kind of education needed to prepare for these positions. In some congregations, we need to raise awareness about the need for behavioral change and to show how best to achieve it. Some of our pastors may also serve as chaplains in our community schools.

At present, all three conferences hold summer camps for youth, along with music symposiums to support youth choirs. We have held HIV/AIDS awareness events for youth in all three conferences, and, in all three, the youth are also engaged in community work projects—perhaps one a month and, in some conferences, more than that. The East Congo and Oriental/Equateur conferences have also sponsored Bible study camps for youth.

The Rev. Djamba Omba (OMBA Djamba) serves as Youth Coordinator for the East Congo Episcopal Area.
People’s Climate March

United Methodists were among the nearly 400,000 people who took to the streets of New York, NY, on September 21 in a historic People’s Climate March. Representatives from all of Global Ministries’ departments marched as a group or with their local church groups. United Methodists from across the country marched—from Washington DC, Washington State, Wisconsin, Vermont, Georgia, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut—and many other places.

The march preceded the September 23 Climate Summit at the United Nations, arranged by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon—who also took part in the march—to spur political action on global warming and encourage leaders from government and the private sector to announce new initiatives.

International Disaster-Response and Risk Reduction Training

Some 26 delegates from South American Methodist churches in 10 countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela—and Global Ministries missionaries accepted the invitation by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to participate in the organization’s first-ever international workshop on professional methods and humanitarian standards of disaster response and disaster risk reduction. In addition, a delegate from a sister communion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia, also took part.

“We’ve been responding to survivors of natural disasters and armed conflict for about 10 years,” said Bishop Juan Alberto Cardona of Colombia, “but we were completely blind in our approach. After receiving this preparation, our eyes have been opened!”

The Arica training looked at core humanitarian standards of international disaster response and some of their legal and moral foundations, including those articulated in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement code of conduct.

Ebola Response in West Africa

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is working with United Methodist health boards in West Africa in a three-pronged approach to confront the spread of the Ebola virus, said UMCOR International Disaster Response and Global Health executives. Community education about the disease, health worker protection, and psychosocial counseling for affected people and their families are the strategy’s three prongs, said Dr. Olusimbo Ige, of Global Health, which, like UMCOR, is under the direction of the General Board of Global Ministries.

In the six months since the World Health Organization (WHO) was notified of the Ebola outbreak, 6,263 cases of the disease have been confirmed or suspected in five countries, with most occurring in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. As of September 21, there have been nearly 3,000 deaths attributed to the disease. To date, UMCOR has channeled more than $400,000 in emergency funds to confront Ebola, chiefly in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It also has provided funds to the health board of Côte d’Ivoire to assist its efforts to promote awareness and take preventive measures to keep Ebola at bay.

During **GIVING TUESDAY** last year, gifts from The United Methodist Church totaled $6.5 million. **WHAT’S NEXT?**
WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED … we maximize our impact and transform the world.

Last year on UMC #GivingTuesday, United Methodists collectively raised a record $6.5 million online through The Advance. Eleven thousand individuals and churches in 34 countries gave more than 16,300 gifts through The Advance to mission and ministries they believe in. It was a wonderful sign of commitment and extravagant generosity, maximizing the impact of thousands of United Methodists coming together on one day to transform the world.

On December 2, United Methodists once again are invited to extend the spirit of giving thanks into the Advent season by participating in UMC #GivingTuesday. And every gift made online through The Advance at www.umcmission.org/give on December 2, 2014 will be matched up to $1 million.*

WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED … we provide an alternative to the recent U.S. consumer-driven shopping traditions of Black Friday, Local Business Saturday and Cyber Monday.

WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED … ministries purchase new land in places like Cambodia and Tanzania.

WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED … an entire community in the Philippines rebuilds after being devastated by a typhoon.

WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED … families in Guatemala generate income and improve their diets.

WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED … youth in the U.S. repair homes for families in need while being trained to be servant leaders.

WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED … UMCOR responds globally to disasters that aren’t in the news spotlight.

WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED … a health-care center in Haiti offers increased access to care.

WHEN METHODISTS ARE UNITED … and support these or any one of the more than 950 United Methodist-related Advance projects, together we meet a range of needs, from helping survivors cope with natural or civil disasters to helping communities build churches, feed and educate children and equip hospitals and clinics.

Global Ministries offers ideas to promote and share the UMC #GivingTuesday campaign at www.umcmission.org/givingtuesday.

To make a contribution, go to www.umcmission.org/give on UMC #GivingTuesday and donate online to any of the hundreds of projects and missionaries listed there.

* Global Ministries will allocate matching funds dollar for dollar up to the first $1 million in gifts to Advance projects received online on December 2, 2014, between 12:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. EST. A maximum of $2,500 per individual gift to a project will be dispersed as matching funds. A project may receive a maximum of $25,000 in matching funds.
In general, the majority of the Congolese population lives in rural settings, with roughly 60 to 70 percent of the people residing in small rural villages. In the Eastern Congo, many villages are in remote places and a community may be made up of just a few hundred people. Other Christian movements across the world are likely to employ a missionary approach focused on creating faith communities and congregations in some selected, densely populated cities and towns. In contrast, Eastern Congo United Methodists seek to bring the gospel to every village, knowing that each sheep matters in the eyes of the Lord. Using this approach, we end up with a very high number of local churches with small memberships that range from 25 to 500 members, at most.

To reach people, we take every opportunity either to meet people where they congregate or to sponsor events that bring people together. For example, we place chaplains in schools, hospitals, and health centers. The women and youth of our churches organize music performances, playing and singing in public places in our villages. We also hold small prayer meetings in local churches, and our lay members volunteer to serve as evangelists and to visit people in their homes. Our church members will also attend public social gatherings, such as youth events or occasions when there is a large distribution of mosquito nets.

Drawbacks of Village Approach
While our village approach seems to be the best way for us to reach people for Christ, given our demographics, this kind of church planting is not without its drawbacks. Having a large number of small local churches may prove to be financially unsustainable, as it is difficult for small congregations to attain self-reliance. There may not be enough people involved to maintain the facilities or even to pay the pastor. This creates a disincentive for pastors, particularly when there is already a shortage of trained, ordained clergy. So a significant number of our churches are administered by lay preachers—and they are not always adequately trained.

