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Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

150th Anniversary Issue

NEW WORLD OUTLOOK

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Cover: Photo of Guy Quoetone at age six, 1892, by James Mooney, from the collection of Charles Quoetone. The Rev. Guy Quoetone "was born to be a Methodist preacher," according to his son, the Rev. Charles Quoetone, pastor of Mt. Scott Kiowa UMC in the OIMC.

Photo/Art Credits: p.46.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Two years ago, the church—and *New World Outlook*—marked the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas with a call to repentance and transformation. This fall, we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference with joy. It is, however, a joy mixed with sorrow for the suffering, admiration for the sustaining spirit, and thanksgiving for the survival of the Native American people.

A year ago, as a prelude to a retreat at Gulfside Assembly, three members of the Mission Education and Cultivation Program Department—Russell Scott, Christie House, and I—visited the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. There, under the aegis and tutelage of Becky Thompson, the conference Council Director, we traveled around the Tulsa area with cameras and tape recorders, meeting and talking with many clergy and lay members of the OIMC. Four of them—Anita Phillips, Becky Thompson, David Adair, and Thomas Roughface—have written articles for this issue. Meanwhile, while we were in Oklahoma, our colleague Susan Thomas was back east in North Carolina, visiting the Cherokee United Methodist Mission at the Qualla Boundary.

North Carolina is my native state. It was a starting point for the "Trail of Tears"—the cruel forced march of Native Americans across the continent between 1830 and 1842. Though I'd often seen the epic drama about that exodus, *Unto These Hills*, I'd never heard the real story until I heard it from David Adair, Anita Phillips, and Becky Thompson in Oklahoma—from the survivors' point of view. The members of the Five Civilized Nations were so supportive of their weaker members on the march, in the face of the guarding soldiers' brutality, that they converted many soldiers to Christianity.

In fact, when Christianity was first formally introduced to the Native Americans, they recognized its tenets as what they already believed and practiced. Ponder Becky Thompson's question: "Would God have left any of his people without protection, guidance, love, and care?" Jesus was theirs long before they knew his name.

In this issue, then, we honor the American Indian past (with historian Adair), celebrate the present sesquicentennial anniversary (with Phillips and Thompson), and look forward to the next century (with Roughface). Though the "Lost Heritage" commemorated in Alvin Deer's poem will not be recaptured, neither will it be forgotten. At the same time, it is critically important to listen to, learn from, engage with, and support the American Indian people of today.

Other articles in this issue follow up on our coverage of current mission studies: "Is Your Church Child-Friendly?" by Gwen White and "AIDS in Uganda" by Solomon Muwanga. Then we move to Asia, visiting China in Carol Walker's account of "Teaching for The Amity Foundation" and Israel/Palestine in John William Peterson's interview with Peter Miano.

Welcome to two new members of our masthead: Patricia Bradley as Administrative Assistant (Hortense Tyrell is now Recording Secretary for the GBGM) and Susan Siemer, head of Circulation Fulfillment at the Service Center (Mary Jane Shahan has retired as Service Center Director). And happiness to our newlyweds: Associate Editor Christie House and Donald Reasoner, Executive Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean in the World Division. To them, to you, and to the OIMC—God bless!

—Alma Graham

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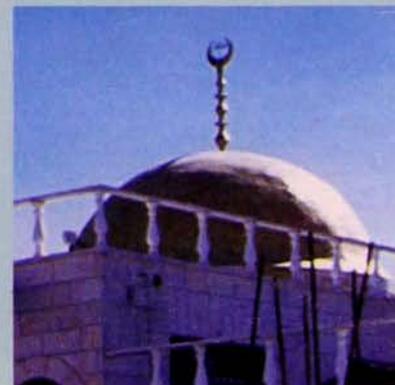
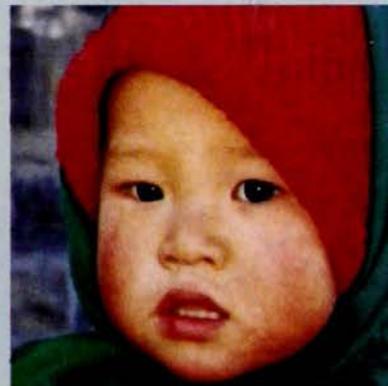
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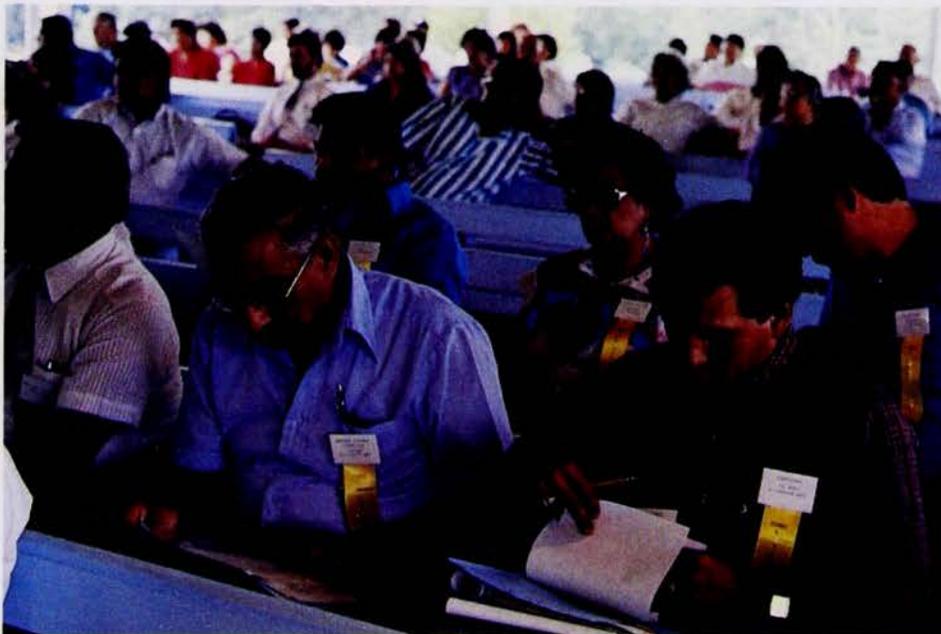
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Where We Walk... What Can We Do for You, Jesus?

by Anita Phillips



The annual session of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, June 1989.

“Where We Walk” is the first line of the Cherokee hymn, “One Drop of Blood”—also known as the “Trail of Tears” hymn. Wherever we walked, that’s where the trail became. The subtitle or second line of the hymn is: “What can we do for you, Jesus?”

—Becky Thompson,
OIMC Council Director

We believe that those who have lived many years and have crossed into that place called “elder” are marked with a special kind of sacredness. Their feet have walked the earth for a much longer time than ours have. Their ears have heard sounds from worlds long gone. Their eyes have watched the comings and goings of many generations. Surely the Creator has had great purpose in the life of an elder. So we who are privileged to know the elders—to share in their wisdom—show our regard by listening with a willingness to learn, observing with an attitude of humility, and interacting with respect.

Over the past several years, I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with a tribal elder of sorts. I am speaking of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary

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Conference (OIMC) itself, which will celebrate 150 years of existence on October 23, 1994. Just as I might with a tribal elder, I have found as many stories of the life of the OIMC as there have been people touched by its existence.

As part of my seminary studies this year, I researched the history of the OIMC in existing written documents. What I found was interesting—sometimes enlightening but many times disturbing. Something seemed to be missing from the available historical books and papers. One important fact was this: With the exception of one author (Dr. Homer Noley - *First White Frost*), the writers of OIMC's history were *not* Native Americans. There were few indigenous resources to be found. Those available (with the exception of Dr. Noley's book) lacked the passion and engagement of a participant-author whose very identity was tied to the subject.

Where the history of the OIMC comes to life is in the presence of those whose own personal, family, and tribal stories are interwoven with the story of the conference. It seems that each time I am in a meeting or church service with the people of the OIMC, it is during the break times, after-hours conversations, and relaxed times at meals that bits and pieces of oral history emerge.

Our people are indeed masters of storytelling. Stories capture and preserve our identity. It was this experience that led me to the conclusion that perhaps less than 10 percent of the actual history of the OIMC has been recorded in written form. This, in turn, has led to my involvement in an exciting project: recording and transcribing the recollections, histories, and stories (some dating back many generations) of the elders of the OIMC. The interviews completed at this point confirm the vast and rich world of conference history preserved within the hearts and minds of our people.

Each meeting of our Sesquicentennial Committee confirms this conclusion. Our committee is a wonderful gathering of gifted Native American people who have made the choice to live out our faith and commitment to Jesus Christ through The United Methodist Church and the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. At our meetings, we hear the voices of the many nations that are represented on our committee: Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Kiowa, Comanche, Potawatomi, and Ponca. Each voice is singular in the sorrowful journey traveled by unique ancestors to arrive at this place and time. All voices are united in the great joy of a people who have surely been upheld by the Creator in order to survive the journey that leads now to celebration!

In honoring the life journey of the OIMC, the selection of the sesquicentennial logo became a powerful form of tribute to this much beloved "elder." Several drafts of the logo were processed before our committee felt satisfied with the story reflected in the circles and figures that now grace our work. As with all missionizing efforts among native peoples, the process through which United Methodism was shared on this continent came with both blessing and curse. Our logo symbolizes this mix: the tears left upon the trails we traveled; the footprints representing the path left by courageous ancestors who came before us and whom we now follow; the cross representing evidence that the Creator is with us always; the spirit of the fire serving to light our way and bind us together as a people; the four feathers reflecting the four directions from which our people came; and the unity of the circle, always found wherever Native American people speak of themselves.

Finally, as we honor the origin, history, sorrow, and joy that make up the first 150 years of the



Top: OIMC's sesquicentennial logo. Above: The Rev. Anita Phillips at the pulpit of Christ United Methodist Church in Claremore, OK.

OIMC, we are beginning again the circle that shall be the second 150 years. It is with gratitude that we celebrate the life of this conference. It is with the faith of our ancestors that we look forward to its future. □

The Rev. Anita Phillips serves as chairperson for the Sesquicentennial Committee that has coordinated the events of the 150th anniversary celebrating the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. A Cherokee, she is pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Claremore, OK.

The 150th Anniversary of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

Interviews with Anita Phillips and Becky Thompson



Collected by Alma Graham, Christie R. House, and Russell Scott

EVENTS

Saturday, October 22:

- Opening Program in the Tahlequah amphitheater, with a grand entry of church banners
- Museum exhibits
- Church and District displays
- The evening meal, with traditional tribal foods
- Gospel singing in Native American and English languages

Sunday October 23:

- Commemorative walk to the site of Riley's Chapel
- Reenactment of the 1844 reading of appointments
- Morning Worship

Anita Phillips: The events celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference will take place on the grounds of the Cherokee National Museum and Amphitheater. The amphitheater seats between 1500 and 1800 people. It is located in a beautiful wooded area ideal for camping, outdoor events, and Gospel singing.

We plan to have a commemorative walk that will be to the original site of the first church—Riley's Chapel. The original site is now on private land in a cow pasture. We hope to walk to that site, where the conference was founded.

We plan to do this walk in tribal dress with our banners. Each church in the conference has come up with a church banner that symbolizes the people's concept of faith. These are beautiful concepts of faith set within our different cultures.

We are also going to have a reenactment of the first reading of the appointments. The Cherokees have a newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*, which first came out in the early 1800s, that documents the announcement of the Methodist Episcopal Church's founding of a conference for Indian people. There is a list of appointments of the first pastors assigned to this conference. This list was first read aloud on October 23, 1844, by Bishop Thomas Morris. Our current bishop, Bishop Dan Solomon, will lead us in our Sesquicentennial reenactment. In commemorating that event, we're going to try to be authentic to the last hour.

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Leandra Thompson on the stage of the amphitheater at the Cherokee National Museum in Tahlequah, OK—site of the OIMC's 150th Anniversary celebration.

We will invite all of the tribes that have Methodist churches in their reservation boundaries or within their jurisdictional boundaries. We believe the impact of Methodism on tribes is something we have not publicized. We will also invite Native American Methodists from other conferences.

We will have Gospel singing in Native languages and some singing in English. We're going to serve a traditional big picnic. We call it a "hog fry." We will butcher some fresh hogs—and also some cattle, out of respect for the western tribes because many of our western people prefer beef. We will have to be ready to feed a thousand people.

We are going to have historical displays that will originate from the districts. There are four districts, and we will commemorate the unique histories of the churches from those areas. We'll also have a commemorative items booth that will include all sorts of memorabilia.

We've reserved Camp Egan and Cookson Hills Center. We have a data packet about accommodations

at Tahlequah and Muskogee. Camp Egan is a camping facility of The United Methodist Church located close to Tahlequah.

Becky Thompson: The primary focus of the celebration is for people in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC). The districts will have celebrations at annual conference time. We want the annual conference sessions to be a time of looking forward. The United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men will have their own celebrations as well.

Phillips: We want, as a conference, to make a statement about our origins and our ancestors, about the people who came before us—both Native American and non-Indian—who contributed to our conference. As a minister, I realize that this organization I am a part of (OIMC) is contributing a lot to my identity. I think it does so for all of the OIMC members. Your life revolves around the annual conference—where it's going to be; stories about people who once

lived there, who used to be preachers there; the great heritage that comes from the conference.

For a lot of people, I think their conference identity is traditional; it is complimentary to their tribal sovereign identity. It is a very important test to know who you are among Indian people and to know where your place is in the bigger world. Ultimately, it is a key to our children's future—to help them to know who they are and where they are in history.

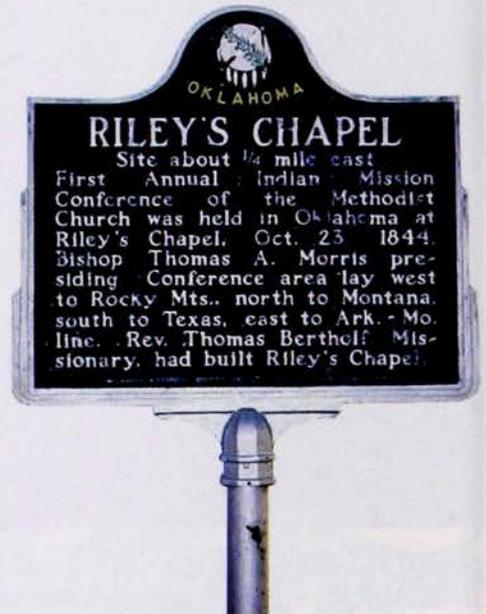
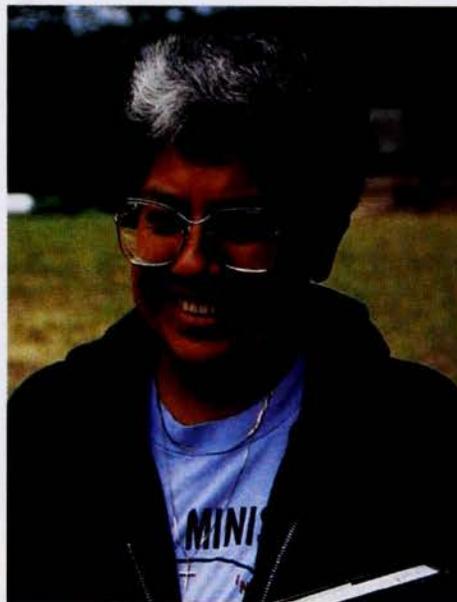
OIMC's major structure has a place for all the tribes. Certain churches affiliate with tribes of their particular area and sing hymns of that language. In an intertribal church, I'm learning to sing the hymns of different tribes.

We want to make the 150th Anniversary of the beginning of the OIMC a very special event: something that we will all remember, something our children will see as a reflection of who we are.

Thompson: We looked at whether to celebrate the anniversary at annual conference time or to set aside time in October to celebrate.



Left to right: A mother and child in the Southeast District of the OIMC; the Rev. Ruth Harris-Jacobs, a pastor in the Southeast District; historic marker for Riley's Chapel, site of the First Annual Indian Mission Conference of the Methodist Church in 1844. Bottom: The logo of the Tulsa Indian United Methodist Church, Northeast District.



ONE DROP OF BLOOD

Gah doe dah jah yuh, dun nel lee jee sah,
 O gah jay lee jah gu wee you hee,
 Oh gah lee gah tlee, yuh ha quo yea noe,
 Joe ghe lu wee stah nay dee yee.

Oh gah jay lee gah,
 Jah guh wee you hee.
 Jah jay lee gah noe,
 Jah guh wee you hee.

(Native Hymn Songbook, Lawrence Indian United Methodist Church, Lawrence, Kansas)

We agreed to do both. The theme of the celebration involves looking back from where we have come and looking ahead to where we are going. "Where We Walk" is the first line of the Cherokee hymn, "One Drop of Blood." This is also known as the "Trail of Tears" hymn, but the Cherokee words are closer to the English translation: "Where We Walk." We had a long discussion about our pathways and trails, the journeys that we made, the Trail of Tears, the forced removal. Wherever we would walk, that's where the trail became. The subtitle or second line of the hymn is: "What can we do for you, Jesus?"

