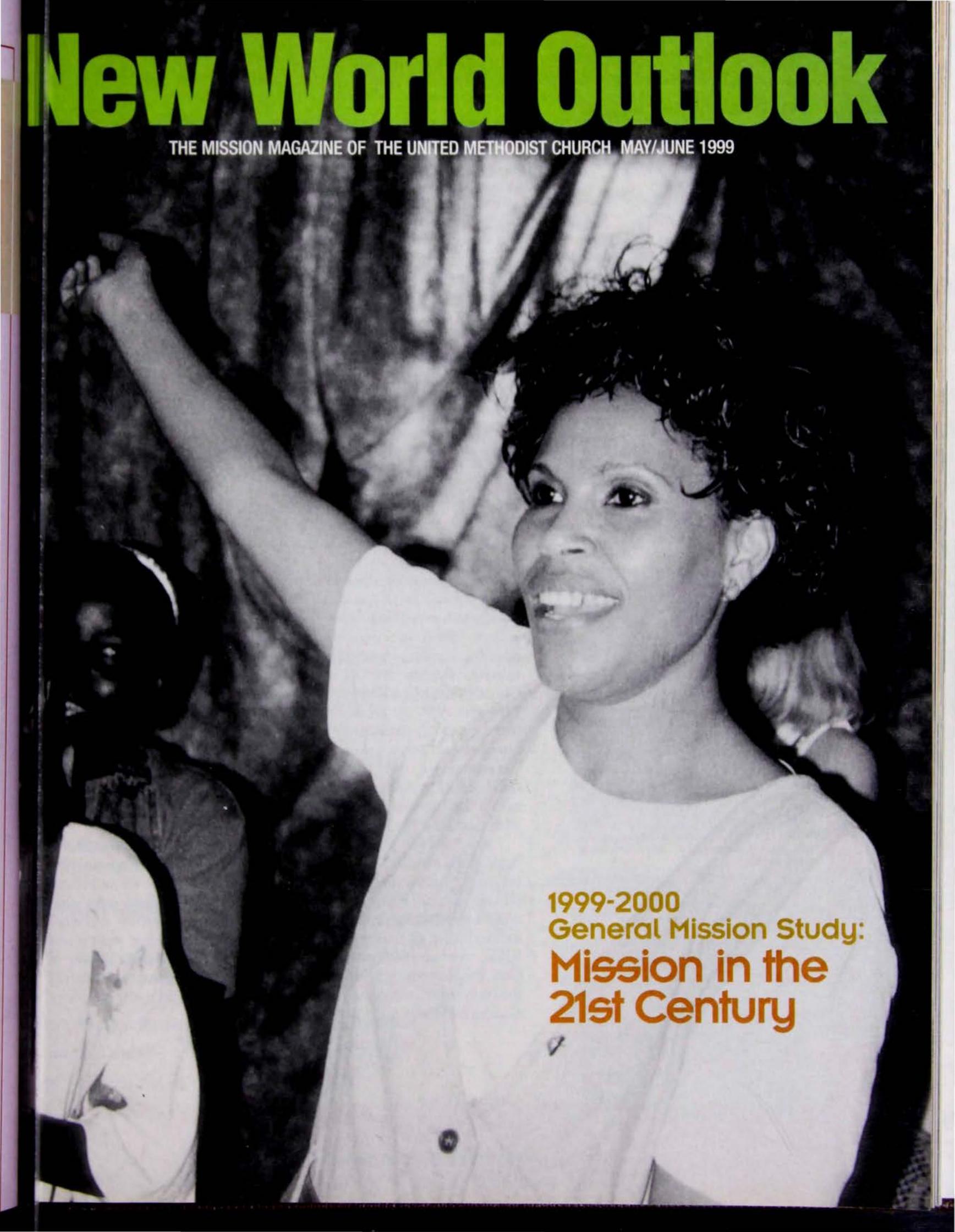


New World Outlook

THE MISSION MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MAY/JUNE 1999



1999-2000
General Mission Study:
**Mission in the
21st Century**

NEW WORLD OUTLOOK

Publisher
Randolph Nugent

Editor
Alma Graham

Associate Editor
Christie R. House

Art Director
Roger C. Sadler

Layout/Design
Emily Grote

Production Manager
Nancy Quigley

Administrative Assistant
Patricia Y. Bradley

Editorial Offices
Alma Graham
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1476
New York, NY 10115
212/870-3765