In the more populated urban areas, Christians seem to be drawn...
to spectacular megachurches under the spell of the media. These churches have enough money and members to advertise on the internet. Televangelists also draw people into their churches, and church choirs are expected to perform using sophisticated instruments. Thanks to the media hype, large gatherings create high expectations that miraculous events will occur during church services. United Methodist churches actually lose members in some urban areas because they cannot compete with the megachurch entertainment.

As the Eastern Congo is still recovering from years of war, many churches are in bad shape. Some lack roofs. Others had all the furniture taken or burned. And some are simply in disrepair from neglect. Our pastors seek continuing education opportunities, but we have insufficient training material and equipment to meet their needs. There is also little opportunity for continuing education for pastoral trainers. Parsonages in the area are in the same condition as the churches, so pastors experience deteriorating living conditions. In the two Kivu Provinces, persistent insecurity is an ongoing challenge to evangelism.

### United Methodist Evangelism in East Congo

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Meeting the Challenges
In order to overcome some of these challenges, the episcopal office has been working diligently to provide effective and appropriate training for lay evangelists. We have employed a “Train the Trainers” model to multiply the effectiveness of evangelists back in the villages. Different levels of the church have also sponsored music events, which are very popular here and draw a lot of people.

We hope that the global UMC will be inclined to invest in the improvement of Eastern Congo’s low-income church infrastructure. This is not to say that churches in the United States and Europe should build our churches. But simply providing roof sheeting and materials to make cement would go a long way toward encouraging Eastern Congo members to do the rest.

The Eastern Congo also seeks help in building the capacity of trainers in each conference. A few additional technical resources made available to local churches, such as computers and access to the internet, would greatly assist the churches in their mission to strengthen their members. All of this would go a long way in supporting self-reliance initiatives in rural congregations.

“We have employed a ‘Train the Trainers’ model to multiply the effectiveness of evangelists back in the villages.”

What the East Congo Conference Told US Church Leaders about Evangelism
by Christie R. House

A good number of pastors, district superintendents, and lay leaders of the East Congo Annual Conference gathered at Cité Salama UMC in Kindu on August 16, 2014. There, they met several US bishops, Bishop Ntambo from the North Katanga DRC area, and a few general secretaries from US general agencies. They came not only to meet the visitors but also to help them understand how the churches of the East Congo have entered into a period of growth and increased membership. Many members of the UMC in the Congo have heard about the decline of membership in the conferences of the United States and Europe. So Bishop Gabriel Unda called them together to engage in a discussion intended to help US leaders understand how East Congo members do what they do.

Founded in 1957, Cité Salama UMC was the first Methodist Church planted in Kindu. All the districts of the East Congo Conference had representatives present: Tunda, Kibombo, Kalima, Kasongo, Punia, Samba, Kindu North and Kindu South. Some representatives of the other two conferences—Kivu and Oriental and Equateur—were also present, having arrived in time for the dedication of the new episcopal center offices and the bishop’s residence. Some of them had traveled by boat for days on the DRC’s maze of rivers and waterways.

Bishop Ntambo Nkulu Ntanda of North Katanga was the first to address the group. He told how he had planted 157 new churches by first inviting people to his home, sharing stories, and connecting with the people in the community.

Dr. Philippe Okonda reported that he had worked for seven years for the Congo UMC after his graduation as a medical doctor. Recently hired as the coordinator of medical services for the East Congo area, he is based at Tunda Hospital. “We preach the Good Samaritan Gospel,” he said. “The Samaritan did not say to the sick or injured, ‘God bless you, you are saved,’ while walking away without giving aid. When you have a chance to see the UMC at work in the Congo—even in remote places like Tunda (150 miles from Kindu), you see the Good Samaritan Gospel. The church assists people who have come 130 miles to receive help, often on foot or by bicycle. One man reported that his wife died because

The Rev. Benoit Ngereza Mahamudi (MAHAMUDI NGEREZA Benoit) is the coordinator of Evangelism for the East Congo Episcopal Area.

Onofumbo Dimoke, a Lay leader in the East Congo Conference. PHOTO: CHRISTIE R. HOUSE
she couldn’t get a C-section, and she couldn’t walk 15 to 20 miles to get to the hospital. This church goes to those remote areas. The UMC medical missions serve people who cannot afford medical care. A woman needed a goiter removed from her throat, but the government hospital said it would cost $1000 to remove. At the UMC hospital in Tunda, we did the same operation for $20. Her whole family is now United Methodist and a witness for God. This is my experience, presenting the church as one that will assist people in their deepest need. Many joined the church after an Imagine No Malaria net distribution. They realized the UMC cared about their children.”

From a different perspective, Rev. François Lushima, who coordinates the area’s pension plan and interfaces with the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, emphasized how the church cares for the youth. He started in the church as a youth and has now served 30 years as a pastor. Born into a very poor family, he received his full education through the UMC. “The church made me who I am today,” he said. “Spiritual care for youth is a great strategy for church planting and growth. Teach the Bible to children. After their studies, the young people may work elsewhere in the country, but they will take the church with them and plant another church wherever they go.”

Rev. Lushima’s second point was that the UMC cares for seniors. Young people are taught to care for the old. He saw the Central Conference pension initiative as showing that the whole global church believes in caring for and honoring the elderly for their service.

The Rev. Kumbe, a female pastor and former DS who had just retired, quoted the Scripture that drives her: “Go to all the nations and make disciples.”

“As pastors,” she explained, “we go out seeking people and bring them in. We walk, we use bicycles, and we go to a place and gather people, inviting them in to accept Christ as savior.” She said that a dialogue mode worked best, starting with an engaging conversation. “We sustain the groups in prayer,” she continued. “We start with a few people, share, preach the gospel, form a choir—and, after a while, people in the community start coming. First they might come just out of curiosity, to see what’s going on. But they stay. That small group might build the first worship shelter out of palm trees. Then the district assigns a local lay pastor. Later, as the fellowship grows, clergy will be appointed. God’s hand is on us. By faith new churches are growing.” Rev. Kumbe has planted five churches.

Onofumbo Dimoke (DIMOKE Onofumbo), a layperson in the conference, said the US church spends too much energy measuring church growth by numbers. The way the UMC in Kindu gains members differs from the practices of other denominations and of revivalist churches, such as Pentecostal and independent congregations. “Most churches want to plant one church and then concentrate on gaining a lot of members,” he said. “All the churches in the East Congo area are under 500 members. But we see growth in the number of churches.”

