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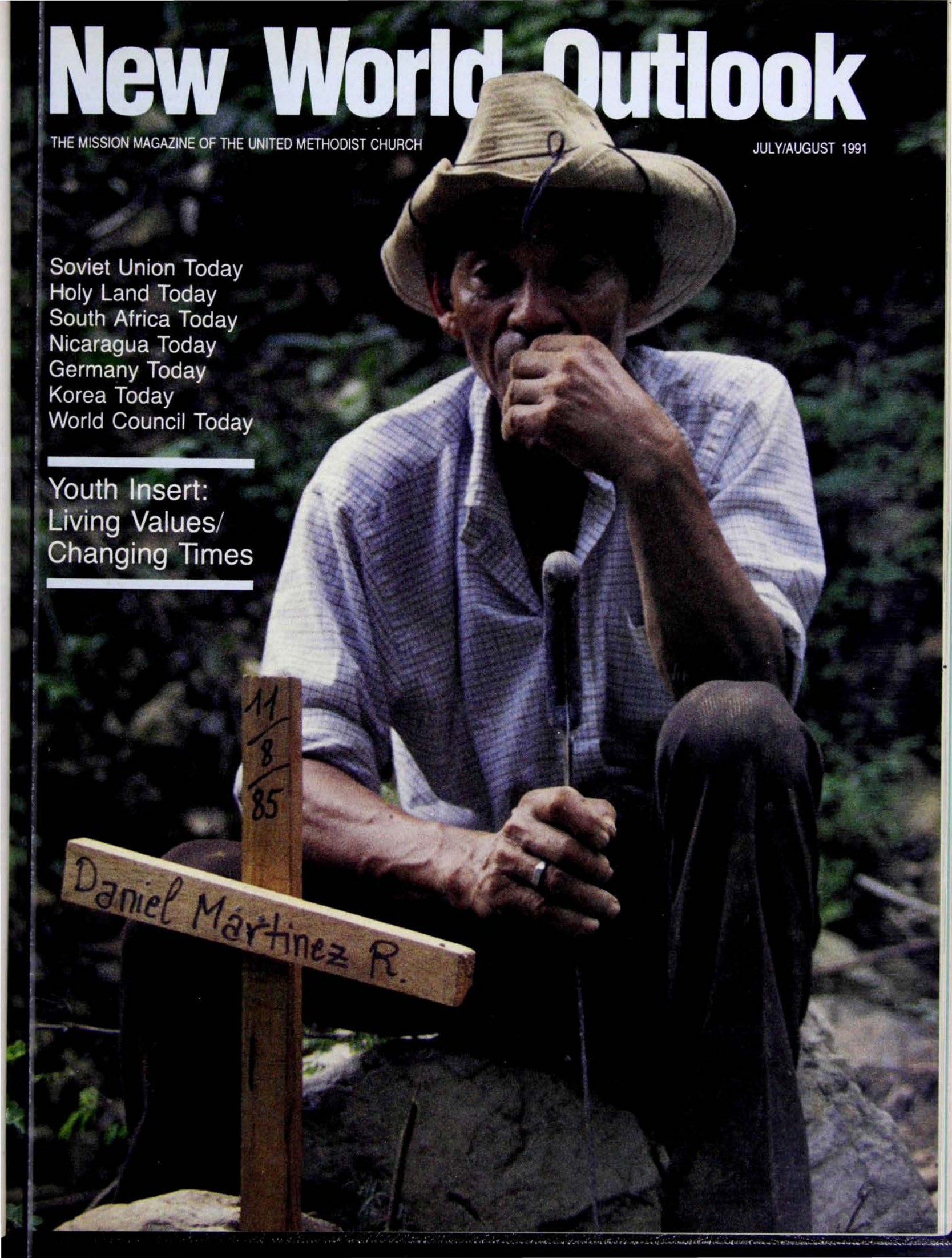
New World Outlook

THE MISSION MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

JULY/AUGUST 1991

Soviet Union Today
Holy Land Today
South Africa Today
Nicaragua Today
Germany Today
Korea Today
World Council Today

Youth Insert:
Living Values/
Changing Times



New World Outlook

Publisher
Randolph Nugent

Associate Publisher
Rena M. Yocom

Editor
Alma Graham

Consulting Editor
James R. McGraw

Senior Staff Writer
Ezekiel C. Makunike

Administrative Assistant
Hortense A. Tyrell

Art Director
Roger C. Sadler

Production Manager
Nancy Quigley

Photo Editor
John C. Goodwin

Production Assistant
Claire M. Johnson

Copy Editor
Christie House-Forni

Circulation Fulfillment
Mary Jane Shahan

Editorial Offices
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1351
New York, N.Y. 10115

Advertising/Promotion Director
Ruth Kurtz
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1337
New York, N.Y. 10115
212/870-3784

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Cover photo: by Paul Jeffrey. It pictures a Nicaraguan father in mourning, praying beside the grave of his son who was assassinated by the contras.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Mission is global. This is the message conveyed throughout this exciting issue of *New World Outlook*. The mission that unfolds in these pages is as boundless and as compelling for Christians today as it was two thousand years ago when Jesus first gave us the Great Commission: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations . . . ." (Matthew 28:19a) Now our outreach even extends to our former adversary, the Soviet Union. A missionary from Africa is slated to take the United Methodist message to that largest nation of Europe. Times have changed, indeed!

In fact, the winds of change are blowing all over our planet. Earlier this year, across the globe in Canberra, Australia, the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches chose as its theme this invocation: "Come, Holy Spirit, renew the whole Creation!" With Betty Thompson as our guide, we are there—seeing the sights, meeting the people, experiencing the encounters at the most representative collection of Christians ever gathered.

From that beginning, United Methodist missionaries take us on tours of Israel, Korea, and Nicaragua, while staff members at the General Board of Global Ministries and others bring us up to date on Germany, the Soviet Union, and South Africa.

Esther Megill evokes Jesus' tears over Jerusalem as she introduces us to some of Israel's displaced Palestinians and lets us overhear their painful stories. Sonia and Dwight Strawn reveal the suffering of Koreans parted from their families in a still-divided land. In contrast to their story of separation is Kathinka Kaden's account of the spiritual tensions remaining after reunification in Germany. Invisible walls can be the hardest to knock down. In fact, even "peace" can be imperfect when it means only a cessation of hostilities. Paul Jeffrey shows us post-war Nicaragua today—a desperate place where many are worse off than they were when the contra-Sandinista war was in progress.

Yet hope remains the most important part of the story. Shirley Traylor finds hope for change in the spirit of tiny, tattered South African children, raising their fists in a sign of freedom. She is also uplifted by the examples of lawyers and political prisoners who suffered and sacrificed for the cause of justice.

Grace Brame sees an incredible window of opportunity for Christian witness in the Soviet Union, where spiritually starved people are admitting their hunger for God. Jim McGraw puts this Soviet mission into historical perspective and gives valuable specifics about the past, present, and potential United Methodist response. Finally, Dr. Randolph Nugent puts the Soviet opportunity into a biblical perspective—showing how God's new global mission started and how we can continue it today.

Change is also coming to *New World Outlook*. We've added more color and more illustrations, as well as locator maps. We've included not only a two-sided poster but a special, eight-page Youth Insert, edited by Sidney Fowler, on the mission study theme "Living Values in Changing Times." This year, the Annual Report of the General Board of Global Ministries is a separate publication, and we're sending it as a bonus to all our subscribers. We're also planning theme issues and special features. But to do this, we want and need your input. Write "Letters to the Editors." Give us your reactions and response. Above all, help us respond to what Dr. Nugent calls "the mighty wind of the Spirit in motion" throughout the world.

—The Editors

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Mission Memo

UNITED METHODIST RESPONSIBILITY Wesley Community Centers, Atlanta, Georgia, has been designated by Fulton County as the nonprofit agency to oversee and manage the services for the aging for Central City, Atlanta. **Doris Alexander**, deaconess and executive director of Wesley Community Centers, reports that there are eight senior citizen centers for which United Methodist leadership became responsible on July 1. Services provided by those centers include: congregate meals, home-delivered meals, individual and community care case management, homemaker services, volunteer recruitment, and transportation.

GREAT COMMISSION CONTINUED At a worship service during the April meeting of the General Board of Global Ministries, 27 persons were commissioned for missionary service. Four other persons previously commissioned were reinstated as missionaries and given new mission assignments. The newly commissioned missionaries include an airplane pilot and mechanic, teachers, pastors, church and community workers, deaconesses, and rural community workers. At the same spring Board meeting, a new mission evangelism statement was adopted. It reflects the scriptural and theological foundations of the work of the Board's Mission Evangelism Committee. This committee monitors, evaluates, and reflects upon the continuing task of mission evangelism in the functions and programs of all units of the Board.

NEW ASSOCIATE GENERAL SECRETARY **Rev. John L. McCullough** has been elected to serve as the new associate general secretary for Mission Personnel Resources. A former missionary serving in Kenya (1981-84), the 38-year-old Rev. McCullough served most recently as pastor of Wesley United Methodist Church in Springfield, Massachusetts.

MIDEAST MISSIONARY TO RETURN In early May, **Rev. Alex Awad** received welcome words that the way had been cleared for his getting a work permit from the government of Israel to return to his duties as pastor of a Baptist church in East Jerusalem. Rev. Awad, a Palestinian, a U.S. citizen, and a United Methodist missionary assigned by the General Board of Global Ministries, has been seeking government permission to return to Israel since 1989. During an Easter visit to Jerusalem, he met **Yossi Sarid**, a member of the Israeli Kenesset, who agreed to intercede on Awad's behalf. A letter dated May 1 from the Israeli politician said, "I now believe there will be no further obstacles and you will be able to fulfill your position here in Israel." "He evidently must have worked on my case," said Rev. Awad. "I'm sure this is the start of good news." Rev. Awad joins Romeo del Rosario, United Methodist missionary liaison to the Middle East Council of Churches in Jerusalem.

EUROPEAN CONSULTATION Representatives of all four European Central Conferences of The United Methodist Church met with the General Boards of Global Ministries (World Division) and Higher Education and Ministry (Division of Ordained Ministry) in Vienna, Austria, May 13-19, to probe the theme "considerations for a mission strategy in a changed Europe." It was the fruition of an idea first suggested in the fall of 1989, when the configurations of power were undergoing dramatic change in the German Democratic Republic, the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, Rumania, and Bulgaria. The consultation considered such pressing issues as the continuing spread of secularization; economic disparities between eastern and western Europe; the need to share religious, social, and cultural values; the impact of human migration from east to west *within* Europe and from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East *to* Europe; the challenge of Islam and the need for interfaith dialogue and cooperation; and the theological relationships between connectional and autonomous church structures. "The question of mission," the consultation concluded, "is also an ecumenical topic. This it always was. But the churches shied away from discussing it openly. Perhaps the time is now ripe for the churches to be able to discuss openly with one another without false claims to power and without fear."

MISSIONARIES RETURN Six United Methodist missionaries returned to Liberia in June to assist efforts to heal the ravages of civil war. Two missionaries have resumed their former duties at Ganta Hospital in northern Liberia. Two missionaries have been sent to Danané, an Ivory Coast city on the Liberian border, to help a Liberian United Methodist pastor with refugee ministry. And two missionaries will work in the capital city of Monrovia with Bishop Arthur Kulah and other United Methodist church officials. Recent reports indicate that newly reopened Ganta Hospital school, although badly damaged and heavily looted, is functioning well with a faculty of 80 and 250 students. Liberian refugees are returning from Sierra Leone—some coming to Monrovia and others settling in the Ivory Coast or in Guinea.

AFRICA UNIVERSITY GROUND-BREAKING More than 3,000 people attended a four-hour ground-breaking service for Africa University at Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, on April 6. Guests included members of the Zimbabwean Parliament and other government officials, representatives from the United States and Japanese embassies, United Methodist bishops and church agency executives, members of the board of directors of the university, and the Chief of the region's Shona tribe. The ground-breaking ceremony included music by a United Methodist men's chorus, prayers,

and addresses by Zimbabwe's Minister of Education **David I.G. Karimanzira**, and the chairman of the university's board of directors, **Bishop Emilio de Carvalho** of Angola. The Minister of Education applauded the "illustrious educational record" of The United Methodist Church and cited the school at the Old Mutare United Methodist mission as "one of the best secondary schools in the country." He also praised church-sponsored educational institutions for their role in providing education to black students during the nation's colonial past and said they have played a critical role in developing leaders for the new Zimbabwe. Bishop de Carvalho, who was one of the first persons to propose a United Methodist university in Africa back in 1984, said that the church "for the first time in its 206-year history, and in the context of its historical educational activities in Africa, will be able to provide our people with an institution of quality higher education, hand in hand with those already in existence, thus helping our continent and its peoples to get rid of illiteracy and underdevelopment." In welcoming the crowd on behalf of the Zimbabwe Annual Conference, Bishop Abel Muzorewa paid tribute to his predecessor **Bishop Ralph Dodge** "who in the 1960s tried to fulfill a dream for a university at Old Mutare. But unwelcoming skeptics told him it could not be done without the collaboration of other denominations." Bishop Muzorewa described Bishop Dodge's dream "that in these fields, where we used to harvest first-grade maize, potatoes, and pumpkins and where we tended cattle, sheep, and goats—someday we would tend and harvest the leaders of Africa." "It must have seemed impossible and unattainable," said Bishop Muzorewa. "But today, 30 years later, surely and truly.... is the day that the Lord has made for our celebration. Thank God for the Africa initiative. Let us never stop dreaming."

MISSION MEMO FROM KOREA United Methodist missionaries **Barbara and Jack Theis**, stationed in Seoul, Korea, write in their May 1991 newsletter: "There are many special churches in Korea, such as those for students or entertainers or the hearing-impaired. Last month, we were at the founding service of a church for the mentally and physically challenged. One of our Methodist Theological Seminary graduates is working at Angels' Haven as a chaplain. With more than 400 students in the special school there, they decided to organize formally as a church. The students sang enthusiastically, and it was a special day. The next week, Jack participated in the ordination of one of our 'sons' who lived at Angels' Haven 30 years ago when it was a home for street boys. This new pastor is thrilled that he can now work full-time in the church."

BANGLADESH RELIEF When the cyclone struck Bangladesh at the end of April, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) provided $100,000 to send an emergency team into two of the most devastated areas: the Sardar area of Cox's Bazaar and the island of Moashekali. The team distributed blankets, potatoes, high-protein biscuits, water-purification tablets, and oral-rehydration packets for 75,000 people. Former UMCOR associate general secretary **Norma Kehrberg** is now a missionary in Nepal, some 500 miles from Bangladesh. She was a valuable on-the-scene source of information and provided an assessment of needs. She also delivered 850 oral-rehydration packets from the United Mission in Nepal, along with 100 bottles of water-purification tablets. An UMCOR Emergency Advance number has been set up for aid to Bangladesh: 202-400-6.

PHILIPPINE RELIEF **Bishop Emerito P. Nacpil**, United Methodist bishop of the Manila area in the Philippines, has reported massive destruction over a wide area as the result of the volcanic eruptions from Mt. Pinatubo in Central Luzon. All 29 United Methodist churches and facilities of the Aetas in the Zambales mountain range were destroyed. Many of the United Methodist churches that remained intact have become evacuation centers. They provide emergency shelter for some three thousand families fleeing the disaster area. The Western Luzon mission district—the result of many years of United Methodist mission work—has practically disappeared. There is a desperate need for emergency relief: food, medicine, and shelter. Floods, caused both by the volcanic eruption and by tropical storms, have broken dams, washed away bridges, and swept aside homes. Thick layers of mud and sand, the result of volcanic eruptions, have turned formerly green fields of rice, sugarcane, and corn into a desert wasteland. Lucrative fish and prawn farms have been swamped in at least three provinces. In some places, famine conditions prevail. An UMCOR Emergency Advance number has been established for the Philippines: 240225-1.

DEATHS **Rev. Edwin A. Hackney**, a retired missionary with 30 years of service, died on March 25, 1991, at the age of 61.... **Dr. Sherwood Hall**, a retired missionary with 48 years of service, died on April 5, 1991, at the age of 97....**Margaret Martin-Hibbard**, who served as a missionary in Korea for seven years, died on April 14, 1990, at the age of 81....**Marion L. Kumler**, a retired missionary who had been living in Portland, Oregon, died on April 23, 1991, at the age of 76....**Patricia B. Broadhead**, a retired missionary with 9 years of service, died on April 29, 1991, at the age of 75....**Josephine Kriz-Fisher**, who was a missionary to India for nearly 40 years, died on May 15, 1991, at the age of 85....**Blanche McVeigh**, a retired deaconess with 31 years of service in Missouri, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, died on June 2, 1991.

By Betty Thompson

Winds of the Spirit at Canberra

It was February 7, 1991, a sparkling summer morning in the Southern Hemisphere. In Canberra, the capital of Australia, thousands of people made their way through smoke rising from burning leaves ignited by Aborigines in a traditional cleansing process. Men and women from all over the planet entered an immense white tent pitched on the campus of the Australian National University. They had come together for the opening worship of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Before the worship service began, an Aboriginal runner entered the tent carrying a message stick. Dr. Emilio Castro, a Uruguayan Methodist who is general secretary of the WCC, used this traditional medium to communicate with the Aboriginal elders inside the tent. Responding to his petition, the elders granted permission for the Council's worship leaders to enter their native land.

Appropriately, "Come, Holy Spirit—Renew the Whole Creation" was the theme chosen for this world meeting of Christians in Canberra. The Aboriginal people of Australia think of their homeland as the "land of the spirit." They inhabited the continent for thousands of years before European settlers came from the north and called it *Terra Australis*, "southern land."

The Korean and Aboriginal dancers shown above took part in a presentation in which theologian Chung Hyun-Kyung invoked the Holy Spirit.

It was Dr. Castro who suggested that a spirit-centered theme would be appropriate for the World Council at the present time. Poverty, change, the longing for spiritual values in corporate and personal life, the search for nondestructive ways to relate to the environment—these were some of the concerns the Seventh Assembly would address.

"Should we then be surprised," asked Dr. Castro, "that we turn to the Spirit and pray for nothing less than the renewal of the whole creation?" Some were, if not surprised, at least aware of potential dangers and unplanned consequences.

Parthenios of Alexandria, an Eastern Orthodox Patriarch, remarked on the "holy audacity" involved in evoking the Holy Spirit. Pauline Webb, a British Methodist,

Left: After her controversial presentation, Dr. Chung, a 33-year-old Korean, said that it was time for the church to listen to women's voices. Far left: Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher, United Methodist, was the only female bishop at the Assembly.

even suggested that "there should be a kind of health warning on the program, saying 'Beware of the Holy Spirit'—because it is so unpredictable." Differences in interpretation of the Holy Spirit did threaten at times to disrupt the visible unity that the churches were striving to achieve.

The question of discernment of the Holy Spirit became a matter of controversy following the introduction of the theme by two startlingly different interpreters. One was an Eastern Orthodox patriarch; the other, a young Asian woman.

Parthenios of Alexandria was unable to attend the Assembly because his duties kept him at home during the Persian Gulf war. But his words, read by another, rang out in his absence. "The Spirit blows where he wills," Parthenios pointed out, "and we have no right to restrict his movement and his breathing, to bind him with fetters and barbed wire."

Counterpointing Parthenios, who wrote in the traditional language of theology, was Dr. Chung Hyun-Kyung, who danced and spoke and acted out her message. Dr. Chung, a 33-year-old Korean, is a Presbyterian theologian teaching at Methodism's Ewha Women's University in Seoul. Started by Methodist Women, Ewha is the largest women's university in the world.

Chung Hyun-Kyung made the most dramatic appearance at the Assembly. Aided by Aboriginal dancers and by a young Korean dance group, she called upon the spirits of martyrs through the ages. Her list of tragic victims ranged from the innocents slaughtered by Herod to the people destroyed at Hiroshima and Tiananmen Square. She invoked all the victims of the Persian Gulf war as well as the spirits of the Amazon rain forest, the scorched earth, and the polluted waters. Then she burned a scroll representing all these spirits, watching the burning ashes waft slowly upward.

Both delivery and content made the young theologian's message the most talked-about presentation of the Assembly. Her invocation of the spirits of ancestors and victims of injustice was a plea for repentance and for a new political economy of life. For many—especially the Orthodox and others from conservative traditions—she went too far when she described the many places where she found the Spirit. She said that, as a Korean Christian woman, she saw the female goddess of compassion and wisdom, *Kuan-yin*, as an image of the Holy Spirit. "Her compassion for all suffering, living beings makes her stay in this world, enabling other living beings to achieve enlightenment," Dr. Chung explained. Cries of heresy and syncretism (the uncritical mixture of religions) came from many persons, mostly male.

During the ensuing debate about Christianity and culture, many questions about the presence and activity of the Spirit were raised. Is it active outside the Christian church and outside the lives of Christian people? Is it active in other religious and secular movements? "Answers to such questions," said one commentator, "can never be unanimous or unambiguous."