Phillips: It ties in our past with who we are today. That hymn is a very sacred hymn to all Indian Christians. It is especially sacred to the Cherokees because it came out of the Trail of Tears.

The challenge is to be able to find grace in the midst of that experience of oppression and exile. In a circumstance like that, we tend to identify with the oppressor or the victim. But to be

able to see in that process—even in pain—the hand of God present in the survival experience is the real challenge.

There are stories from our oral history that I can't tell you—they are horrible. There have been tremendous acts of self-sacrifice. All tribes had their walks—not just the Cherokee. Oklahoma is inhabited now by some 30 tribes that were relocated on forced marches from all over the country. They walked great distances. Many of the tribes were annihilated on the walks here. There are stories from those walks of Native American people who sacrificed themselves and their own resources to prolong the lives of others.

In a forced march with an army that is herding people, the worst part of human nature comes forward. The older people on the march were not allowed to rest at night. The young people didn't want to leave them. If they died, they would be left. The army forced them to run so that they would be exhausted the next day.

There was also raping—soldiers taking advantage of the young

girls and those women in order on the night gave them That's Blood." were going Native were the strength with the tured and their di nightly c sing the Blood," a we do fo has a m love. The harmed-light cou those vo people Christ w also stor of many who with of their c For m Native Many pe Native them wit the son o eternal fi Native z tribes ha flame wa symboliz think of all these tradition gions, so the Holy the flame Thomps beginn Chapel. I that's wh However Wesley's with the was a sy of gover

girls and women who were on those walks. I have heard stories of women who sacrificed themselves in order to save the younger girls on the march. They voluntarily gave themselves up to save others.

That's part of "One Drop of Blood." While these atrocities were going on, the Christian Native American people who were there came up with a way to strengthen and be in solidarity with those who were being tortured and hurt. In harmony, from their different locations in the nightly camp, they would loudly sing the hymn, "One Drop of Blood," asking always, "What can we do for you, Jesus?" The hymn has a message of strength and love. The people who were being harmed—out where the campfire light couldn't shine—could hear those voices and know that their people were with them—that Christ was with them. There are also stories told of the conversion of many soldiers along the way who witnessed the incredible faith of their captives.

For many people, there is a Native Christian spirituality. Many people are effectively taking Native beliefs and combining them with the concept of Christ as the son of the one true God. The eternal fire was brought on those Native American walks. Many tribes had a religion in which a flame was always kept burning. It symbolized the Creator. When I think of the Holy Spirit, I can see all these connections. In the old traditional Native American religions, something very similar to the Holy Spirit had a place, and the flame came on those walks.

Thompson: We had our official beginning in 1844, at Riley's Chapel. People tend to think that that's when we became Christian. However, if you remember John Wesley's story in which he met with the Creeks, what he found was a system of family structures, of government, of community

structure already set up in these various tribes. So when the Gospel was brought to them, they couldn't see many differences between Christ's teachings and their own practices of caring for each other, and loving, and giving. It was easy for them to accept the Christian faith as part of their lives.

European people came to our people thinking that we were heathens or pagans because our beliefs were unfamiliar to them. When we became Christian (or civilized), we had to put aside many of our Indian ways. That's where a lot of our struggle comes in. The question I would raise is this: Would God have left any of his people without protection, guidance, love, and care? We are all part of creation. I have heard from the Hopi the stories they tell about one who has come into their midst and that they expect to return. This one showed them how to live and care for one another. I have found since then that there are a number of other tribes that have that same kind of story, with variations. It is very similar to what we have heard about Jesus. Again, would God leave any of God's people without?

Phillips: It takes it out of an ethnocentric concept of "Jesus is ours." Jesus is *everyone's*, and the thought of his appearance among people all over the world is very exciting. Our history is preserved in an oral tradition, not written. Our Jesus stories also would have come to us in an oral fashion. All the things that Jesus desired in people, he found in our people, just as he finds those things in all people.

Thompson: God made each of us in God's image. What first comes to my mind is not what God looked like, but the characteristics of love, giving, charity. If we are all made in that image, we all can have those characteristics. Each one has a culture, a particular way of being brought up and looking at life. But because I don't do



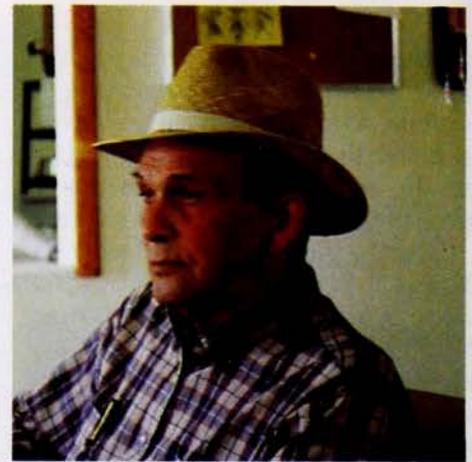
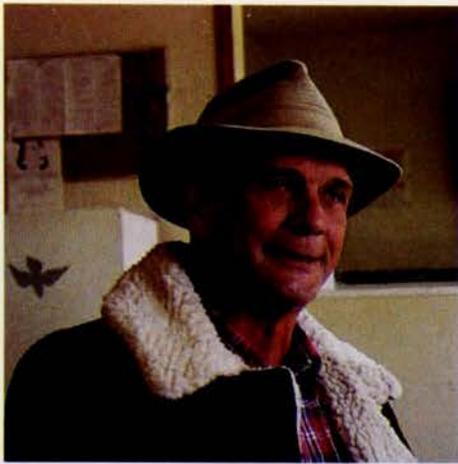
Becky and Leandra Thompson with the Rev. David Wilson at Etchieson UMC, where Wilson serves as pastor. The church sign is written in the Cherokee language as well as in English, as many senior members of the church speak Cherokee.

things just like you doesn't mean I have been deprived in some way. From my point of view, *you* might seem deprived.

When Anita talks about the soldiers hurting the people, some of the Indian people they hurt were Christians who walked along that trail. Some of those soldiers became converted to Christianity through exposure to the spirit they saw in the Native people.

Phillips: Those stories are very precious. It takes a real act of trust to be able to share them. It's not just a story on a page. I would have to trust that it would be treated with the same reverence that I have shown in sharing it. I think that it is time to share some of these stories, with the 150th Anniversary approaching. I think we are ready. Maybe the world is also ready to receive some of these stories at last. □

Anita Phillips, a Cherokee, is pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Claremore, Oklahoma. Becky Thompson, a Creek, is the OIMC Conference Council Director.



CATCH *the* DREAM

by David Adair

*In our culture, the stories are that we (the Cherokees) came from the Mayas. The northward migration up over the panhandle started when the Mexican culture changed to Aztec [in the 1400s]. The Aztecs sacrificed lives. They had a slash-and-burn economy, and the farming grounds began to fail...On the west coast of Mexico is a canal city, like Venice. It is being excavated now. Halfway between that and Mexico City is our Cherokee homeland. Sequoia went back to the old country and scouted it out. He died in Mexico in 1843. We don't know where he died.*¹

In the late fifteenth century, the old theories concerning the shape of the earth were disproved by the discovery of the Western Hemisphere. To the people of the Eastern Hemisphere, the New World was steeped in mystery. It was filled with peoples and nations that had never had contact with European ideas or thought. These peoples had developed societies, governmental forms, and spiritual theories that could not be expressed in Eastern thought.

Great nations of pyramid builders worked without iron tools. Their ornate works made the Egyptian pyramids seem like simple geometric shapes. They had calendars that for the first time measured the exact year. Their science of medicine focused on the natural laboratory of plants and even included brain surgery. Their astronomy was far ahead of the Europeans'. Some huge art works of animals and other life must be measured in miles and viewed from above. These were made possible by concepts of geometry now lost to plunder.

The Old World could not see the values of the New. Europeans saw only one of the New World's art mediums—gold. Then the destruction began. The native peoples were led to the slaughter. The most genteel people ever known, the Native Americans of the South American pampas, were massacred to make room for cattle. Christianity had met the new race and, in the name of Christ and kings, had conquered it.

Old World people of conscience felt that the Native Americans

should be dressed in European clothing and taught to plow and plant; then they could be saved by the faith. Some colonies were formed to teach these skills, and the people were told that then they could become Christian.

White Christians put down everything the Indians believed. You had to become Anglicized in order to be Christian. So there arose a Creek chief who led his people back to the old religion. There were Methodist churches in the Creek area. The Creeks would whip the churchgoing men to keep them out of church. They went anyway. Probably, in this area of the state, that's what saved the church. If the Creeks had gone back to their old religion, Christianity would have been lost. But the Creeks' dedication to going to church saved the Methodists. When the Indian Mission Conference was organized in 1844, there were largely Choctaws, Creeks, and a lot of Cherokees in attendance.

From 1735 to 1738, just before his own conversion experience,

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One community dismantled its Methodist church and brought it piece by piece to Indian Territory on the forced march.

*Opposite, p. 10: The Rev. David Adair and the Northeast District banner.
Left: The open-air tabernacle of the Northeast District.*

John Wesley came to America to "save" the Indians. He said of the Native Americans: "They are the laziest people I have ever seen. They just sit around and gaze at the river." He failed at his mission and returned to England. While in London, he attended a small religious society meeting in Aldersgate Street. No pastor was present. When a layperson read Martin Luther's introduction to a book of the New Testament [Romans], Wesley began to ponder. (Ironically, in many Native American societies, this mental state was achieved by sitting and looking at the river.) He then realized his salvation by faith, received Christ, and began the Wesleyan Movement. When this movement reached the Native Americans, a number were quick to receive it.

It is the Cherokee custom, when under stress, to watch the creek. Watch the little bass. Watch until you become part of what you perceive. Wesley couldn't understand the lazy heathens, sitting around watching the river.

Soon, Native Americans had Bibles and hymnals in their own languages. Some tribes began the Western Hemisphere's first public school systems. In time, the church would become the social center of the people's lives. But the new Christian nation needed more land.

We were never discovered by Columbus. We were discovered by greed.

...

One Sunday morning, the army moved in and rounded up people like cattle. They raped the women and arranged to move the people to Oklahoma. The Supreme Court said we couldn't be moved. President Andrew Jackson moved us anyway. He emptied the stockades of prisoners to form the army. But by the time we reached Oklahoma, the soldiers had been converted to Christianity by the example of the Christian Native Americans. "What can we do for you, Jesus?" is a question you can always ask, no matter what your circumstances may be.

As time went by, the Native Americans were escorted to new homes in the western wastelands by the US Army [1830-1842].² In some instances, wagons were provided to help haul machinery such as printing presses or farming implements. One community dismantled its Methodist church and brought it piece by piece to Indian Territory on the forced march. At that time, the churches were a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, except for the Ponca Mission, which was a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Southern churches were assigned to the Arkansas Conference. Then, in 1844, in the capital city of Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation, the Oklahoma Indian Mission was formed. It was given the responsibility for the work from the Red River valley to Montana. People of faith made the wastelands flourish and thereby may have sealed their own fate.

By the year 1906, much Indian land had been sold to White settlers. [After the US Congress passed an enabling act,] an election was set to dissolve the Oklahoma



A close-up of the artwork in the Northeast District tabernacle. The painting is by Sally Moto, a Native American from Alaska who is a member of Pickett's Chapel in Sapulpa, OK.

Territory (to the west) and the Indian Territory (to the east) and make a single unit for statehood. The new state was to be named Oklahoma. The election succeeded.

Also in 1906, the Indian Mission Conference voted to dissolve the mission and create the Oklahoma Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Indian-language churches, which had formed the first Methodist conference in Oklahoma, were left out. In 1918, the presiding bishop organized the Native American churches into the Brewer Mission—later renamed the Oklahoma Indian Mission. Politically, it was a district of the Oklahoma Conference. Until 1939, it did elect delegates to the General Conference; but after the 1939 reunion, Indian churches were not represented. After the 1968 union of The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church, the concept of a missionary conference became the law of the church. The Oklahoma Indian Mission became the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. Thus we now have

delegates to General Conference and a vote.

The United States' social history and policies concerning the "Indian problem" directly affected the Indian churches. Various solutions included extermination, relocation, and assimilation. They all failed. Many tribal governments were dissolved. All tribal business was then transacted by a chief who was appointed by the President of the United States. There was no opportunity for Indian people to continue to develop leadership skills and organizational knowledge. Only the church, through the General Board of Global Ministries, financed leadership-development programs in Native American settings.

People began to demand the reinstatement of their rights. They demanded that the United States honor its treaties and renegotiate past economic injustices. In recent history, we have regained the right to self-government. Many of the leaders in these civil rights movements were people who had learned their skills in Native American churches.

The church, however, has a far greater role in the lives of our people. The greatest value—lost in the conquest of the land—was the unique dreams of its people. As we see in the fall of the Soviet Union, the nations and tribes thought to be lost have risen and taken to themselves the dreams of their fathers and mothers. In holding to our faith and spirituality, we have kept the old dreams alive. Surely, when God said, "Let there be light," God had a dream.

Among our Indian people, decent housing, good health care, and economic development are now realities where once only dreams existed. Through tribal and church programs—such as the Ethnic Minority Local Church (EMLC); the Hispanic, Asian, and Native American Scholarship Fund (HANA); and Native American Awareness Sunday—we have a new, much better educated generation. These young Native Americans dream even greater dreams. Out of these dreams a bit of light shows and leads us into new directions.

The name of God has never changed for our people. It is the same as before the White people came. We've had the same God throughout our history.

The church must teach that dreams are the plans for acts of faith. It must teach people to use their faith to build their own realities. Then the church will flourish in the new New World. A great leader of the Cherokee religion once preached a sermon to his followers. He said: "I believe that the Creator made our people for an important purpose, and I do not believe that we have fulfilled it." To find that dream that was created within us and to fulfill it is the purpose of our faith.

Today, the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference has churches in three states. It extends from

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Dallas, Texas, in the south to the Kickapoo reservation in northern Kansas. It spans Oklahoma: from a "12-step" ministry in the east to the great Cheyenne-Arapaho people of the west. It embraces many tribes, many nations, many languages. We must deal with problems such as alcohol, treaty rights, child abuse, urban violence, and despair. We must create youth opportunities. We have a joint mission in eastern Oklahoma with the Oklahoma Conference and the General Board of Global Ministries: the Cookson Hills Center. It deals with people's basic needs.

In recent years, we have also begun several Native American Wesley Foundation programs in colleges with large Native American populations. We place a great emphasis on youth, and each district has a youth summer camp. Our United Methodist Women's program is our strongest missional outreach. Our Volunteers in Mission recently traveled to Dulac, Louisiana, for a work camp.

With deep thanks to The United Methodist Church and other agencies, the educational level of our people and our ministers has risen rapidly in the past 20 years. On the other hand, we still have great need for pastors who can communicate in our old languages and serve the people who follow more traditional life styles. Our economic development has been good, but we are still far behind. Poverty is never far away. In our membership, we have doctors, medical workers, lawyers, and people who are skilled in every endeavor. Yet our average income is far below that of the areas we serve.

Many tribes administer their own hospitals. Malnutrition is still a major problem; diabetes, a very real danger. Native American pastors are traditionally counted upon to provide transportation to the medical facility and to explain the importance of the medicines and the doctors' guidelines. Still,



Each district of the OIMC has an open tabernacle (like the one at the Northeast District center in which this photograph was taken). The Annual Conference meets at each site in rotation.

to Native Americans, the primary duty of the church is the healing of broken spirits.

Each Sunday, in more than 100 churches, our people gather. Out of their spirituality, they bring treasures, old and new. There are many customs, many languages, many dreams—all inspired by God's Holy Spirit. The world has been changed, and history has left indelible marks. But the dreams of the people have not changed.

Often we are asked to go to other places to interpret our mission. United Methodists are a gracious people, and such trips are learning experiences for us. Still, on each trip, someone usually becomes frustrated and asks: "When are you people going to quit being Indian and be just like the rest of us Americans?" I don't resent such questions, but I have never answered them.

In retrospect, I think that in all missions of the church, the dream is far greater than the temporal resources. All Christian workers struggle to create the dream. The limitations of this world often make the dream seem far away,

and it seems to fade like a summer morning's mist.