E-mail: nwo@gbgm-umc.org

Website: <http://gbgm-umc.org/nwo/>

Advertising/Promotion Director
Ruth Kurtz
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1472
New York, NY 10115
212/870-3784

Published bimonthly by the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. (ISSN-0043-8812)

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Copyright © 1999 by the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. No part of *New World Outlook* may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the Editors.

Printed in U.S.A.

New World Outlook editorials and unsigned articles reflect the views of the editors and signed articles the views of authors only.

Unsolicited manuscripts will be acknowledged only if used. Otherwise, the editors cannot be responsible for returning them.

Report change of address to: Magazine Circulation, Service Center, 7820 Reading Road, Caller No. 1800, Cincinnati, Ohio 45222-1800. Also send old address, enclosing if possible address label. Allow at least 30 days notice.

POSTMASTER: Send address change directly to *New World Outlook*, Service Center, 7820 Reading Road, Caller No. 1800, Cincinnati, Ohio 45222-1800. Subscriptions in the United States and Possessions: One year \$15.00 (combination with *Response*, \$25.00). Single copies \$3.00. Two years \$26.00 (combination with *Response*, \$45.00). All foreign countries: One year \$20.00.

Photo/Art Credits: page 47

Cover Photo: by Linda Rhodes. Alice Saperau, a lay pastor of the United Methodist Church in Senegal, holds a worship service in a house church, 1998.

Editor's Column: Talking About Time

It was near sunset on Palm Sunday Eve during the last year of the 1900s when Bishop Alfred Johnson of New Jersey, bearing a shepherd's staff and leading a red-robed children's choir, emerged from the Asbury Park United Methodist Church into the street. After bishop and choir came several hundred of the faithful—wearing people who had met all day to learn how to be holy and bold enough to bring shalom to God's people in the city.

Now, at last, finding new energy for this end-of-day procession, they came forth singing hymns and waving palms—handing palm branches to pedestrians, to passing motorists, to people coming out onto porches, to patrons of a fast-food restaurant. As twilight approached, they turned into a street where they'd been told drug deals took place after dark. But they came openly, not furtively, with songs of praise on their lips and palm branches in their hands, turning the puzzled expressions that greeted them into smiles of surprise and delight.

This was mission in action—John Wesley's style of mission, taken out of the church walls into the places where people live and work and gather. It was mission for any time, any place, any century. For it was a witness to joy, an expression of inclusive love, a celebration of salvation.

As we consider what Christian mission has been in the past and might become in the future, let's pause for a moment in the here-and-now to talk about time. The time we measure out with clocks and calendars—the time we divide neatly into hours and days, years and decades, centuries and millennia—is human time, not God's time. Even as human time is measured, the second millennium after Christ's advent on Earth has already ended—somewhere between 1994 and 1997. We are already in what might be 2003 or '04, '05, '06 had the B.C.-A.D. calendar system devised by Dionysius Exiguus in 525 not been four to six years late in its dating of Christ's birth.

Even if we could pinpoint Christ's time of birth to a millisecond, what would it signify? In the beginning—before time, before space, before the universe was created—was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

It is the Holy Spirit working in us that moves our mission forward, not a mystical trio of zeroes at the end of a date. We can analyze where we've been in mission; look at where we are now—moving out into new places, doing new things; and ponder prayerfully over what our understandings and our actions in the future need to be. But what moves us out of the church doors—what propels us into streets and fields, over oceans, and across continents—is the creative power of God, the redeeming love of Jesus Christ, and the sustaining breath of the Holy Spirit, which bid us to bring the gifts of God to the people of God, everywhere, now and forever.