Dimoke admitted that he was amazed by the District Superintendent’s expectations for growth. But each time the people gather for the next annual conference, there are more churches—some with only 25 members. However, this 25 and that 100 and those 5 together make up the East Congo Conference, which now has 300,000 members. “It all adds up, from cities to little tiny villages,” he said. “Forget about the budget to plant churches. Just plant a church. Appoint a pastor to supervise. In the US you are merging churches. Stop focusing on the budget and how to preserve a church. Go plant more.”

Christie R. House is the editor of New World Outlook magazine. She visited the churches of Kindu in August of 2014 and made many friends. She sends special thanks to DIMOKE, mentioned above, who also happened to be her driver most of the time. “I rode with DIMOKE, with Senga LOKALE, the conference PR expert and president of the East Congo Conference UM youth, and with two district superintendents: the Revs. Paul NDJEKA of North Kindu, and Cèlestin LOHALO of South Kindu,” she said. “It was the best way to travel, by far!”
The provinces of North and South Kivu presently constitute the Kivu Annual Conference of the East Congo United Methodist Church. While the DRC’s other two annual conferences were founded mainly by American missionaries, the Kivu Annual Conference resulted from the work of Congolese clergy and laity.

What was to become today’s annual conference started in 1994 with one local church of about 50 members. At that time, the church members were part of the Central Congo Episcopal Area, which supervised the work of East Congo before 2012. Now, in 2014, 20 years after the first small church was founded, the number of members and local churches has increased to the point that the Kivu Provisional Annual Conference has become a full annual conference.

Factors in Growth

Typically, a new church is started in the DRC by a United Methodist family or an individual working and living in the area where the church will be planted. The church starts on the initiative of a family, leading to the creation of a cell group of people meeting informally around spiritual matters. Eventually, growth in the cell group may lead to the creation of a local church under the direction of a lay leader.

Annual conference leaders begin to get involved when church membership reaches 25. At that point, the conference officially assigns a pastor or lay preacher. Using this approach, the number of local churches has rapidly increased each time an influential or charismatic member has been sent to a new location. Sometimes the laity plant churches when they move from one area to another.

Over 10 years, the Kivu Conference expanded from local churches in Uvira, Goma, and Bukavu to 36 local churches working together as a body to create social programs, such as schools and health centers.

Churches in Kivu

The churches in the North and South Kivu provinces are mostly in rural areas with 200 to 300 members. Each church has a local design based on what its members can afford to build. Church members seek to conform to *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church. The annual conference structure allows church members to locate themselves within the global church, and, for us, the office of the bishop is the primary symbol of the church’s global nature in the local churches of Kivu Annual Conference.

Youth are the most active members in all the local churches, with young people being more than 70 percent of the participants in worship services.

Construction of local churches is often accomplished with material and financial contributions from United Methodist Men (UMM). Some UMM members help emerging churches by contributing to pastoral support. At least 10 local churches in marginalized communities benefit from the contributions of this laity network for mission.

A food distribution in the Rutshuru IDP camp, supported by an UMCOR emergency grant and coordinated and distributed by East Congo members.

PHOTO: COURTESY EAST CONGO UMC

Dr. Richard Letshu, a member of the UMC in East Congo, works for the World Health Organization in the DRC.
United Methodists say: “We open our hearts, our minds, and our doors,” and “we respond to God’s call to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” In the East Congo Episcopal Area, opening our hearts and our doors sometimes means rescuing people overcome by calamity or crisis and giving them easy access to the kinds of assistance they need—without any discrimination based on race, sex, religion, or any other such consideration.

The East Congo human rights office is monitoring humanitarian conditions in the North and South Kivu Provinces and in other annual conference areas—on behalf of the episcopal office. Beginning in 2013 and continuing this year, the government of the DRC has exercised broad control and authority in the eastern provinces, which were marked by the end of the last rebel movement, the M23, which had been supported by elements in Rwanda. Nevertheless, there is a residual presence of Congolese and Rwandan armed groups controlling mining areas in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Oriental Provinces. Armed groups still perpetrate serious violations of human rights, such as the stealing of property, the burning of houses, extortion, rape, and murder.

Some 300,000 people in the area are still displaced by the war, and more than a million returnees are without adequate shelter. Conflict, mistrust, and aggression arise between communities that accuse one another of betrayal. The persistence of war between Muslim Seleka rebel groups and anti-Balaka militias in the Central African Republic have sometimes resulted in war crimes on all sides and possible crimes against humanity.

Unfortunately, the DRC has seen a significant reduction of the response capacity of several humanitarian organizations. We still deal with major structural issues related to underdevelopment that increase the vulnerability of the population—80 percent of which lives on less than $2 per day. Only 30 percent of the people in the DRC have access to safe drinking water, and no one has health insurance.

**Working for Justice**

At present, the Office of Human Rights collects and disseminates information on such events as natural disasters, war, and violations of individual human rights, with a focus on sexual violence. When to disseminate information and which information to include is a decision made by the bishop. We support advocacy and human rights activism in cooperation with other associations working toward the same goals. Finally, the office organizes relief work—the distribution of material goods or food—to vulnerable people, such as those displaced by fighting or natural disasters.

People displaced by ongoing fighting in North and South Kivu received food and non-food items from the UMC, East Congo.

PHOTO: COURTESY EAST CONGO UMC

Dr. Richard Letshu currently works for the World Health Organization in the DR Congo. He has also served as Health and Relief coordinator for The United Methodist Church in East Congo.
What are these feeble [people] doing? Will they restore things? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish it in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish—and burned ones at that?

Nehemiah 4:2b NRSV

I told them that the hand of my God had been gracious upon me, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. Then they said, ‘Let us start building!’ So they committed themselves to the common good.”

Nehemiah 2:18 NRSV

As we travel along the dusty roads of Kindu, Maniema Province, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), it soon becomes clear how the words of the prophet Nehemiah resonate with the people in this clan of the United Methodist family. Across the Atlantic, there are no eyewitnesses left in the United States who suffered during the Civil War of the 1860s—a war that pitted North against South and family members against other family members. But that’s the only reference point Americans have to try to understand the violence and the sorrow that overwhelmed the Congo people, right in their own villages, following them even into the remote areas where they fled.