As is my custom in times of stress, I go out to the river and gaze at it. In a while, I become a small part of all that I see. The river has flowed for eons—and will flow until I, and my dreams, are forgotten. Suddenly, the dream returns! It is new and fresh! There are battles to fight, and I am ready! And now the answer to the question—"When are you going to quit being Indian?"—comes to me. "When I go to the river and the dream never comes back, then I will go away and fight no more." □

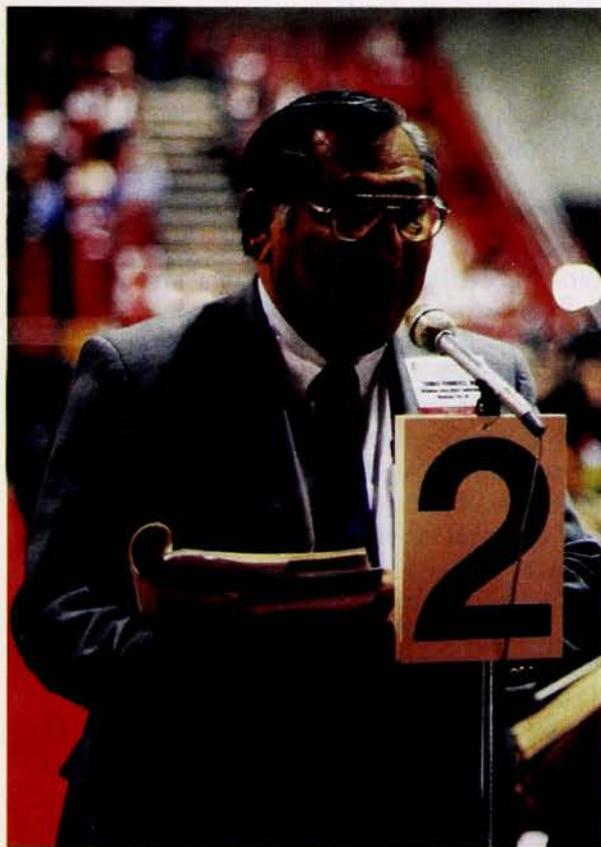
¹ The italicized quotations are from an interview with David Adair taped on November 7, 1993. Sequoyia (1760?-1843) invented a system of writing for the Cherokee language and later became a Cherokee historian.

² This forced march, on which many Native Americans died, became known as the Trail of Tears.

The Rev. David Adair, a Cherokee, is the District Superintendent for the Northeast in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

THE FUTURE BECKONS

by Thomas Roughface, Sr.



The Rev. Thomas Roughface, Sr., speaking on the floor of the 1992 United Methodist General Conference.

One hundred and fifty years! Methodism in the state of Oklahoma had its official birth on October 23, 1844, as the Indian Mission Conference. Today the Oklahoma area of Methodism is composed of two conferences: the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference and the Oklahoma Conference. There are no boundaries between us east and west, north and south; we live and minister in the midst of each other. Though we began as one in 1844, events and circumstances have made us the two separate entities we are today.

The history and heritage of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference is not unlike other stories of Christianity. It too is about a people of God—their faith, their journey, their dreams, their struggles, and their will and determination. Written history has not always told our story. Still, we who are the descendants and heirs of those who went before us are the inheritors and keepers of a faith that has endured: that brought hope and promise, that organized congregations, and that prepared them for mission. Our ancestors were ever searching for new fields of ministry. They built the foundation upon which we thrive as the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

We face the twenty-first century with confidence. We realize that we face challenging times in an already complex world. Even so, we feel that we have the organization, strength, and vision to meet these times and provide effective ministries. We will be led to develop new and exciting endeavors while at the same time maintaining and strengthening what we already have.

Affirming Laity and Youth

Whatever becomes our mission in the future, the involvement and participation of the laity will be key to its success. Throughout our history, no matter what the conditions were that burdened and tested the faith of the conference, our laity always persevered and kept the church going. Our laity are not just people in the pews but people actively involved in the local church and in designing and implementing new mission efforts. They are people who share the vision of what *can be* in the future of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

A word—separate and apart from *laity*—must be said for our children, youth, and young adults. Yes, they are laity too, but we see them in a different light and from a different perspective. They are our future. Our conference is determined to invest in young



In the OIMC, parents bring their children to annual conference. Here, children play just a few feet from conference proceedings. Special children's programs are available during sessions.

people with special and particular ministries. We want to involve them as much as possible in the life of the church and conference while they are children, in their teen years, and as they are growing into adulthood. Any futuring we do as a conference must include visions of our younger generations becoming the pillars of the local churches and the eventual leaders of our conference. Children, youth, and young adults can make unique contributions to the ministries of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, and we will do all we can to enable them to do so.

Christianity Enhances Identity

We are Native Americans in the sense that, before Columbus came, we were natives of this land. In this part of Methodism, we are 8000 Native Americans who represent 28 tribes across Oklahoma. We used to have difficulty claiming or celebrating our heritage as Native Americans. Now we are in an era when we take the liberty to celebrate who we are. We do not subscribe to the idea that our whole identity must change to accommodate Christianity. We believe Christianity accommodates us, just as we are. We believe Christianity enhances who we are.

Yes, we are children of God, our foundation grounded in Jesus the

Savior. We encourage our people to preserve their language, their traditions, and what culture remains. As a conference, we want to affirm all of God's children as they celebrate their identity and heritage. Our ministry of the future must be inclusive. Everyone must be made to feel: "Yes, you can be Native American, and yes, there's a place for you in the church." Our first concern will be, as John Wesley proclaimed: "If your heart is as my heart, give me your hand!"

The signs of the times teach us that we need a strong financial base. Thus one of our goals is to develop an appropriate and strong stewardship program. We are already on the way in this effort. We want to become more self-sufficient and more self-supporting in our ministries. Though this is another great challenge, we feel our people will rise to it. The years will bring us success in this effort as our people become convinced of and feel ownership in their own destiny.

The Call to Pastoral Ministry

We are grateful for pastors who, across the years, faithfully attended their appointments, preached the good news of Christ, and cared for and nurtured their memberships and constituents. Salaries or no salaries, they served with

the same zeal and determination that they felt their call demanded. Today, in these times, the call of God to pastoral ministry is unchanged. The message we preach is virtually the same. Itinerating in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference still demands strong determination and sacrifice. The call to pastoral ministry is neither diminished nor unanswered as new persons, both female and male, follow their hearts and commit their lives to our 101 congregations. We feel that God will continue to raise up prophets from among us to secure our ministry in the future. We will adapt to the times as needed. New methods will emerge to fit the needs as they arise. Approaches and techniques will change as people and circumstances change, but we will always be there to tell the same Gospel message.

And so the future beckons to us. Unknown possibilities await us. We really have no choice: our God only moves forward. God's journey is our journey. In the book of Haggai, God said: "Be strong, all you people of the land, and work; for I am with you." (Haggai 2:4b)

There will always be the work. Long after we have passed, others will carry it on. Future generations will speak of our times and will know that God has been with us. A milestone reached is not really a stopping place but a step toward greater things. With much to celebrate and yet so much to look forward to, always thankful to be the people of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, we will continue to make our contribution to the kingdom. □

The Rev. Thomas Roughface, Sr., a Ponca, is the conference superintendent of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

Faces of the Past: Pioneers of Methodism in Oklahoma

(Clockwise from right) This portrait of the Rev. Kicking Bird and his wife is probably from the early 1930s. Kicking Bird, a Kiowa, was assistant pastor at Cedar Creek Church. In the September 1916 *Missionary Voice* he writes: "During Christmas there were about 60 tents put up, and there were about 400 people....We had good meetings, good attendance." Next, the Rev. Albert Horse (arms raised) provides Kiowa translation for a service preached by the Rev. D. D. Etchieson (late 1940s). At right, the photo of Mt. Scott Church identifies "Mrs. Soto" and appeared in the July 1927 *Missionary Voice*. Below, a family portrait shows Be-Ko-Be-Ah; Jimmy and Mat-ton-saw (Daisy) Quoetone, parents of Guy Quoetone (cover); Charles J. Curley; Luther Sahmaunt; and Cross the Creek at a camp meeting in the early 1940s. The bottom photo is found in the United Methodist Archives at Drew University. If any readers can identify people in this photo and estimate the year it was taken (between 1900-1939), please notify *New World Outlook*. The last photo is of an F. Bromley engraving, Charles Wesley preaching to the Indians of Georgia, Drew University Archives.



New World Outlook



George Goodwin





Toge Fujihira, New World Outlook



New World Outlook



Courtesy of Charles Quoetone



Walter N. Vernon

WE CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST

by Becky Thompson

This article was adapted from a presentation made by Becky Thompson as part of the Panel of Witnesses at Global Gathering '93, March 25-28, 1993.

I come from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC), and I hope to speak of some concerns of the Native Americans in The United Methodist Church at large and across our communities.

I recall a story that was told to me recently by a member of our conference. She was teaching the Sunday school children Bible verses. Her three-year-old grandson was part of that group. The verse they were learning was: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13)

From my father and grandfather, I often heard a phrase: "Can't never did anything." I've learned to live with that. I can't do anything. You can't. But God can. And through Christ we can do a lot of things. Anything worth having, though, takes a lot of work.

At the time this woman was teaching the children Bible verses, she came across a situation in which she was having to tug and pull and struggle to get something taken care of at the church. Her grandson, being three years old and not able to speak that well, reminded her: "All 'tings' are possible." I remember that vividly, because I know our vision is possible: to have Native Americans fully participating at all levels of The United Methodist Church.

Personally, my crusade in this regard began in 1976 when the United Methodist Women of our conference asked me to be a leader in the school of mission. During that time, South Africa was one of the mission studies. It was a very enlightening study for me, and I followed it very closely. I was amazed because, for me, the experience of Black South Africans paralleled a lot of the experiences that Native Americans have had in this country. The difference I felt at the time was that there was a great

lack of freedom, human dignity, and human rights in South Africa. I felt very deeply for the people. Here in this country, I thought, it seems that we have freedom which we ought to be able to use to do things in our Native American communities. Now I'm finding that that might not be quite as accurate a perception as I had thought—with many of our people still in poverty, in despair, suffering a lack of hope, whether on reservations, in rural communities, or in urban settings. So there is still much to be done.

Having experienced a life in the church from very early on, being born into a pastor's family, and now having experienced the church at the general level, serving on boards and agencies, I have found a lot of things that I would hope to see changed. Those changes have begun to come about, but it does take time and a process to work through.

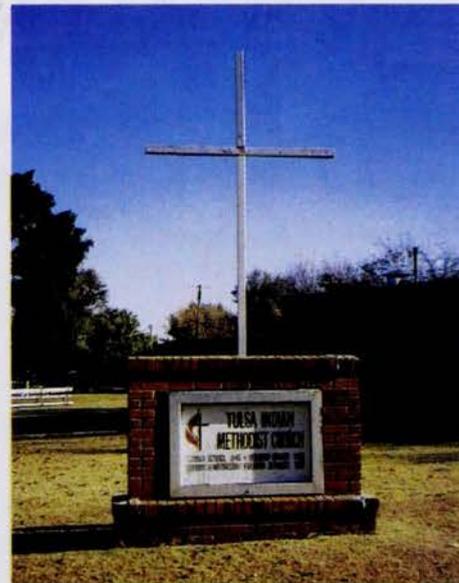
I have had and continue to have a full life in The United Methodist Church. I have seen and felt the connections that are possible through developing relationships with people—people like yourselves and others across the church. I would lift up two other short stories here for you.

In our conference, we are supported by Advance Specials. One in particular that comes to mind is the Native American Children's Fund. This was a school supplement for our children—to help them remain in school by meeting school needs and by saying: "Someone cares about you." Recently, a single parent promised to give back what she received from this fund, small amount though it was. She was in need at the time she sought assistance. Her child was in need. She was unemployed, and she said: "My

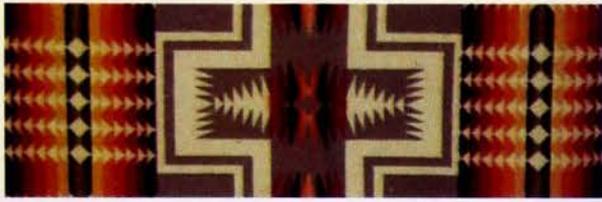


child needs these things." We received her promise of repayment gratefully and let it slide on by. A short time later, she made good on her promise. She refunded the money she had received. She was now in a better situation, and she wanted to give more so that someone else could receive and could have a better situation in their life.

Native Americans have had a lot of things done *to* them. They have had things done *for* them. They have been done *in* in a lot of ways. We have not had a lot of choices in our life in this country. We have felt that we couldn't do a lot of things because others have done them for us. We are now beginning to see that we can do things for ourselves—and also with you. We don't always have to have you come and work *for* us. If you feel the need to do that, come



Opposite, p. 18: This traditional design is woven into a blanket on the altar of Tulsa Indian United Methodist Church, Becky Thompson's home church (above). **Top left:** Becky Thompson (right) with her daughter Leandra.



Top: Detail from the altar blanket at Tulsa Indian UMC.
Above: The Rev. Taylor Harjo, pastor of Tulsa Indian UMC.
Below: Becky Thompson.



and work *with* us. Try to help move yourselves beyond the superficial and stereotypical images that you have of Native American people. We want you to come and worship with us, talk with us, share meals with us, sit down and hear our stories, and sing our songs with us.

The other story I'll share with you is about a recent visit we had from mission secretaries in one of the jurisdictions. They were looking for linkages with Native Americans. We referred them to the area they came from and said: "You have a number of Native Americans in *your* communities. What are you doing to create linkages with *those* people and communities *there*?" We are still asking that question. Where is the Native American presence here at this conference from your area? I am glad to see Yellowstone, with its large number of representatives, here in addition to the OIMC. I believe I have counted about 10 conferences that have some representation of Native Americans. But the jurisdiction that visited the OIMC, I am glad to say, responded to the organization in their area to which I had referred them. When they took back the concern and need for Native American ministry at home, the people in the local church said: "We need to do something in our own community."

I would like to say thank you to the staff and directors of the General Board of Global Ministries, who have made possible our participation at this conference, and also to the people of The United Methodist Church. However, again I say, where is the Native American presence from your annual conference? Where is the Native American presence in the worship experience of large United

Methodist gatherings? Where are the major Native American speakers at these conferences?

We are appreciative of the booths set up showing the Native American presence in this United Methodist Church. We appreciate the pictures. We hope that you will not keep us in pictures and in words only but that you will be in action with us in our ministries. I urge you to go out into your communities and see us as people, as human beings, as persons like yourselves. Find out what our needs are, where we hurt, what our joys are, what our concerns are. Sit down and just share time with us. The animals and the people of creation are all our relations according to Native American belief. You are now a part of that.

I urge you to get a copy of the Native American Comprehensive Plan, to study it, and to take some action—as an individual, as a local church, as a conference, as a community—to be in ministry with Native American people. Involve Native Americans in your work, beginning with the planning stages—not after you have already done something. I am not going into detail here and now about the Comprehensive Plan, because I think you need to look at it, study it, and do something with it yourselves. As you do, I would like to remind you again: We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. □

Becky Thompson, a Creek, is a United Methodist diaconal minister who serves as council director of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. She has also served on the Board of Discipleship and the General Council on Ministries and has been a member of the Native American International Caucus and a delegate to General Conference.

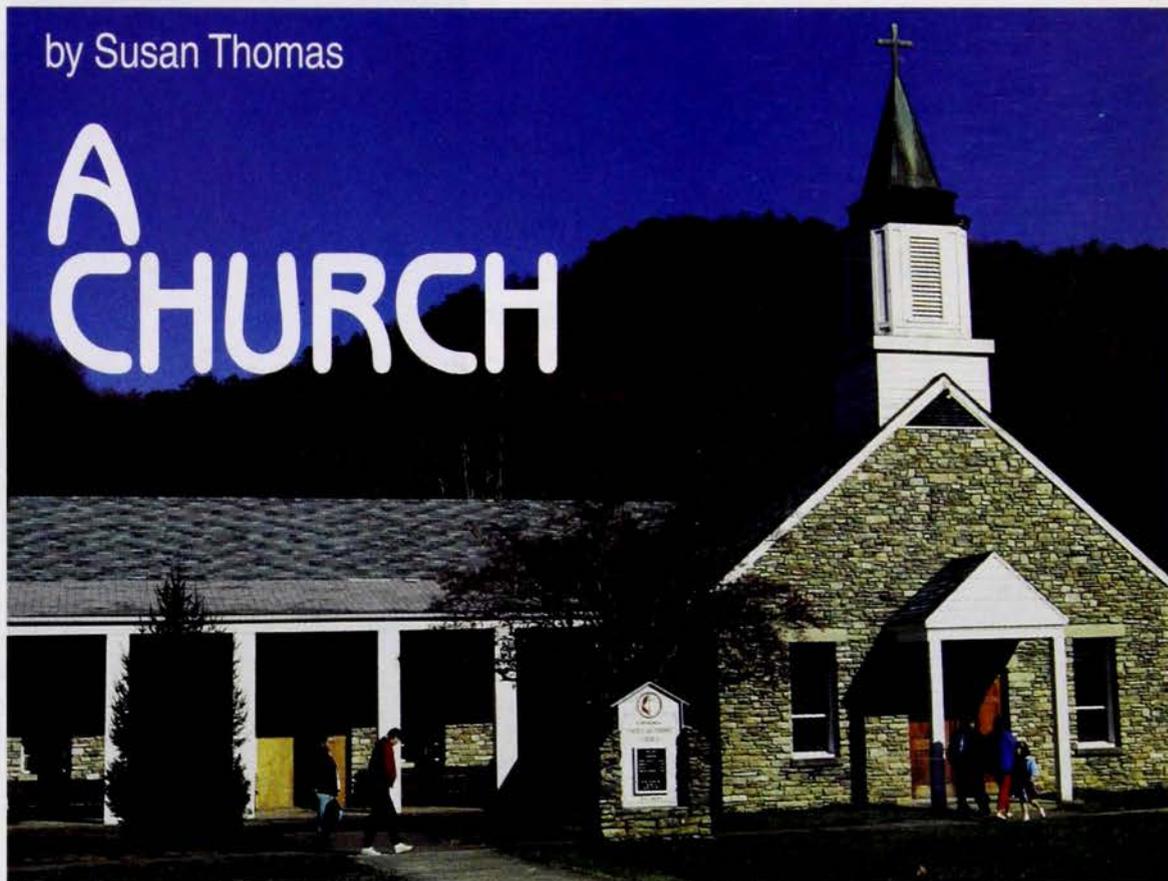
About an hour and 10 minutes west of Asheville, North Carolina—after I snaked up to the crest of the Blue Ridge and wound down again—I found the Qualla Boundary, where descendants of the original Cherokee Nation live. Their forebears hid in the mountains when most members of the tribe were force-marched to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears. In a cleft of the mountains called the Soco River Valley, there's a lovely little church built of local stone in 1952 by a Native American work team. This church is now the center of the Cherokee United Methodist Mission, founded in 1830. Its pastor is the Rev. Pat Freeman.