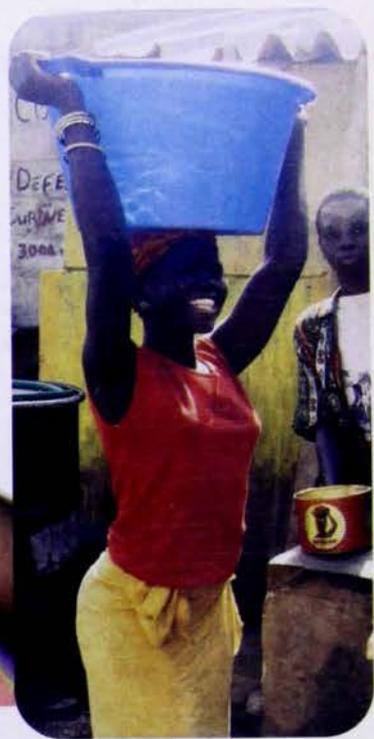
—Alma Graham

New World Outlook

1999-2000 MISSION STUDIES

Mission in the Twenty-First Century

- 4 Mission in the New Millennium**
by Randolph Nugent
- 5 History's Lessons for Methodism in Mission**
by Dana L. Robert
- 10 Christian Mission: The End or a New Beginning?**
by S. Wesley Ariarajah
- 16 The Russia Initiative**
by John Lovelace
- 19 Interview With Bishop Ruediger R. Minor**
- 20 Case Histories: Partner Churches**
by John Lovelace
- 26 Transforming Destruction to Healing in Kazakhstan**
by Robert B. Howerton, Jr.
- 30 Restoring the Church in Cuba**
by Philip Wingeier-Rayo
- 34 Models for New Mission: Cambodia and Senegal**
- 38 Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality**
by Alma Graham

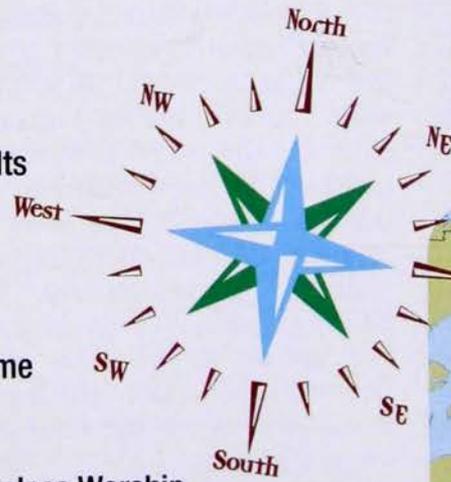


Humanity Comes of Age

- 40 Ideas for Ministry With Older Adults**
by Brenda Connelly

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Editor's Column: Talking About Time**
by Alma Graham
- 15 Mission Memo**
- 44 Wireless Worship**
by Charles Cole
- 45 Bulletin Inserts on Mission**



Mission in the New Millennium

by Randolph Nugent



The excitement being generated at the approach of the millennium has spurred new interest in mission, which is now being renewed on many fronts. New thinking about mission is already in progress, undergirding our widened mission outreach and illuminating our missionary task. Our expectations are high, fueled by new energy; for we are not only ushering in a new year but, in 2001, inaugurating a new century and embarking upon the third millennium of Christ's church. Still, our mission remains the same.

In our missionary outlook, we need to make the most of the opportunities presented at this moment in time. Key new elements that can extend the purview of mission around the globe need to be part of our millennial vision. Many new and different means of communication are available to us today as we seek to enable the proclamation of the Gospel. Additional methods of outreach may help

us reach a larger, more technologically sophisticated population. New strategies may also link us together as a church in a more structured and effective way.

But in our enthusiasm over the opportunity for a renewed and energetic beginning and a reformulation of mission outreach on a grander scale, we must also be wary. Those who believe the new millennium will bring a time of rapid change for the better underestimate the ferocity and power of sin and its counteroffensive skills.

The urgency of the missionary task—the necessity to share the Gospel—is even more compelling than it has been in previous centuries. The capacity of people at ever more local levels of society to control and destroy others is on the increase. Now, too, there are means available to impact the environment and to lay waste to people on a larger scale than ever before. Thus mission in the new millennium must not be seen primarily as a process of funding projects but as a call to a life-changing, life-sharing, life-witnessing, life-bearing outreach. This challenge lies before us all—the entire denomination—not just before those who serve the church as missionaries.