Dr. Chung explained that she was attempting to speak the Gospel in "the authentic cultural language of Asia." This was met with the Orthodox charge that she was equating the Christian Gospel with every other religion and affirmation. To what extent can cultures be adapted to the Christian faith? Dr. Stanley Harakas, a teacher at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, had one answer. He said that the early church was instructed "not to believe every spirit but to test the spirits to see if they are of God."

Dr. Chung rejected what she called the "macho, warrior God," arguing that, throughout history, women's voices had not been heard. It was time, she said, for the church to listen to a Third World woman. "Theology does not come from the sky," she pointed out. "You must *do* theology, not just think about it. You have to *know* the people; otherwise, theology cannot empower the people." She reminded her Orthodox critics that they also had drawn on culture in their worship, citing the Orthodox use of icons as "windows of the Spirit."

Dr. John Deschner, United Methodist theologian and also moderator of the World Council's Commission on Faith and Order, may have summed up the issue best. He suggested that the theme of the Holy Spirit "seemed to be more at home in the spirituality of the assembly—in its singing and its worship—than in its theology. My own best memory of Canberra," he concluded, "was its singing, especially Third World songs."

Dr. Jan Love (United Methoaist), Arthur Malcolm (Australia's first Aboriginal Anglican bishop), and others tell a press conference of the deplorable conditions in Aboriginal communities.

Another perspective on the Holy Spirit came from Dr. Jacqueline Grant, an African American theologian from Georgia. She called the Holy Spirit "a divine equalizer." While doctrines concerning God and Jesus Christ have been essentially controlled by theologians, "the Holy Spirit," she insisted, "by its very nature, is uncontrollable. Perhaps that is why poor people, dispossessed people, downtrodden people can speak with jubilant expectations of the Holy Spirit. The presence of God through the Holy Spirit affirms them even when oppressive, unjust systems debilitate them."

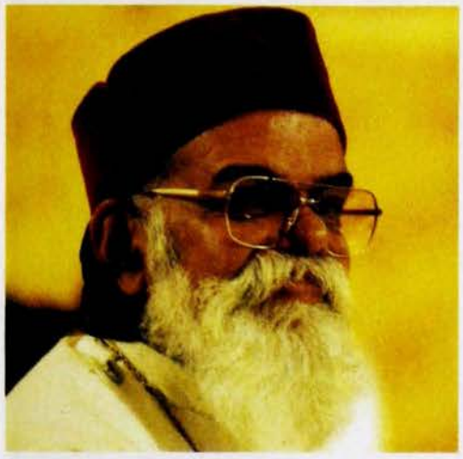
Dr. Jacqueline Grant, an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) theologian from Georgia, called the Holy Spirit "a divine equalizer."

Encounters

Even before the Assembly began, the plight of Aboriginal people was a concern. On the eve of the Assembly, two teams of participants visited Aboriginal centers. They came away with a keen sense of the need for human rights and land rights. Dr. Janice Love, a United Methodist political science teacher from South Carolina and a member of the Council's Central Committee, voiced the group's concern. She told a press conference that the treatment of the indigenous people was genocidal and horrific.

The Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, came to greet the Assembly at its first session. He praised the World Council of Churches for its attempts to dismantle apartheid. "With its moral authority," he said, "the Council laid bare the ethical bankruptcy of South Africa's racist ideology." While acknowledging that the Aborigines of his own country have endured "a long and tragic history of demoralization and despair," Hawke outlined his government's moves to improve living conditions, self-determination, and land rights.

But Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, a Syrian Orthodox primate from India, and one of the WCC's seven presidents, challenged the prime minister. He said that the most important need was "to educate the dominant community to change its attitudes toward Aboriginal people." Hawke had cited the one billion dollars the government was spending this year on Aboriginal concerns. To this, Gregorios replied: "Money cannot solve the problem, though money is important. . . . I hope there will be enough understanding on the part of the majority community that, without absorbing them into the mainstream, the Aboriginal people will be able to stand tall and free with dignity in their own land."



Above: Let the Aboriginal people "stand tall and free in their own land" said Paulos Mar Gregorios of the Syrian Orthodox Church of India.

Right: A special program centered on the greening of the cross to celebrate the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women.

But most encounters were more joyful. An Ethiopian bishop, who has been both a hermit in a cave and a geologist, met a Native American woman academic. She told him of her tribal cave tradition related to being in the womb of Mother Earth. "The bishop loved his cave—as a scientist, as a monk, and as a person made of dust in the cave womb," the Native American woman told me. "We had a meaningful encounter that continues by mail."

Apart from a WCC assembly, where else on earth would such diverse people be likely to meet on the common ground of their Christianity? A veteran ecumenist put it this way: "An assembly always affords opportunity for personal encounter with persons from the global and ecumenical church. Geography becomes alive, prayers become personal, the Christian community becomes real." No doubt the same view is held by most of the 4,000 people who attended the WCC Assembly.

Despite the theological and political tensions at the Assembly, the group agreed on the war in the Persian Gulf. The delegates advocated a cease fire but rejected an action that would have said no war was ever justifiable.

While the World Council of Churches is a Christian organization with a Trinitarian basis, it is open to dialogue and encounter with other religions. There were 12 representatives from other faiths present, including Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Buddhists. The assembly committed itself to a refusal to be separated from brothers and sisters of other faiths as a result of the Persian Gulf war. It rejected any efforts to divide Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

In the period between the Founding Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 and the Seventh Assembly at Canberra in 1991, the World Council of Churches has continued to hammer away at the problems of a fragmented world and a divided church. The meeting in Canberra was the most representative Christian body ever gathered, though Roman Catholics, Southern Baptists, and most Pentecostalists do not belong. At its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Council also has a lively existence between assemblies. It is not just a forum where member churches talk together. The churches also work together to carry out a program of mission and evangelism, interchurch aid and refugee work, theological work, international affairs, education, and development.

At Canberra, 31 official United Methodist delegates were among the 825 official participants from some 300 churches. Bishop William Dew, bishop of the Oregon-Idaho area, particularly treasures the return to the WCC of churches absent for many years. Representatives were introduced from the churches in North Korea and China. The Church in China, after many years of estrangement, returned when the China Christian Council joined the WCC. The CCC is a federation of four Protestant churches: Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, and Presbyterian.

Returning home, Bishop Dew carried with him memories of Christian men and women, young and old, of all races and nationalities, worshiping, singing, praying, and debating together, all in the name of Christ. "Such experiences should happen more often than every seven or eight years," he said. "And, in God's time, they will." ❑

Betty Thompson is the Director of Public Relations for the General Board of Global Ministries. She was New World Outlook's *official press representative at Canberra.*

Jerusalem Tears

A Cry for Justice

By Esther Megill

Esther Megill has been called out of retirement on special assignment with the World Division's women's desk as part of a project to assess Christian-Muslim relations in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

I was sitting in the Basilica of Dominus Flevit ("the Lord wept") on the Mount of Olives. This is the traditional site of Jesus' weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19: 41). As I looked out over the Old City, with the golden Dome of the Rock shining in the sun on the Temple Mount, I thought, "How Jesus must weep over Jerusalem today!"

Orientation to Sorrow

I had arrived in Israel only three days after the tragic events on the Temple Mount. On October 8, 1990, at least 20 Palestinians had been killed, and hundreds wounded, when the Israeli border guards fired at unarmed civilians gathered in the Temple Mount complex after worship at the mosque. I had heard nothing of these events, but I learned about them soon after my arrival. The first report came from the taxi driver who refused to take me to St. George's Cathedral hostel, where I had reservations, because it was just across the "green line" in Arabic Jerusalem. A few days later, I attended a news briefing by B'-Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization. I also attended the ecumenical Christian service held in memory of those who had died in the Temple Mount tragedy.

Two of our United Methodist missionaries became personally involved in the sorrow and pain of Temple Mount. Romeo del Rosario, United Methodist liaison in Jerusalem, visited the wounded in the hospital along with other pastors. Mission intern Joanne Reich was acting director of the Princess Basma Disabled Children's Center. It is located on the Mount of Olives opposite one of the two Arabic hospitals. As frantic relatives and friends of the wounded and dead crowded the street near the hospital, Joanne brought buckets of water for the people to drink.

Suddenly the boys on either side of her were shot with rubber bullets. (Rubber bullets are large steel balls covered with a thin coat of rubber. While not usually fatal, a closeup shot causes very painful bruising and sometimes broken bones.) Tear gas was also sprayed upon the people in the street and even into the maternity ward.

Romeo del Rosario, known as Romy, is United Methodist missionary liaison to the Middle East Council of Churches in Jerusalem.

Joanne Reich, a United Methodist mission intern, was acting director of the Princess Basma Disabled Children's Center when the Temple Mount tragedy took place.

Settlement and Displacement

During the 20 days I was in Israel, I saw a number of sites that are holy to Christians. Thanks to Romy del Rosario, I also met some Palestinians and saw the unjust treatment with which they deal constantly. For example, after a visit to the Palestine Human Rights Information Center, several of us were given a guided tour of the Jewish settlements around Jerusalem. These are communities built on what was Arab land. A ring of Jewish settlements nearly surrounds Jerusalem today—even though such construction in the occupied territories is a violation of the Geneva Convention.

Since 1948, 350,000 dwellings in Arab villages have been destroyed. We paid an especially poignant visit to the site of what had been the home of a Palestinian man and his aged father. Their family had lived on the land for 70 years. However, in 1984, a Jewish Iranian in Los Angeles bought their land illegally. He paid a 12-year-old boy to bulldoze their house and most of their olive trees. These fruit-bearing trees were their main source of income.

Since that time, the original Arab owners have tried to fight the illegal purchase of their land in the courts. When fraudulent land sales were uncovered a few years ago, the building containing the ownership documents was burned. The original owners cannot build on their land because the court case has not been settled. Yet they dare not leave the land for fear it will be seized once it is unoccupied.

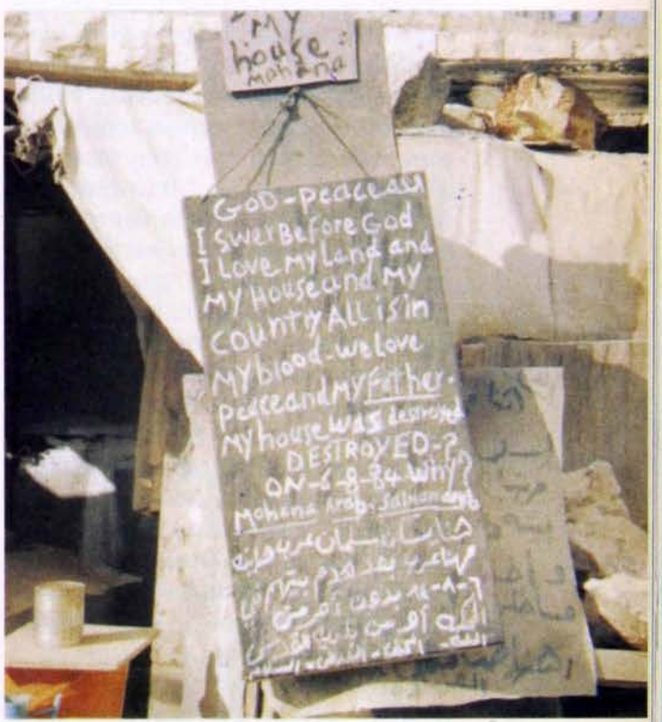
So now the Palestinian man and his father live on the land in tents. They also occupy an old bus given to them by the mayor of Jerusalem several years ago. An Anglican rector raised money in England so that the son could buy a sewing machine and continue working as a tailor.

We saw pictures of their house as it had been and as it looked while being bulldozed. After that, the son served us cold drinks and cake that he had made for us. When we left, we were filled with pain over the injustice done not only to this family but to thousands of other dispossessed Palestinians.

Another concern is the crisis in the water supply. Israel takes about one-third of its water from underground reserves in the occupied West Bank. The influx of Soviet immigrants will place an additional strain on limited water supplies. Since the first months of occupation, Israel has restricted Palestinian access to water. Meanwhile, water usage by Jewish settlers has continued to increase. This struggle for water is an important factor in Israel's determination to retain control of West Bank territory.

Occupation and Resistance

The Israelis are captives of their own fears. Members of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are everywhere. They are armed with automatic rifles and with machine guns. Compulsory military service is three years for men and two years for unmarried women. Men up to age 55 are assigned to a reserve unit after their compulsory service. As reserves, they serve about 30 days a year—or longer in times of emergency. Single women are subject to reserve service up to age 34. Increasing numbers of Israelis are refusing to serve in the occupied territories, in spite of imprisonment, because they have seen how the IDF treat the Palestinians.



Since their land was illegally sold and their home bulldozed, a Palestinian father and son have had to live on the land in tents.

Palestinians are not accepting the situation passively. In December 1987, an Israeli truck smashed into cars carrying Arab workers home from Israel. Four Palestinians were killed and seven more were seriously wounded. This incident set off an explosion of demonstrations. Now the uprising, or *intifada*, has the clear-cut aim of establishing a Palestinian state. Many Palestinians are participating in acts of mass disobedience—including strikes, tax revolts, and the boycott of Israeli produce in favor of Palestinian goods. The emphasis is on Palestinian self-sufficiency at all levels.

The events of one intensive day during my stay made these things very real to me. It began with a visit to the YWCA in East (Arab) Jerusalem. YWCA director Doris Salah and her assistant Nadia Farah met us graciously. They told us about the YWCA business and homemaking courses for young women. These courses have helped fill the educational gap created when Palestinian institutions of higher education were closed by the Israeli government. We also learned about the YWCA programs in three refugee camps on the West Bank and in Gaza. One program provides schooling for four-to-six-year-olds. "This is very important," the women told us, "because of the psychological trauma the children experience."

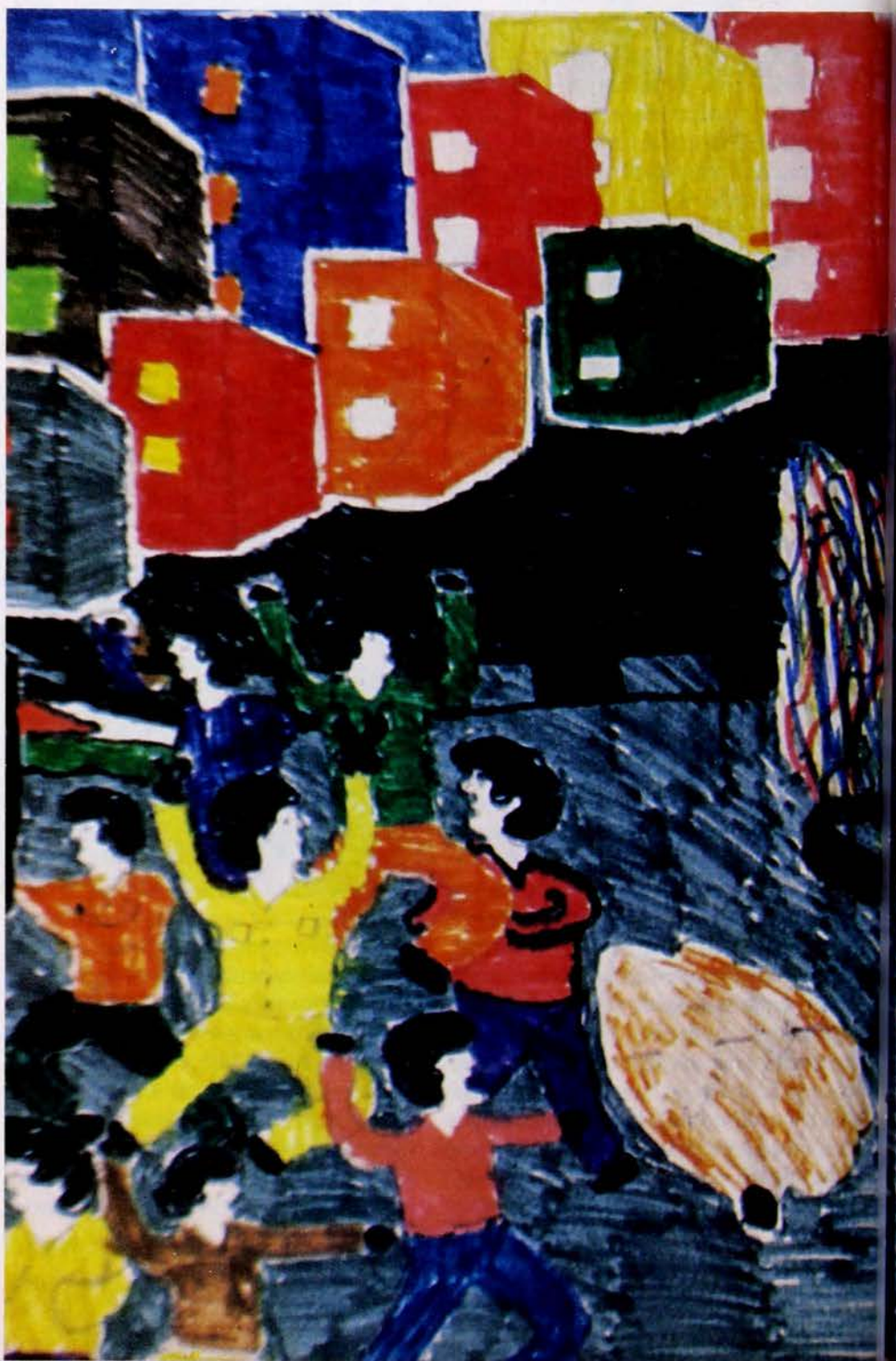
Occupational Costs

Because of the Persian Gulf war, funds for assistance to Palestinians have been cut off. Substantial funds from Kuwait for Palestinian programs are no longer available. Many Palestinians working in Kuwait used to send money home to their families. Now a drop in tourism and rising unemployment have combined to create economic crisis. Displaced Palestinian workers are being replaced by new Soviet immigrants. We were told: "Palestinians don't want Israeli jobs, but we have to have them to survive. All we want is to be left alone, given our own land, and allowed to live our own lives."

From the YWCA, we went to visit the Anglican St. Luke's Hospital in Nablus (the biblical Shechem). Our guide was Bishop Samir Kafity of the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East. St. Luke's Hospital is one of 32 institutions supported by the 7,000-member Jerusalem diocese. The Bishop spoke about the hospital's financial crisis. It was brought on by several factors: the Gulf crisis, the *intifada*, inflation, and the high customs duty on imported medical equipment and supplies. We saw a building project that could not be completed because funds from Kuwait had dried up. One million dollars is required to complete the much-needed new wing. The hospital administrator spoke of the training needs of doctors and other personnel. "It is almost impossible," he said, "to get slots for Palestinians in medical schools in the United States, England, Europe, or Australia. Having specialists come here to train our doctors to use some of the modern equipment would help."

Curfews and Bloodshed

We talked with Salwa, a second-generation resident in a refugee camp. She has three children who are also growing up as refugees. Trained in social work at Bir Zeit University, for seven years she



could find no work. She is grateful for her new job as a social worker, made possible by World Vision and Catholic Relief Services.

Salwa told of the frequent curfews enforced by the Israelis, sometimes lasting as long as 30 days. During curfew, a person cannot leave the house. Even opening a window or door invites gunfire from the soldiers. Palestinians under curfew cannot go out to buy food. Fresh food cannot be kept for two weeks or a month. Even if it could, most people cannot afford to buy food in such large quantities.

Salwa also told of how soldiers can, and do, enter Palestinian homes at any time. Sometimes they destroy the houses and their contents. The soldiers attack, and often arrest, Palestinian men and boys, she said. Is it any wonder, I thought, that the boys and young men are throwing stones at the soldiers? It is the only way they have to retaliate—even though they can go to prison for it. In prison, they can be subjected to solitary confinement—even torture.

Poverty is a growing problem, we were told. Many women have husbands or sons who have been either imprisoned or killed. A man who has been in prison is given a "green card," preventing him from getting a job. Poor Palestinians have many needs: food, housing repairs, heat in the winter, medical care.

We went with Bill Warnock, area director of World Vision, to another private hospital. He was looking for a friend who, he had heard, had been injured by Israeli soldiers. The man was in a ward where young men wounded in the *intifada* were treated. There, we learned his story.

Warnock's friend was a nurse. He had been going to work during the recent curfew. Medical personnel carry passes allowing them passage. He was hurrying so as not to be late when some Israeli soldiers told him to stop. He didn't hear them. So they shouted, "Stop, or we'll shoot!"

The nurse showed the soldiers his identification card (which all Palestinians in the occupied territories must have). He also showed his special pass. "The soldiers threw them on the ground," he said, "and began to beat me around the head and arms. Finally, they shot me three times in my leg at close range with rubber bullets. It will be a month before I will be able to work." He was in obvious pain. Even so, with true Arab hospitality, he offered us candy bars that someone had given him.