Kindu is the capital of Maniema Province, and while the government has made much progress in rebuilding the city, vestiges of the battles that destroyed so much in this region can still be seen in many areas. “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace.” (Nehemiah 2:17 NRSV)

Bishop Gabriel Unda, the first resident bishop of this new East Congo Episcopal Area, says that the words of Nehemiah 2:18 serve as the motto
for his church: “Let us rise up and build!” (King James Version) The Book of Nehemiah is set in a time of war and violence—subject matter often considered too rough for Sunday school lessons or US worship services. But the children of East Congo understand what Nehemiah saw and what it feels like to look out and see their city in ruins.

Community Together
Like the tribes of Israel, people in the DRC are still part of a communal culture centered on family, extended family, and the members of the community. Here, while there are houses and shelters to retreat to at night, much of life is lived outside in the company of others. Women gather at water stations to draw potable water for their families and to wash dishes. They gather at streams to wash clothes and at community ovens to bake their bread or cakes for special occasions. People gather for all kinds of occasions when they hear music being played—whether for funerals or weddings, Holy Days, or family parties.

Never have I experienced such a welcome as the one waiting for us when we arrived at the Kindu Airport. I was traveling with three bishops, three general secretaries, and the president of the US United Methodist Women’s organization, among others. Gaston Ntambo, the UMC Wings of the Morning pilot, had flown us from Kamina in the recently acquired 12-seater Caravan. Community, church, and government leaders were lined up right on the runway to shake our hands and welcome us. Outside the terminal, hundreds of people lined the streets—and two large commercial trucks were filled with people, some tumbling off the sides. Several dozen Methodists on motorcycles rode out in front of us, while United Methodists lined the paved streets of town to wave at our cars. United Methodists were dressed in their Sunday best, holding photos and bulletins from their churches, while curious bystanders stopped to survey the commotion.

“Let us rise up,” is understood as addressing everybody—all of us together. And in the past two years of life with their new bishop and their new denominational designation, the people of East Congo have risen up—out of their poverty and ruined churches, schools, and health clinics, buoyed by their faith—to begin the process of rebuilding their congregations and creating new ones.

Let Us Rise Up and Build
Bishop Unda was strategic in scheduling our visits to the churches in the East Congo Annual Conference. (The episcopal area serves three annual conferences, but we were only able to visit one.) The night our group arrived, we met at the Tokolote UMC in the Moto-Moto neighborhood of Kindu and were formally introduced to the large congregation. This was a well-established faith community, whose members seemed to be a strong pillar in the conference. They came out in large numbers that Friday night and filled the church to the rafters.

The next morning we stopped first at Basoko Mapendo UMC, a church that ended up in the middle of violent confrontations during the civil war in the mid-1990s. The church had been looted and its furniture burned. But now it had a brand new roof and fresh bright brickwork. The floor had been patched and strong wooden pews filled the sanctuary. The congregation that greeted us that day was mainly made up of young people, and a terrific young men’s choir, whose only instruments were rhythmic sticks, sang in four-part harmony.

But next door, the parsonage told a different story. The pastor’s house had not yet been renovated. It was riddled with bullet holes. The pastor’s family had had to flee during the war, when soldiers slept in the house. Rev. Célestin Lohalo (Célestin
LOHALO Malamba), the District Superintendent, said much of the property had been destroyed or looted. The roof still leaks and the pastor and his family had little more than mats to sleep on. But children and young people flooded the yard and followed us out to the street.

From this church we traveled to Nazareth UMC, a few miles away. Nazareth is a relatively new church whose members here had built a small chapel with a thatched roof. As we arrived, the worship area filled up with children. The conference had decided to expand this little chapel, and a metal roof had been erected high above the old thatched roof, some of which could still be seen inside the sanctuary.

Funding for the reconstruction efforts in this episcopal area has been acquired through grants—$20,000 from Global Ministries. Advance giving also provides a way to designate money for East Congo rebuilding, and several US conferences have been supporting this effort. Instead of spending the grants on a few big churches, the bishop’s office has spread that money across the episcopal area. Grant money will provide a congregation with roofing materials, which are costly and difficult to find. The conference also provides supplies to make cement. But the rest must come from the local congregation—bricks, labor, woodwork, and all.

Members make the bricks themselves in a common area with clay that is readily available in the soil. “We ask everybody to stand up and build, but each church has to bring a lot to each project,” explained Bishop Unda. Bishop Ntambo (NTAMBO Nkulu Ntanda), from the North Katanga Episcopal Area, pointed out that the grants for rebuilding these churches were covering only about 20 percent of the cost of renovation. The local churches contribute the other 80 percent.

From Nazareth UMC we traveled to the Omada neighborhood in the North District of Kindu. There, we entered an open area where palm poles and thatched leaves overhead defined a worship space. The Rev. Paul Ndjeka, District Superintendent of this area and Christian Education coordinator for the bishop’s office, introduced us to Pastor Joseph. Ndjeka explained that the city of Kindu is expanding to the north, so the UMC is planting churches in the area where more people are moving. “When our missionary (Pastor Joseph) came,” Ndjeka explained, “this was still like the bush. Now we are planting.” The pastor doesn’t live in the neighborhood, but he and an associate pastor travel about five miles every day to hold services here. They also visit regularly to draw together new members.

Thomas Kemper, General Secretary of Global Ministries, asked Pastor Joseph what his text would be for Sunday’s service. “Psalm 133:1,” the pastor answered without hesitation. “Let’s work together in unity.”

As we turned to leave, Bishop Unda said to Joseph and Ndjeka, “Start making the bricks.” Soon, the new congregation will start making and firing the bricks that they will use to build their church.

A New City on a Hill

Sunday August 17, 2014, was a day of great celebration for United Methodists in the East Congo area. This was the day the church dedicated three new buildings that arose out of the ashes of the former Lokole mission station. The bishop’s new residence, an office building, and an educational building were all nearing completion. Lokole mission station was situated on top of a hill that overlooked some of the Kindu neighborhoods. Because of its vantage point, it had also been a great place for rebels, government soldiers, and militias to command. A lone shell of a building, the former UM Elundu Technical Institute, stood as a reminder of the war that had destroyed the property.