When I walked into this church, I could feel the Spirit. As Bob Mangum, Jurisdictional Representative, says: "This church is full of missionaries." The pastor, a Creek from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, presides over a popular 11:00 A.M. triracial service after he does an earlier service at the Olivet UMC up the mountain. A choir of fewer than 10 people sings in perfect four-part harmony. The bass is a pillar of the church named Delmar Robinson, an African American who directs the Job Corps. The tenor is a cheery young Native American. The top parts are held by the Cherokee Quartet, four Native American women, the youngest of whom is over 70. The choir and congregation sing in Cherokee and Choctaw as well as in English. A children's sermon was delivered by Jerry Wolfe, a Native American storyteller. Associate pastor Jeff Johnsen, who had just finished work on a master of divinity degree, is of German extraction. He, too, has been accepted at Cherokee UMC, and some of the elders have given him an Indian name.

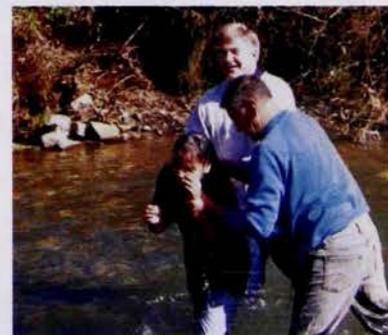
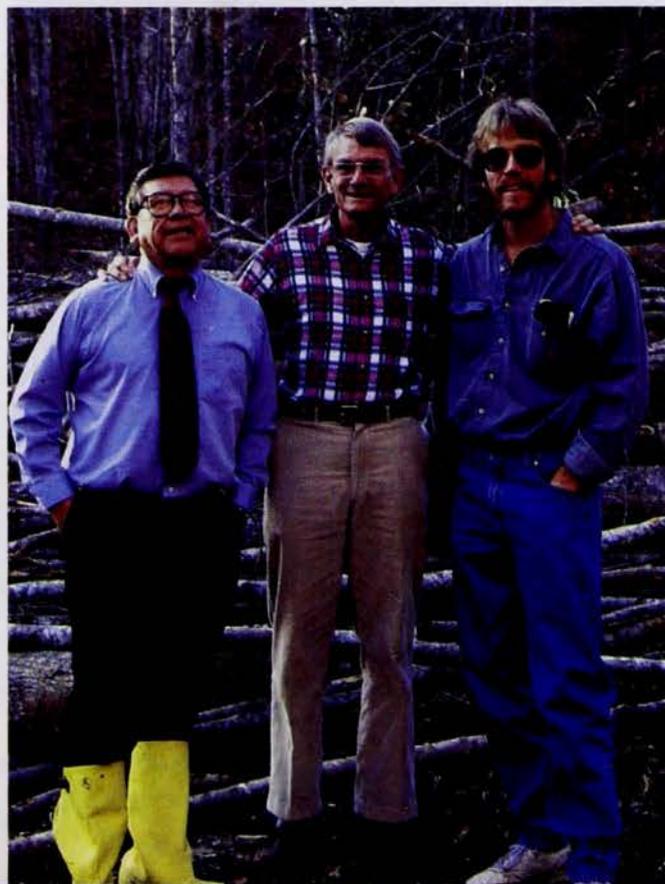
The little church at Qualla Boundary has a long list of outreach programs: a daycare center; an emergency shelter for families and others in crisis situations; a service center that distributes

by Susan Thomas

A CHURCH



FULL OF MISSIONARIES



Top: Cherokee United Methodist Church. Left: Pastor Pat Freeman; Micah LaRoche, volunteer from South Carolina; and Danny Howe, work team coordinator from Kingsport, TN. The wood pile behind them will be cut up by work teams. Above: Associate pastor Jeff Johnsen and lay leader Buddy Owle baptize seventh grader Shannon Bark in the river.

*Right: Pastor Freeman administers communion to a parishioner at her home.
Below: The Soco River Valley.*



*Above: The Cherokee singers: Mary Catolster, Nancy Wilnoty, Emaline Cucumber, Viola Queen, and Lucy Riley.
Right: Work-team members of all age groups and geographic locations enjoy joining forces to build and repair homes for people living on the reservation.*



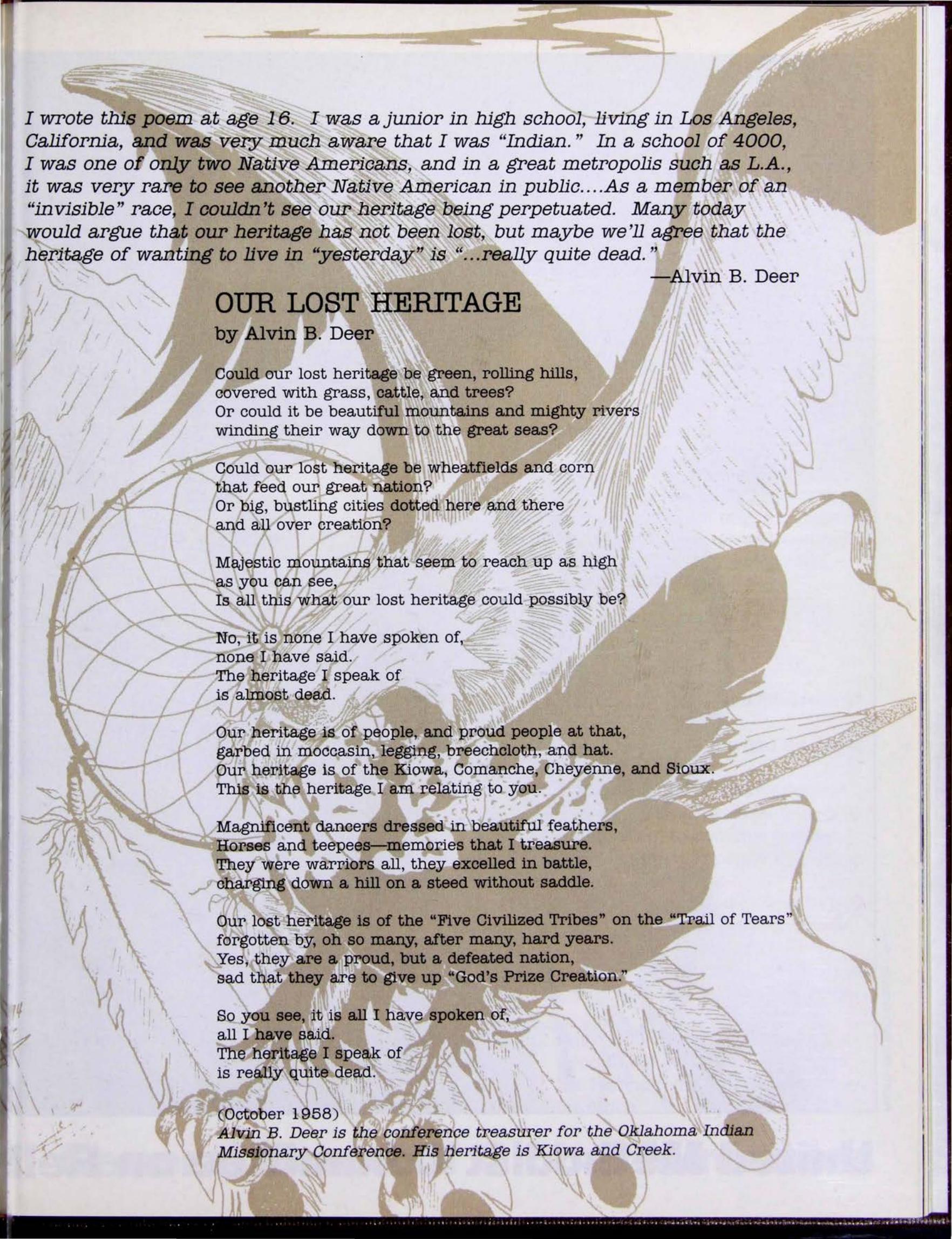
clothing, furniture, and household items; a native crafts shop to support local artists; and home-repair and building ministries. Its calendar is jammed with work-team events, for it is both a sending and a receiving congregation. The day I arrived, the United Methodist Men were holding a barbecue to raise money for work teams. They netted \$1541, which they later used to send two volunteers on mission trips.

That same day, the church welcomed a visiting work team for a week of cutting wood. The 35 team members—whose home states stretched from South Carolina to Rhode Island—paid for their own food and transportation and bedded down in sleeping bags on the floor of the church. They ranged in age from 20 to 70 and included a doctor, two lawyers, a pastor from Virginia, two Mennonites, a father who had just lost his son, and a 70-year-old widow who was still grieving for her husband. Some of these people find work-team experiences so rewarding that they go from one to the next.

As Danny Howe, coordinator of the work team, put it: "We don't just cut wood. We create 35 parts of the body of Christ who have no doubt by the end of the week what their relationship is to each other, to the church, and to Jesus."

That light in the eyes reminiscent of the early Christians characterizes everyone I met at Cherokee United Methodist Church. It is a church that multiplies the Advance gifts it receives into wide-ranging and creative forms of Christian mission. □

Susan Thomas, Editor of the Prayer Calendar and Literature Editor for the Mission Education and Cultivation Program Department of the GBGM, visited the Cherokee United Methodist Mission in November 1993.



I wrote this poem at age 16. I was a junior in high school, living in Los Angeles, California, and was very much aware that I was "Indian." In a school of 4000, I was one of only two Native Americans, and in a great metropolis such as L.A., it was very rare to see another Native American in public....As a member of an "invisible" race, I couldn't see our heritage being perpetuated. Many today would argue that our heritage has not been lost, but maybe we'll agree that the heritage of wanting to live in "yesterday" is "...really quite dead."

—Alvin B. Deer

OUR LOST HERITAGE

by Alvin B. Deer

Could our lost heritage be green, rolling hills,
covered with grass, cattle, and trees?
Or could it be beautiful mountains and mighty rivers
winding their way down to the great seas?

Could our lost heritage be wheatfields and corn
that feed our great nation?
Or big, bustling cities dotted here and there
and all over creation?

Majestic mountains that seem to reach up as high
as you can see,
Is all this what our lost heritage could possibly be?

No, it is none I have spoken of,
none I have said.
The heritage I speak of
is almost dead.

Our heritage is of people, and proud people at that,
garbed in moccasin, legging, breechcloth, and hat.
Our heritage is of the Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Sioux.
This is the heritage I am relating to you.

Magnificent dancers dressed in beautiful feathers,
Horses and teepees—memories that I treasure.
They were warriors all, they excelled in battle,
charging down a hill on a steed without saddle.

Our lost heritage is of the "Five Civilized Tribes" on the "Trail of Tears"
forgotten by, oh so many, after many, hard years.
Yes, they are a proud, but a defeated nation,
sad that they are to give up "God's Prize Creation."

So you see, it is all I have spoken of,
all I have said.
The heritage I speak of
is really quite dead.

(October 1958)

*Alvin B. Deer is the conference treasurer for the Oklahoma Indian
Missionary Conference. His heritage is Kiowa and Creek.*

BISHOPS' APPEAL & CAMPAIGN FOR AFRICA

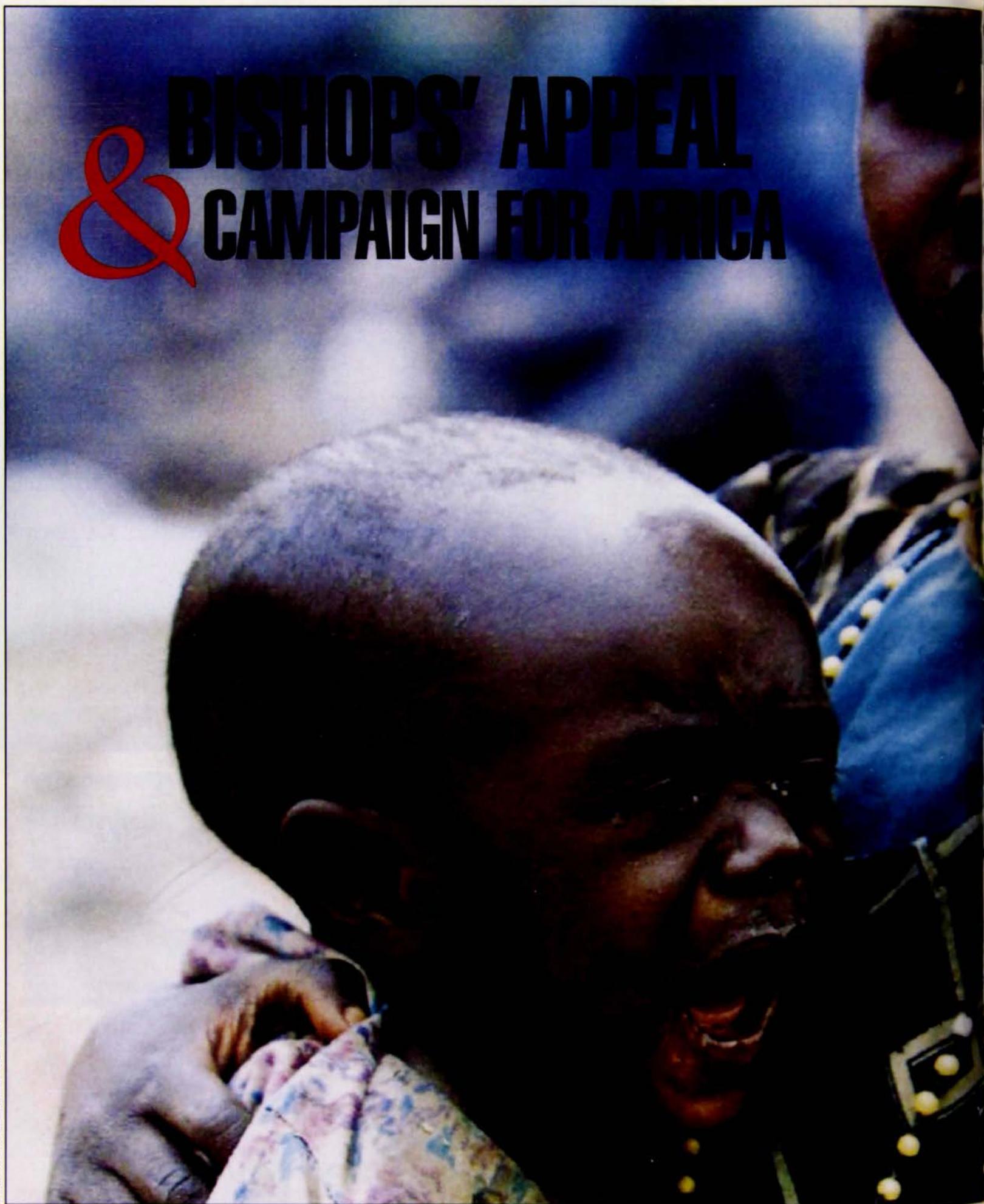


PHOTO: RNS PHOTO/Reuters 1994

United Methodist Committee on Relief



UMCOR Advance #101275-4

In recent months, fear and violence have uprooted millions in Rwanda and Burundi. Over 200,000 children, whose parents have been murdered, are wandering in search of food and shelter. The civilian death toll is in the hundreds of thousands. The total number of refugees in Africa now surpasses 6 million.