A drawing by 12-year-old Ayman Dabbagh, depicting a protest demonstration at a Palestinian refugee camp with an Israeli settlement in the background. Taken from the book Faithful Witnesses: Palestinian Children Recreate Their World *(Olive Branch Press: Brooklyn, New York, 1990.)*

A drawing by 14-year-old "Abdallah" Afif, depicting the chaining and blindfolding of everyone in a schoolyard. Taken from the book Faithful Witnesses: Palestinian Children Recreate Their World *(Olive Branch Press: Brooklyn, New York, 1990.)*

One of the 11 patients in the ward was only 13 years old. Another was 17. All had been beaten and shot in the arms, legs, or stomachs. There were several fractures. One young man will never be able to bend his elbow or use his right arm again because a nerve was damaged by the beating he received. All the patients were young except for one man who had been shot in the head while picking his olives. Israeli soldiers had been trying to prevent farmers from harvesting olives—their main and often only source of income.

Israelis for Peace with Justice

All Israelis do not support their government's policies. I met with Roni Ben Efrat, a journalist and activist in the Israeli peace movement. Her newspaper had reported what was happening in the occupied territories. As a result, she and other editors had been imprisoned—one for as long as 30 months. Many times they were in isolation and were *psychologically* tortured and mistreated. (Arabs, but not Jews, are *physically* tortured.) Once an Arab friend was tortured where the Israeli prisoners could hear his screams. Then they were told that they were the cause of their Arab friend's torment—because they would not confess.

"This terrible experience has strengthened us," said Roni Ben Efrat. "Our organization, *Nitzatz* ('The Spark'), works with all peace organizations on the Israeli left. It also has worked with Palestinian groups. But," she continues sadly, "the Al Aqsa (Temple Mount) massacre has so embittered the Palestinians that most have said they will no longer cooperate with us." The *Nitzatz* goals are to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of the territories and to establish a separate Palestinian state.

Roni is also one of the "Women in Black," a spontaneous, grass-roots movement of Israeli women. Every Friday from 1 P.M. to 2 P.M., the women gather at Frances Square in Jerusalem. They are dressed in black and they hold signs that say "No to Occupation." Silently they stand, old and young, as a protest against the occupation. Every day other people, often dressed in white, come to oppose them. Often the opponents hurl sexist epithets. Sometimes they spit or throw eggs at the protesters. But the vigil continues each Friday. It has spread to 32 different places throughout Israel. There are also groups standing silently in front of Israeli embassies in other countries and cities (including New York and Los Angeles). The prayers for peace with justice continue around the world.

Dr. Esther Megill is a retired United Methodist missionary who has served in Sierra Leone, Ghana, and the United States. She was formerly area secretary of North Africa/Middle East/West Africa for the General Board of Global Ministries.

Strategies for Christians in the United States

(1) Become better informed about the realities of the Middle East by reading books such as *We Belong to the Land* by Elias Chacour. (See review in *New World Outlook*, March/April 1991, 45-46.) Also write to request reports from the Palestine Human Rights Information Center of the Arab Studies Society, 4753 North Broadway, Suite 930, Chicago, Illinois 60640. Remember that the United Methodist 1992-93 geographical mission study will be on the Middle East. United Methodist women will offer this theme for study in the 1992 Schools of Christian Mission.

(2) Write to your senators and representatives in Congress. Ask for the U.S. State Department's Report on Human Rights in the Middle East. Then study it carefully. Look for documented human rights violations. Let your representatives know your findings. Remember that the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, Section 502b, prohibits security assistance to countries where there are human rights violations.

(3) Make contact and connections with groups such as the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 4201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20008.

(4) Contribute to Middle East projects that receive United Methodist support, such as the Princess Basma Center. Check the 1991-92 *Partnership in Missions* catalog for a description of projects and funding amounts requested.

(5) Pray in concert with Christian, Muslim, and Jewish brothers and sisters for peace with justice in the Holy Land. ❑

Korea: Hymns of Hope in the Silence of Separation

By Sonia and Dwight Strawn

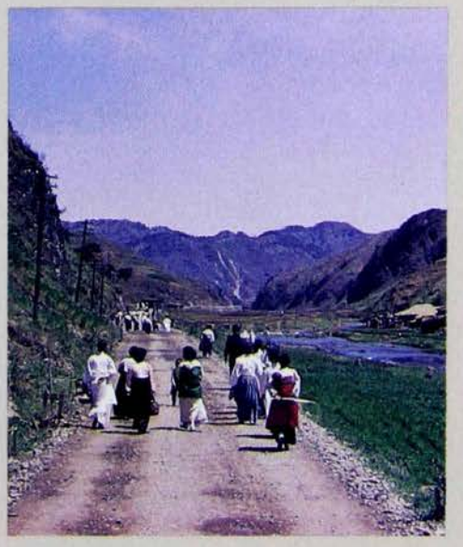
The November 1980 issue of New World Outlook *contained an article by the Rev. Syngman Rhee entitled "A Crack in the Barrier of Silence." It told the story of his return, after a 30-year absence, to Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. There he met family members whom he had not been able to see for three decades because of war and the division of the country. Rev. Rhee had returned to Pyongyang not knowing what he might face or what hardships might come to him and his family after his trip became known. But he fervently believed that Christians are called to take risks for reconciliation.*

Rev. Rhee is now associate director of the Global Mission Unit of the Presbyterian Church-USA and president-elect of the National Council of Churches of Christ, USA. A decade of incredible change has passed since he wrote about his vision of the openness and newness of the Gospel that needed to be communicated to all Koreans. Praying "that I may be bold in speaking about the Gospel as I should," Syngman Rhee has since been able to make several more trips to North Korea. Amazingly—despite reports of no Christian activities there—he has been able to worship with groups of Christians, even in a new church sanctuary.

Having served as United Methodist missionaries in Korea for more than 25 years, we were very moved (on July 22, 1990) to hear Syngman Rhee's report of his most recent visit to Pyongyang. It is an important witness—not only for one congregation in a single Seoul church but for all people who hope for unification and peace in a Korea where "south" and "north" are directional indicators rather than national distinctions.

It was a warm and sunny Sunday afternoon. The place was Zion Methodist Church in downtown Seoul, capital of South Korea. The Zion congregation had gathered to celebrate Mission Sunday. The service was led by a female elder who prayed fervently that all Koreans would find a vital faith in Jesus Christ. Many members of the congregation were natives of the northern part of the Korean peninsula.

Koreans on their way to an outdoor church service.



For the past 45 years, it has been inaccessible to them because of the division of their country into two states—still not at peace with one another. The younger people in the congregation were born after the outbreak of war in 1950 or during the time of refugee hardships that followed. They also shared their parents' deep longing for reunification. They wanted to see family members of whom they had only heard, to visit places in the north that are part of their family's history, and to reclaim their heritage.

Sitting with these people, we could sense the pain shared by the 10 million separated family members in Korea. They live so close—yet so far away—on this small peninsula. We saw the intensity of their yearning for news of each other. It was hard for us to know how to comfort a man who had fled from the Communist army in 1950, leaving his wife and children behind. He now has a family in the south. But he recently learned that his first family is alive and has never ceased to love and wait for him. However, he is living under a South Korean law which stipulates that any contact with North Korea is punishable by imprisonment. In this divided land, sisters and brothers have been turned into "enemies" by international forces. They have been made citizens of two separate countries. They cannot call, write, or see each other.

Rev. Rhee's message was about mission as our response to God's grace—a mission of God that will only take place in the world through us. Depending on God for its

Dwight and Sonia Strawn with Kim Hak-Soo (center) and Professor Suh (right) of the Methodist Theological School.

strength, mission is both "our privilege and our responsibility," he affirmed. "What we thought impossible last year," he said, "we see now before our eyes. God's thoughts are greater than ours." Rev. Rhee read from II Corinthians 5 to describe the method of mission. He concluded: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation." (5:18)

Then Rev. Rhee cited connections between Paul's words and his own experience. In the 1980 article, he had written that he hoped "to find faith come alive again in North Korea." Now, 10 years later, his words sounded like Paul's reports of missionary journeys. He told of worshiping the previous two Sundays with more than 300 people in a Protestant service in Pyongyang's Pongsoo Church. There, Rev. Rhee gave the congregation examples of the endurance of the Christian faith in their homeland. Many (including family members, old friends, and the Rev. Seung-Ho Han, the minister of Zion Church) listened with rapt attention. They remembered the martyrdom of Rev. Rhee's father, the Rev. Tae-Suk Rhee, at the hands of the Communists during the first year of the Korean War.

In North Korea, Rev. Rhee reported, people with the strongest commitment are coming out and are eagerly participating in Christian community life in public. Rev. Rhee challenged the congregation: "As we see what God is doing, how can we doubt? I am certain that, although there are many obstructions based on politics, the Church's greatest responsibility here and now is that of reconciliation. I have been through many hardships myself, as you all have, and I still believe that we have to be engaged in reconciliation. Politics cannot bring that. Only people of faith can break down the walls if they start first by opening up their hearts to their brothers and sisters."

Then he invited everyone to listen to a tape he had brought of a familiar hymn sung at the service in Pyongyang the week before. He asked the people in Seoul just to listen to the first two verses and then to join in for the final three verses. Instead, the people around us almost unconsciously started to join in at the middle of the first verse. First they hummed quietly. Then they actually started singing louder and louder. Soon we could not distinguish between the taped voices from the north and the live voices from the south. Tears of sorrow, amazement, and joy shone on all the faces that surrounded us.

After a quiet moment, time was given to sharing news of family members met in the north. Kim Hak-Soo, a distinguished artist, Methodist elder, and mentor to Rev. Rhee, had waited 40 years for some word of his wife and four children from whom he had parted in 1950. Kim Sung-Whan, a respected elder who had accompanied Rev. Rhee to Pyongyang, rose and told of her meeting with Kim Hak-Soo's family only days before. We watched Elder Kim's face. He sat calmly listening to the report of a woman who had so recently spent hours with his wife. She had also taken pictures with his children, who were now grown up with families of their own. The reunion gave a new, living, human dimension to the word "reunification."

Today, with the winds of change blowing everywhere, in the most unexpected places, we cannot help wondering if the hopes, hymns, and prayers of such congregations will be answered. Formerly cold relationships are warming as leaders of North and South Korea shake hands for the first time after 45 years. As understanding, wholeness, and trust replace division and mistrust in other parts of the world, is it too much to expect that in Korea also love and reconciliation may be more powerful than hatred and enmity? As South Korea reaches out in rapprochement to the Soviet Union and China, overtures between the two parts of Korea are being made

The congregation of Zion Methodist Church in Seoul, South Korea, worshiping on Mission Sunday: July 22, 1990. They long for reunification of their country and reunion with family members in North Korea.

by soccer players and classical Korean musicians. The media report events unheard of a little more than a year ago. Survival necessities and economic realities seem to be influencing north and south toward mutual cooperation.

On a recent visit to the United States, we were often asked about the possibilities for Korean reunification. We were happy to say that churches in many places have taken the lead through international ecumenical opportunities to meet, talk, worship, and share Holy Communion with Christians from both parts of Korea. Even as the United States is committed militarily and economically in South Korea, U.S. Christians, through the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, have committed themselves to ministries of reconciliation in Korea.

It is an exciting time to be missionaries in Korea, but a difficult time as well. We must carefully consider what our response and responsibility as Christians should be in this place. We believe, with Rev. Rhee, that "the strength of the seed of the Gospel never totally disappears, despite hardships." We still hear his words of that Sunday afternoon, saying: "There is much further to go, but we believe firmly that God can do what we cannot even imagine now. God works in countless wonderful ways. It is up to us to trust and believe and act as reconcilers wherever we can."

Kim Sung-Whan (elder) and the Rev. Seung-Ho Han (pastor), Zion Methodist Church, Seoul.

As Christians from the United States, we have been inspired by Rev. Han's benediction that day in Zion Methodist Church. His words were full of joy, sorrow, and hope. They were words that spoke of people on the other side not as enemies but as friends—people with and for whom they wanted to build a new church and reach out in evangelization to the whole reunited Korea. Rev. Han prayed: "Happier days must and will come when we can go there and they can come here. We will cry together and we will laugh together. May that day come soon, O God. Amen." ❑

Sonia Strawn serves in Seoul, Korea, at the Legal Aid Center for Family Relations. Dwight Strawn teaches at Yonsei University, also in Seoul. They are United Methodist missionaries placed by the General Board of Global Ministries.

Imperfect Peac

Marta Velasquez waited for years for the war to end. When it finally did grind to a halt, she thanked God. Then she looked forward to enjoying the fruits of peace. Today, a year after the weapons of war were destroyed, she is still waiting for the blessings to be revealed.

Velasquez's country is no longer at war. But the things that make for peace are a scarce commodity in post-war Nicaragua.

The struggle against the U.S.-backed contras came to an end after Nicaraguan voters elected Violeta Barrios de Chamorro as president in February 1990. Both Chamorro and her Sandinista rival, incumbent President Daniel Ortega, had promised to end the war. Despite these identical promises, a majority of voters believed that only the election of Chamorro (whose campaign was heavily financed by the U.S. government) would convince Washington to end the conflict. Eight years of war had cost Nicaragua more than 30,000 dead and some $17 billion in damage.

It seems the voters were correct. Once inaugurated, Chamorro convinced the contras to turn in their weapons. She promised them land, credit, and a new start in civilian life. The contras turned in thousands of Soviet-made AK-47 assault rifles that had been purchased with U.S. taxpayers' dollars. The weapons were cut in half by U.N. peacekeeping troops that were supervising disarmament.

A year after they laid down their arms, however, many contras are disenchanted and hungry. They are frustrated over Chamorro's inability to fulfill her promises. Prodding the government to respond, they have taken over scores of private farms and cooperatives in the countryside. Dozens of people have died in the last year when such actions turned violent.

Chamorro claims her government lacks the necessary

By Paul Jeffrey

e in Nicaragua

resources to carry out post-war reconstruction. She has called on the United States and other developed countries to step up their assistance to Nicaragua. However, her appeal has gone largely unheeded. After years of focusing on Central America's problems, western countries are turning their attention—and their resources—to Eastern Europe and other areas. After bankrolling the contras with hundreds of millions of dollars, the U.S. government has turned off the spigot. Some contra leaders have accused the United States of abandoning the troops after using them against the Nicaraguan government for the last decade.

In addition to the future of the contras, other issues remain now that the fighting has stopped.

Thousands of people who were maimed and disabled by the contra war lack hope for rehabilitation. The government has few resources to help the children and adults who lost limbs to contra mines. Nor can the government assist the hundreds of former soldiers—from both sides of the conflict—who face life in wheelchairs or on crutches. Private groups, including churches, are helping some victims. But the needs far outweigh the resources.

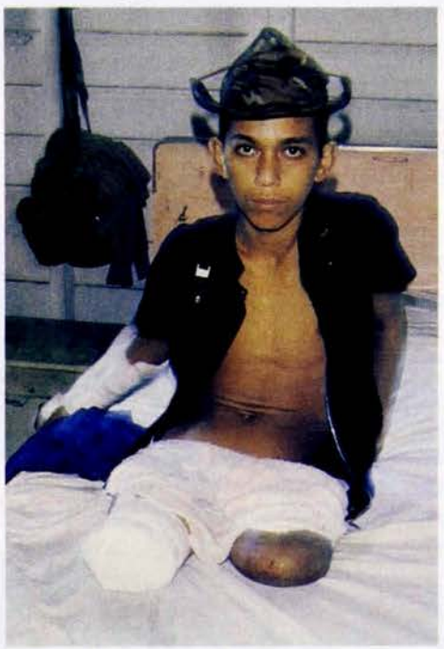
The fate of several thousand people kidnapped by the contras during the war remains to be clarified. Relatives of the disappeared and kidnapped are pressuring the government to investigate the fate of their loved ones. Despite this, the Chamorro administration has done little. Both the U.S. government and former contra leaders have refused to provide information. The discovery of several common graves in the countryside has highlighted the relatives' demands for information.

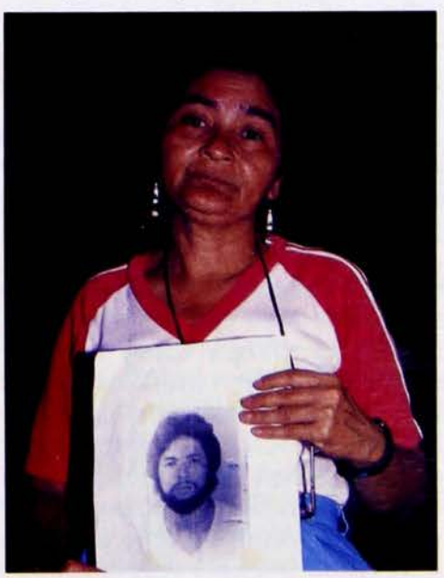
Left: AK-47 assault rifles are cut in two by U.N. peacekeeping troops, July 1990.

Besides promising to end the war, Chamorro also pledged during her campaign that she would fix Nicaragua's war-ravaged economy. Her aides vowed to wipe out inflation within 100 days. Actually, the new president ended her first calendar year in office with inflation running at 13,500 percent!

Chamorro has sought financial help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral sources of capital. To please these international bankers, her administration implemented a series of austerity measures. This action provoked protest from workers and the poor. They felt Chamorro was seeking to balance the budget on their backs. Two general strikes in Chamorro's first four months in office paralyzed the country.

Throughout the Third World, such protests are usually met with government repression. Yet Chamorro, seeking to forge national reconciliation, left control of the military and police in Sandinista hands. Police and soldiers have sworn that they will not be used to repress workers. So Chamorro's administration was forced to negotiate with protesting workers who demanded that the burden of economic adjustments be spread around and shared. That has annoyed the United States and other





Above: A young government soldier recovers from a contra mine explosion, 1989. Below: Family members seek information about loved ones "disappeared" by the contras.

The U.S.-backed war did more than $17 billion worth of damage to Nicaragua. This bridge was destroyed by contras.

international lenders. They call on Chamorro to take a harsher line with her country's workers.

With real wages continuing to fall and unemployment running at 50 percent, the poor in Nicaragua are worse off today than they were during the height of the war and economic embargo. Wealthy émigrés returning from Miami have opened video stores and fancy restaurants. However, infant mortality and malnutrition are on the rise among the 70 percent of the population that is poor. Polio—once eradicated by the Sandinistas' aggressive vaccination programs—has reappeared. Measles and diarrhea are killing hundreds of children in isolated rural villages and poor urban barrios. Alka-Seltzer commercials have reappeared on television after a 10-year absence. Yet government-run hospitals and clinics have no drugs to dispense. The former government's provision of free medical care to the poor is a fading memory.

Education is similarly under attack. Old textbooks were burned and replaced with new materials provided by the United States Agency for International Development (AID). Controversial subjects, such as phonics and sex education, have been purged from the curriculum. Children are now taught the Ten Commandments and the Monroe Doctrine. Most public school teachers, frustrated by both the new curriculum and low wages, walked out on strike only a month after the new school year began.

Where is the church in this new situation? The Roman Catholic hierarchy, flushed with its influence inside the new government, is building a new cathedral. This project is being financed by Tom Monaghan, a U.S. conservative who owns Domino's Pizza. Conservative evangelical organizations in the United States—many of which provided support for the contras in the eighties—are rushing in to capitalize on what many see as the new "democratic opening" today.

Christian base communities—a cornerstone of the Sandinista revolution—are reorganizing. Self-critical of the way they rested on their laurels with the Sandinistas in power, progressive Catholics are living out the Gospel the old-fashioned way. They are organizing people in poor neighborhoods to educate their children and to fight cholera.

Nicaragua's council of evangelical churches (CEPAD) continues its ministries of development, relief, and reconciliation. With the government's commitment to social justice waning rapidly, groups like CEPAD have their work cut out for them. According to evangelical leaders, that's nothing new.

"Our task, as always, is to proclaim the Gospel," argues Gilberto Aguirre, CEPAD's executive director. "The Lord is calling us to be faithful. We've worked for life in the midst of earthquakes, hurricanes, a popular insurrection against Somoza, and an invasion by the United States. Now we confront a new reality. We must do what God is calling us to do: help the poor, demand justice, work for peace."

Meanwhile, Marta Velasquez says more beggars come to her door every day. She owns a small house with a dirt floor in a Managua barrio. The Sandinistas gave her title to her small lot. But she's worried that the current government will return the property to its former owner, a cotton farmer who just returned from Miami. She admits she doesn't have much time to worry, however. She is too busy struggling to feed her five children on what she earns baking and selling tortillas in a nearby market.

Marta Velasquez and her children are barely surviving. She admits that some days she finds little hope that things will improve.

"I thought that peace would solve all our problems," says the weary mother. "But it hasn't." ❑

The Rev. Paul Jeffrey is a United Methodist missionary serving as a General Board of Global Ministries program interpreter with the Evangelical Committee for Aid and Development (CEPAD) in Managua, Nicaragua.

The General Board of Global Ministries' work in Latin America is supported through World Service dollars and the United Methodist Women's Pledge to Mission. Advance Special designated giving numbers for projects serving Nicaragua are:

Rehabilitation of War Victims	CEPAD Development Program
115486-RA	525453-0

Tensions in Reunion:

The Protestant Churches in Germany

By Kathinka Kaden

"A great and incredible chapter of international agreement over Germany has been written in 1990," said Martin Kruse. (Kruse is president of the German Council of the Evangelical Churches, or EKD. The EKD is the common organization of the largest German Protestant churches. It embraces the Lutheran Church, the Reformed Church, and the united congregations of both denominations.)