Bishops, visitors, and pastors gathered at the Kitumaini UMC on the property. The Rev. Antoine Otoka (Antoine OTOKA Kapele), serves as pastor for this church and as communications director for the East Congo Area. Kitumaini was also in the middle of renovation—with a new roof and a good start on rebuilding the chancel area and the windows.

The service was held outside, where hundreds of church members had gathered amid the three new buildings. The bishop’s residence was dedicated in the name of Bishop William McAlilly. The Memphis and Nashville conferences that he leads had given $87,000 to the building project. The office building was named after Global Ministries, which...
allocated $40,000 for building projects in East Congo and in the other two annual conferences, Kivu and Oriental/Equateur. The third building was named for Bishop Peggy Johnson, of the Philadelphia area, whose conferences had given more than $16,000 for reconstruction efforts. Thomas Kemper of Global Ministries and the two US bishops were present for the dedication of the buildings.

During the dedication, Bishop Unda talked about the family of Tunda, whose grandfather had accepted the first Methodist missionaries in Maniema Province in 1922. The bishop said today’s gathering still has the ring of the covenant made in 1922 between the missionaries and the people of East Congo. He also spoke of the descendants of this Tunda family, who took the Scripture seriously when the disciples asked Jesus how to feed the crowd, and Jesus answered: “You feed them.” For the last two years, this family has provided all the food to feed all the members who come for annual conference, which lasts a week or so.

“Two years ago, there was nothing in this place,” Bishop Ntambo reminded those gathered, “and now—look and see what the Lord has done.” As in the Book of Nehemiah, the exiles have returned, the walls have been rebuilt, a covenant has been made, and the population of the city has increased. And on the day of dedication, there was music, and singing, and dancing, and people gathered from many villages.

“They offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. The joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.” (Nehemiah 12:43 NRSV)

Christie R. House is the editor of New World Outlook magazine, a publication of the General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church.
The United Methodist Church is an important contributor to the health-care system in the East Congo area. It has 18 health facilities and 10 smaller clinics that provide health care to an estimated population of 400,000. Thanks to the support of partners such as UMCOR, the health ministry of the UMC keeps growing each year. The East Congo malaria-control program is especially well developed as part of the Imagine No Malaria program.

**East Congo Health Program**

The East Congo Health Program organizes and manages its United Methodist medical facilities in accordance with DRC health regulations. Its mission is to facilitate better access to health care for more people in need, regardless of their race, sex, religion, tribal or ethnic affiliation, or other factor. United Methodist health workers also provide public information, necessary education, and effective support to promote health in the general population.

In 2012, we inherited a health system in the East Congo Episcopal Area composed of the following institutions. In the East Congo Annual Conference, there was one General Hospital of Reference (GHR) in Maniema Province, known as Tunda Hospital, a Technical Medical Institute (TMI) for teaching medical students in the town of Tunda, and six health centers: Likeri, Kibombo, Minembe, Lokole, Lubao, and the Ongelo Health Post. In Kivu Annual Conference, there was one clinic, the Uvira Clinic. And in the Oriental and Equateur Conference, there was the Mangobo Health Center. These various institutions were plagued with problems, including poor infrastructure, inadequate and outdated equipment, and a lack of medicines.

Since 2012, when the Episcopal Area was founded, East Congo has established a Board of Health Development and has adopted a strategic plan for strengthening existing health services and establishing new ones. Health Board members have been recruited and trained, and an office for health coordination has been opened in Kindu.

Major areas of the strategic plan are intended to strengthen the coordination of health ministries in East Congo as part of the Congo Central Conference of The United Methodist Church. The plan seeks to support the development
of health facilities as well as improve the quality of care for patients. Within our health network, health workers also conduct high-impact public health interventions against endemic diseases, such as malaria and HIV/AIDS.

Of particular concern is addressing the health issues of women who are victims of rape and sexual violence, along with the health needs of people who have been displaced by the ongoing conflict in the northern and southern parts of the Kivu provinces. Two assistance programs were conducted in 2013 for internally displaced people in the two Kivu provinces.

Health Center Renovations

Over the last two years, renovations have already taken place in a number of health facilities. Not only has Lokole Health Center in Kindu been renovated but a new maternity wing has been built on the property. The Mangobo Health Center has also undergone renovation, and work has been started on the Likeri Health Center and on a health center in Bukavu.

Four of the health centers—Lokole, Uvira, Mangobo, and Kibombo—are being developed into hospital centers with additional services and medical personnel. This will enable the health workers to coordinate a more comprehensive package of complementary health care. The UMC also plans to revitalize 10 health centers to meet the government’s standards for a health facility capable of providing a certain minimum package of care.

Today, in addition to Tunda Hospital, Tunda Technical Medical Institute, and three of the completed hospital centers, the UMC’s East Congo health system has 23 health centers, for a total of 28 health facilities.
Plans for the Future
By 2016, the health system of the East Congo Episcopal Area will be strong enough to contribute more fully to the reduction of the currently excessive mortality and morbidity rates in eastern DRC communities, in accordance with the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church. By then, a fourth health center will be developed into a more comprehensive hospital center. And we will continue to strengthen the 23 current health centers to meet the minimum requirements for basic primary health services. We also hope to improve the facilities and services of Tunda Hospital.

In the next two years, the East Congo Health Program plans to assist with a large distribution of bed nets in South Kivu and to implement an informational program about HIV/AIDS in some of the schools.

Challenges in the Region
As in all areas of work in Eastern Congo, poor communication networks and a lack of affordable transportation between provinces limit the amount of regular contact the health coordinator can have with the various health facilities of the church. Since conferences have limited financial resources, accomplishing our goals has created a dependence on UMCOR at this early stage of our development. The health board hopes to develop the ability to diversify East Congo’s technical and financial partners in the future.

Given the extensive poverty in the DRC, few of the patients served by the UMC health centers have sufficient income to pay for medical services. Thus most of our medical services are free of charge at this time.

Dr. Philippe Okonda and Dr. Richard Letshu, DRC.
PHOTO: CHRISTIE R. HOUSE

Dr. Philippe Okonda is the Coordinator of Health Services for the East Congo Episcopal Area. Dr. Richard Letshu works with the World Health Organization in the DRC and served as the Coordinator of Health Services from 2012 to 2014.