To respond to these needs and strengthen the church in Africa, the United Methodist Council of Bishops has launched an African Appeal and Campaign. The campaign will last for five years and will help the churches in Africa to minister and witness in the midst of overwhelming need.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Take an offering at a minimum \$1 per member.
- Study about Africa and the plight of its refugees.
- Contact the President and your congressional representatives to urge them to continue the US commitment to peace and stability in Africa.
- Set aside a period of time for your congregation to pray for African refugees.
- Encourage your annual conference to collect and ship needed items.

Call 1-800-554-8583 for more information on how to respond to the Bishops' Appeal and Campaign for Africa

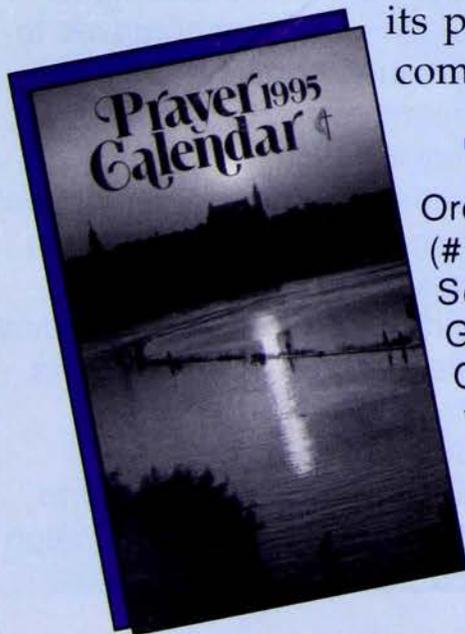
General Board of Global Ministries



Prayer Calendar 1995

These young people are beginning their service as mission interns through the General Board of Global Ministries' Mission Intern program.

Keep them in your prayers by using the 1995 *Prayer Calendar*. The calendar helps you to remember them in prayer on their birthdays. The best resource about The United Methodist Church in mission only costs \$5.00, and through its pages, projects and personnel come to life.



Order copies of the *Prayer Calendar* (#1900) @\$5.00, plus postage, from: Service Center, General Board of Global Ministries, 7820 Reading Road, Caller No. 1800, Cincinnati, OH 4522-1800 or Fax: 513-761-3722. Available November 1.

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Mission Memo

Bishops' Appeal for Africa

The United Methodist Council of Bishops has launched a churchwide Appeal and Campaign for Africa, announced by Bishops J. Woodrow Hearn and Forrest C. Stith. The special appeal for African refugees began on July 31, a Day of Prayer and Healing for Rwanda sponsored by the All Africa Council of Churches. Two million Rwandan refugees have flooded into neighboring countries since the civil war between Rwanda's Hutus and Tutsis broke out in April. They are among 7 million refugees and 17 million internally displaced persons on the African continent whose relief, rehabilitation, and repatriation the bishops' appeal and campaign will assist.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) has provided monetary grants to help refugees and has sent food shipments of rice, beans, and corn flour to refugee camps in Zaire. "I broke into tears when I saw children struggling on the line to get food," an African church leader said. A United Methodist delegation, led by Bishop Felton May, visited the camps in August. By letter, Bishop May urged the Clinton Administration to issue a call for volunteer medical personnel.

Beyond the refugees' emergency needs for food, water, and care, the campaign is a long-term commitment to strengthen the rapidly growing Methodist churches of Africa through prayer and aid. It includes the repair and reconstruction of church property and assistance in church program redevelopment. Contributions to the Bishops' Appeal and Campaign for Africa, UMCOR Advance No. 101275-4, may be made through church treasurers or sent to UMCOR, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 1374, NY, NY 10115.

Southeastern Flood Relief

UMCOR's relief efforts continue in response to the torrential rains of July 5-6 that caused severe flooding in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. Nearly 16,000 families have been affected. To provide financial assistance, gifts may be sent to UMCOR Advance No. 901165-2. Building supplies needed at the United Methodist receiving depot in Columbus, GA, range from drywall nails to hammers to insulation. Sheetrock will be bought locally. Call 1-800-450-4559 for updates on supplies needed and 1-800-918-3100 to volunteer for work teams. Many volunteers for this most recent flood have been Midwesterners—those who a year ago desperately needed help themselves.

Medicine Box Program

The Health and Welfare Ministries Program Department (HWMPD) and UMCOR—both units of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM)—encourage congregations to join a campaign to send needed medical supplies around the world.

Congregations may stock a Medicine Box with enough over-the-counter medications and supplies to treat common illnesses among 1000 people for three months. A monetary contribution of \$350 per box covers shipping and prescription medicines. For information, contact HWMPD, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 350, NY, NY 10115.

Women Elected to Lead

On July 7, the Rev. Graciela Alvarez Delgado of Mexico City became the first woman elected bishop in the Methodist Church of Mexico—and the first female bishop in any of the Methodist-related churches of Latin America. Bishop Alvarez D. was elected in the México Conference. Also in July, Beatriz Ferrari de Arias became the third woman and second laywoman elected president of the Evangelical Methodist Church in Uruguay.

Town and Rural Resources

The Rev. Harold McSwain, for 22 years the director of the United Methodist Center for Town and Rural Ministries in Worthington, Ohio, has retired. The center, which has received GBGM grants and Advance Special funds in the past, will close. It will be replaced by a new Town and Rural Resources Program in Columbus, Ohio, to be directed by Carlene Triplett, a GBGM church and community worker assigned by the National Division.

Missionary Conference 1994

The annual Missionary Conference hosted by the World Division of the GBGM was held July 13-17 at Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center in Norcross, Georgia. Sixteen new mission interns were commissioned at the conference, which celebrated the work of 14 retiring missionaries with 482 combined years of service in 9 countries.

DEATHS Paul Goodman Hayes, a retired missionary with 14 years of service in China, died March 1, 1994, at the age of 103...Lydia Esther Young, a retired deaconess and ordained pastor with 42 years of service in US churches and settlement houses, died May 5, 1994, at the age of 96...Anita Harris, a missionary with the Women's Division for 6 years, died May 31, 1994, at the age of 90...Elsie F. Stowe, a retired deaconess and ordained pastor with 42 years of service in US churches, died on June 8, 1994, at the age of 100...Bishop Roy H. Short died July 2, 1994, at the age of 91. He was the last surviving bishop who had attended the 1939 uniting conference that brought together three branches of Methodism to form The Methodist Church...Margaret Cassidy Miller, a missionary with the Women's Division for more than 17 years, died on July 7, 1994. □

Is Your Church Child-Friendly?

by Gwen White

“Is your church child-friendly?” This may seem like a strange question at first. Yet some exploration may be necessary if you are to give a realistic answer.

Most important is the attitude of the adults in the congregation toward the children in their midst. Adults can communicate a message in so many ways—some obvious and others more subtle; some negative, some positive.

In a child-friendly church, the message will be one of acceptance and caring, love and concern. Children will be allowed to be children without having expectations put upon them to behave or to perceive in adult ways.

Jesus struggled with his disciples over the importance of children and the significance of their spirituality. In the disciples' understanding, children were too little, too unimportant, and too lacking in knowledge to come to Jesus. They were seen as an annoyance—a nuisance to be prevented.

However, Jesus took a child and put that child in the center of the disciples—not to perform or entertain but to represent a kind of spirituality that is important to Jesus and to us. Jesus points out that we need an openness to the child-spirit in order to experience some important aspects of adult spirituality.

**Learn the names
of as many children
in the congregation
as possible.**

**Calling a child
by name**

**communicates acceptance
and welcome.**

Where and how do we keep in touch with that child-spirit and how do we realize its meaning for us as adults unless there are children in the midst of the congregation? We need children both to be a *part* of the faith community and to serve as a *reminder* to the faith community.

Church as Extended Family

For their part, children need to belong to the extended family of the church. They need significant adult others whom they can look to for guidance, loving attention, and a protective presence—adults who relate to them in genuinely caring ways.

Church members might begin by learning the names of as many children in the congregation as possible. Calling a child by name communicates acceptance and welcome. It helps establish a sense of belonging.

Creating and offering more opportunities for intergenerational contact will help the adults and children in the church to come to know one another. Some congregations not only have intergenerational evenings at the church but also have an intergenerational weekend at a conference camp or retreat facility. Such a weekend event includes a true cross section of the faith community: two-parent and single-parent families, blended families, youth, older people, single adults, and families who bring their children's friends along. Activities are planned for children and youth during some adult sessions, but other events include everyone together. Thus the church members become extended family for one another. They worship together, they learn together, and they play together.

Children's Spirituality

Children bring many wonderful gifts of ministry into our midst: spontaneity, open and loving trust, sympathy, curiosity, imagination, expectation, and excitement. They



The New York Annual Conference's yearly Peace With Justice Camp is an intergenerational, multicultural, family event. Here, campers pass the peace by laying hands on each member of the group.

also bring joy and celebration. They live from the center of their beings and reawaken within adults the importance of gratitude for the gift of life itself.

Are these the attributes and elements of true spirituality that Jesus alluded to with his disciples? If so, the church needs children as teachers and reminders for the adult members.

JoAnne Taylor, in her book *Innocent Wisdom* (Pilgrim Press), says: "The spirituality of our children also has the power to enliven and transform the larger Christian community. It is imperative that we as adults share our knowledge of biblical and religious traditions as well as our own faith stories with younger members of the community." She continues: "I am an educator and I assume that the church school will continue in some form or another as it has over 200 years, but let us consider the undervalued and underutilized gifts of children in the educating process." Adults need to be open to those gifts—receiving them, affirming them, and learning from them.

However, if there is more adult concern for the care of the *house of God* than for the *household of God*, then a loving, accepting, nurturing environment may not be what children will find in the church.

**If adults care more
for the *house of God*
than for the
household of God,
then children may not
find a loving, accepting,
nurturing environment
in the church.**

Participation in Worship

Religious education is very important in the lives of children and should be given high priority in choosing teachers for the task. All adults who work with children in any way should be carefully screened and trained for their responsibilities. Team teaching that includes men as well as women will provide important and inclusive faith experiences. However, significant contact and interaction with the *larger* community of faith is essential for children's spiritual development.

Too often children are isolated from the worshiping community because adults think they are "too

young to understand." What is really being implied is that they are too young to understand in the same way as adults.

However, children absorb the environment surrounding them and pick up clues in bits and pieces through their own level of perception. The symbols of faith become familiar to them just because the children are consistently in their presence. Those same symbols take on different meanings for children as they mature in faith. Children are often deeply impressed by rituals that adults take for granted because of their familiarity.

The lighting of candles on the altar, for instance, signals to a child that something important is about to happen. Later in the service, children will often slip off the pew and stand in anticipation of the offering plate's coming their way. Then they will proudly deposit their coins in the plate as it passes by them. I've also watched children receive the elements of communion with a sense of mystery and awe, seriously imitating the adults beside them in an attitude of prayerfulness. When Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me" (Matthew 19:14), what better place can they come than to his table?

In some congregations, children are invited to come sit in the front



pew during a baptism and are reminded by the pastor of their own baptism. Some pastors carry the newly baptized infant up and down the aisles as a way of introducing the new member of the household of God to all gathered in the house of God.

It is so beautiful in a worship service to hear a child sharing in the praying of the Lord's Prayer. The child may be about two words behind, but the small voice sounds like an echo of sincerity in the gathered community of prayer. I recall one Sunday morning when, during the request for prayers by the members of the congregation, an eight-year-old boy stood up and asked for prayers for his friend who was going to the hospital for a leg operation. It was very obvious that the child considered prayer important and that he felt a comfortable belonging in the midst of the praying community.

There are other ways in which children can actively participate in the worshipping community. I've heard older children read Scripture beautifully, bringing an added dimension of meaning to the liturgy. On one occasion, the morning Scripture lesson focused on Jesus' receiving the children over the protests of the disciples. It was acted out by children, the pastor, and several adults—the

**I've watched
children receive
the elements
of communion
with a sense
of mystery
and awe.**

drama providing a powerful emphasis to the word.

One Easter morning, all the children were included in the opening procession. They brought with them beautiful large butterflies that they had created and colored. With a bit of masking tape on the back, the butterflies could be attached to the ends of the pews and to the choir loft. The children's creations gave a real sense of resurrection celebration to the service. Creative imagination and a sincere desire to include children in worship can bring a special blessing to any congregation.

Children can also be invited to take part in some specific outreach

ministries of the church. They can participate in walks for the hungry, heifer projects, and recycling programs. If given some careful preparation, they can be taken on visitations to rest homes, perhaps bringing some gifts they have made, such as table favors or May baskets filled with flowers.

Child-Friendly Environments

Even the physical environment of the church building communicates something. Any space set aside for children—whether classrooms, a nursery, or a daycare center—will need lots of light and color. Water fountains and classroom tables should be at a child-sized level, and the church should be child-proofed for safety. This may include covered outlets, sturdy railings on stairs, and adequate space for children's physical movement.

Is your church child-friendly to children beyond your local congregation? Our society desperately needs good daycare services in a friendly and nurturing environment. Also needed are well-supervised after-school programs for children whose parents have to work until 5:00 or 6:00 P.M. Latchkey children, left unsupervised at home, are especially vulnerable during the after-school hours. They need a safe place to be

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Opposite, p. 30: (Far left) Melanie and Paul Baker Della-Rocco receive communion. (Mid-left) Children of Demarest United Methodist Church in Demarest, NJ, participate with the Rev. Robert Boettner in the children's sermon. Left: Confirmands of the Demarest UMC: Sonoko Ishikura, Lauren Hoag, Michael Kolacia, Lisa Lupardi, and Elizabeth Mabery.

where a nutritious after-school snack can be served and recreation can be provided. Another valuable way to care for children is through after-school tutorial programs, where caring adults help with homework assignments.

What Children Remember

While writing this article, I posed some questions to friends, family, and fellow workers. I asked each to share some happy memories of being a child in the church. Their answers give clues about ways in which a church can be child-friendly.

- I remember lying on the pew with my head in my mother's lap while she stroked my hair.
- When I first learned to print the names of colors, I sat listing all the colors in each stained-glass window, one at a time, while my father was preaching.
- I loved the Christmas Eve services with the lighted tree, the Christmas story being acted out, and the candle lighting at the end.
- I thought my Sunday school teacher was the most beautiful person I knew because she really cared about me.

- I remember waiting for the time of the Lord's Prayer because I was so proud that I knew it by heart and could pray it out loud with everyone else.
- I loved the church picnics we had every July. Everyone was having fun and the food table was like a great feast!
- My mother sang in the choir and my dad was an usher; so I always sat with Mr. and Mrs. Granby, who were like grandparents to me. Mrs. Granby was the one who taught me how to follow the music and words in the hymnal.
- I grew up in a church where there was an altar call every Sunday morning, and my dad and I always went up to kneel at the altar together. Then he'd put his arm across my shoulder and say a prayer for both of us. I'm still living out some of those prayers.
- The music in the Hispanic church is very joyful, with lots of rhythm, and I used to love it as a child. I still do!

What kind of memories will your church give to children? Will they be happy ones? Will children

be blessed with important learning experiences as part of their early spiritual formation? Can your church become even more child-friendly than it is at present?

Children are not only our future for the church. They are also a significant part of our present moment in the life of the congregation. Many congregations are identifying themselves as safe havens for children. They develop child-advocacy groups whose members study and involve themselves in issues affecting children. Such a group can keep the whole congregation informed for awareness and action.

Children are among the most powerless people in any society. They have no voice or vote; so we, as Christian adults, must become advocates on their behalf. All believers benefit when the church welcomes children as important members of the household of God.

Gwen White is a leader of workshops on communication skills, spiritual disciplines, spirituality of the family, spirituality of children, journaling, and intergenerational education and ministries. She has taught in regional and conference schools of Christian mission. She and her husband, retired Bishop Dale White, are the parents of six adult children.

AIDS

IN UGANDA:

A Fledgling Church Tackles an Epidemic

by Solomon Muwanga



AIDS started as a rumor in the southwestern part of Uganda. Today it is a catastrophic national epidemic. The disease has not spared United Methodists. They fall victim just as other members of the Ugandan community do. We have lost many church members through this scourge, and a good number of our fold are chronically ill.

Traditionally, the church has a role in caring for the sick and for victims of disaster or war. The Ugandan community and the government expect United Methodists to join with other denominations and organizations in fighting the dreadful disease. The Bible indicates that God is concerned about peoples' lives and mandates that Christians of sound health should care for those who are sick.

The World Health Organization (WHO) does not define *health* as simply the absence of disease. Health is a state of well-being, including mental, physical, socio-economic, and spiritual wellness. Bearing this in mind, the Ugandan church recognizes with great concern the major impact that the

AIDS epidemic has on people's lives. Lack of knowledge about and fear of HIV/AIDS has caused discrimination against those who have the disease by coworkers and employers. Some businesses carry out HIV testing on employees. Companies may refuse to hire those who test positive. Some educational institutions also test entering students and may refuse admission to those with HIV/AIDS. These practices increase fears of unfair treatment of persons with AIDS and contribute to prejudices against them, causing them psychological trauma, depression, and even thoughts of suicide.