Amazingly enough, Kruse pointed out, despite a long, bloody history of conflict, Germany's European neighbors welcomed its reunification. However, this external agreement in the European community does not mirror Germany's internal state. "To create a new unity inside Germany will need much more time," Kruse confessed.

Less than a year has passed since the reunification of Germany on October 3, 1990, after 45 years of division. Today, many German people—especially in the east—are unhappy over all the new challenges. One out of every two East Germans is unemployed. Each day, a thousand young people leave the economically depressed eastern part of the country and move west. Many houses, apartments, factories, and offices in the east have been abandoned.

In April, *Die Zeit*, a widely circulated German weekly magazine, stated: "It is evident that [German economist] Ludwig Erhard's free-market model cannot be employed now" in East Germany. The magazine called for "clear concepts of economic and industrial policies" that might work. In West Germany today, there is much more money available than after World War II. However, cash alone cannot rebuild the ecology and economy of East Germany. In addition, West German people are afraid of too many changes and of too much cost.

The churches have already experienced these fears. Even though Germany has had separation of church and state since 1918, state authorities collect church tax for the Protestant (EKD) and Roman Catholic churches. Only church members are subject to the tax, which is withheld from their pay. West Germans have always paid the church tax. After 1945, East Germans were urged—but were not forced—to pay. Some East Germans continued the tax voluntarily, paying it directly to their churches. Now, since January 1991, the tax is being collected from all eligible church members—both from the east and from the west.

The total church tax collected in Germany is equivalent to 8 or 9 percent of the overall income tax withholding. So declaring yourself a member of a tax-withholding church increases your tax rate. This is a major reason why church membership is declining. In April, the popular weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* wrote: "The tax increases planned by the government already doubled the number of people leaving the church in some cities compared to March a year ago—despite the fact that the church tax will stay the same." Every month, more than 10,000 people leave the Protestant (EKD) and Roman Catholic churches. (The some 50,000 members of the German United Methodist Church are not a part of this process.) As a "free church," United Methodists raise their funds independently.

Today, German churches are organizing their own reunification. The former "Federation of the Evangelical Churches in the German Democratic Republic" (*Kirchenbund*) and the west EKD will be reunited as one EKD in November 1991. The United Methodist conference of the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and the United Methodist Conference of the former Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) will become one Evangelical Methodist Church in 1992. Duplicated church positions, such as bishoprics, will be eliminated or shared. But the question of true unity remains: Where is the common denominator? Aren't there still two different peoples and cultures?

It was the eastern regions of Germany in which the 16th century reformer Martin Luther preached and taught. In 1945, 80 percent of the people there belonged to Protestant churches. That figure has fallen to 25 percent today. Unlike the churches in the west, which enjoyed the sympathetic support of the government, the churches in the east have experienced ostracism during the last four decades. The majority of popular socialist politicians in East Germany rejected the Christian faith. They characterized it as superstition and as a hindrance to socialistic progress. Christians in the east suffered discrimination. They had less education, low-status jobs, and no career opportunities.

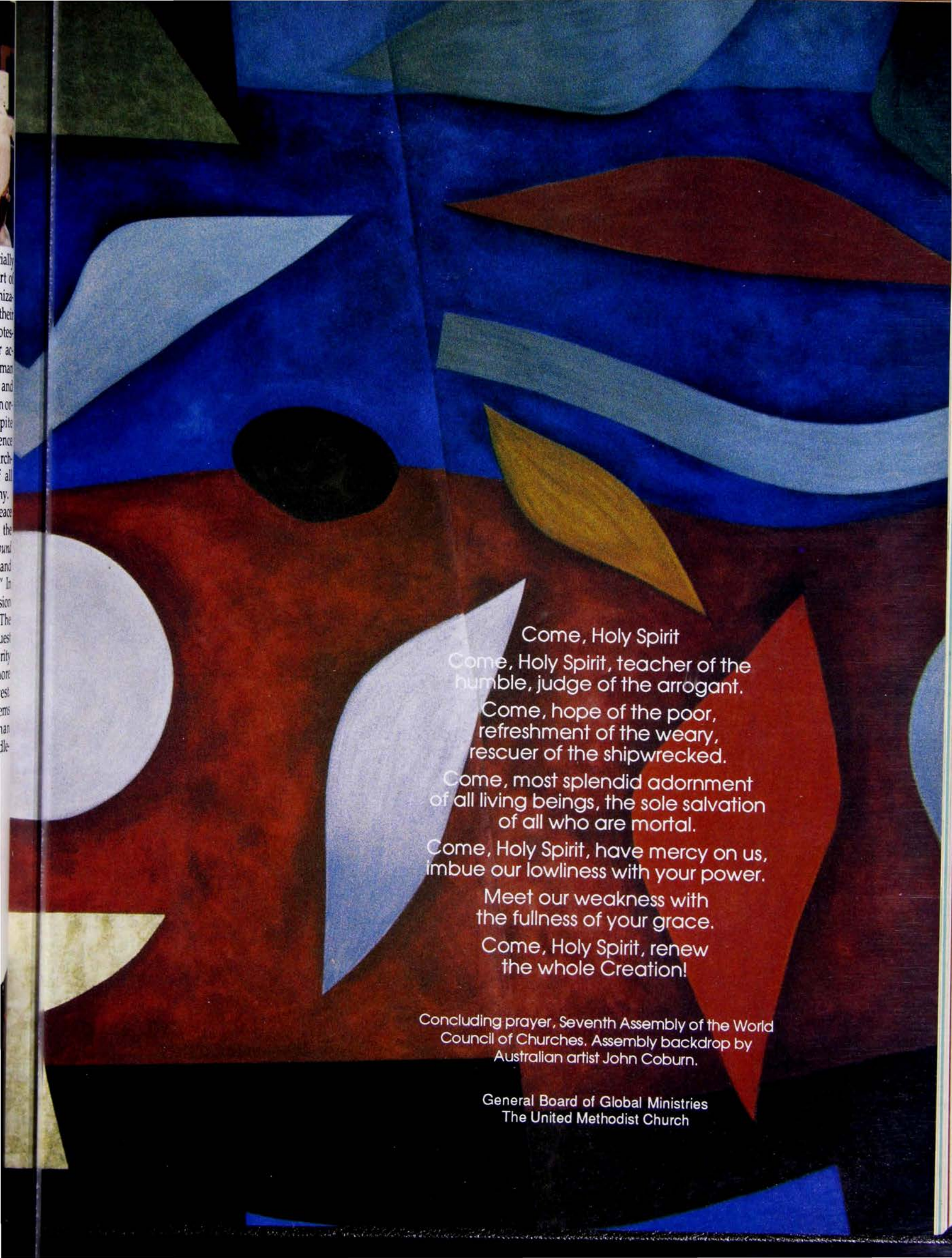
Many people stopped confessing their faith. Christian rituals were changed. There was no longer Christian "confirmation," but rather a "consecration of the youth" organized by the government. December 25th was no longer called "Christmas," but a "celebration of the end of the year." Even angels were renamed "winged figures of the end-of-the-year celebration," or "wives with wings."

From 1945 to 1968, a common organization of West and East German churches was difficult but still possible. However, in 1957, the Socialist Unity Party of East Germany (SED) started

to criticize the churches, especially the EKD, saying they were part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Hoping to ease their situation, the East German Protestant churches terminated their active membership in West German synods and conferences in 1969 and 1970. They established their own organizations. However, despite separate constitutional existence and structure, west and east churches emphasized the unity of all Protestant Christians in Germany.

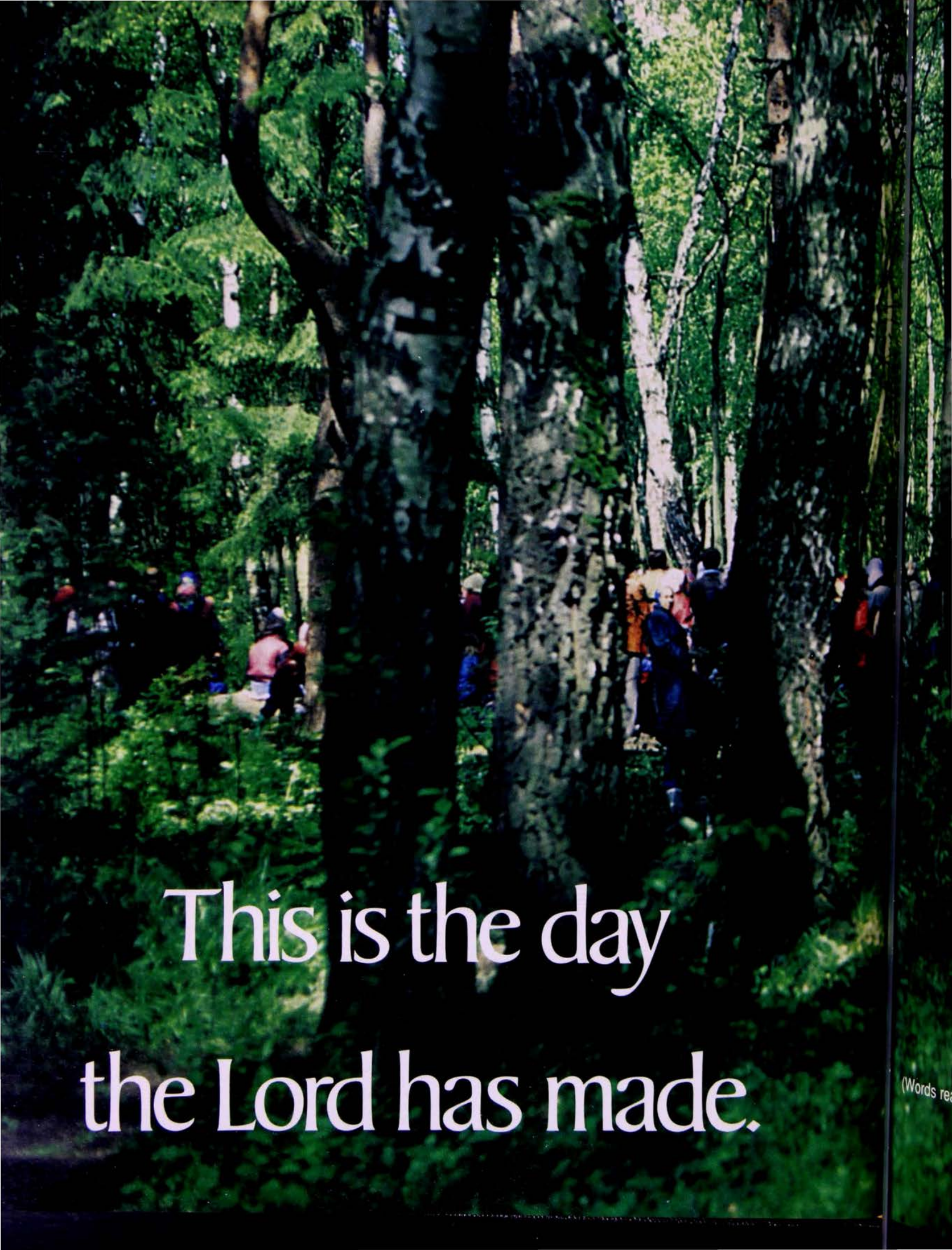
In 1982, as the East German peace movement gained momentum, the synod of the Lutheran *Kirchenbund* denounced the "spirit, logic, and practice of nuclear deterrence." In 1987, they published a "Confession on the Question of Peace." The World Council of Churches' quest for "Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation" became much more popular in the east than in the west. Christians spoke out on problems that involved all East German citizens. Prayer services and candlelight vigils for peace were held.

(Continued on p. 27)



Concluding prayer, Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Assembly backdrop by Australian artist John Coburn.

General Board of Global Ministries
The United Methodist Church


This is the day
the Lord has made.
(Words re

"We have to keep our world 'very good,'
as God created it,
for over it hovers the Holy Spirit."

Parthenios of Alexandria, Eastern Orthodox patriarch
(Words read at the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Canberra, Australia, February 1991.
Scene: Russian Pentecostals worshipping in a forest outside Moscow.)

General Board of Global Ministries • The United Methodist Church

Taking down the Berlin Wall, 1990.

(Germany: continued from p. 22)

Church magazines were the only publications in the east to write about the ticklish theme of emigration to the west. When the socialist East German government falsified the results of the May 1989 elections for its own benefit, the churches protested. The churches also protested the arrests of people seeking social change. When people were beaten by police during demonstrations, the churches implored the government to respect humanity and to honor the constitution. Every night, church members lit hundreds of candles in remembrance of people who had been detained. After the breakup of the East German government, many church members participated in the "Round Table" at which the first political steps toward national reunification were planned.

West German churches never enjoyed such grass-roots support or such popular appeal. In the western regions, Protestants make up 43.5 percent of the population, and 43.6 percent are Roman Catholics. Yet in 1988, only 5.2 percent of the Protestants attended Sunday church services. Many parents do not have their children baptized because they themselves are not related to the church (except that they pay church tax). Official church participation in political processes is rare.

Today, church magazines in the east (such as *die kirche* in Berlin) report on a number of social, economic, and political concerns. They report on the growing unemployment of women and on a new peace movement. They report new demonstrations at Leipzig against further worker layoffs, against closures of hospitals, and against Chancellor Helmut Kohl for "mismanaging the crisis." They report bishops' requests for government recognition of church educational institutions. They report synodic protest against the building of nuclear power facilities in the eastern regions.

On the other hand, church magazines in the west (such as the *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt für Württemberg*) write about ministers from the west who go to the east "to help." These ministers call for more solidarity with "the poor people in the east." Editorials counsel "patience" and recommend placing hope in "time." If church journalists in the east criticize the church tax and the wealth of western churches, church journalists in the west become upset. Said one: "Is that the answer to the EKD, which pays 300 million German marks a year to finance eastern church staff and salaries?"

Now the more than 60 million Christians in Germany (32.5 million Protestants and 27.7 million Roman Catholics) are reunified as one nation. They constitute 75 percent of about 80 million Germans. More than a quarter of them are over 60 years old. "The eastern state was annexed because it no longer had any structure," said Martin Kruse. "The damage was so advanced that one could no longer rebuild a state." But, he added, "in the case of the churches, it is different. We have capable partners in the east whose credibility is not to be doubted."

Many German Christians have yet to discern any benefits from that church partnership. Christians in the east struggle with their complacent sisters and brothers in the west. Christians in the west struggle with their critical sisters and brothers in the east. Although torn down, the old Berlin Wall still casts long shadows. ❑

Kathinka Kaden from West Germany is an intern at New World Outlook. *She is a journalist with a degree in theology from the University of Tübingen and is a member of the Evangelical Church of Württemberg.*

New Mission Partnership Initiatives in the Soviet Union

By James R. McGraw

Popular historical tradition links the rise of Methodism in America to a combination of economic hardship and the determined initiative of a Methodist laywoman. Driven to emigrate to the New World colonies by the harsh economic conditions in Limerick County, Ireland, Philip Embury settled in New York City in 1760. Six years later, while a card party was in progress, his cousin Barbara Heck interrupted it, urging Embury to lay down his cards and to commence preaching. She warned that, if he failed to do so, "God will require our blood at your hands." The Methodist mission to America was underway!

Today, a new United Methodist mission initiative to the Soviet Union has arisen from the harsh economic realities and the new political possibilities in the USSR. Once again, a United Methodist laywoman—Suzanne Stafford from North Carolina—has provided the initial urging to mission.

Under the auspices and at the invitation of the Soviet Peace Fund, Suzanne Stafford arranged for the president and the general secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries—Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn and Dr. Randolph Nugent—to visit the Soviet Union in January. Once there, they met with key representatives of the Peace Fund, the Russian Orthodox Church, and agencies of the Soviet government. They visited hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and senior centers. They saw the long lines of people waiting to purchase food and other goods. They observed firsthand the medical and other physical and developmental needs of the Soviet people.

They heard Russian Orthodox Church leaders report that church properties were being returned by the Soviet government at the rate of six a day. This was creating enormous training needs in hospitals, churches, and other social service institutions for doctors, medical workers, managers, teachers, and pastors. They received an unsolicited offer from Russian Orthodox Church representatives to help The United Methodist Church obtain property in the Soviet Union for establishing local United Methodist congregations.

Bishop Hearn and Dr. Nugent returned from the Soviet Union convinced that God was calling The United Methodist Church to a new mission outreach and partnership. In April, they articulated that call to the directors of the General Board of Global Ministries.

It was an echo from more recent United Methodist history, harking back some seven decades. Methodism came to Russia in the mid-nineteenth century but faced perhaps its greatest challenge following the Bolshevik Revolution. Economic collapse and famine swept Russia, eventually claiming five million lives in 1921-22.

At that time, there was a thriving Methodist Episcopal Church mission in Petrograd (later renamed Leningrad). This mission was well poised to respond to the emergency. During the crisis, Sister Anna Eklund, a Finnish deaconess, sold her own possessions to help others, even as she wasted away from hunger. Scores of railroad cars transported hundreds of boxes of food, clothing, shoes, medicines, New Testaments, and hymnals from European Methodist Relief for distribution to the suffering Soviet people.

Sister Anna reported to the 1922 European Central Conference that, in addition to helping countless individuals, Methodist relief had provided food for 14,000 children in government-operated children's homes. Feeding both body and soul, the Petrograd mission not only survived the worst of times but also thrived as a vibrant community of faith. When Bishop John L. Nuelsen (then one of the three European Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church) visited in October 1922, he observed: "There is hunger for the bread of life stronger than I have seen anywhere in Europe."

Methodist mission was noted with deep appreciation and respect by the Russian Orthodox Church. When an All Russian Sober (conference) of the Russian Orthodox Church convened in late April 1923, European Methodist Bishop Edgar Blake (Paris area) attended. He addressed the sober, saying: "When your call came across the seas, we answered with but one desire, and that is to aid the Russian Church and the Russian people. If in anything we can serve you, you have only to ask. Tell us what you want and, so far as our resources will permit, it shall be done."

However, Bishop Blake's enthusiasm for mission partnership with the Russian Orthodox Church was not shared universally throughout the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Board of Foreign Mission refused to endorse a $50,000 pledge Bishop Blake had

A Russian Orthodox procession in the Soviet Union. After many decades of keeping the faith through prayer, worship, and witness, the Russian Orthodox Church now enjoys full legal rights.

made. The editor of *The Christian Advocate* condemned his activities as "bolstering Bolshevism." Nevertheless, the 1924 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church received a cablegram from the Russian Orthodox Church. It read: "Our church will never forget the Samaritan service which Bishops Blake, Nuelsen . . . and your whole church has unselfishly rendered us. May this be the beginning of closer friendship for our churches and nations."

Once again, a window of opportunity for mission evangelism, ecumenical partnership, and church development has been opened—a window that had been closed for decades. The Russian Orthodox Church, United Methodist and other Christian congregations, and other religious communities find themselves both challenged and burdened by new opportunities. After having faithfully endured the hardships of governmental hostility for so many years, they are now free to take on a heavy responsibility: extending physical and spiritual nurture to the people.

However, there are serious questions about how long the window of opportunity will stay open. Dr. Nugent has observed: "Those who are responsible for moving forward in mission outreach must do so as rapidly as possible." Bishop Hearn has said: "A door has been opened to us in a spiritually starved land to present the good news of the Gospel. The spiritual vacuum that has existed in the Soviet Union will be filled in one fashion or another. I hope a large segment of it will be filled by the kind of Christian religion that The United Methodist Church represents."

The specter of a future return to the closed Soviet society of the Cold War period provides added impetus for immediate mission outreach. Dr. Nugent notes: "There are those who remain skeptical about any openness concerning church development in the Soviet Union. Their doubt is based upon the crackdown of the Soviet government in the Baltic states and the suspicion that the Soviet military leaders neither desire nor will allow real and lasting change in a nation that still has over 30,000 nuclear weapons." He further recognizes: "The presence of United Methodist Christian communities would provide further examples of the global United Methodist Church. In the midst of unstable, uncertain political situations, such churches would be visible illustrations of the Christian link for stability around the world."

At the April meeting of the General Board of Global Ministries, the directors voted to allocate $216,000 from the Board's Program Development Fund for planning and structuring a new mission initiative. (Advance Special Number: E-8670P for special initiative to the Soviet Union.) A mission outreach is envisioned that will utilize and involve the various divisions and departments of the GBGM as well as other boards and agencies of The United Methodist Church.

A Joint Commission on Humanitarian Aid will be responsible for overall policy and strategy, the approval of program objectives, and the deployment of resources. It will consist of Bishop Hearn, Dr. Nugent, GBGM World Division deputy general secretary Robert J. Harman, and representatives of the Soviet Peace Fund. The Joint Commission will have an office in Moscow and one in Washington, DC.

The Moscow office will handle such thorny bureaucratic necessities as obtaining visas and work permits for long- and short-term mission personnel and securing duty-free entry into the Soviet Union for food, medicine, medical equipment, and other items of humanitarian aid. It will also facilitate currency exchange, financial transactions, transportation, and distribution arrangements. The Washington office, headed by Suzanne Stafford and Marjorie Loory, will relate to United Methodist constituencies, government agencies, and other supporting organizations in the United States.