Though we recognize that the need for relief and development will grow incrementally, we should understand that people's greater needs are needs for a life of the spirit. Unless we invite people to become followers of Jesus, disciples of Christ, they cannot comprehend the sustained, abundant life that God is offering them. To do mission faithfully, we will need to transcend our exclusive commitment to our own language, class, gender, race, and status. The words and power for the new day should not be equated with worldly power. Instead, we must give ourselves to Jesus Christ without reserve as we struggle to lift others out of harm's way and into the arms of a loving God.

Though some of our computers might misinterpret the final zeros of the year 2000 as a two-digit code for 1900, we cannot go back to the mission methodology of the past. Still, as the clock chimes and the calendar turns, the fundamental task we were given in Christ's Great Commission continues. That mission task will be carried forward in a different world, enabled by new and different means, but the task itself is now and will be what it always was: to go and make disciples of all nations—to open up the kingdom of God to all. □

A kind
As we
behooves
understan
both the c
dition of A
changing
church, or
the global
where we
Lessons F
Methodis
a healthy
between
through.
good orga
risk-takin
Meth
gelism ha

History's Lessons for Methodism in Mission

by Dana L. Robert



A kindergarten class of a bygone era in Bareilly, India.

As we sit on the edge of a new millennium, it behooves us to ask if past experiences can help us understand our present, despite profound changes in both the church and the world. Can the missionary tradition of American Methodism put into perspective the changing structures for mission, or divisions in the church, or the relationship of our missionary calling to the global dominance of Western culture? How does where we have been affect where we are going?

Lessons From the Past

Methodist mission has flourished when there has been a healthy balance between *expansion and consolidation*, between individual initiative and corporate follow-through. History tells us that, just as stability requires good organization, creative expansion relies on flexible risk-taking and mobilization of individuals with vision.

Methodist mission has also flourished when evangelism has been coupled with strong support of *higher*

education. Ironically, a denomination that began in revivalism became one of the greatest sponsors of educational missions in the world.

Another feature of Methodist mission has been its *pragmatic patriotism*—a willingness to work within existing sociopolitical structures to spread the Gospel. Methodist missions have usually sought change from within rather than supported revolutionary action from without.

Expansion and Consolidation

American Methodism has always lived in the tension between expansion and consolidation, between individual creativity and corporate regulation—or, to put it in theological terms, between the moving of the Holy Spirit and human systems. The watchcry of nineteenth-century Methodism was expansion undergirded by careful organization. Under Bishop Francis Asbury, Methodism spread across the United States so quickly



Missionary John Springer (seated) in the Belgian Congo, 1907. He and his wife, Helen, were founders of Methodism in that land.

and effectively that, by 1850, it comprised 34 percent of the church-going population. A brilliant mission strategist, Asbury perfected a system in which young, itinerant ministers worked the margins of the American population, seeking out the poor, the immigrants, and the frontier folk. All preachers were considered to be missionaries. Methodism was a highly effective missionary movement.

From the 1840s until World War I, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States went global. The most important "foreign" mission before the 1840s was a struggling presence in Liberia, established by antislavery sentiment and the appeals of African American Methodists who had emigrated there. In 1847, the Methodist Episcopal Church entered China and Argentina; Germany in 1849; India, 1856; Japan and Mexico, 1873; Korea, Angola, and Singapore, 1885; Zimbabwe, 1898; the Philippines, 1899; and Congo, 1911. Similarly, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; the Methodist Protestant Church; the

United Brethren in Christ; and the Evangelical Association opened missions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

What reads in the history book like a clear path from Maine to Liberia, or from New York to India, or from Kentucky to California was in reality contested and confusing—and always marked by tensions between grace and order, or between individual innovators and the mission board, or between calls to honor the Spirit and references to *The Book of Discipline*. The people whom we honor today as pioneers—the "saints" of Methodist expansion—were always stretching the system. On the other hand, without organizational support for the experiments of Spirit-led enthusiasts, there would be little sustained work for us to remember today.