The High Cost of the Epidemic

Every level of the community is deeply affected by AIDS, from individuals and their families to the national economy. Many people infected with HIV are in the prime of their working lives. The majority of people living either with or at risk of the HIV infection are sexually active adults living productive lives.

In a developing country like Uganda, the kinds of jobs to be



Opposite, p. 32: Children of Peterson Memorial Primary School in Uganda, run by the Kioga United Methodist Church. Many children have been orphaned because their parents died of AIDS. Left: An educational AIDS poster in Maua Methodist Hospital, Kenya.

had are as civil servants, workers in large private companies, health workers, soldiers in the army, or workers in national industries. Others work on small family farms, in markets or street trading, and in other small businesses. Many women earn income for their families by selling produce or crafts.

For every death from AIDS, an average of 15-20 years of work experience, associated skills, and investment in schooling and training are lost. Also lost are three quarters of anticipated lifetime earnings. The estimated increase in deaths from AIDS has a great implication for the national economy in terms of producing goods for internal consumption and for the export market. AIDS illness in industry means more sick days for the infected and more time off for healthy workers to look after sick relatives. Benefits such as health insurance (provided by some employers for workers and their families) may be threatened by the increased demands caused by AIDS-related illness. AIDS in the workplace also affects the morale

of colleagues. When a coworker dies, productivity slows down. People must take off to attend the funeral and afterwards take on extra work until a replacement can be found and trained.

AIDS-related illness causes a decrease in family income. In addition to the costs of care for the sick and dying, funeral arrangements can take all the family savings. A coffin costs four months' worth of a laborer's salary. Families carry the responsibility of raising the children of deceased relatives.

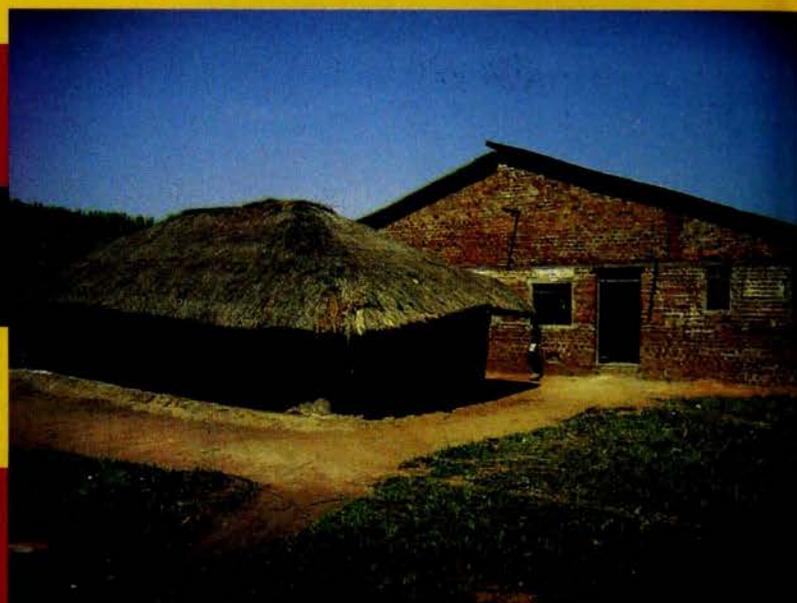
AIDS places enormous pressure on health budgets and services, especially in Uganda, where government health expenditure is low. Up to 80 percent of the beds in some urban hospitals are occupied by patients with HIV/AIDS-related illnesses.

Tuberculosis (TB) is an opportunistic infection that often goes hand in hand with AIDS. The number of people infected with TB as a complication of AIDS is very high. TB is transmitted by bacteria, so healthy individuals without AIDS can fall victim to TB even while they are taking all the

precautions necessary to avoid the AIDS virus. Tuberculosis has the same clinical features, whether as a separate disease or as an opportunistic infection associated with HIV/AIDS; so the two conditions can be confused.

The Ugandan Church's Health Department

In order to deal effectively with the AIDS epidemic and other health concerns, The United Methodist Church of Uganda has organized a health department as part of its administrative responsibilities. The health department has outlined a number of goals for the Ugandan church in its AIDS ministry. Health education is a major priority. The purpose of the church's health-education program is to identify the causes and contributing factors of the AIDS epidemic in Uganda. Strengthening HIV/AIDS awareness in the population reduces the incidence of disease and death. If we can educate youth in the prime of their lives, we may be able to affect the economy, both on the national level and for individual families.



Education will help ease the discrimination against people who are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. The church can help to remove the social stigma that comes with having AIDS. We train counselors who work with the relatives, children, and colleagues of persons infected with AIDS. Some ministries have been set up to care for HIV/AIDS patients who are unable to care for their own biological, social, and spiritual needs. The church provides support and care for widows and widowers of members who died of AIDS and helps them plan for their children's futures. Finally, the church cares for children who are orphaned because their parents died of AIDS.

Prevention by the Church

In its counseling and educational programs, the church seeks to curb all possible agents of the disease. We encourage behavioral change. Using drama, preaching, and small-group education, we try to discourage behavioral factors that contribute to the spread of the virus. Pastors encourage couples

in premarital counseling to get blood tests. They discourage the superstitious beliefs that have arisen around HIV within the culture. The church promotes safer sexual practices, giving information about the use of condoms and the need for using sterile equipment in medical practice.

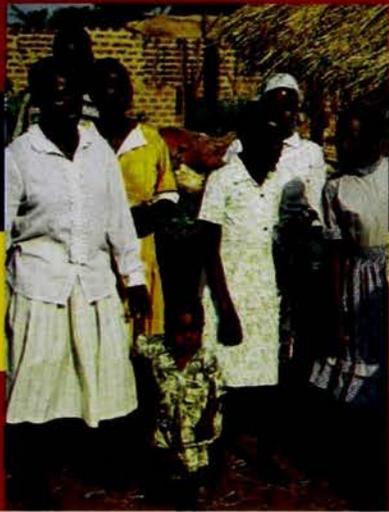
Both politics and science tend to exclude the church from major issues concerning the prevention of AIDS. But the church is not a club of saints standing aloft, separated from human suffering. True saints must look for ways to solve human problems with God's help. The church has a stand on morality and an important role to play in the prevention of AIDS. A pastor can be very influential as he or she visits the sick, buries the dead, and conducts pre- and postmarital counseling.

Given the right message on HIV/AIDS, the church has an attentive audience and a structure by which it can pass the message on. The church has always stressed behavioral change through repentance, individual witness, and acceptance of the

word of God. Recently, because of AIDS, science has also been forced to recognize the place and importance of behavioral change.

The church faces AIDS because members of our congregations have AIDS, though they are faithful faces in the church. We therefore stress AIDS ministry as The United Methodist Church through our health department. The church advocates the use of condoms. We believe every member of society—regardless of sex, age, race, religion, or economic situation—has a right to know what a condom is, how it should be used, and the diseases its use may prevent. What people do with the information is their own choice. They may defend condom use or condemn it.

The majority of the community is uneducated, with many being illiterate; so all information must be disseminated in person, by word of mouth. The church is well aware of the urgency of the situation and strives to train counselors for effective ministry. But the lack of funding makes this task very difficult.



Progress Made

The church has made some headway in its struggle to educate Ugandans about AIDS. Most people are now aware that the disease exists and that it is fatal, having no cure at present. Our congregations are aware that sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are cofactors in the spread of AIDS, that STDs may cause sterility, and that use of a condom may prevent the transmission of STDs and of the HIV/AIDS virus.

The church is also aware that the cost of *not* spreading the word is too high to pay. The church directly feels this cost in terms of member mortality, in caring for the chronically ill, and in raising orphaned children. Counseling is a priority even though knowledge and training are limited and a complete, comprehensive service is not yet available.

The UMC in Uganda has developed the following strategies in order to achieve its goals in AIDS ministry:

- Conduct AIDS seminars and workshops.

- Develop and coordinate community-based AIDS initiatives in collaboration with other agencies that fight AIDS.
- Develop counseling centers in various areas where the church is present, train counselors, and develop HIV/AIDS information libraries.

The counseling centers should provide medical services as well as counseling to persons with HIV/AIDS. The church also strives to establish daycare centers and other outreach facilities where infected people can come for care and feel at home. Community-based education is another important goal for the church. We are looking for a way that the counseling centers can be self-sustaining, supported by some kind of income-generating activity. The church remains committed to caring for orphans and must find a way to cover their school fees. Within the general poverty of Ugandan communities, women and children are most at risk. The church wants to establish cottage

Opposite, p. 34: (Far left) A billboard in Mombasa, Kenya, warns of the dangers of AIDS in both Swahili and English. (Left) Mt. Zion Azuku UMC in Arua has built a health clinic with help from the Western Pennsylvania Conference. Unfortunately, it is used to dry peanuts, lacking money for medicines, equipment, and personnel. Page 35: Women and children of the Masafu UMC in Masafu-Busia, Uganda.

industries, making small investments to help women, especially widowed or single mothers, to earn a living.

Resistance to change in the Ugandan culture because of myth and cultural beliefs is a difficult obstacle to overcome. When added to a lack of funds, few supplies, and a poor system of transportation, the church faces a monumental challenge in its AIDS ministry program. It is a challenge we must, and do, accept. □

The Rev. Solomon Muwanga is District Superintendent for The United Methodist Church in Uganda. Uganda is an episcopal district of the Burundi Annual Conference, overseen by Bishop J. Alfred Ndoricimpa.

TEACHING IN CHINA FOR THE AMITY FOUNDATION

by Carol C. Walker

I was walking across the campus of the teachers' institute in Nanjing, People's Republic of China, when I heard one of my new students calling my name. I stopped to let the young man catch up with me. Breathlessly, he explained that he had to tell me something. It sounded urgent. "You see," he said, "all the students have been talking about you in the dormitory."

Curious but cautious, I answered, "And...?"

With an engaging and ingenuous smile, he went on: "Oh, we all agree that you must have been beautiful before you became an old lady!" I was all of 55.

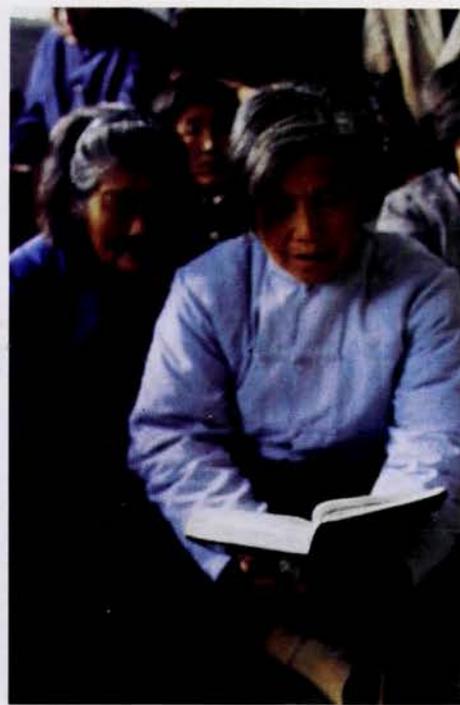
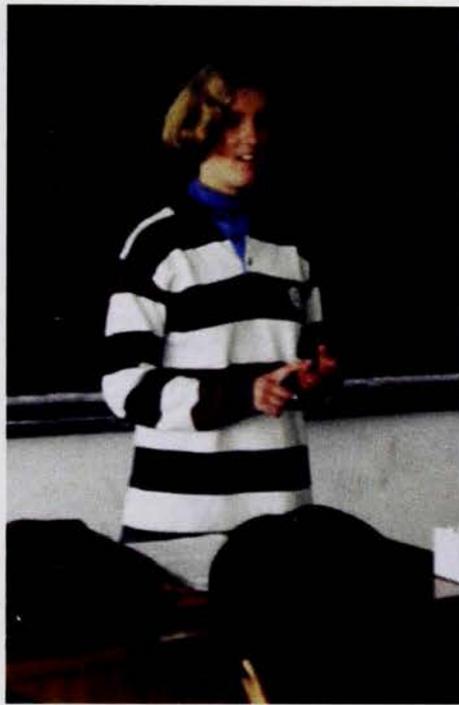
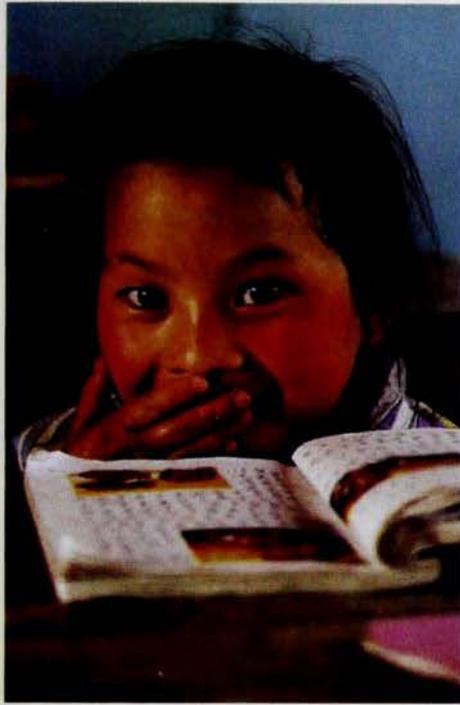
Every Amity Foundation teacher in China could tell a similar story. With disarming candor and curiosity, shy diffidence, and bold innocence, our students challenge every bit of teaching skill and experience we can bring to the task.

In 1989, I began this new adventure in teaching and learning in the Foreign Language Department of the Jiangsu Provincial Education Institute. This is an institution of higher learning that offers advanced training for rural high school teachers (called middle school teachers in China). The teachers who come to our department for a two-year course of study must have served at least three years in their work units before applying for admission. Some will pursue a bachelor of arts degree, but most will simply be working toward a certification that they have completed the two-year course. One student told me that

the competition for admission is fierce and that he had applied for six consecutive years before receiving permission from his principal to attend. Another hindrance for hopeful applicants is that their employers often feel they cannot afford to be without these teachers for an extended period.

Because these in-service teacher trainees are primarily from rural areas, much of their reaction to Nanjing typifies the culture shock anyone might feel in coming to a big city. A certain vulnerability surrounds them, especially the women. It is not unusual for them to restrict themselves to a rather small circuit consisting of the immediate environs of the school. With few exceptions, these students will return to their original places of employment. Most will spend the rest of their teaching careers in the same place, with a comparatively low salary and limited advancement. It is very difficult for a teacher in China to move to another geographical location. Because most of our students are married with one child, they are at times achingly homesick for their families and homes. How readily I can identify with that homesick feeling!

Strangely, I feel protective and even a bit parental in my relationship to some of the students, even though it is I who am halfway around the globe from home and family. Their experience of the world has been so circumscribed that much of what I represent seems to them inaccessible. They marvel over the fact that, at my age, with four children and six grandchildren, I would ever dream of coming to China to



teach. Equally mind-boggling to them is the way I dress, the way I assert my independence, and—perhaps most astounding of all—my Western teaching methodologies.

The Amity Foundation

The organization for which I—and some 80 other foreign teachers—work was initiated in 1985 by the China Christian Council. It is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that serves rural Chinese people at the local level. Language-teacher placement is only one facet of the work of The Amity Foundation. It also has extensive programs of social welfare, medical assistance and training, agricultural and rural development, and disaster relief. There is an ongoing process of seeking out and implementing areas of community need. In addition, the Amity Printing Press in Nanjing, inaugurated in 1987, is responsible for an impressive output of printed religious materials. Since the presses began to roll, over seven million Bibles—in traditional and simplified Chinese characters—have been distributed.

Most of the employees of The Amity Foundation are Chinese, both Christian and non-Christian. They bring a considerable variety of talent and expertise to the diverse job expectations and to the demand for innovative thinking. All are committed to long-range plans for serving the future of China.