Two missionaries will be sent by the GBGM to the Soviet Union to help establish the new mission initiative. At the time of this writing, Chris Hena has been identified as being one of them. She is a young Russian-speaking Liberian who

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20) Now we have the opportunity to carry Christ's Great Commission to the largest nation in the world.

studied medicine for six years in Soviet Georgia, under a scholarship from the Soviet Peace Fund.

A United Methodist Task Force on the Soviet Union will put together a network for utilizing the resources of the whole church. For example, acute medical needs and hunger problems in the Soviet Union could be immediately addressed by the combined efforts and resources of such agencies as the Board's Health and Welfare Ministries Program Department, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and the programmatic and human resources of the World and National Divisions and the Mission Personnel Resources Program Department.

Hospitals and clinics operated by the Russian Orthodox Church are in desperate need not only of medicine and medical equipment but also of training for doctors, hospital workers, and managers. Hospitals treating children who suffer from the radiation effects of the 1986 nuclear accident at the Chernobyl plant are in particular need of humanitarian aid. Severe food shortages and nutritional deficiencies among the Soviet poor and elderly call for the relief and distribution capabilities of UMCOR. The agricultural development and nutrition programs of the World and National Divisions are also needed. More long-range mission outreach possibilities include technical assistance and labor for housing construction and rehabilitation, leadership training and educational exchange, and assistance to mission partners in the training of priests and pastors.

The new mission initiative also will extend United Methodist development efforts already underway and expanding in the Soviet Union. As mentioned above, the Russian Orthodox Church has offered to assist in the establishment of United Methodist congregations. Throughout the Soviet Union, the United Methodist presence is increasingly visible and vibrant.

- The United Methodist Church in Tallinn (Estonia) has received permission to build a new church. It has been sharing a church facility with a Seventh Day Adventist congregation since the United Methodist building was destroyed by bombing in 1944.
- Renovation and repair are underway at another Estonian church, the Kuressaare United Methodist Church, built in 1912.
- Since 1988, congregational development in Estonia has been bolstered by a new Sunday School movement.
- The Hungarian provisional conference is providing new impetus to the work of the United Methodist church in the Ukraine.
- Two United Methodist churches in Siberia are regularly visited and served by Estonian pastors.
- Under the leadership of Bishop Hans Växby, the Northern Europe Central Conference is expanding mission outreach efforts in Estonia and Latvia.
- A missionary has been identified and approved by the Finnish provisional conference to establish a United Methodist congregation in Leningrad.
- With the help of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Korean Mission Association (KMA) of Russia has opened churches in Moscow and Tashkent. The KMA has also identified more than 30 additional places for mission among the 500,000 Koreans living in the Soviet Union.
- Bishop C. Dale White (New York area) has appointed a Korean deacon to serve as a missionary pastor based in Moscow.
- An informal Christian congregation in Sverdlovsk in central Russia has received permission to build a United Methodist church on 10 acres in a 40-acre city park. This park has been renamed "Methodist Park." The congregation in Sverdlovsk has been assisted by the pastor and congregation of the Broadmoor United Methodist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Such examples show that the winds of the Spirit are blowing through the open window of opportunity in the Soviet Union to create a new United Methodist mission movement. For the moment, at least, it is a refreshing breeze in a nation once dominated by Karl Marx's assertion that religion "is the opium of the people." The time is ripe for a new mission initiative which embodies John Wesley's conviction that Christianity is not a narcotic but a cure. Christian love, Wesley wrote, "we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men. . . . This religion we long to see established in the world . . . ." ❑

Christian Opportunity in the Midst of Communist Crisis

By Grace Adolphsen Brame

The last three years have offered the greatest opportunity in history for the sharing of religious faith in the Soviet Union. A whole spectrum of religions, new and old, have made great strides—particularly Christianity and Islam. In other Eastern European countries, it is the same. The people of these nations have been spiritually starved for the past 70 years. There is a hunger for meaning in life, for something that will fill the soul. And there is a hunger for rest—from conflict, suspicion, and the burden of survival.

There is still unparalleled opportunity for religion in these places. But seizing present opportunities will require the exercise of wisdom and sensitivity, both within each country and from the outside. Despair and bitterness could follow new religious openings, and newly found faith could be forsaken.

During the spring of 1990, a million Korans were shipped into the USSR. During the summer, both Hare Krishnas and the Sisters of Charity could be seen on the streets of Moscow. Exponents of the New Age continued to arrive. So did Mormon missionaries. Children sang sacred songs on television.

In October 1990, the Supreme Soviet passed the long-awaited Resolution on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations. The new law allows as few as 10 adults to form a religious group

Alexei Bichkov

with legal rights (II, 14). It further states that "notification of state authorities of the formation of a religious society shall not be obligatory" (II, 8). An unregistered church is no longer against the law but merely lacking in legal status.

I have had five extended trips to the Soviet Union in the past 13 years. The last visit was during the summer of 1990. I interviewed people almost daily, filling a 200-page notebook in the process.

Seizing the Moment

"We live in great hope and great fear!" said Alexei Bichkov, an internationally known leader in the Evangelical Christians-Baptist Church in the Soviet Union. "Never could we have *imagined* what has happened! I have spoken on national media every month this year. The government has given us ground for a seminary to be built in the *center* of Moscow. Soon we begin an important *joint venture*: radio programs on religion and ecology."

"Yet, we have great challenges," he continued. "We do not know if or when the flow of history might change and opportunities vanish."

He went on to describe a particular challenge: "Our church is preaching in 27 languages, but we should be preaching in all the languages of our nation—157! We need to translate the Bible, educational materials, hymnals, and religious literature into all 157 tongues."

A few days before, I heard: "The window is open only for a little while. We don't know when it will close. It could be weeks, months, or a few years. We must do everything we can before that happens." The speaker was Sasha Semchenko, the dynamic founder of *The Protestant*—

"Our church is preaching in 27 languages, but we should be preaching in all the languages of our nation—157!"

an organization giving its name to a religious newspaper, a newly born seminary, and an endless list of charitable efforts. Semchenko is a former prisoner of conscience who was released by President Gorbachev. Like Alexei Bichkov, Sasha Semchenko radiates energy and joy, although the demands upon his strength seem endless.

One day I walked the streets with a Communist official who spoke to me in great earnestness. "We can go one of three ways: the way of *evolution*, or *revolution*, or hopeless *degradation*," he said. "If we choose *evolution*, there will be gradual constructive growth made possible by a multiparty system and the efforts of the majority. They have been silently waiting for a chance to express their true feelings. If there is *revolution*—a civil war—there will be blood. It will be horrible, and it will solve nothing. If there is *degradation*, there will be a loss of hope, of incentive, of direction, of ability to see a clear way through our problems. It will be like dying, but I would rather have this than revolution. If only our people would give Gorbachev more time!" (In two months of conversations, I found only three people who, when asked, voiced support for President Gorbachev.)

One person who personally knows the workings of the Communist Party spoke of recent changes in ideology within the national party membership of 20 million: "Half of them no longer want to play the game. They want a life of their own—with family, food, and a decent home. They want the simple, beautiful, and fundamental things of life. But there are one to two million conservative hard-liners who believe in military power. They are passionate and tough. If they ever get into power again, it will be frightening."

"You think things have changed," said one friend, "and they have. I haven't been interrogated recently. But the KGB may well be listening to this conversation. They are as active as ever, but not nearly so obvious. If we ever go back to the old ways, they will have far more names and far more information because people have exposed themselves under *glasnost*."

Religious Hunger

Expressing a shared conviction that transcended generations, both a man in his twenties and a retiree insisted grimly: "Russia cannot change without revolution. It has always been that way and always will be. Nothing will be different until blood flows!" Yet few people could suggest what step to take after the blood stopped flowing.

A lifelong unbeliever used four months' salary to buy a Bible. "Perhaps religion is the one thing that can help us," she said.

Below: A priest sprinkles a congregation in the Soviet Union. "We are ***hungry*** *for God!" said a Russian in Moscow.*

Bottom: This nun tending her convent garden symbolizes the hope for Christian rebirth in the Soviet Union.

"We were chosen for this," another person said stoically. "We were chosen because we know how to suffer and endure."

Other people truly are struggling against such fatalism. A wonderful woman said to me: "Fear is in our blood. While we grew up, our fathers and uncles were dying in labor camps. There was no way to help each other. We need to belong to a community that cares. That is what religion should be doing for us. Too often it divides."

I shall never forget a conversation I had while walking through the gray Moscow rain. An intense, wistful voice told me: "We are *hungry* for God! Can you hear what I am saying? I'm not sure you can understand. We are *so* hungry."

That may be why a friend of mine, a lifelong unbeliever, spent 600 rubles (four times the average monthly salary) for a Bible on the black market. She had been told that she could buy one book. "I could have used it for shoes or food or a washing machine, if I could have found them," she said. "But I can think of only one thing to help us. Perhaps it is religion."

Churches Out in the Open

On a Sunday morning, I went to a Pentecostal forest meeting. For years, in order to remain undetected, Pentecostals have been gathering in all kinds of weather under the trees outside Moscow. Now they still worship in such places, but for a different reason. Registered Pentecostals now have no room to house their burgeoning congregations. Although the Russian Orthodox Church is said to have from 30 to 50 million adherents, the Pentecostals claim they are the most rapidly growing church in the country. In the summer of 1990, they counted 300,000 members—one-third aboveground.

This new acceptance and exposure is a shock to the Pentecostals. They are struggling for a "new language"—one that will speak both to those who have never known Christ and to those for whom Christianity is a *tradition* but not a *living* faith. A church in Finland has sent them a movable tent that houses 1,200 people. One group rented the church closest to the Kremlin (now an office building) to hold a service. Last August, massive evangelistic meetings were held, making use of cinemas, concert halls, and a stadium that holds 7,000 to 8,000 people. Pentecostals had moved from underground worship to stadium evangelism in two years.

Below: This Baptist church in Moscow is filled to the rafters with worshipers. The opportunities for United Methodist mission are also great.

Bottom: Russian Pentecostals worship in a forest outside Moscow.

In less time, the first movements of the churches toward charity have unleashed a pent-up love that is pouring out wherever it is accepted. In 1929, Stalin codified all previous laws on religion into the Law on Religious Associations. Article Seventeen stated: "It is forbidden [any member of a church] to render material assistance to other members." The new law on conscience and religious associations assures that "religious organizations shall be entitled to engage in works of charity and mercy independently and also through public organizations" (IV, 23). Actually, for some time before the new law was passed, churches in the USSR were not only helping their own in need but also reaching out through charity.

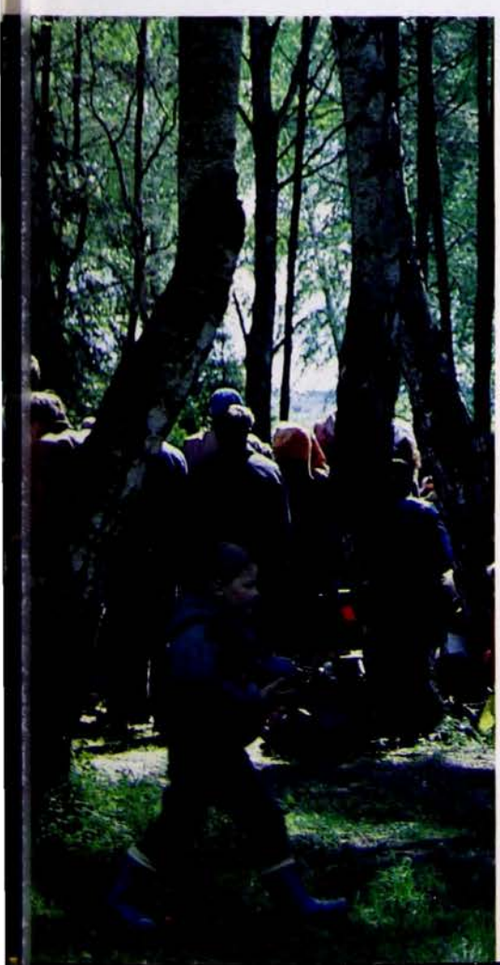
Innovative projects are multiplying. Once, the Catholic Church was said to be the archenemy of the state because of its claims of papal authority and its universal image and outreach. Today, it is represented by nuns in Moscow serving in a hospice and preparing to work in an orphanage—both buildings having been provided by the state.

Left: Author Grace Brame with a Pentecostal worshiper.

Evangelism Opportunities

One evangelization project claims particular success. Through the efforts of *The Protestant* and the Baptists, the film *Jesus* has been shown on national TV, in prisons, and in theaters. Reportedly, it has caused 30,000 conversions to Christianity.

This past year, a heretofore unlikely combination of Catholics, Orthodox, Seventh-Day Adventists, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, and Pentecostals organized the Bible Society of the Soviet Union. They legally registered it with the government. Their objective is to publish both the whole Bible and the New Testament alone in *all* the languages of the USSR. They know they can succeed only with spiritual, financial, and technical support—not only from their members but from friends around the world.



Partnership Opportunities

There are thousands of Christians in some areas of Slavic countries where there are no trained leaders. There are potential congregations with no pastors. The huge revival services held in Slavic countries in 1990 yielded thousands of people deciding for Christ. However, they have no direction from anyone about what that decision means. Also, there are no buildings adequate to house new, large congregations. Tragedy could follow promise if the fervor of new commitments is permitted to die from lack of nurture, support, and guidance.

Westerners wanting to help are excited about the breakthrough in evangelism and want to be part of it. But the critical need is follow-up. One Romanian said to me: "Every week people from the West come to my town to evangelize. Sometimes it's a choir with 50 or 60 people. Sometimes it's a youth group. Our people are generous. Although they are already standing in line an average of two hours a day, they take their guests home to share their meager amounts of food. If only these wonderful, well-meaning people would ask us what we need ahead of time. Often we would have to say: 'Pray for us. Send us money for a building or to train pastors and teachers. Support the programs we already have in place.' It is important that we don't dilute our efforts, sap our strength, or confuse our programs. Our greatest need is to fill specific insufficiencies."

In Moscow, indigenous leadership is also reaching out for specific support. *The Protestant* is trying to be a liaison with Christians in other countries who wish to adopt or assist vital projects in churches, hospitals, prisons, and group homes inside the Soviet Union. Sasha Semchenko's bold plans to produce Bibles and New Testaments on site in Moscow have already begun to be implemented. Up until now, the

Thousands of people in Slavic countries decided for Christ. However, they have no direction about what that decision means.

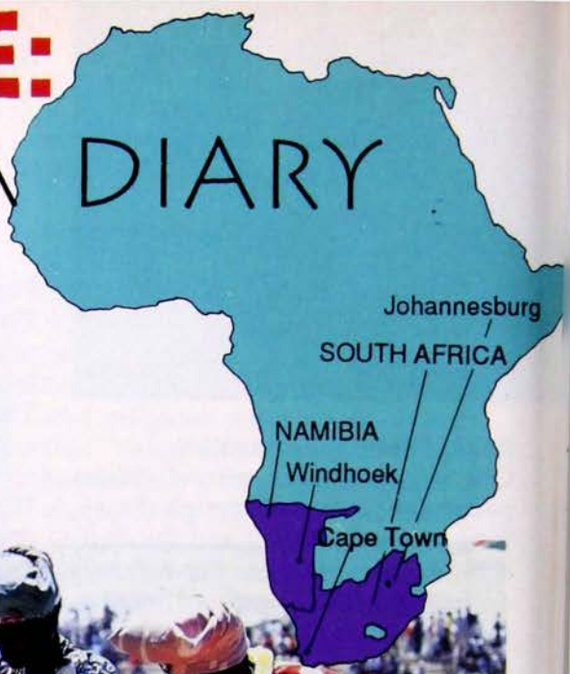
cheapest Bible I could find commercially in Moscow sold for 50 rubles. With gifts from West Germany, Scandinavia, and the United States, a large Baptist church provides Bibles for 30 rubles. Semchenko's plan is to sell Bibles for half that price, or 15 rubles, and to provide New Testaments for 6 rubles. His impressive goal is to print 60 million Bibles in three years.

There is a need for quality printing equipment and for translators, technical personnel, and funds. Semchenko is also looking for professors for the new seminary to help train the pastors who have been promised to parishes where the need is most critical. The ecumenical seminary has thus far invited Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Catholic, Pentecostal, and Mennonite students.

If right-wing coups, civil war, or further economic disintegration do not destroy the Soviet people, Christian projects will have a chance to bring them a new and far more abundant life. The new Resolution on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations could be a primary enabler. Developed by church and state working cooperatively together, that law might be seen someday as the focal point of another October Revolution—one that millions of Soviets pray will replace the first. ❑

Dr. Grace Adolphsen Brame teaches theology at Villanova University and writes in the field of prayer and life in the Spirit. She is author of Receptive Prayer *(CBP Press, 1984) and collector and editor of* Ways of the Spirit *(Crossroads, 1990).*

GOING HOME: A SOUTH AFRICA DIARY



BY SHIRLEY TRAYLOR

It was Friday evening, March 15, 1991, in New York City. My taxi driver was expertly weaving his way through the rush hour traffic across the Triborough Bridge toward Kennedy International Airport. After 20 years of supporting the human rights struggle in southern Africa, I found it hard to believe that, in a matter of hours, I would be landing on the continent of Africa for the first time. I was one of the members of the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) invited to attend a conference on "Making a New South African Constitution." This conference was being convened by the African National Congress (ANC) in Cape Town, South Africa.

As trite as it may sound, I had an overwhelming sense of going home—a feeling that had been described to me by so many other African Americans making their first trips to Africa.

Arriving in Johannesburg, I was not prepared to see such a highly industrialized, Americanized city. I had expected a more "European" city. Instead, American music blasted in the fast-food places and shopping malls. McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken were alive and well in "Joburg!" *Kindergarten Cop*, *Sleeping With the Enemy*, *Look Who's Talking*, and *Godfather III* were playing at the movie theaters. The most popular television programs were American soap operas.

The integration of the people during the work day in Johannesburg was even more surprising. Cab drivers, cashiers, and bank clerks were very often colored (of mixed black and white ancestry) and, less frequently, were black. However, it was painfully obvious that the street sweepers and laborers were *always* black Africans and that the highest-level positions were *always* held by whites. I was told that this illusion of integration was a recent phenomenon, resulting from the cease-fire and the repeal of many oppressive laws. In the evening, I noticed that the black African citizens disappeared from the streets of Johannesburg. Still, I had not expected to see even minimal integration of the shops and streets. I had expected to see a totally segregated city with a strong police and army presence. I also expected more open hostility from the whites with whom I came into contact.

Women in traditional garb celebrate Independence Day in Namibia.

Our delegation was hosted in Johannesburg by South Africa's National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADAL). They arranged for me to stay with a white female artist who lived a few miles from the center of town in a middle-class community. She described it as an upwardly mobile, "yuppie" community. The small, colorful, stucco homes were surrounded by gardens and trees. To get to my guest room in the back, I had to lock and unlock seven gates and doors.

The residents of "Joburg" are very security-conscious. Steel gates are everywhere, and I was reminded by merchants more than once to watch my purse. I was told that the crime rate in Johannesburg is the highest in the country.

The apartheid laws created a land-use system that segregates people according to their race. There are townships reserved for blacks, for Indians, and for coloreds. Nonwhites are not permitted to live in the cities. But they live within commuting distance, to be available for work when they are needed or to be discarded when they are not. Unemployment in the black townships is very high.

I saw the conditions of the black townships when we visited Soweto, located about an hour's drive from Johannesburg. Although I knew it was home for hundreds of thousands of black South Africans, I did not expect Soweto to be so large. First we stopped in a middle-class section of Soweto, one of several middle-class enclaves that I never knew existed. The homes were quite palatial. The residents are merchants, teachers, doctors, and other professionals. Although they could afford to live in some other community, they are required by the apartheid laws to live in a black township.

In the middle of the township was a police training academy. At first glance, it looked like a college campus. Then I noticed the barbed-wire fence surrounding the buildings. Having this police training institution located in the middle of their community is particularly offensive to the people of Soweto. It was the target of derisive remarks as we drove past.

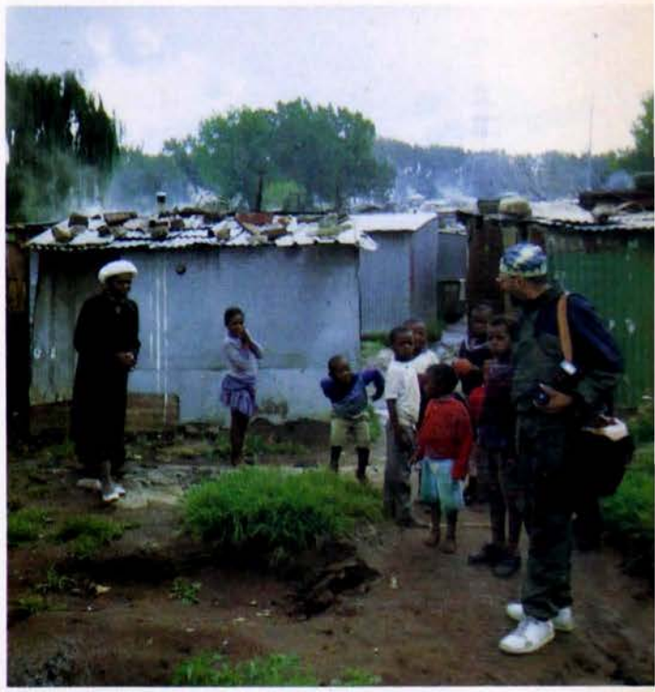
From the images of American television, I had expected to see more of a police presence in Soweto. When I mentioned my expectation, I was told that our integrated delegation had already attracted police attention and we were being followed by an unmarked police car. I was told that the police presence escalates at the 9:00 P.M. curfew.