SUPPORT FOR HEALTH WORK IN EAST CONGO

There are several opportunities to support health ministries in the East Congo area through the Advance.
Advance #3020682, Kisangani Health Center and Maternity Center Reconstruction, will help to revitalize a UMC health center in the Oriental Province.
Advance #15135A, Kindu and Tunda Health Center Reconstruction, will assist UMC health facilities in the Maniema Province of the DRC.
The Major Communication Challenges in the New Episcopal Area

by Antoine Otoka

Bishop Gabriel Unda of the East Congo Episcopal Area is developing the area’s Communications Department to bring it up to modern standards for information dissemination.

Currently, the equipment that the Communications Department has available for collecting, processing, and disseminating information is very basic. In addition, frequent power cuts, common in the DRC, rapidly degrade what equipment we do have. Often, our connection to the internet is weak. The episcopal area lacks its own website, which weakens both our global connection and our ability to communicate within the area.

Several districts in the conferences still have no connection to the internet. Given the low bandwidth and the frequent interruptions in service, there is a delay in transmitting information. Few of our members have any access to modern communication tools, such as the internet, a personal computer or laptop, or a smartphone.

Forging Ahead in Faith
At present, we are working to develop a partnership network with all our local radio stations, which already accompany us in the coverage of our events. Most of our members have some way to access a radio, many of which are battery-, solar-, or wind-up-powered. In the future, we would really like to acquire our own radio station.

The Communications Department provides media coverage of events in our episcopal area. We broadcast these events on our Facebook page or send them by mail to our correspondents, who pass the news on to members in their conferences and districts. We archive data on CDs or DVDs, which can then be used in district events. Many of our districts have no access to the internet, but a screen, a DVD player, or a laptop computer may be available for district events.

The press is alive and well in the DRC. There were so many Congolese reporters covering the dedication ceremony of the new Episcopal Center buildings, at times the congregation could barely see the bishops. At the podium are Bishop Unda, Bishop Ntambo, and Bishop McAlilly.

PHOTO: CHRISTIE R. HOUSE

The Episcopal area has an ongoing priority to strengthen and modernize our working tools, such as voice recorders, video, and still cameras. We also intend to sponsor formal training and exchanges with other episcopal areas to explore other communications networks. As resources become available, we seek to broaden our contact system, reaching all episcopal districts by mail, telephone, or ham radio for an efficient area-wide system of communications.

The Rev. Antoine Otoka (Antoine OTOKA Kepele) serves as the Communications Director of the East Congo Episcopal Area and as pastor for Kitumaini UMC in the Lokole neighborhood of Kindu.
Global UMC Connections

Grants, Scholarships, Personnel, Training, and Other Developmental Support for the East Congo Episcopal Area

Even before East Congo was made a separate episcopal area, the global United Methodist connection supported its ministry. Today, a concerted effort is being made by general agencies and annual conferences in the United States and Europe and in other conferences of the DRC to work in partnership with the East Congo UMC as it develops and grows. Below is a snapshot of the ways in which various general agencies and conferences are involved with United Methodists in East Congo.

Approved Grants for East Congo Projects
$40,000 for the East Congo Episcopal Area: allocated in October 2013 to support the construction of offices in Kinshasa, East Congo Annual Conference, as well as in the two other annual conferences of East Congo—Kivu Annual Conference and Oriental and Equateur Annual Conference.

$20,000 support, processed in October 2013, for reconstruction of East Congo Conference churches destroyed during the war.

National in Mission Support Grants
A National in Mission (NIM) grant is given by the General Board of Global Ministries to support staff members serving in mission positions in their own country or region. These grants are funded for three years and can be renewed for another three, depending on the availability of funds and on the need expressed by the church leadership in the receiving region.

Global Ministries supports the following positions in the East Congo Episcopal Area: Christian Education Director, Community Development Officer, Women’s Coordinator, Youth Coordinator, Schools Coordinator, HIV/AIDS Program Director, Tunda Maternity Clinic Director, and Orphanage Director.

Three full-time missionary placements have also been approved for the Episcopal Area—an Administrative and Liaison Support person, an East Congo Treasurer, and a doctor to serve Tunda Hospital.

World Communion Scholarships and Leadership Grants
The scholarship office is exploring the possibility of funding a group of students at the United Methodist University of Kinshasa through a block grant. Global Ministries is currently receiving scholarship applications from East Congo students. Two Central African Republic pastors who received scholarships have now concluded their studies at the Methodist University of Katanga, but they have not been able to return home with their families because of ongoing violence in the CAR.

For UMCOR grants, see page 38.

The United Methodist Women’s Regional Missionary initiative was created to address the issues that concern women and youth in developing countries throughout the world. Grace Musuka serves as the regional missionary in the DRC, focusing on issues of health, gender equality, the elimination of violence against women, and support for the uprooted and marginalized.

Musuka will receive training this year from Youth for Christ (Jeunesse pour Christ) as she seeks to understand the pressures on young adults in the Central and East Congo Episcopal Areas in the areas of youth militia forces (similar to US gangs), substance abuse, and violence. The knowledge and leadership skills she gains will help her develop a young adult program in partnership with the Central and East Congo areas.

Currently, United Methodist Women provides scholarships for eight Congolese women who are earning college and graduate degrees. Three study in US universities and five are enrolled in Africa University.
Publishing and Contextual Resources

In January 2014, Discipleship Resources, International, General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), worked with East Congo representatives to launch the East Congo Publishing Team. The team is led by the Rev. Antoine Kepele Otoka (Communications), with the Rev. Benoit Ngereza Mahamudi (Evangelization, Dean of the Theology School, Methodist University of Kindu), as publishing coordinator. Top priorities for the publishing team are Bibles in Kiswahili and French; hymnals, liturgy, and Christian discipleship literature in Swahili, Lingala, and French; and *The Book of Discipline* in French. In August, the new publishing team met with Stephen Bryant of GBOD/Discipleship Resources, International, to draft its 2014-2016 publishing plan.

The East Congo Publishing Team is one of five such teams operating in Francophone Africa (East Congo, Central Congo, North Katanga, Tanzania, and Côte d’Ivoire). These teams are networking to produce critical resources for United Methodist churches primarily in French and/or Kiswahili and other local languages, as needed. Altogether, 12 such publishing teams serve the UMC in Africa, and two more serve in other parts of the world. All are dedicated to making UM resources available, affordable, and appropriate to the culture.