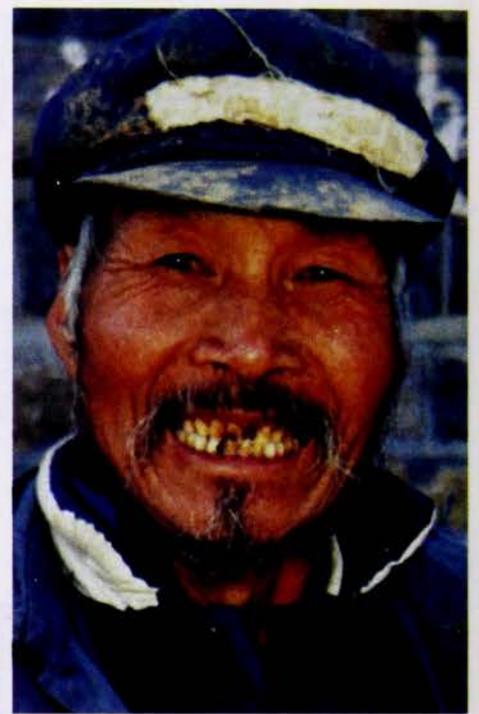
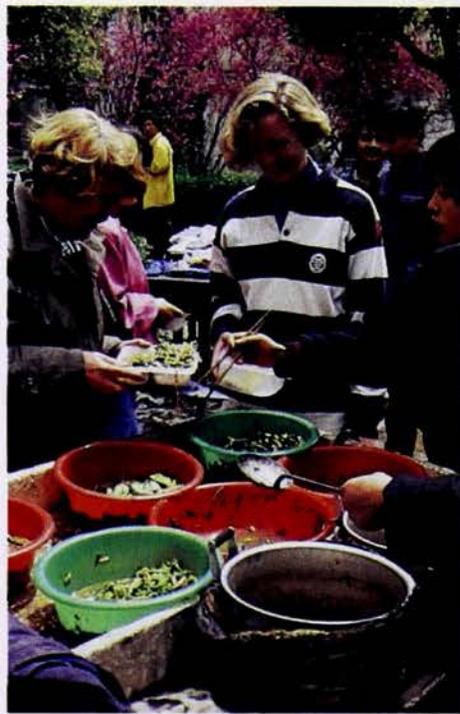
We language teachers come from 10 different countries and a cross section of denominations. We are sponsored both by denominational mission

boards and by the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC), mainly in Europe, Australia, Japan, and North America. While most of us are engaged in English teaching, a few teach German and Japanese. Our placement is most often in the smaller schools of higher education—especially teachers' colleges—that cannot afford to hire foreign teachers.

As part of the overall China Program of the NCCC in the United States, some 35 to 40 US teachers are sent annually to China. The United Methodist China Program regularly supports 10 to 12 teachers. The NCCC China Program oversees orientation, which includes Bible study, mission theology, cross-cultural training, and introductions to contemporary China and to teaching English as a second language (ESL). Amity provides on-site orientation and “survival Chinese” language study along with an introduction to the life and witness of the church in China. Amity also assigns teachers according to their experience

With disarming candor and curiosity, our students challenge every bit of teaching skill we can bring to the task.

and attempts to match them to the particular needs of each Chinese institution.



The Amity teachers' program is an unusual opportunity offered by the General Board of Global Ministries. While Amity teachers are people of deep faith, most are not commissioned missionaries. This is so for three reasons. First, in an effort to become "self-evangelizing," the church in China asks partner organizations not to send missionaries. Second, China's constitution provides for freedom of religion but forbids evangelizing by non-Chinese. Third, in China's Post-Liberation Era [1949-present], churches worldwide are seeking new ways to share human resources through more equitable means. Teachers are expected and are able to live out their faith through their daily Christian presence.

In the Classroom and Out

My area of specialization in English is the literature of Western civilization. I have never been more challenged than in China to present this literature in a way that opens eager minds and defies traditional

thought and new insights into their own teaching practices. Because the primary learning tool in the People's Republic of China has been the ability to memorize, most of my Chinese students have seldom had to develop their own creative thinking processes. For this reason, my Western ways of teaching—of prodding, pushing, and digging, of discerning language patterns and structures, of making the writer's craft open up new understandings for the reader—are truly foreign to my classes.

I recall what happened after the first in-class essay test. It was a test that I had considered easy enough, but it left the students anxious with self-doubt. The class monitor, with extremely diplomatic and careful words, approached me to say that my test had been very frightening for the students. "Chinese teachers don't teach that way," he said. A few minor changes in format was all it took to make the students feel more comfortable, though I continued to expect more of them than memorization.

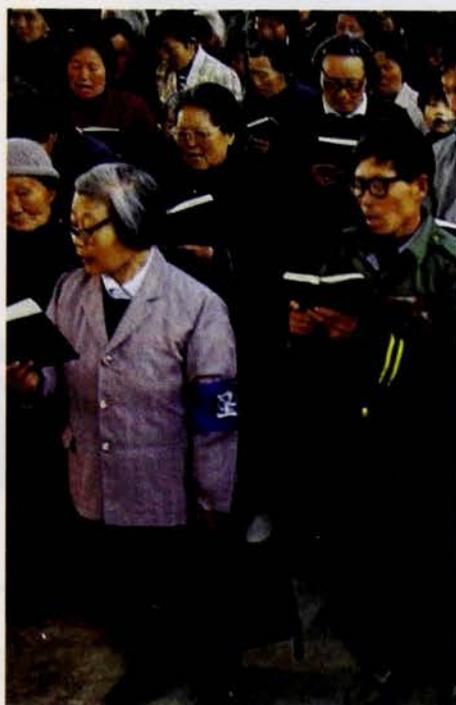
Greek mythology and the classical age of Greece were my emphases for the fall semester of the second year. My students had never heard of most of this material. After the Liberation of China in 1949,¹ the schools were directed to teach only "useful" subjects. Some 50 years later, we dug right in, studying classical Greece's history, philosophy, drama, heroes and heroines, recurring patterns

of myth, and rewards and punishments. It was not easy for the students to remember so much, and I continued to attempt to make connections for them with

Because their primary learning tool has been memorization, most Chinese students have not had to develop creative thinking skills.

learning methods. My students—after a lifetime of defining lessons by the measuring rod of utilitarianism—are stretched to discern new dimensions of

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modern literature. Some resisted at first. I even got an anonymous note that said: "All this is non-utilitarian!"

But I kept encouraging them and telling them that the knowledge would be yet another golden key to understanding the Western world. Finally, they began to see parallels in their own lives. At the end of the semester, I introduced a twentieth-century essay, "The Myth of Sisyphus," by the French existentialist Albert Camus. This essay ponders how the "punishment" of ceaseless, mindless, hopeless labor can be transformed into happiness. How absurd, how challenging, how miraculous! It was only after we had finished working with the essay that I myself realized how plainly it speaks to Chinese daily life.

The bell rang. Like students all over the world, my Chinese students began to talk, to gather their books, and to move out into the hall. But I looked down to see a quiet young man in the first row. He was staring at the floor, hands folded, eyes full of tears. He had been profoundly moved by the insights and inspiration of the essay. I went over to him and put my hands over his. He held my hands tightly, and though we spoke no words and hardly even looked at each other, I knew that he had been touched by the rare moment when life and literature are mutually affirming.

The dreaded final exam was upon us. The students were stunned when I told them—two weeks prior to the date—that they were to write an essay about what they'd learned that semester. They had the freedom to choose what was most important to them. There would be no long hours of memorization, no repeating to the teacher exactly what she'd said. They

had never before had such a final exam. But, without exception, the 78 students wrote essays that impressed me by their honesty and forthrightness.

One student wrote that she had found an ocean of knowledge before her. She had only to wade in.

One young woman, whose deep intelligence is masked by her self-effacing shyness, started her essay by retelling an old Chinese fable wherein the frog—boastfully proud of his home in the deep well of fresh water—is invited to see the home of the turtle, which turns out to be the ocean. This student wrote that, when she came back to school, having taught for several years, she felt that there was little for her to learn. Instead, she had found an ocean of knowledge in front of her. She had only to wade in. □

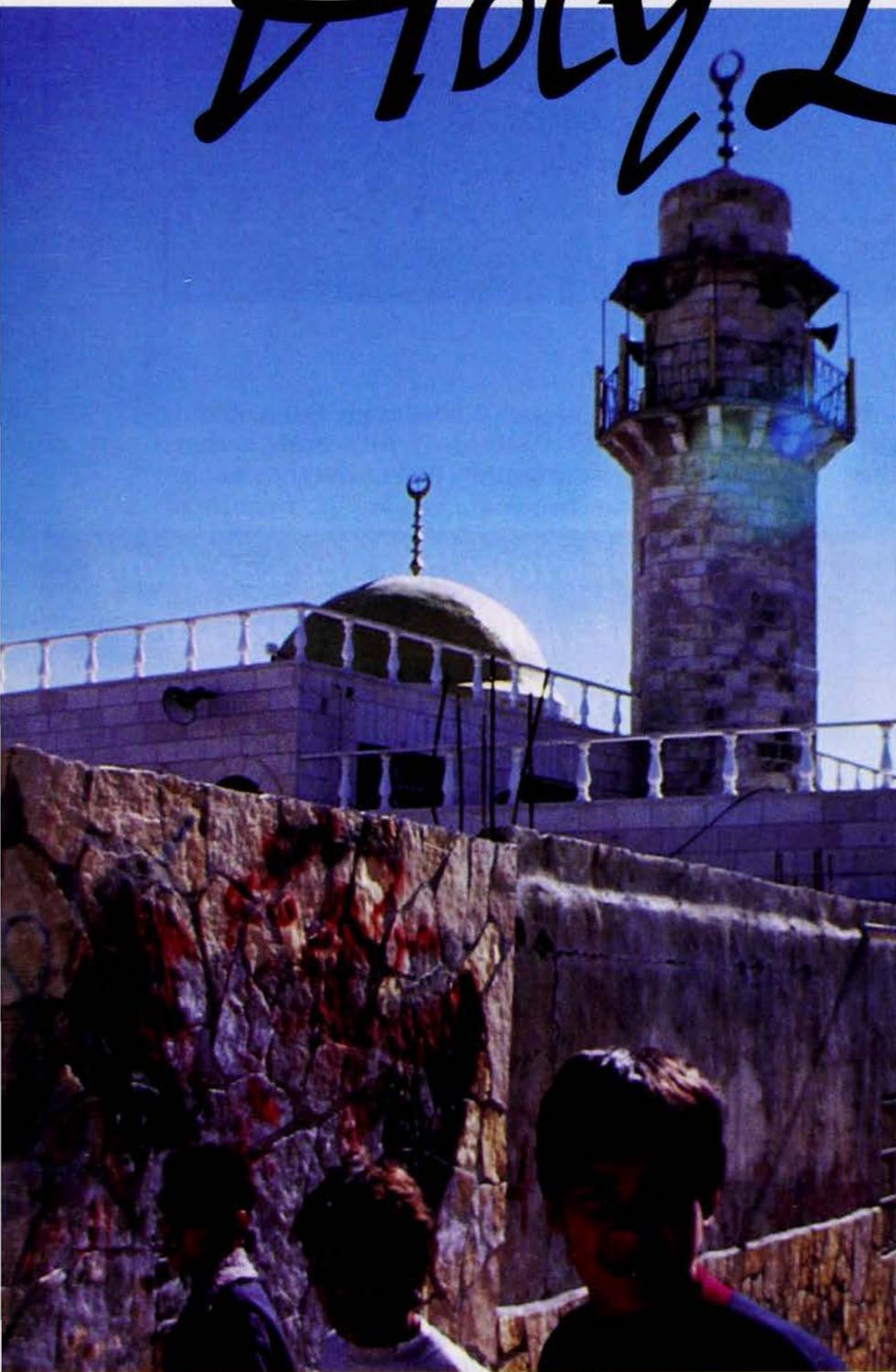
¹ *The Chinese refer to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 as the Liberation of China and to the period between 1949 and the present as the Post-Liberation Era. —Ed.*

Carol C. Walker is a United Methodist missionary with the China Program, assigned to The Amity Foundation. She spent 1993 working in the Louisiana Annual Conference of The UMC as a Peace With Justice Educator.

An Interview with Peter Miano
by John William Peterson

REPORT FROM THE

Holy Land



Peter Miano is an ordained United Methodist minister in connection with the New England Annual Conference. During the first 10 years of his ministry, he served local churches in the Boston area. For the past year and a half, Rev. Miano has been the United Methodist liaison in Jerusalem on behalf of the General Board of Global Ministries. He is currently on sabbatical, writing a book for laity on the cultural background of the New Testament. In November, he returns to Jerusalem to teach at the Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies. This interview took place on March 20, 1994.

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Peterson: Describe the ministry you have been involved in as the United Methodist liaison in Jerusalem.

Miano: As the word *liaison* suggests, our office seeks to be a bridge between visiting United Methodists—primarily from the United States—and the indigenous people of Israel and Palestine. We strive to develop, maintain, and cultivate relationships with people of differing political and theological perspectives, thereby making our church present and tangible to them. Our goal is to facilitate contacts so that people can learn about contemporary life in the Holy Land. Tourists miss something if they don't meet the Palestinians and Israelis of today. Their spiritual pilgrimages are enriched when they include in their journeys visits that expose them to the contemporary situation.

We visit the United Methodist mission sites in Israel and Palestine, and we recommend new opportunities for United Methodist mission. We also provide encouragement and affirmation for people who participate in the worship life of Saint George's Cathedral, the Anglican cathedral in East Jerusalem in which our office is located. But we are not exclusive. Through the Middle East Council of Churches—which is the primary source of funding for our work—we endeavor to make The United Methodist Church present to all the different Christian denominations in the Holy Land.

The General Board of Global Ministries designates block grants to Church World Service, which supports the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). Through the MECC, we are in contact with people throughout the Middle East who are involved in health projects, educational efforts, and other programs.

Peterson: Acts of violence, such as the Hebron massacre, could have a potentially chilling effect on the Middle East peace process. Are you hopeful that the peace process will continue to move forward, or do you fear that it may be derailed by further bloodshed?

Miano: The only thing that makes me optimistic is my faith that Christ will prevail—that eventually peace will overcome violence and warfare, justice will overcome injustice, love will overcome hatred, and reconciliation will overcome vengeance. I don't think that anything good will come out of an act of violence. The massacre at the Hebron Mosque was an awful event with no redeeming value. At the same time, I was not surprised that it occurred. I was angered and deeply saddened, but I was not shocked. It was a tragedy waiting to happen.

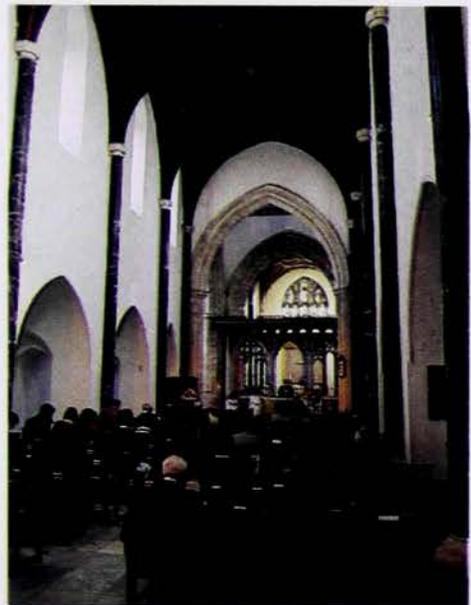
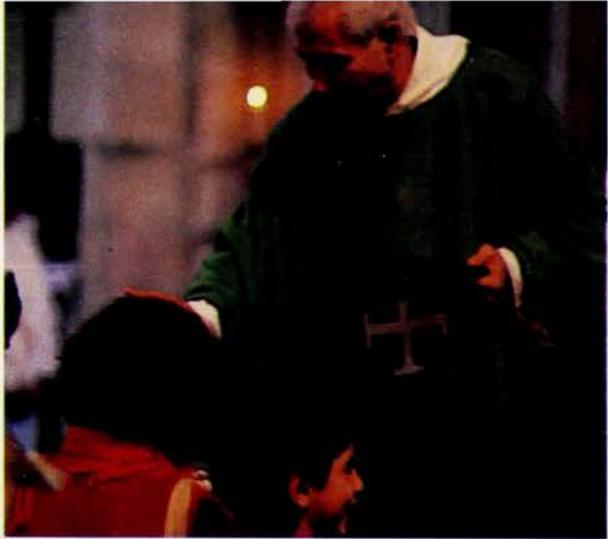
The atmosphere has been one of toleration for Arab-hating. There have been a number of incidents reported in the Israeli media in which settlers have gone on violent rampages against the Palestinians while the Israeli defense forces just stood by and provided cover. The Israeli settlers have been allowed to blockade streets and to harass Palestinians (sometimes verbally, sometimes physically and violently), with no intervention by authorities.

Subsequently, I hope that the parties to the peace talks will begin to take the discussion seriously. In saying this, I am thinking primarily of the Israelis. The Palestinians have no alternative but to return to the negotiating table. But unless there is a shift in the posture of the United States toward a more even-handed, balanced approach to the negotiations—an approach that recognizes the legitimate values and aspirations of the Palestinian people—the Israelis will have little impetus to compromise. I don't see



Opposite, p. 40: Young Palestinian boys in the Kalandia Refugee Camp stand before a mosque. Above: The Rev. Peter Miano conducts a United Methodist tour through the Israeli settlement of Beth Al. Below: Sunday school classes for children (top) and adults (bottom) at Saint George's Cathedral (Anglican), East Jerusalem.