In the shantytown section, we passed row upon row of structures—sometimes made of concrete and sometimes made of wood—many of which had no doors. These were neighborhood communal toilets since there was no running water in the shacks. Poor Soweto residents sometimes had to walk long distances to get water from communal taps. Walking was not easy. There were only dirt roads; and during the frequent heavy rains, the shantytown can be under a foot of water, making life miserable. Residents sometimes lose what few belongings they have. Sometimes they can't get to work or school.

A family invited me into their home—a shack about nine by nine feet. The room was divided by a thin paper curtain serving as a wall. One cot was neatly made up, and I was told that the family takes turns using it. In one corner was a small coal stove and a cupboard with kitchen utensils stacked in rows. The room was dark and had only one window. Stacked in a corner were a TV and other electronic equipment collected from discarded trash in the city, even though there was no electricity.

Shacks are made of all sorts of materials, many with roofs held down by bricks. The township residents emerged from their homes to greet and stare at the visitors from America. Children crowded around us. Despite their desolate surroundings, they were like children everywhere: curious, mischievous, and laughing. I noticed one child, who looked to be about four years old, carrying a bucket of water on her head. Most of the children were barefoot and wearing tattered clothing. We were told that township residents—especially children—suffer from illnesses caused by the lack of sewerage systems and by the continual heavy flooding.

A shack in Soweto township, South Africa. The roof is held down by bricks.



Soweto children raise their fists, displaying the traditional sign of victory and freedom.

After a while, my eyes and nose began to sting. Breathing became a little more difficult owing to the clouds of black smoke coming from the shanties and streaming toward the sky. When we boarded our buses, the children ran toward us, waving goodbye. We opened our windows and began waving back at the children. Then a most astonishing thing happened. Spontaneously and in unison, these tiny tots raised their fists high above their heads—straight into the air.

They were displaying the traditional sign of victory and freedom.

A few days later, I had a similar experience in Cape Town. We arrived on the same day that 14 young men who had been political prisoners on Robbin Island were released. They spoke at a reception that night. Even as they described their unjust arrest and the hardship of their imprisonment on that infamous island, it was inspiring to see that their optimism and belief in the future remained intact.

We stopped at Merafi hostel, a single men's dwelling located in the middle of the township. It was made of wood, and all the windows were broken out. The inside was drab with unpainted walls and cots lined up beside each other. Eight men live together in each small room, using bits of broken furniture. The cooking facilities are outdoors. There are no lights, radios, or televisions. The men who live in Merafi hostel work in Johannesburg. They are from rural areas and Bantu lands one or two days away by train. They are permitted only one visit home a year. Otherwise, they live in the hostel away from their wives, children, and families. They are commonly called "men without women."

Often, men from several different tribes who don't speak the same language are housed together. Sometimes they are out of work. They are isolated from their families, from the townspeople, and from the civic life of the town. The few social services available for blacks do not reach these men, and they are often viewed as troublemakers by the townspeople. Without family contact or recreation, these men most often spend their free time drinking or chasing prostitutes. Their life is both physically miserable and psychologically damaging.

Thus the hostels are fertile ground for fanning the flames of intertribal and political animosity and violence that have erupted between followers of the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party. Such violence has stalled negotiations for government reform and a new South Africa. Violence in the black townships has claimed 6,000 lives since 1986. There have been more than 1,000 deaths over the past year.

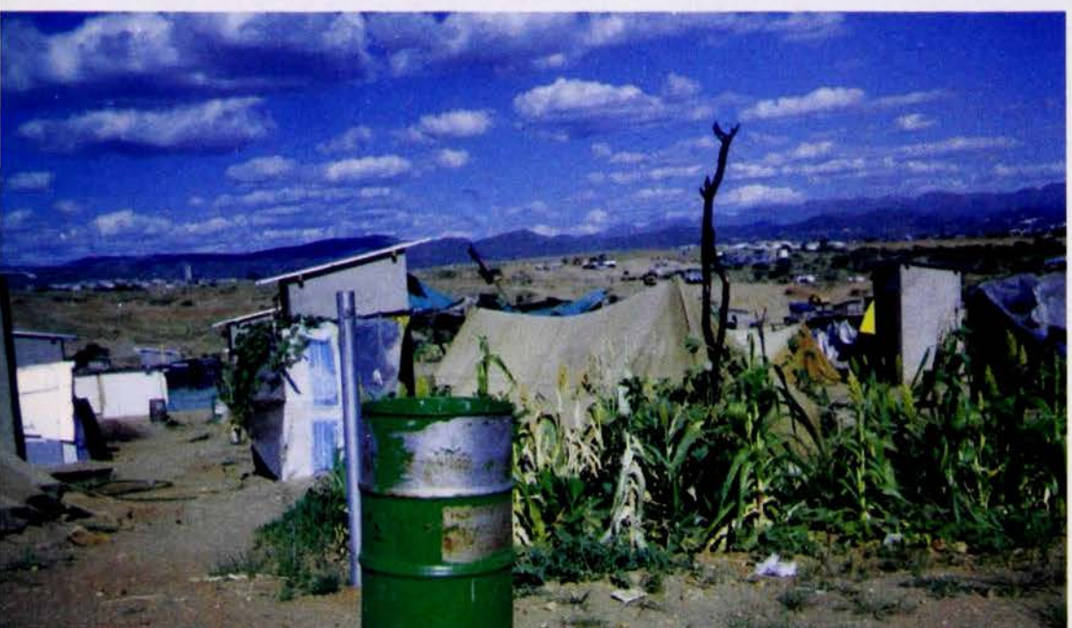
On my final evening in Johannesburg, I attended a party hosted by NADAL. Lawyers from all over Johannesburg—black, white, and Indian—attended the party. Many of these lawyers had been so brave over the years, struggling against apartheid and providing legal services to the masses of unrepresented black South Africans. It was a pleasure to talk with them.

We talked long into the night about the obstacles to justice presented by the apartheid system in South Africa and by racism in the United States. As these lawyers talked about their vision of a free, democratic South Africa, I suddenly had a vision of my own.

I suddenly realized that there is no organization like NADAL back home! Progressive bar associations, such as the National Lawyers Guild and the National Conference of Black Lawyers, work closely together on issues and provide mutual support. But they remain separate organizations. My exposure to NADAL—a bar association of whites, blacks, and Indians, also integrated by gender—enabled me to envision what a truly democratic society could look and act like. It was a delicious moment.

I witnessed both the promise and challenge of that vision during a side trip to the Republic of Namibia. The occasion was that new nation's first anniversary of independence. The conditions of oppression in Namibia were exactly the same as in South Africa, including legalized apartheid.

Today, after a long, bloody war with South Africa and negotiated independence, the cities and towns in Namibia are expanding at explosive rates, creating an acute housing shortage. The problem is complicated by the poor condition of the housing stock in both the urban and rural areas. Water, electricity, roads, and sanitary services are either inadequate or nonexistent, particularly in former black townships. The high cost of construction prohibits even the middle class from building. Most Namibians would have to be subsidized to purchase a new home. The government estimates that it would cost about $600 million to meet housing needs, excluding the additional massive cost for water, sewers, and electricity. The government simply does not have the money. Compromises necessary to



A black township outside Windhoek in Namibia.

Left: Young Namibian women exuberantly celebrate independence.
Below: Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe with Namibian President Sam Nujoma.

negotiate independence left much of the wealth and control of productive resources in the same hands as under apartheid rule.

Although segregated schools have been abolished, the grim legacy of apartheid still permeates the system. The national school system is underfunded, teachers are undertrained, and an estimated 65 percent of Namibians cannot read. A Justice of the High Court told me how the demise of the educational system under apartheid has impacted the future of the legal and judicial systems in Namibia. There is a severe shortage of lawyers, particularly black African lawyers, because not enough Namibians are able to complete the necessary education for legal training. Consequently, most members of the bar and most judges are the same people who administered the apartheid system. The Justice saw the problem persisting for a long time.

On Independence Day, the entire capital city of Windhoek was alive with excitement. Many women and men were colorfully dressed in traditional African garb. The celebration in the public stadium featured an endless stream of dancers, marchers, tumblers, skydivers, child performers, and athletes. I felt at home among the proud, cheering crowd. That night, I was reminded painfully of my other home.

I attended an official state reception at the State House gardens, hosted by Namibian President Sam Nujoma in honor of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe from Zimbabwe.

As I was talking with one of the Namibian guests, I was startled to hear a woman's voice, with an American accent, say: "Durban (a large South African city) is just like Miami; only instead of being overrun by Cubans, it is overrun by Indians." Later, I was told that she was the American ambassador. After I had spent a week in South Africa, the first openly racist comment I heard from a white person came from an American diplomat!

On my last day in South Africa, we drove to Cape Point. On the way, we passed a grey mass of rock in the distance, barely visible from the shore. Only the protruding lighthouse could be seen clearly. It was the notorious Robbin Island prison. Adjacent to this rock of human misery were some of the most beautiful homes I saw in South Africa—summer homes for wealthy white South Africans, homes that seemed to jut straight out of the mountains.

The contrast was a reminder of the disparities between rich and poor in so many nations of the world, including my own. But the lighthouse beckoning from Robbin Island beamed a reminder of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and so many others who have suffered there for the cause of justice.

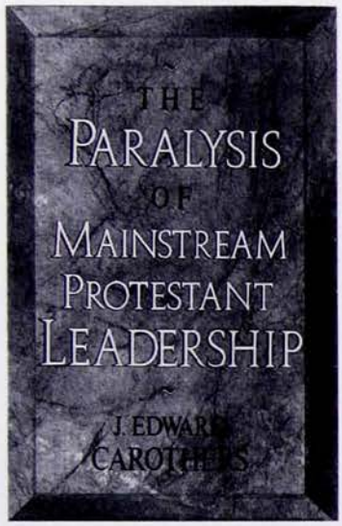
On the ray of hope such examples represent, I was ready to be beamed home. ❑

Shirley Traylor is an attorney-at-law with a particular commitment to public interest law. She has been the chief counsel for the Community Services Society of New York for the past several years.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Paralysis of Mainstream Protestant Leadership
by J. Edward Carothers

Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1990.
$10.95. To order: 1-800-251-3320



When J. Edward Carothers speaks, everybody listens. At least this was the prevailing attitude of many of us caught up in the social upheavals of the mid-sixties and early seventies. Carothers was a prophetic voice in the church in those days. He was General Secretary of the National Division of the Board of Missions, and his actions were consistent with his thinking. To appreciate his influence, one need only read his earlier book *The Pusher and the Puller* and to compare it with the new direction the National Division took under his leadership.

For those who care about and love the church, Carothers' new book, *The Paralysis of Mainstream Protestant Leadership*, is not only worth reading, it is a must. Here he speaks not as someone who wields executive power. He speaks as someone who, in retirement, pours out the burden of his heart for the church he loves and has served so well. Not to listen to what Carothers gives us in this new book would be to miss the wisdom of his churchmanship. Worse, we would condemn ourselves to the very paralysis he so eloquently addresses and attempts to cure.

Characteristically, Carothers minces no words. Mainstream Protestant denominations are declining. The fault lies with the leadership of the church. The failure to experience the "Epiphany" of God in the here and now paralyzes the church. It prevents movement from a belief system to a faith action.

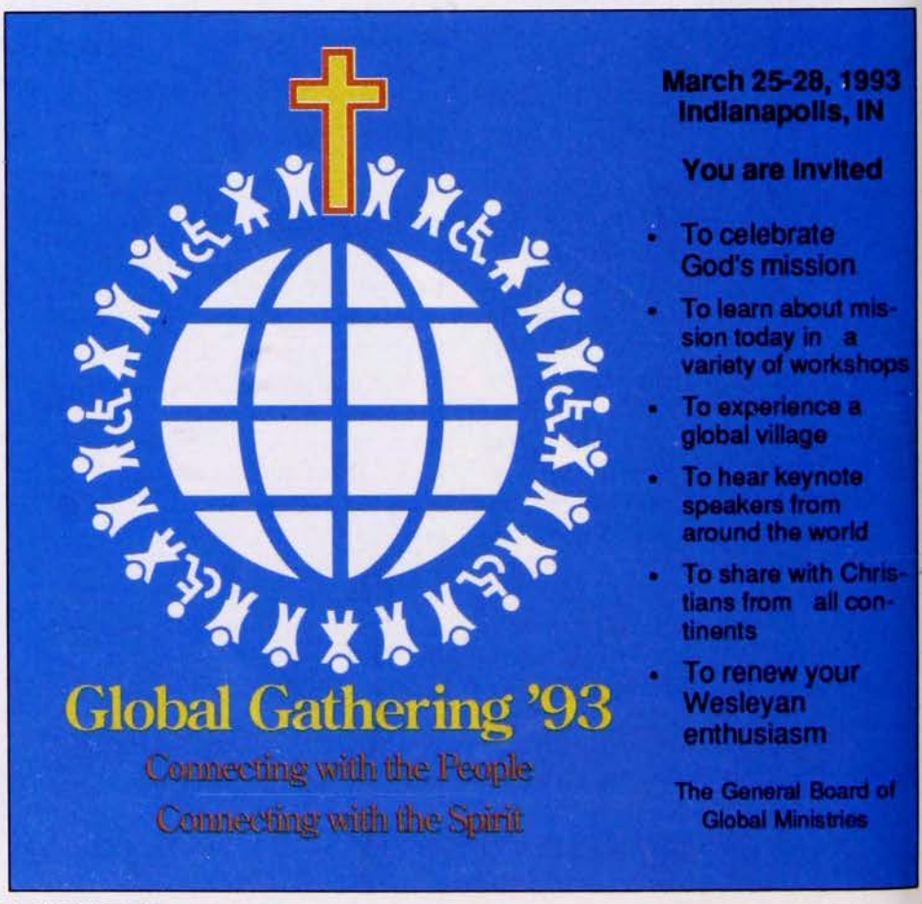
Making use of broad, sweeping categories, Carothers spotlights the three main forces that are keeping the church at bay: fundamentalism, scientism, and materialism. These are the controlling factors stymieing the church and keeping the leadership in paralysis.

These forces have put churches in a no-win situation. Not to act against them is to continue the demise of the church. However, to act would be to threaten the status quo. This paralysis of leadership is traceable to two well-cherished notions: first, that the church is indestructible and can survive any and all forces; second, that love for the church makes us blind to its sins. This belief in a guaranteed success is what is wrong with mainstream Protestantism today. And the leaders of the church are the ones who embody this belief system.

Carothers addresses ways out of the impasse created by these crippling forces of fundamentalism, scientism, and materialism—forces that have malnourished the mainline churches. He says the responsibility falls squarely on church leadership. That leadership embraces those who sit in pews as well as those who occupy pulpits and reside in episcopal residences.

If the indictment of the church leadership seems harsh, then read on, because the cure is simple. For Carothers, the cause of the paralysis is not only external but lies in the life of our leaders—specifically, in the death of their imaginations.

Imagination for the author is the "fertile soil in which God's Holy Spirit lures us to take the wing of the dove." His strong emphasis on returning to the Bible—particularly



Youth View

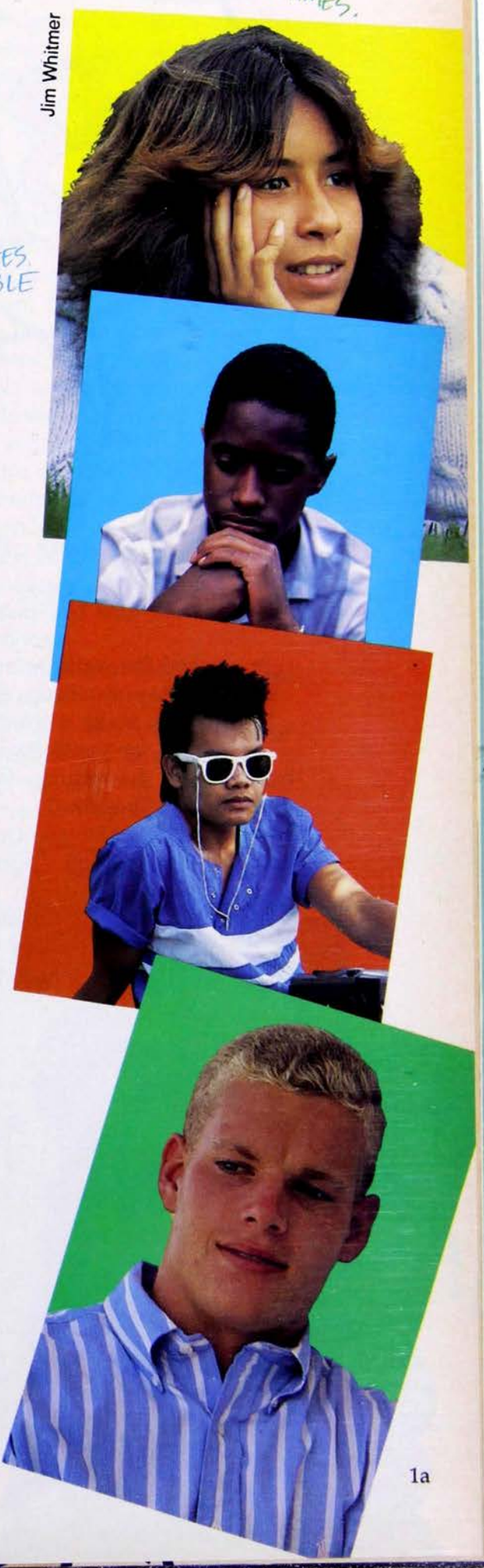
IT'S TOUGH MAKING DECISIONS IN THESE CHANGING TIMES.

Living Values in Changing Times

By Sidney D. Fowler

WE ARE LIVING IN A TIME WHEN SOCIETY IS UNDERGOING MAJOR CHANGES. VIEWS ARE CHANGING ON VARIOUS ISSUES. WHAT WAS ONCE ACCEPTABLE MAY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE NOW. WHAT WAS ONCE NOT ACCEPTABLE IS ACCEPTABLE NOW. WE ARE CONSTANTLY FACED WITH ETHICAL QUESTIONS THAT ARE NOT SO CLEAR-CUT.

Jim Whitmer



Sixteen-year-old Mario Uvalde from Sacramento, California, says it's tough today for Christian youth to take a stand. Today you face all kinds of issues. Some of the issues are personal. Others are more global in impact. Stephen Mott, professor of ethics at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, identifies one of the critical personal questions you must ask today as: "Will you have sexual intercourse before marriage?" Larry Rasmussen, a professor of ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, asks a global question of you: "How might you, along with others, help create a humane world community?" Both kinds of questions demand that you identify your values, evaluate them in light of Christian values, and then decide. This article is intended to help you discover Christian values and take a stand.

Uncover Your Own Values.

One way to begin to make a decision about those tough questions is to identify your own values. Values are the stuff that your ethical decisions are made of. Whether or not you are aware of your values, they are the source of what goes into decisions about how you spend your time and money, whom you avoid or love, or what you do with your life. Values are what matter.

Barbara Varenhorst, an adolescent psychologist from Portola Valley, California, focuses on what values are when she asks youth these critical questions: "Who or what are you going to serve in your life? Are you going to devote your life to personal gain, money, material goods, popularity, and power? Or will you attempt to make a difference in the quality of human life by committing yourself to humanity, family, community, and environment?" Money, popularity, power, family, and community are all examples of values.

How you spend your life may be a good indicator of what you value the most. For example, Greg spends most of his time, when he is not asleep or in class, playing basketball. Basketball is his passion. He is always practicing on the court; his friends are his basketball buddies; and his money is spent on basketball shoes, going to games, and basketball camp. Succeeding at basketball is a central value for him.

A closer look uncovers a deeper

(Continued on p. 8a)

YOUTH VIEW is a special insert in *New World Outlook*. It was created to assist youth and youth groups in studying the 1990-91 mission theme, *"Living Values—Changing Times."*

YO Dude, Do the BARTMAN!

BY DAVID OTTO

COULD BART SIMPSON BE THE MODEL OF VALUES FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS IN THE 90's?