Leadership Development

“UM Way Seminar”

At Bishop Unda’s invitation, GBOD introduced the “UM Way Seminar,” a replicable seminar series for pastors and lay leaders of East Congo, in Kindu during the week of August 13-18, 2014. This seminar was a composite of three others—“UM Way of Making Disciples,” “UM Way of Worship,” and “UM Way of Connection”—originally designed and piloted with the Central Congo Area. (Kinshasa, 2011-2012). A seminar was also taught in Tanzania in July 2014. The East Congo Publishing Team will produce a booklet that supports the seminar presentations so that the sessions can be replicated throughout the episcopal area.

**East Congo School of Theology, United Methodist University of Kindu**

(General Boards of Discipleship and of Higher Education and Ministry)

An “E-Readers for Theological Education” project addresses the dire need for academic books and “library” resources for theology students and faculty. The next step for the East Congo region and representatives from these two general agencies is planning time with the dean and faculty of the theological school for application in 2015.

The French language collection of e-reader resources is currently in development. In response to a proposal from the Africa Association for United Methodist Theological Institutions, the Central Conference Commission on Theological Education made some start-up funds available for East Congo. “Distributive Education by Video” (an off-line resource) is in development for testing with Francophone seminaries.

**United People’s Ministries**

Young people from the East Congo Episcopal Area participated in the July 2014 Global Convocation for United Methodist Young People, a quadrennial event sponsored by GBOD that draws youth and young adults from across the global church. East Congo sent three voting delegates, along with three non-voting observers, to the Philippines for the 2014 conference. In addition, one East Congo youth participated in the Young Leaders Summit held at Africa University in May 2014.

**UNITED METHODIST COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT**

United Methodist Communications is providing Frontline SMS and Ushahidi software—both open-source programs—to manage mobile numbers and send group text messages without need of the internet. Through rugged and ultra-low-power equipment, people in the developing world can work despite high heat and unreliable power conditions. More options in solar solutions are available and internet access is increasingly accessible.

United Methodist Communications has met with East Congo Communications Director, the Rev. Antoine Otoka, to provide training for various initiatives. A solar-charging-stations pilot program can support income generation and program initiatives through solar technology. The Fenix International “Ready Set Go” Solar Charging System can charge multiple cellphones and tablet computers.

Printed hymnals in several different languages can be costly for local churches. Also, in Africa, where not all areas have secure access to electricity, the use of multimedia equipment is prohibitive. United Methodist Communications’ low-energy worship projection system
seeks to overcome some of these barriers and serve as a model capable of being replicated throughout the United Methodist central conferences where reliable electricity is an issue. The system contains hymns that are also being added to WorldReader for access on basic mobile phones, which are being tested in the East Congo Episcopal Area.

United Methodist Communications is working with Antoine Otoka to map the East Congo Episcopal Area on https://unitedmethodistchurch.crowdmap.com, using Frontline SMS software. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the first region of Africa to be added to United Methodist Communications’ international map of The United Methodist Church.

The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) is exploring a partnership with the East Congo area to learn more about tribalism and how it has hindered the work of the UMC in East Congo. The most pressing needs concerning inclusivity and institutional equity in East Congo will be identified, allowing GCORR to design learning materials tailored to the needs of the East Congo. This connection will be one of mutual learning and innovation, assisting East Congo members as they strive to be more effective in reaching a multicultural demographic.

The members and congregations of the Tennessee and Memphis annual conferences of the Nashville Episcopal Area contributed $87,000 during 2013 toward the construction of an episcopal residence for Bishop Gabriel Yemba Unda. The home will be completed before 2015.

The Tennessee and Memphis conferences hosted Bishop Unda during their June 2014 annual conference sessions. Bishop Unda preached at both conferences and thanked conference members for their generous support, both in providing funds to construct the episcopal residence and for efforts in support of Imagine No Malaria. The Tennessee and Memphis conferences hope to reach the goal of $1 million for Imagine No Malaria by June 30, 2015.

The Eastern Pennsylvania and Peninsula-Delaware conferences have been supporting mission personnel and Advance projects in the DR Congo for many years. In 2013, total giving to the DRC from Eastern PA was $21,143, and from Peninsula-Delaware, $22,275. Also, since 2012, the total giving of the Philadelphia Episcopal Area to the East Congo region has been about $17,000.

Congregations, conferences, and individuals can support projects that assist ministries in the East Congo Episcopal Area through Advance giving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Congo, DRC (East Congo) Undesignated</td>
<td>Supports mission work through church partners in the East Congo Episcopal Area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3021993</td>
<td>Central African Republic Undesignated</td>
<td>Supports mission work through church partners in the Central African Republic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3021926</td>
<td>East Congo Church Reconstruction</td>
<td>Restores local churches and pastors’ houses damaged by the war.</td>
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<td>15135A</td>
<td>Kindu and Tunda Health Center Reconstruction</td>
<td>Provides equipment, medicine, and support for rebuilding health-care facilities that provide maternity care.</td>
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<td>15138N</td>
<td>Kindu Orphanage Improvements</td>
<td>Supports the East Congo women as they care for the physical and spiritual needs of children whose parents were killed in war or by AIDS.</td>
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<td>3021399</td>
<td>Goma Orphanage</td>
<td>Helps the women of Kivu and the East Congo area establish an orphanage in the Goma area, where there are many refugees.</td>
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<td>3021401</td>
<td>Kisangani Mission Station</td>
<td>Improves facilities for schools, churches, health-care ministries, and orphanages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3020682</td>
<td>Kisangani Health Center and Maternity Center Reconstruction</td>
<td>Reconstructs health centers that were destroyed during the civil wars.</td>
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**United States Postal Service**

**STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION**

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<td>i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation</td>
<td>93%</td>
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17. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal and/or civil sanctions.

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Christie R. House, Editor, October 1, 2014
When there are meetings to attend, events to plan and schedules to juggle, you would like more time. The Official United Methodist 2015 Program Calendar gives you that time by providing easy-to-use formats for scheduling, tracking activities and events, and keeping up with lectionary references and the liturgical year. It’s also a how-to book offering tips and shortcuts for United Methodist churches.