Top: Anglican priest Niam Ateek and (above) a Sunday service at St. George's Cathedral in East Jerusalem. Below: As many as 250,000 Jewish settlers now live across the green line (center of the road) on what was the Jordanian West Bank.



that there is any real pressure being put on Israel to make sacrifices and offer concessions. Their promise to make concessions once the Palestinians come back to the negotiating table is a typical ploy—one they've used before. When the bombing of Lebanon during the summer of 1993 caused the suspension of the peace talks, the Israelis promised that they would make concessions. Their concessions tend to be superficial. This is not a situation that will be redressed with cosmetic concessions.

Peterson: Was the outlawing of the two Jewish extremist groups following the Hebron massacre a step toward peace?

Miano: It's a gesture and should be acknowledged and affirmed and encouraged. But it's a small gesture. The release of Palestinian prisoners is frequently lifted up as a major gesture. But what usually is the case is that the prisoners who are released had been held in jail longer than their sentences. Their terms of confinement had already expired. In fact, frequently the ones who are imprisoned are people who have never had a trial or even a charge brought against them. Of the 10,000 to 12,000 Palestinians in jail, 30 to 40 percent are being held in "administrative detention." That means they have not been charged with a crime. That's an abomination as far as I'm concerned. These prisoners have not received due process. Their detention is wrong in the first place.

A more significant gesture would have been the removal of Israeli settlers from Hebron or an agreement to include Hebron in the autonomy plan. Those would have been helpful gestures, but the release of prisoners is not an adequate concession. The truth is that Rabin is less worried about satisfying the Palestinians than he is about satisfying the right wing of his own political party. And it's

his right wing, the Israeli settlers, the hard-core Zionist ideologues, who are causing trouble for him. As I've said from day one, the people who are the greatest threat to the peace process are not the Palestinian extremists. Even though Hamas and other Palestinian extremist groups have the power to kill, they lack the political power to disrupt the peace process.

Peterson: What are some obstacles to peace that you foresee?

Miano: The main problem is that Israel has no incentive to satisfy the Palestinian demands. For years, Israel has gotten away with the suspension of Palestinian human rights, civil rights, and the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for nationhood. In spite of more than 90 United Nations resolutions directed against Israel's deportment in the occupied territories, no one is really pressuring Israel to knuckle under and talk seriously with the Palestinians.

One thing has become clear. The massacre in Hebron demonstrated without any question whatsoever that Israeli settlers are out of control. They're terrorists as much as any Palestinian has ever been a terrorist. On a positive note, within Israeli society itself, the extremist settlers are wearing out their welcome. They're being viewed by other Israelis as an obstacle, as an impediment, as a wrench in the whole works. Israelis are saying: "Look, we don't want to continue living in a siege mentality just for the sake of 250,000 Israeli settlers." The settlers represent about 5 percent of the Israeli population.

That number—250,000—is not the number that's printed by the press. The figure quoted by the media—and even by the US government—is around 150,000. This media estimate is low because the estimators don't consider the Israeli settlements in East

Jerusalem when compiling their total. The total number of Israelis living across the "green line"—in what was the Jordanian West Bank—is about 250,000.

Peterson: In the midst of the tension between the Muslims and the Jews, the Christians have been the forgotten minority. How is the peace process affecting them?

Miano: The Christian community is a very important but very small minority within the Arab community. In the Palestinian territories, it is the Christian community that has been at the forefront in articulating a vision of Palestinian nationalism. So its influence and its impact have been far greater than its numbers might suggest. It is, however, a community that feels itself very much under siege. Not only has the Christian community experienced the repression that all Arabs experience, but it also feels itself to be under suspicion by its Muslim neighbors. They see Christianity as a Western phenomenon sympathetic to the state of Israel.

Still, it's very clear that the Palestinian Christians feel themselves less threatened by their Muslim brothers and sisters than they do by their Western Christian brothers and sisters. I was in Damascus talking with the vicar of the entire Antiochian Arab Church, and I asked him about the relations between the Muslims and Christians. He said: "Look, our problem is not with Muslims. It's with Western Christians." Arab Christians feel themselves not fully understood by the Muslim majority, but they feel themselves completely misunderstood by the Western Christian community. Western Christians often don't even realize that Arab Christians exist. They associate Arab exclusively with Muslim and Christianity exclusively with the West—even though Christianity began in the Near East. So Arab

Christians are caught between a rock and a hard place.

As a result, the representation of Christians in Palestine has plummeted since 1947. I believe that, in 1947, 20 to 30 percent of Palestinian Arabs were Christian. Now only 2 or 3 percent of the Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank are Christian. That is a very severe decline in the numbers of Palestinian Christians. They're leaving to escape Israeli political and economic repression. They're going to seek economic advantage in other countries.

The present population of Christians in Palestine also contrasts sharply to the representation of Christians in other Arab countries. Lebanon is about 50 percent Christian. Syria and Iraq are about 15 percent Christian. Jordan is about 10 percent Christian. But Israel and the occupied territories are only 2 to 3 percent Christian. So you can see that there is a problem.

The deterioration of their numbers is extremely alarming to Palestinian Christians. They are greatly worried that some day Christianity will be represented in the Holy Land only in museums and shrines. These are people who have been faithful to the Word for 2000 years. They are the original Christians. Arabs were included among the people present at the day of Pentecost (in the second chapter of Acts). They have been very influential and have made enormous contributions to Arab society and to Christian culture throughout the generations.

Peterson: What can we do as United Methodists to accelerate the peace process?

Miano: The United Methodist Church has had a very active and vital presence in the Middle East historically. To continue to be an active participant in the dialogue, the church needs to recognize the strategic location of its office in Jerusalem. It needs to reinforce

that office so that more people learn about it and about the benefits that an association with it can provide. In addition, The United Methodist Church can encourage people to make pilgrimages to the Holy Land that include opportunities for gaining insight into the contemporary situation. It's important for the church to learn that Holy Land pilgrimages are enriched when people not only study the history of the Bible but also experience the Bible's moral imperatives. Israel and Palestine are, after all, the only places on the face of the earth where you can visit and study the Biblical heritage while at the same time witnessing its applicability to a contemporary, real-life situation—a situation crying out for the Gospel message to be implemented.

In the meantime, people need to take seriously the Methodist heritage of identifying spiritual holiness with social holiness. Wesley said that there is no holiness without social holiness. I think that the Methodists need to learn that an important part of spirituality is learning the relevance of the Gospel message to the real world. That is not only to benefit the places in the world where people are living in violent, broken circumstances. It is also for the benefit of each individual believer—whose faith is enriched, whose spirituality is enlivened, and whose sense of appreciation for the relevance of the Gospel message is heightened through real-life applications. So it's not only for the benefit of Israelis and Palestinians that we do this. It's also for the spiritual enrichment of every United Methodist. It's part of our spirituality. Thus it needs to be part of our identity as Christian people. □

The Rev. John William Peterson is a member of the Pacific-Northwest Conference, assigned as Program Director of Holden Village in Chelan, Washington. He has toured Jerusalem with Peter Miano.

Mission Education

Suggestions for Mission Leaders

by Faye Wilson

Singing the Mission Story

One of the workshops offered at Global Gathering '93 was "Singing the Mission Story." One focus of the workshop was to emphasize songs that have their roots in countries other than the United States. Church hymns, songs, and choruses from various countries were taught. They were sung in English, Portuguese, Shona, and Spanish.

This workshop can be recreated or revised as an avenue for mission education within local church and district settings. By singing the mission story, church members can increase their understanding of the church around the world.

When and Where to Sing the Mission Story

Worship — Choose hymns from *The United Methodist Hymnal* to teach about the biblical mandate for mission. This should be done not just on Mission Sunday but at various times throughout the year. Some mission hymns might be considered self-explanatory, such as "O Zion, Haste," "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations," and "Here I Am, Lord."

Other hymns or choruses with a mission focus might need a word of explanation or a sentence or two in the bulletin. For example, the song "Jesus Loves Me" is known worldwide and has been translated into various languages. That song can be sung in a different language (or two) with a word of explanation about how worship is experienced or how mission is carried out where that language is spoken.

Devotions — Use songs at the beginning of church committee meetings, particularly larger church gatherings such as Council on Ministries and Administrative Board meetings.

Devotions present a unique opportunity not only to teach songs in a different language but also to add information about how to sing the songs. At a regional school of mission, the community learned songs from the African church experience. One song taught was "Siyahamba." At one point, participants were told to get up and move to the music. There was marching and swaying and dancing as people sang: "We are marching in the light of God."

Sunday School — Include mission songs during individual classes as well as during the devotional period. Teachers should be encouraged to use the mission hymns they find in the hymnal and in their Sunday school literature as well as ones they learn in schools of mission and at mission rallies.

Choir — Have all choirs—particularly the children's and youth choirs—experience singing in a different language.

The Virginia Annual Conference has developed a model for mission education for young people using the concept of a choir. The choir, Voices of Youth, is organized each summer. Young people study together for a couple of weeks, learning about mission and learning music. Then they travel throughout the conference and jurisdiction sharing the mission message through songs and skits.

Songfest/Hymn Sing — Organize a fellowship time that has a mission focus. Arrange to have copies of various choruses and hymns, or place them on transparencies for use with an overhead projector. Recruit a knowledgeable song leader and musician (pianist or guitarist). Encourage people to dress comfortably and to come prepared to experience new music.

Workshop — Offer a "Singing the Mission Story" workshop during a district or conference training event. Use that time to teach choruses as well as to promote various settings for sharing the mission message through song.

Sources for Hymns and Choruses

The United Methodist Hymnal offers many hymns and choruses that tell the mission message or reflect the experience of church music from different countries, for example, "Thuma Mina" ("Send Me, Lord") from South Africa.

Send a music-mission delegate to the conference school of mission. Every year, each school offers a geographical mission study. For 1994-95, the geographical theme is "African Churches Speak." The classes and the worship services include music from African countries. At one school, a song from Nigeria, "Come, O Holy Spirit, Come," was taught in English as well as in a Nigerian language.

Ask missionaries and Volunteers In Mission to send songs (via tape) or to teach mission songs when they come to speak.

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

This letter is written in response to the "challenge" in the March-April issue to solve the problem of violence. The proposed solutions make the erroneous assumption that firearms are the sole cause of violence, which, of course, is far from true. A real solution to the problem is the Gospel. We need to implement evangelization programs into areas of violence. A regenerated heart is a dynamic force against violence. Our ultimate goal should be to win the lost to Jesus Christ. Shouldn't this be our new world outlook?!

David R. Jennys
Rochester, IN

Absolutely! —Ed.

The May-June 1994 issue was the best I have read. Glad to read about the work of the church in Africa. Continue your good work.

Marjorie A. Kim
Flint, MI

I wish to compliment you on the May-June 1994 coverage of the churches in Africa. However, I want to call to your attention some errors in the article about Sierra Leone. First, no mention was made of the Rev. B. A. Carew's years as bishop in the *autonomous* United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone. In February 1973, the Sierra Leone Conference became autonomous, with B. A. Carew as bishop (1973-1979). In 1981, the conference opted to give up its autonomy and to become part of The United Methodist Church. Secondly, I realize that one cannot list all the ethnic groups in Sierra Leone, but it is certainly an oversight not to have mentioned the Sherbro (the largest group of the Bullom peoples). Mission work started in Shenge, the seat of the Kagboro Chiefdom (one of the Sherbro chiefdoms), and the first converts were Sherbro. Many church leaders have been Sherbro.

Esther Megill
Asheville, NC

I wish to apply for 20 copies of the Mission Magazine of The United Methodist Church, *New World Outlook*, for the month of May-June 1994. I have found this particular edition extremely interesting and very educative.

D. P. Dabale
Resident Bishop, UMC
Nigeria Area

The African contents of the May-June 1994 issue interested me greatly. On page 25, on "Nigeria," you refer to "the Guinter Memorial Hospital, founded by the Evangelical Church in the 1920s...." On page 11, "The United Methodist Church in Nigeria," is the statement: "In the 1920s, many other mission stations were opened, both by Guinter and other Evangelicals on the north side of the Benue River (beginning with Bambur in 1923)." This last statement is correct. The work began in 1923 with Dr. C. W. Guinter. The medical work was very limited at that time—depending upon what medical work the evangelistic missionaries were able to do, and that was stupendous. However, no appointed medical workers were available until 1946. One other nurse and I were the first two registered nurses appointed by the Evangelical Church to arrive in our area. The doctor and his wife (also a nurse) arrived in late 1946 or very early 1947. Construction of Guinter Memorial Hospital was begun, but it did not actually open until 1950 or 1951, at which time the church was Evangelical United Brethren. I was fortunate to be on the field at that time and able to work in the new hospital for a time.

Lucy Rowe
Asheville, NC

There were a number of interesting articles in the March-April issue. But between the front cover and the back one I failed to find—even once—the names "Jesus," "Christ," "Holy Spirit," or "Lord."

Have we forgotten the motive behind missions?

Patricia Gorton
San Diego, CA

We're sorry you missed Barbara Simon's and Christie House's articles. Even more, we're sorry you missed the spirit of Jesus Christ motivating and informing all our missions. The resurrected Christ was recognized by his disciples not only through the use of his name but in his actions (See Luke 24:13-32, John 20: 11-18, John 21: 1-7). We try to both invoke the name of Jesus and show his spirit at work in the world. —Ed.

I find the *New World Outlook* a balanced mission magazine. According to the "Good News" people, the General Board of Global Ministries is long on social concern but short on evangelism or personal redemption. Your articles in the July-August issue strike a balance between social concern and personal redemption. Smokey Mountain—Manila, CIEMAL, the church in Indonesia, and other articles tell about the work of the church in evangelism as well as social concern. Rest assured of my constant and fervent prayers for you and your ministry of the printed page.

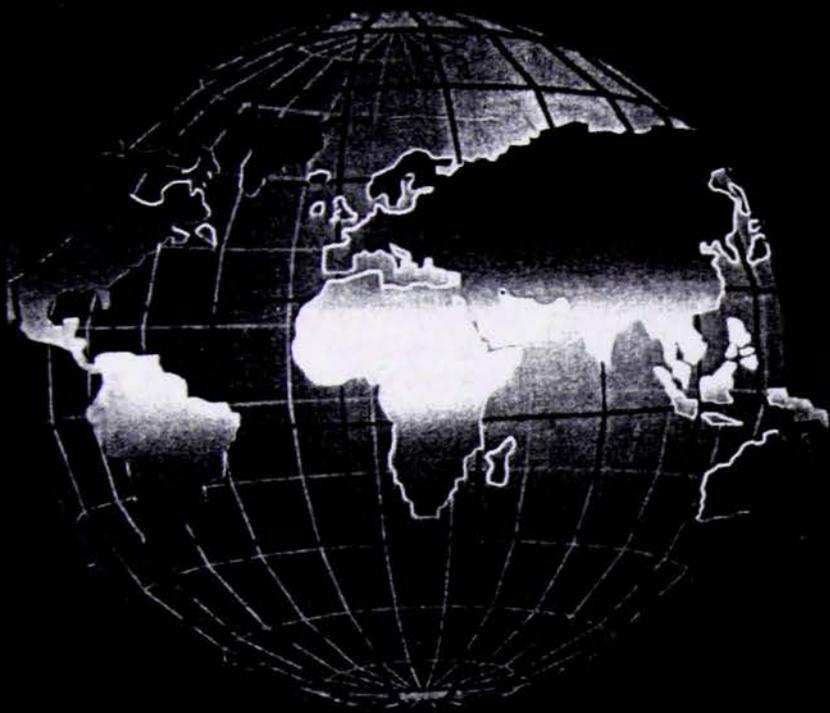
The Rev. Victor C. Vinluan
Dagupan City, Philippines

Editor's Note:

The artwork featured in this issue on pages 4, 6, and 23 is by the young Jicarilla-Apache artist Damon Neal, a 10th grader from Dallas, TX.



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Our conference—*The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference*—was organized 150 years ago. We included members of many different tribes (all speaking different languages) that were relocated to the Indian Territory in the early 1800s.

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Today we're making our dreams come true. We're building new churches. We're training a new generation of leaders. And we're sharing the Good News with our neighbors.



Children at Goodwater United Methodist Church, Okla., prepare to ring the bell.

ARVIN R. LUCHS PHOTOS

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For more information, call the Advance Office, General Board of Global Ministries at (212) 870-3790 or 800-UMC-GBGM.

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MISSION MAGAZINE VIDEO

The General Board of Global Ministries' half-hour news video program with exciting stories of United Methodists putting faith into action.

Features in the *SUMMER 1994* edition of *MISSION MAGAZINE* include:

Highlights of the recent 1994 *ASSEMBLY OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN* held in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The General Board of Global Ministries extends our mission outreach through special relationships with groups such as Habitat for Humanity and Heifer Project International, which provide help to poor and disadvantaged people around the world.

UPDATES ON RECENT STORIES...

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**October
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UNITED METHODIST COMMITTEE ON RELIEF

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UMCOR Global Hunger Campaign, call or write:

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United Methodist Committee on Relief
100 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Suite 501
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