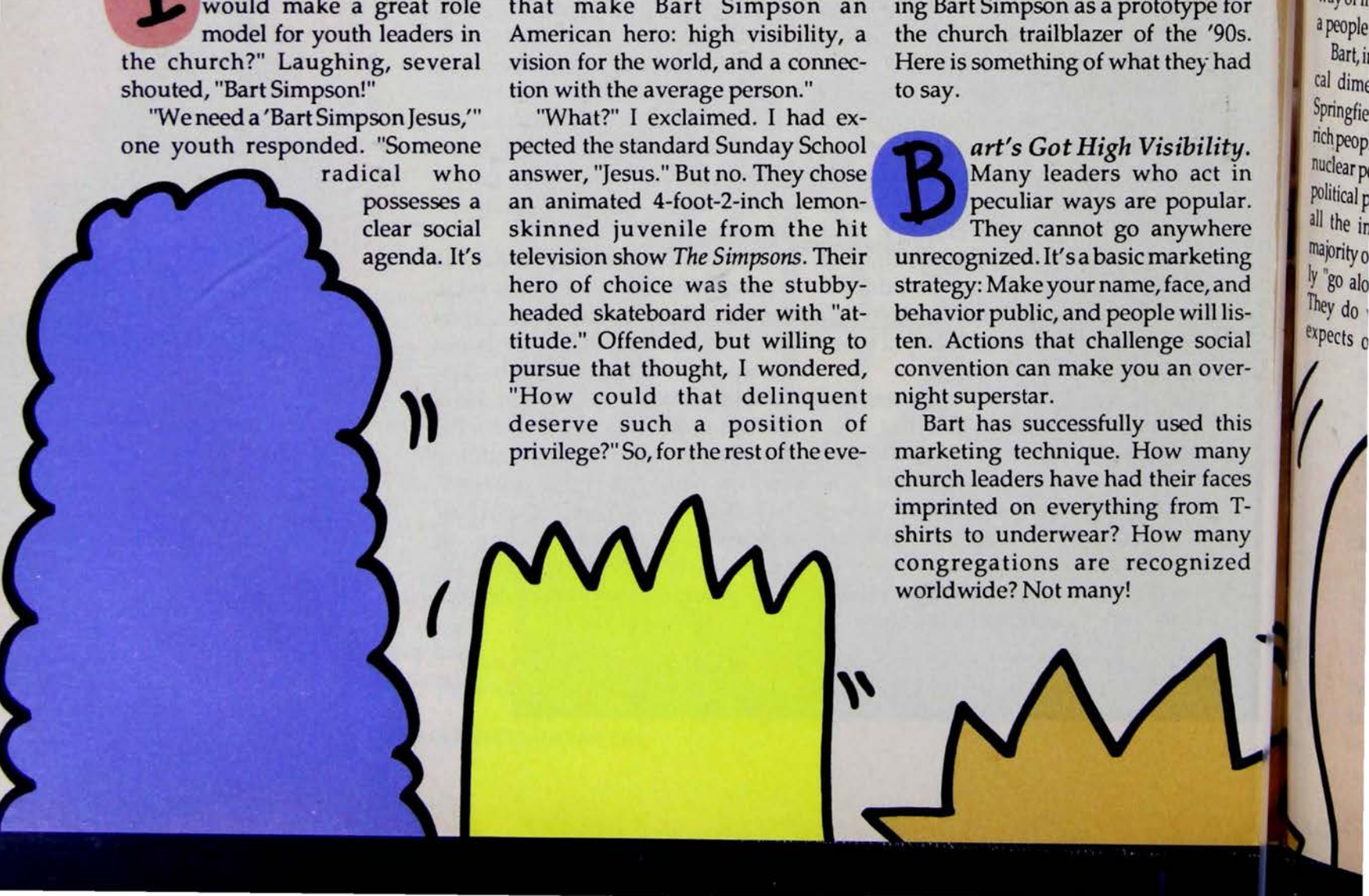
I asked the youth group one Sunday evening, "Who would make a great role model for youth leaders in the church?" Laughing, several shouted, "Bart Simpson!"

"We need a 'Bart Simpson Jesus,'" one youth responded. "Someone radical who possesses a clear social agenda. It's a marketing issue. Let's face it: Christian youth need three qualities that make Bart Simpson an American hero: high visibility, a vision for the world, and a connection with the average person."

"What?" I exclaimed. I had expected the standard Sunday School answer, "Jesus." But no. They chose an animated 4-foot-2-inch lemon-skinned juvenile from the hit television show *The Simpsons*. Their hero of choice was the stubby-headed skateboard rider with "attitude." Offended, but willing to pursue that thought, I wondered, "How could that delinquent deserve such a position of privilege?" So, for the rest of the evening, I listened to 20 youth develop a three-point rationale for promoting Bart Simpson as a prototype for the church trailblazer of the '90s. Here is something of what they had to say.

Bart's Got High Visibility. Many leaders who act in peculiar ways are popular. They cannot go anywhere unrecognized. It's a basic marketing strategy: Make your name, face, and behavior public, and people will listen. Actions that challenge social convention can make you an overnight superstar.

Bart has successfully used this marketing technique. How many church leaders have had their faces imprinted on everything from T-shirts to underwear? How many congregations are recognized worldwide? Not many!



popularity, however, are two different things. Celebrated public figures need to act as responsible role models. Bart's "Eat my shorts, Dude" attitude makes for negative public relations. The church needs faithful leaders who can speak of a radical love from an awesome God. With work and growth, Bart could become such a person.

Bart's Got a Vision for the World. But isn't Bart's willingness to act against social convention a message we need to hear? To be in the church often means to behave in a radically different manner from others--to take stands and say things that might rub others raw.

Look to the history of the church. It is an organization that emerged from the actions and vision of a radical dude named Jesus--one who refused to accept the political, economic, and religious realities of his day. Following the example of Christ, the church has traditionally sought to name the oppressors, free the captives, and promote a new way of living in the world--living as a people of God.

Bart, in part, personifies this radical dimension of the church. In Springfield, Bart's hometown, a few rich people (like his dad's boss at the nuclear power plant) possess all the political power. They seem to make all the important decisions. The majority of folk in Springfield simply "go along for the ride." They do whatever society expects of them. Everyone but Bart. He confronts unjust authorities. He leads protests (like the one at the nuclear power plant). He asks provocative theological questions ("If I got my leg chopped off in life, will it be waiting for me in heaven?"). He even promotes a new kingdom for the world ("Peace, Dude!"). When Bart feels powerless, he challenges the system.

At times, however, Bart seems misdirected, confused, self-serving, and uncaring. He often fails to distinguish between just and unjust authorities. Bart rebels against them all--just to be safe. The church could teach Bart to be more selective in his rebellions. (Sure, good luck.) On the other hand, Bart constantly reminds us and the church to struggle, to take the leap toward change.

Bart Connects With Average People. In many ways, *The Simpsons* reflects a more honest view of family life than many other television shows. Each episode reminds us of our human nature--a condition in which we may speak sarcastically, think irrationally, and behave irresponsibly. As members of families ourselves, it is easy for us to relate to Bart. When Bart mows down the water sprinkler, parties till the windows shatter, or puts mothballs into the beef stew, his declaration--"No one needs to tell me I'm in deep, deep trouble"--reminds us that we've lived that lyric.

Effective youth and adult leaders in the church must help congregations remember their humanness. Far from feeling elevated above others, such a leader must remain one of us--a colleague who leads the struggle for a just world . . . and who makes mistakes along the way.

Bart Simpson's actions are often materialistic, self-centered, and narrow-minded. Yet these ridiculous antics reflect Bart's anxious waiting for an emerging world of "Peace, Dude."

Now you may differ with the insights of the 20 youth gathered that Sunday evening. You might think that the lemon-headed rebel, Bart Simpson, has little to offer the church. Our group saw many of his wild flaws. We wondered if we took him too seriously. We wondered how closely his vision of "Peace, Dude" compared to Jesus' reign of God. But those of us present that night confessed we needed him. We were afraid of becoming stagnant, of simply accepting things as they are. In many ways, we feel the same frustration–and fear–that motivates Bart Simpson.

We closed our discussion that evening with a prayer:

Great God, as a church of pacesetters for Christ, fashion us into a visible, determined people who seek "Peace, Dude! Hi-Carrumba!" Amen.

David Otto is a professor of religion at Centenary College, Shreveport, LA.

Try this:

- **View an episode of *The Simpsons*.**
- **Discuss:**
  1. **In the episode, what does Bart care about or value?**
  2. **In the episode, how does Bart go about convincing people of his values?**
  3. **What kind of vision of the world does Bart communicate in this episode? How does he connect with average people?**
  4. **Do you agree that Bart Simpson is a role model for Christian leadership? Why or why not? Support your opinion with examples from the episode. How do his values support or conflict with Christian values?**
- **For fun, try to figure out what Bart's circles of influence are. (See page 8a of *Youth View*.) By looking at what influences him, what do you think his values are?**

Street Dreams from Brazil

Robin Nagle

Larry Hollon

A House to live in

A family to love

Security

Education

Respect

Every child in the world has a right to these things. But for many youth in Brazil, what they value the most are only dreams. Seven million children and youth are fighting to stay alive on the streets and in the *favelas* (the ghettos) of Brazil's cities. Sixty percent of the youth and children live in substandard housing in neighborhoods without basic sanitary conditions. During this past year, in three cities alone, according to Amnesty International, 457 youth were killed by death squads (groups that murder street children and that often are organized by and include police).

Recife is one of those cities. It is a city of 1.5 million people on the northeast coast of Brazil. Several thousand of those 1.5 million people are street children--like Lucia. Lucia, the youngest of three children born to a very poor family, started living on the streets of Recife when she was in her early teens. Lucia's mother had met a man whom she wanted to marry, but the man said he didn't want to live with Lucia and her sisters. He told Lucia's mother she had to chose between him and her children. She chose him. One of Lucia's sisters went to live with an aunt. Another sister got married. Lucia ended up on the streets.

Today Lucia is 17. She has a daughter of her own, Ana, who is 14 months old. Like any 17-year-old, Lucia has dreams for her future and has worries and fears about her day-to-day life. But she dreams about things that most 17-year-olds take for granted, and she fears things most teens will never face. For instance, she dreams that someday she'll have a house to live in. She worries about finding enough food for her daughter. And she fears the violence of living on city streets.

Children who live on the streets sometimes steal things like watches, jewelry, or purses so that they can buy food to eat. If the police catch them in order to "clean up the streets," the children are beaten or put in jail, or both. Sometimes the police demand that the children give them part of the money they get from stealing things, or else the police will beat them, rape them, or put them in jail. Lucia has known children who have been killed by the death squads.

Today Lucia and Ana are off the streets. They spend days at Passage House to build a new life. About 30 girls are at Passage House during the day. Most also sleep at the community house.

Some of them, however, still sleep on the streets. Flavia does. She's 15 and has lived on the streets for four years. She won't say how she came to live on the streets, but she hints of terrible problems at home. She says that she fled beatings and other abuses. She's only been coming to Passage House for a few weeks. She wants to be a receptionist when she grows up because, she says, it's elegant, delicate work. A receptionist wears pretty clothes, answers phones, and smiles often.

Like many of the girls at Passage House, Flavia has deep scars on her forearms. They're from knives and razors, and they are self-inflicted. Flavia cut herself after she was raped. The only way that she could

express her rage was by hurting herself. There was no one to help her after rape--no one to help ease her continuing emotional pain. Right now, Flavia says she doesn't like herself very much. She wishes she didn't have the scars on her arms. She wishes she had her mother by her side to help her, but her mother died many years ago. Flavia says she'll stop sleeping on the streets when there's room for her at one of the new community houses that's being built by the people from Passage House.

Nine-year-old Marcus lived on the streets for several years before he came to the Community of the Small Prophets. The Community, like Passage House, provides street children with schooling, a place to sleep, warm meals, and lots of affection. Like Lucia and Flavia, Marcus has dreams. If he were president of Brazil, he says, he'd make sure that all children had enough to eat, a house to live in, and a family to love them. When he grows up, Marcus wants to be a cab driver. His dreams are simple. His values are basic to mere survival.

In São Paulo, a city of 18 million people, at the *Projeto Meninos e Meninas de Rua*, street children gather for Bible study and uncover their fears and dreams for safety. Bert Garner, a mission intern with the project for the General Board of Global Ministries, speaks about a group of street youth who acted out the Christmas story. They were drawn to Matthew 2:13-18, the story of the "slaughter of the innocents." The slaughter of the innocent children by Herod, the powerful leader of Jesus' day, reminded them of their own world. In deciding what costume the character Herod should wear, a youth said, "He will wear a tie like the rulers today." The Bible is providing stories that help youth act out their fears and confirm their hopes and dreams.

Every year, there are more and more children living in the streets of Brazil's cities. Their terror, despair, and hunger only increase. For those children who survive, their dreams continue. They value what it takes to make it through the desperate days and violent nights. They crave food, love, security, respect, and the promise of a future. Simple values. How long will it be before their dreams are fulfilled?

Robin Nagle is a doctoral student in anthropology with Columbia University in New York, New York. She lives in Recife, Brazil, where she is busy studying and writing her dissertation.

Try this:

- **Imagine you are Lucia, Flavia, or Marcus, and describe or write about a day on the streets. What do you do? How do you get food? What dangers do you face? Share your accounts with one another.**
- **Discuss:**
  1. **From the article or from your own accounts of street youth, what disturbs you?**
  2. **Why do you think things are so rough for the youth of Brazil?**
  3. **What are some of the hopeful things that are going on? What ideas do you have about ways things could improve in Brazil?**
  4. **In what ways are the values of Brazil's street youth and the values of youth in your group similar? In what ways are they different?**
  5. **If street youth from Brazil were to meet with your group, what do you think they would want to say to you? How would your group be affected by their visit?**

Street youth from São Paulo's Projeto Meninos e Meninas de Rua *give the hand sign for friendship, hello, and hope.*

Sid Fowler

Speak out, Sisters!

by Judith Anderson Dorney

- *Think about a learning experience that was powerful for you. What made it powerful?*
- *Describe work that you love to do. What do you love about it?*
- *Has there been a time in your life when you faced a situation where you didn't know what to do?*
- *What do you hope your future will be like? What one thing could someone do to help you toward the future you want for yourself?*
- *What do you think is the culture's image of an "ideal woman?" Do you accept or reject that image? Why?*

How would you answer these questions? My friend, Lyn Brown, and I are part of a project aimed at learning about girls' development. We used these questions to discover how girls express their values, feelings, and thoughts. This article lets you in on some of our findings. It also invites you to consider what those discoveries might mean for you.

Our research traced the development of girls from interviews with second, fourth, seventh, and tenth graders, primarily at an all-girls school in Ohio. What we found was that younger girls, at about seven years old, are clear about what they know from their experience. They freely let people know about their perceptions and reactions. They speak about what they see, hear, and feel, even if it may cause conflict. They show their anger and hurt feelings openly in relationships with both friends and adults. They are direct and "call things as they see them." These are signs of strength and self-confidence.

As girls enter the middle-school years, they talk about being encouraged by adults to be always "nice" and "kind." So, at around age 12, they begin to hide what they know and feel. They seem to lose courage and confidence. They begin to become silent--not wanting to upset or to disturb others. One seventh grader, for example, talked about hiding her own thoughts and feelings so that she would be accepted by a particular group. Her words indicate that her silence was not without great cost. "I wasn't being true to myself," she admitted. "I just wanted to have this group of friends. I was losing track of myself, really--losing the kind of person I was."

At about age 15, the girls we interviewed had a tough time figuring out or following their own thoughts, wants, and feelings. Their own preferences and opinions now came second to those of others, especially to those they saw as having more power than they had. For example, a tenth-grade girl told a story of accepting a ride with her girlfriend's drunk boyfriend rather than refusing and risking the anger of her friend. And a high school senior told me that, in dating, she considered the boy's sexual desire to be more important than her own. She could be persuaded to do what *he* wanted rather than express or insist upon *her own* thoughts, feelings, and decisions about the relationship. She had become silent.

From the research it seems that, as girls grow up, they experience greater self-doubt and come to distrust their own perspective. They silence themselves in relationships. Many girls choose to do this for what they feel are good reasons. They most often state that the reason for the silence is the fear of hurting someone, appearing angry, or making someone else angry. The ethicist Beverly Harrison has said that anger is a sign that all is not right in a relationship. I agree. I encourage you, however, not to dismiss the anger. Feel the anger. See if you can discover what it might tell you about the relationship. It is important to consider *your own* needs, thoughts, and feelings *along with* those of others.

What do you make of our research? What might the implications be for you? Consider the following suggestions for responding to our findings.

Check Our Research Out.

Ask yourself whether or not our findings are consistent with your own experience. Discuss the findings with your friends--both female and male. Does this experience ring true for you? If not, why do you think that it is not the case? What is it in your life that has helped you hold onto your voice? Where have you found support?

Jim Whitme

If this silencing *does* sound like your experience, in what ways can you join with others to talk about this concern so that you can discover support and not lose your voice? Your youth group might explore this question with you. Group members might suggest ways to love yourself with the same Christian love you want to extend to others.

Don't Give Up Your Voice.

Think about the ways in which girls get the message to remain silent and to give up their voice. I spoke recently with a former student of mine, a young woman who now teaches theology. I asked what she knew now that she wished she had learned in high school. She answered, "I wish I had learned that I didn't have to sacrifice myself." There are times when people, when Christian people, may need to make sacrifices for others. But to always sacrifice your deepest feelings, opinions, and values for those of someone else is a mistake. Often, when you speak truthfully, out of your own convictions, your voice will speak the exact words that the relationship needs to hear.

Discover Your Voice Through Prayer and Self-reflection.

It is important to check your feelings out with friends and to listen to the opinions of others. However, it is just as important to set a time apart to figure out your own thoughts, to feel your own feelings, and to discover and explore your own values. By opening yourself to God through prayer and meditation, you may discover what is in your heart. Speak to God. In prayer, you may gain the strength to speak the word closest to your heart and to do what you need to do.

Seek Out Friends Who Are Willing to Support You.

When you think you are the only one with your feelings or opinions, it is difficult to express them. Very few people want to risk someone's anger or rejection. Try to find people who you believe accept you as you are--either other youth or adults--and take the time to tell them what you are thinking. Ask them for their support--whether that means for them to listen, to give you a pep talk, or to give you a hug. Along with other youth and with adult counselors, find ways to make your youth group at church into a place of Christian support and love.

In her poem, "Councils," Marge Piercy says that for girls and women to speak out requires courage. She writes: "[W]omen must learn to dare to speak...the women must learn to say, I think this is so...." Girls must learn to speak from their deepest convictions and to voice what they *know* is so. I urge you to cultivate the faith and the relationships that give you courage--the courage to "dare to speak."

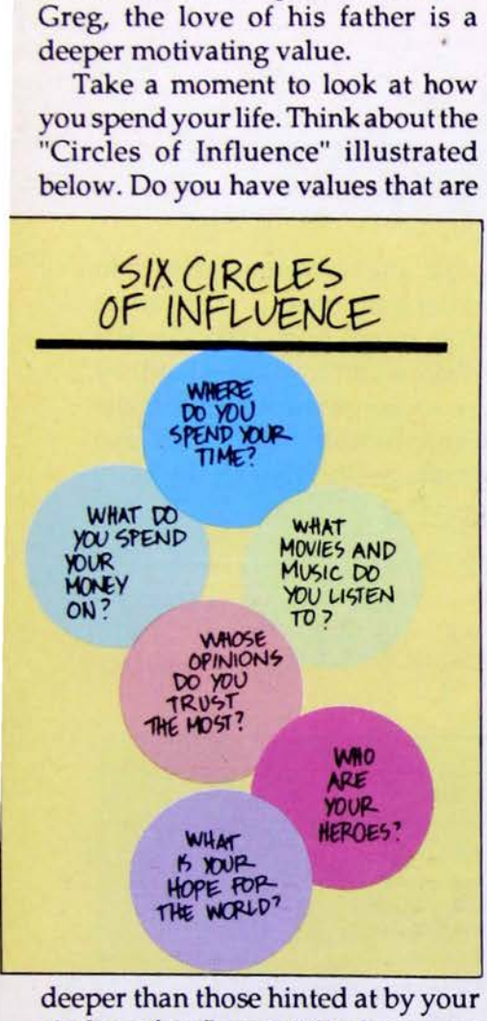
Judith Anderson Dorney is a member of the collaborative Project on the Psychology of Women and the Development of Girls at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Try this:

- **Play "Take-A-Stand." Identify one side of the room as "Yes" and the other side of the room as "No." In response to questions (examples below), have youth move to whichever side of the room represents their beliefs.**
  Questions might include:
  1. **Shouldn't boys, rather than girls, call for a date?**
  2. **When it comes to government spending, should more be spent on national defense than on education?**
  3. **If both wife and husband work, should the family relocate if the wife gets a better job elsewhere?**
- **Then discuss:**
  1. **Which decision was easier to make than the others? Why?**
  2. **What influenced your decisions? What impact do the opinions and stands of others have on you?**
  3. **In what ways is it more difficult for females to express their opinions? Do you believe that taking a stand is more difficult for females?**
  4. **How can your group be both challenging and supportive to group members--males *and* females?**

value for Greg. He says: "My Dad was a big-time basketball player in college. More than anything, I want to be good at the game. It means a lot that he is proud of me." Although basketball is an important value to Greg, the love of his father is a deeper motivating value.