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Rural Development Work

by Joseph Mbeleko, who works with Rural Development for the United Methodist East Congo Episcopal Area.

The United Methodist Rural Development Work in eastern Congo includes animal husbandry and agriculture, as one might expect, but at Mujila Falls Agriculture Center in Kanyama, Zambia, where I’ve been working with several farmers’ associations over the last several years. Also in the Komofo district, about 120 kilometers south of Lusaka, a research project was conducted with 69 farmers’ organizations. A research team from the Kasungu Development Project at the Kasungu Agricultural Research Institute conducted the project. The team centered in the East Congo Annual Conference area, a region with diverse agriculture, livestock, and forest resources. The team’s objective was to identify needs and opportunities for agricultural and animal production.

The task of Rural Development Work is to analyze and identify needs within the development strategies framework for the support of people living in the episcopal area. We provide technical, logistical, and financial support to farmers’ organizations for agricultural and animal raising activities. We are also involved in the development and support of farmer cooperatives and local agricultural associations. The United Methodist Rural Development Work in eastern Congo includes eight projects.

The East Congo Episcopal Area

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Training the East Congo Health Board

Ted Warnock is a missionary working with UMCOR and Global Health. His primary focus concentrates on health board capacity development and education. This piece comes from Ted and Carla Warnock’s September 2014 newsletter.

A January 2014 trip to the East Congo Episcopal Area was to have resulted in training their new health board. But, along the way, the right wing engine pump on the commercial airplane we were traveling in became inoperative and we were forced to change our focus and plans.

We eventually got to Kinshasa, where we had the privilege of sharing in the dedication of a new medical clinic built through Imagine No Malaria funding.

Ted and Carla Warnock, October 2014
It Is All About Saving Lives

Gaston and Jeanne Ntambo serve as Global Ministries missionaries with the Wings of the Morning Aviation Program in the North Katanga Episcopal Area. Gaston Ntambo wrote about Silas Kawaya in his May 2014 missionary newsletter.

Silas Kawaya, a 50-year-old farmer from Kabulo, Kisanga, woke up one morning in November 2013 with pain in his hip and then in his backbone. He is married and he and his wife have seven children. Day by day, the pain became worse. Since he lives in a place where there is no doctor, Mr. Kawaya decided to waste no time. The goal was to reach the town of Kamina, where there was hope for an x-ray machine and a diagnosis of his problem. Kamina was 380km (236 miles) away, but in the rainy season, this was going to be a very difficult trip, especially for a patient in his condition.

Mr. Kawaya and his wife left the rest of the family behind. First they traveled 180 km (111 miles) by road to Kabongo, riding in the back of a six-ton truck. Then they traveled another 200 km (124 miles) by train to reach Kamina. The entire trip took the couple four days. Unfortunately, the clinic in Kamina has no x-ray machine. This meant only one thing. He was going to have to travel another 600km (372 miles) by train, or in the back of a truck, to reach the city of Lubumbashi.

At this point, Mr. Kawaya was ready to give up. That kind of travel would be just too painful. A phone call was made from the United Methodist Conference office in Kamina and I brought the plane to his rescue, flying him to where he could receive medical attention.

It was great to see Mr. Kawaya’s smiling face again in May 2014, shake his hands, and see him standing on his own. Wings of the Morning continues to give hope to many—hope that medicine and help will come, and for that, we praise the One that deserves all the praise and honor.
East Congo United Methodists look to the biblical Book of Nehemiah for hope and inspiration. It tells the story of the Jewish people returning from exile and rebuilding Jerusalem. Nehemiah, their governor, oversees a group of weary refugees as they raise the wall that protects their city. 

Like the ancient Jews, people in East Congo (DRC) know all about the need to rebuild. Recurring wars left 6 million dead and destroyed homes, buildings, and ways of life. But, as in Nehemiah’s time, once new structures are up, the rebuilding of the actual community is just beginning. Nehemiah and the scribe, Ezra, continued to call the people back to their heritage. They retaught God’s commandments, which were forgotten during exile. In addition, Nehemiah brought charges against the nobles and officials of Judah who were extorting the people, stealing their lands and daughters.

The people of East Congo endured incredible violence during the wars, including sexual-based violence against hundreds of thousands of women. Their families were destroyed, they lived as refugees, and they experienced the complete destruction of their social infrastructure. Everyone was affected.

And we, the world, watched—but paid little attention to what was happening. Most Westerners saw the conflicts as too messy, too complicated, to get involved.

The most recent conflict followed 400 years of exploitation of the DR Congo. Slave traders kidnapped people at gunpoint, destroying communities and local government. Then the colonial power of Belgium, under King Leopold, ushered in a time of brutal exploitation. The colonial mindset denigrated the people, providing little education or chance to develop leadership.

Independence in 1960 brought new challenges. The country’s future and resources were caught up in the Cold War. Civil war broke out, elected leaders were killed, and in 1965 Mobuto Sese Seko seized power. As long has he kept Communism at bay and pleased Western nations, he could do whatever he liked. Reportedly, when soldiers complained about wages, he replied, “You have guns, you don’t need a salary!” A culture of taking from civilians became ingrained.

The church today is trying to rebuild. Building houses, churches, and social and health institutions is hard work. But the biggest challenge is building trust. Can there be trust without first addressing the truth of what happened and doing the difficult work of reconciliation? We have good examples of such efforts in South Africa and Sierra Leone, where churches were instrumental in the truth and reconciliation process. Our United Methodist Bishop Joseph Humper led the formal process in Sierra Leone.

Can our church provide momentum for reconciliation in the DRC—trust beyond ethnicity and tribalism, and a desire for truth and healing? Can the Word of God be plainly seen in our mission?

The connectional church has the responsibility to help East Congo make both real bricks and bricks of trust, peace and justice. Let us both pray and work with the United Methodists of East Congo as they walk in the steps of Nehemiah, building a new society that provides abundance for all.

Thomas Kemper
General Secretary
General Board of Global Ministries

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Be Hope.
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*Global Ministries will allocate matching funds dollar for dollar up to the first $1 million in gifts to Advance projects received online on December 2, 2014, between 12:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. EST. A maximum of $2,500 per individual gift to a project will be dispersed as matching funds. A project may receive a maximum of $25,000 in matching funds.