Take a moment to look at how you spend your life. Think about the "Circles of Influence" illustrated below. Do you have values that are



deeper than those hinted at by your circles of influence? Perhaps you value love of friends or parents more than anything. Perhaps you value the ability to succeed. Perhaps the love of God or helping other people is what you value most.

What do you think and feel about the values that you uncovered? After you identify your values, evaluate them in light of Christian values. Your values and Christian values may be similar or they may be in conflict with one another.

Discover Christian Values.

Christians' decisions depend on Christian values. One of the first ways you might begin to discover Christian values is to identify the values of Jesus. Those who follow him share his values. Try to identify the circles of influence that impacted Jesus.

ing out Jesus' circles of influence, go to the Bible. Uvalde, who is chairperson of the National Youth Ministry Organization, points to the Bible as an important source for discovering the values of Jesus. He says: "Although what was written in the Bible speaks directly to the issues of Jesus' day, we must listen for the constant values and apply them to our lives today.... There are certain things that stand out in my mind as important. Those things include the Ten Commandments, the parables and sayings of Jesus--and there is the Golden Rule."

In the Bible, you discover who Jesus spent time with, what his vision was of the world, and what he was willing to die for. For example, in Luke 19:1-10, in the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus, you see that Jesus values all people--even those who have been hated by society. In the Bible, you also discover such Christian values as salvation, justice, obedience, love, the vision of the reign of God, and a concern for the poor and the outcast.

Stephen Mott points out the importance of looking to Scripture to discover Christian values. He also mentions the importance of prayer for discovering one's own Christian values. Through prayer, you can "be in touch with the wonder and power of God's new way." Through prayer, you not only discover Christian values, but those values become deeply rooted in your spiritual life. They become part of your heart and actions.

You also discover values from other Christians. Mott stresses: "Include among one's close friendships others who would hold to Christian values and commitments." Listen to Christians you trust. Carefully listen to persons in the church as they struggle with issues.

Test Your Values--Make Decisions and Take Action.

Christian values invite you to reevaluate your own values. In the light of Christian values, other values—values that support materialism, misuse of power, or the fulfillment of only one's own

But when Christian values such as love and justice are central to you, certain decisions will be easy. When faced with a decision to disregard or degrade someone because he or she is different from you, love and fairness will guide you. You will not intentionally seek to do violence to the other.

Some decisions won't be so easy. Decisions will have to be carefully made. Take steps in making your decision that include: (a) identifying your values; (b) checking them out with Christian values--with other Christians and through prayer and Scripture; (c) identifying the impact of your possible decision on others, especially those who might suffer because of your decision; and (d) after prayer, taking a stand.

Often your decisions will be supported by people who love and know you. But there are times when you will go against the crowd. Mario Uvalde said, "Sometimes it's difficult to be a Christian youth, to stand up for the decision you've made. But we must follow what we know is right."

Times do change. You are constantly making decisions during these tough times. Let Christian values be central to all your decisions. And when you decide to do the right thing and things get rough, have hope and courage. In the words of Larry Rasmussen, "[May] you, like Jesus, sustain hope in the hard seasons as well as the smooth ones. The sure ground of your hope, again like the hope of Jesus, is that God is with you."

Sidney D. Fowler is a United Methodist pastor from the New Mexico Conference who is currently a doctoral student in education and religion at Teachers College, Columbia University, in New York City.

YOUTH VIEW was compiled and edited by Sidney D. Fowler under the direction of Susan Keirn Kester.

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chapter six on "The Recovery of Jesus"—is an attempt to cure that infection of the spirit which is the loss of imagination. There is much for reflection in the application of this cure.

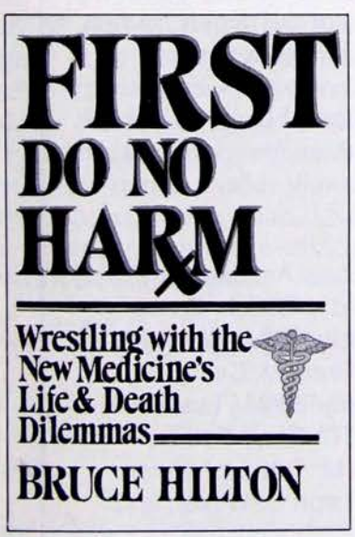
The healing process must be done in community. It is a process that Carothers calls a hermeneutical conversation. This is a venture, a risk, a liberating experience that eventuates in the Epiphany—the achievement of experiential faith that validates our beliefs in ethical actions. ❑

—*Hector M. Navas*

The Rev. Hector M. Navas is Associate Program Director for Hispanic Ministries and Mission and Social Witness for the New York Annual Conference.

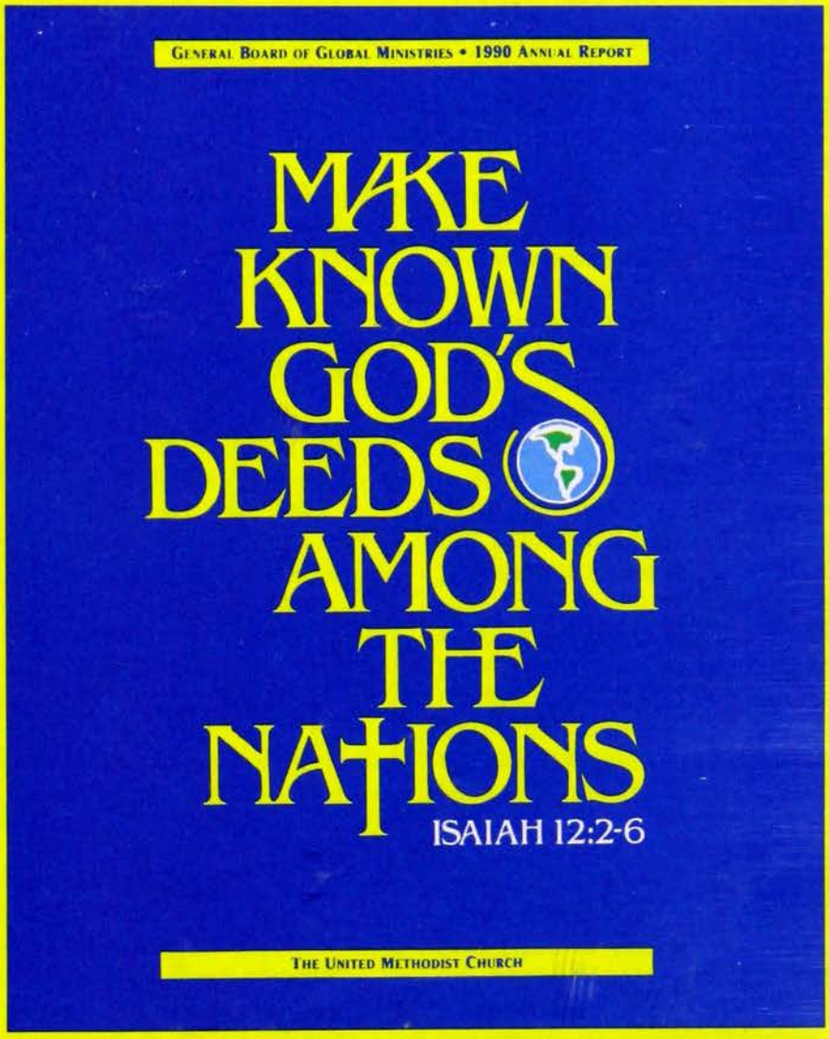
First Do No Harm: Wrestling with the New Medicine's Life & Death Dilemmas
by Bruce Hilton

Abingdon Press,
Nashville, TN, 1991.
$8.95. To order: 1-800-251-3320



Bruce Hilton is director of the National Center for Bioethics and a columnist for the *San Francisco Examiner*. This short book constitutes a mini-survey of contemporary problems in medical ethics.

The chapters cover most of the ethical issues with which general readers are familiar: organ



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transplants, medical research, chemical warfare, suicide, abortion, AIDS, euthanasia, patients' rights, malpractice, and community health.

Hilton writes in a breezy, anecdotal style that makes for easy reading. He cites situations that have received extensive coverage in the media. He communicates some of the anguish that people feel in having to make decisions on such questions as withdrawal of life-support systems, care for the elderly, and abortion.

Such writing is badly needed in a field that specializes in jargon and complexity. Hilton calls his field "bioethics," a jargon word itself, but he devotes a chapter to its meaning and significance.

His conclusions? They vary. Often he asks questions rather than giving answers. Mostly he seems to fall on the liberal side of issues. He comes out squarely for women's rights, for example, in the abortion debate. He also seems to sympathize with those who choose suicide in the face of certain suffering.

Curiously, he rarely attempts to link medical ethics to religious traditions. Is this because he believes the relationship is too complex to treat? Or is it an attempt to be as universal as possible? Whatever the reason, we should like to know where the bioethicist finds the basic premises that determine these life-and-death judgments and views.

At the end of the book, Hilton acknowledges the need for an emphasis on wellness and preventive medicine. Yet his book dwells on problems, not on prevention. Apparently, the material in the book was taken from Hilton's columns. Would a newspaper allow a writer to devote as many columns as these to health and wellness?

The principle, "First do no harm," comes from the medical profession. Now perhaps Hilton can devote a book to a more important principle that is located in the broader, human quest for peace and wholeness: "Do well."

First Do No Harm would be a good resource for local church classes and study groups wanting to survey the field of medical ethics. ❑

—*Charles Cole*

Charles Cole is Executive Secretary for Research and Planning in the Health and Welfare Ministries Program Department, General Board of Global Ministries.

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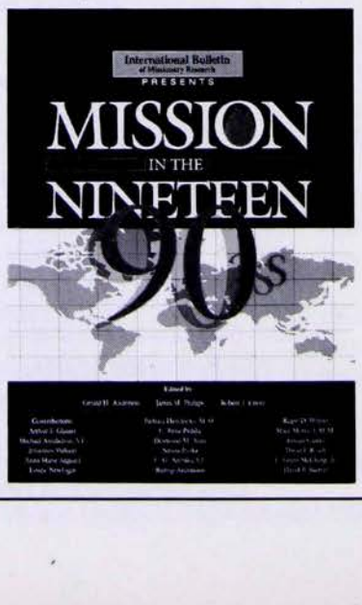
Contributors: Anna Marie Aagaard, Michael Amaladoss, S.J., C. G. Arévalo, S.J., David B. Barrett, David J. Bosch, Emilio Castro, Arthur F. Glasser, Barbara Hendricks, M.M., Neuza Itioka, L. Grant McClung, Jr., Mary Motte, F.M.M., Lesslie Newbigin, C. René Padilla, Desmond M. Tutu, Johannes Verkuyl, Ralph D. Winter, and Anastasios Yannoulatos.



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Mission Education

Suggestions for Mission Leaders

by Faye Wilson-Beach

Mission education for children is not a once-a-year event. Children need to be engaged in a year-round mission-education program. Such a program helps children not only add to their knowledge of the Bible but also increase their commitment to the church and to serving others.

The United Methodist Church offers specific resources—both for adults who work with children and for children themselves—to help children understand the scope of the mission mandate.

Use the checklist (right) to rate your church's mission-education program for children. Assess its comprehensiveness and effectiveness. If you notice any gaps, draft a plan of action. You may need to engage other groups in the church (such as the work area on education and the children's music ministry) to ensure a broader program. The materials listed under *For Your Library* should help you in developing or implementing a children's mission-education plan.

For Your Library

Aki and the Banner of Names (#1612 - $4.95), with *Teacher's Guide* (#1613 - $5.95).

Great Mission Ideas for Workers with Children (#4293 - $3.00).

The 1991 *Prayer Calendar* (#1257 - $5.00). The 1992 *Prayer Calendar* (#1471 - $5.00).

Order the resources above from the Service Center, General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 7820 Reading Road, Caller No. 1800, Cincinnati, OH 45222-1800. Prices above do *not* include shipping and handling charges: $10 or less, + $1.50; $10.01-$25, + 15%; $25.01-$50; + 10%; over $50, + 5%.

United Methodist Children's Fund for Christian Mission packet (educational ideas). Order from Discipleship Resources, P.O. Box 840, Nashville, TN 37202-0840. (615) 340-7175.

Mission Letters: Churches receive letters directly from missionaries with whom they have covenant relationships. Additional copies of missionary letters are available free from GBGM, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 1319, New York, NY 10115. Keep a file of mission letters over a period of years. Use the letters to help children research changes, note milestones, and celebrate ideas that have moved from the dream stage to reality. In particular, help children find examples of ways in which missionaries are ministering to youth.

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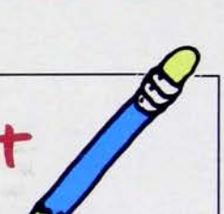
To order Special Sunday materials from United Methodist Communications, call (615) 742-5110. ❑

Checklist



___My church uses the *United Methodist Children's Fund for Christian Mission* packet every year to teach children about mission.

___My church uses the annual mission-study theme materials for children developed by Friendship Press.

___My church uses the mission-study materials during a study time that is separate from Sunday School.

___Children at my church have used the *Prayer Calendar* by looking up their own birthdays and covenanting to pray for a missionary, staff member, or Crusade Scholar born on that same day.

___My church makes a specific effort to share with children the news contained in the missionary letters it receives.

___My church involves children in helping to raise money to support a missionary in a Covenant Relationship.

___Children at my church know about district and conference mission work (such as a soup kitchen, a food pantry, or a shelter for the homeless).

___Children at my church hear the pastor and Sunday School leaders talk about mission and lift up mission in teaching and worship.

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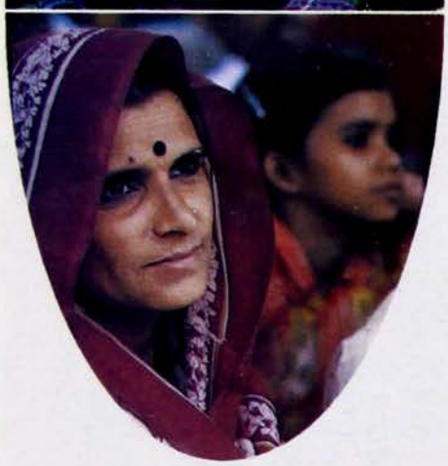
New World Outlook



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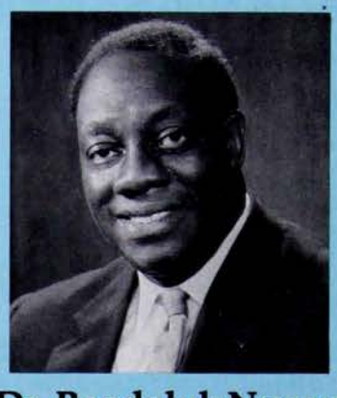
VIEWPOINT

Nations and People



Dr. Randolph Nugent

In May, I participated in a consultation on the new situation in Eastern Europe. The meeting was called by the Central Conference of central and southern Europe of The United Methodist Church. It was held in Vienna, Austria. Participants included representatives from the provisional and annual conferences in Austria, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Sweden, and Norway. The General Board of Global Ministries and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in the United States were represented as well.

I opened the consultation with a Bible study on the 10th chapter of the New Testament book of The Acts of the Apostles. This is a Scripture that speaks directly to the "new situation" and opportunity which motivated the consultation.

In the New Testament story, separate visions came to two quite different people: Cornelius the Gentile and Peter the Jew. Cornelius was a Roman citizen and a military officer. Although God-fearing and devout, he knew nothing about Jesus. Peter was one of the original twelve disciples. He was a leader of the developing church and an eyewitness to the risen Lord. The two were separated by ethnicity, by national identity, and by cultural and geographic distance.

Cornelius was an outsider to the Jewish faith community. Peter was a practicing Jew. Peter's ancestral faith tradition prohibited a Jew from sharing table fellowship with a Gentile—or even entering a Gentile's house. Peter and Cornelius shared a common spiritual yearning. But they were separated, divided, isolated, and estranged by traditional religious practice and belief.

The complementary visions, given to two different people in different places and cultures, were designed to foster mission and to open windows of understanding. These visions brought Cornelius and Peter into contact to advance God's mission by telling each what he needed to know. Peter needed to know what Cornelius already knew—that God was the universal God of everyone everywhere. Cornelius needed to know what Peter already knew—that the universal God had acted decisively for human salvation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

About three o'clock one afternoon in Caesarea, a vision came to Cornelius in the form of an angel speaking his name. Cornelius stared at the angel in terror. Still, he managed to blurt out the right mission response. He asked, "What is it, Lord?"

In mission, we are often confronted with unexpected moments and events that fill us with apprehension or even terror. No matter how confused and fearful we may be, we know that somewhere and somehow the hand of God is behind what is happening. In every instance, the correct mission response is to ask prayerfully, "What is it, Lord? What is your intention and will? What would you have us do?" The consultation on the new situation in Eastern Europe was such a moment of asking and listening—listening to the voice of God and the voices of one another.

The angel from God told Cornelius to send some men to Joppa to find Peter, who was staying at the house of Simon the tanner. Cornelius obeyed, and one aspect of God's mission was underway. The seed for the global church was sown.

The next day in Joppa, Peter received his rooftop vision. It was a

vision that challenged Peter's mission understanding with a voice saying, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." (Acts 10:15)

The voice called Peter to envision mission in an entirely new way. He had to break out of past molds, practices, and assumptions. He had to look beyond human distinctions and discriminations to see all of creation from the perspective of the creator God.

The world is God's world, and mission is God's mission. God has created everyone and everything and has called that creation *good*. So God's mission is to everything and everyone. All are worthy and good in God's eyes, no matter how far lapsed, fallen, or estranged they may seem.

Peter's initial reaction was not unlike our own. When a new mission opportunity is laid before us, too often we react in old, familiar ways. We may insist that whatever we do about the new vision must conform to past mission rules and fit established mission structures. We may want the new call translated from a new *vision* of what mission *can* be into a new *version* of what mission has always been.

The mission message to Peter was a vision of the solidarity of God's creation, especially the solidarity of God's children. The notion that one nation or people is more acceptable than another is a blatant misreading of the created order. It is a contradiction of the global understanding of God's call to all people and nations.

In a very profound sense, all people on earth are related. As science writer Guy Murchie has pointed out: "No human being can be less closely related to any other human than approximately 50th cousin, and most of us are a lot closer . . . . A single indirect genetic contact between Africa and Asia in a thousand years can make every African closer than 50th cousin to every Chinese."

If some people are judged to be "unclean" or "profane," it is *our* judgment, discrimination, and doing—*not God's*. God has created a human family, and God cares *for* and *about* everyone. In God's eyes, and by God's creative hand, all human beings are related. All are equally and uniquely God's children.

The three messengers sent by Cornelius arrived at the house where Peter was staying. The Spirit spoke again to Peter, saying in effect, "Three of your Gentile cousins are downstairs. Get up, and go down, and accompany them without hesitation. For I have sent them." (Acts 10:20)

When Peter heard their report of the vision Cornelius had received, he set aside former practices and assumptions. He began to move in mission in a new way. Breaking with strict Jewish orthodoxy, Peter gave the men lodging for the night. Peter had no idea where this new mission moment might lead. But he knew that the hand of God was behind it. The next day, Peter accompanied the three men on their return to Caesarea. He took some of the believers from Joppa with him.

Cornelius realized that the vision and message he had received was not merely a personal communication or a private revelation. He recognized that God was not rewarding or blessing him for his individual piety. Instead, God was gathering a community and expanding the parameters of the people of God. So Cornelius prepared for Peter's arrival by gathering some of his relatives and close friends at his home.

The radically new nature of God's mission began with the sharing of visions so that the next step in God's plan could be perceived. Peter bore witness that "God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean." (Acts 10:28) Cornelius bore witness that "all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say." (Acts 10:33)

Peter proclaimed two basic mission truths. First, God is equally and indiscriminately the God of all nations and people. Second, in Jesus Christ the human family is more intimately related than they are genetically. (Acts 10:34-43) Christian mission cannot be confined to any nation, institution, political structure, or cultural tradition.

Nor can any institution, nation, or people lay exclusive claim to the workings of the Holy Spirit. God shows no partiality among members of the human family. God's Spirit moves in universal acceptance and inclusion of all God's children for whom Christ died and among whom he rose again. The true identity of members of the human family is found not in ancestral heritage or ethnic tradition but rather in Christ Jesus. It is Jesus who is "judge of the living and the dead."

While Peter was speaking, the truth of his universal, all-inclusive, world-embracing witness was validated. "The Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word." (Acts 10:44) The believers from Joppa who had accompanied Peter were "astounded that the Gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles." (Acts 10:45) The Spirit moved dramatically and decisively to demonstrate that everyone, without qualification or exception, shall be received into the community of faith and numbered among the people of God.

God's new global mission was off and running. It continues today. The Great Commission from Jesus had taken a bold, dramatic new step. The mighty, rushing wind of the Spirit—the wind that swept among devout Jews of every nation at Pentecost—was now in motion to sweep up and include all the nations and peoples of Earth. ❑

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