Two specific illustrations of this creative though stressful dynamic between expansion and consolidation are the mission of John Stewart to the Wyandots and the mission of John and Helen Springer in the Belgian Congo.

John Stewart and the Wyandots

The mystical voice of God heard by a descendant of slaves catalyzed the founding of the Methodist Missionary Society in 1819-1820. John Stewart (1786-1823), of mixed African and European descent, was born free in Virginia. After joining a Methodist camp meeting in Ohio, he heard God calling in a vision, in the voice of a man and a woman, telling him to preach to the Indians.

Setting off in a northwesterly direction, Stewart sang and preached first to the Delawares, then to the Wyandots. His ministry resulted in the conversion of chiefs, leading women, and others. Rival missionaries quickly appeared on the scene. They accused Stewart of having no credentials from an organized group of Christians. Supported by his converts, Stewart approached the Ohio Annual Conference and requested formal credentials.

Today, John Stewart probably wouldn't pass through an ordination committee. But in 1819, the Ohio Conference recognized his call from God as part of the divine plan for the expansion of Methodism. The conference immediately licensed him, collected money for his work, and appointed a regular missionary to follow with a circuit.

Back in New York City, the leading Methodists heard of Stewart's success and organized the Methodist Missionary Society to raise money for missions and book publishing. Leading women founded the New York Female Missionary Society, which assisted the missionary outreach through fundraising—an idea that quickly spread to Methodist women in Albany, Boston, and other Methodist centers.

It was in 1844 that the General Conference founded a General Missionary Committee to provide

national oversight of appropriations and other matters. This began a process of stabilization whereby missions related to the entire denomination. The most effective period of Methodist expansion followed the founding of permanent centralized structures. Board of Mission secretaries oversaw Methodist work around the world.

The Springers' Work in Congo

In a twentieth century of fixed budgets, pioneers fought to keep expanding the Methodist missions. John (1873-1963) and Helen (1868-1946) Springer were founders of Methodism in the Belgian Congo. Called by the Holy Spirit to found a chain of mission stations across central Africa, the Springers traveled from Zambia to Angola, scouting possible mission locations, despite the disapproval of the mission board. Returning to the United States, they raised so much support and money for a mission in the Congo that the mission board capitulated to public sentiment.

In John and Helen Springer's struggle to establish the Congo Mission, we can see how spiritual

conviction and entrepreneurial success—undergirded by grassroots support—permitted individuals to impact the twentieth-century mission bureaucracy. The noteworthy successes of Methodist missions have often relied on a healthy, if uncomfortable, tension between Spirit inspiration and disciplined follow-up. If we heed the lessons from our history, we must expect missions to be messy, with individual initiative often outrunning the support structures. In many cases, iconoclastic individuals have left the church. In other cases, denominational structures managed to channel the creative energy of pioneers like the Springers.

Mission Education

A second enduring theme in the history of Methodist missions is support for higher education. A connection between evangelism and education is precisely what fueled Methodist expansion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At first glance, support of educational institutions seems a peculiar emphasis for a movement whose strength was drawn from

the anti-intellectual climate of revivalism. Hostility against formal education for clergy continued on a popular level well into the twentieth century. Yet by 1844, American Methodism had established 13 colleges; and by 1897, the Methodist Episcopal Church alone was sponsoring 54 colleges and universities in the United States. By the turn of the century, American Methodists were busy establishing nascent colleges in China, Japan, Korea, Latin America, and India.

In addition to concerns for the education of clergy, Methodism committed itself to liberal arts education for broad segments of its target populations. Methodist identity has rested on an optimistic view of human capabilities combined with faith in the democratic potential of educated people. By the 1880s, there was a core group of Methodist missionaries in Asia who had themselves been educated in Methodist colleges. These missionaries naturally saw education as a source of their own advancement, and they began working toward founding colleges in Asia.

Another reason for the strong Methodist support of higher education in foreign missions was the active women's movement in the church. Since women typically could not be ordained, unmarried women became missionary-teachers, founding schools for girls in which they hoped to convert them as well as advance women's place in society through education. Methodist women founded the first colleges for women in Asia, including Ewha Women's University of Korea, now the largest woman's university in the world. By 1910, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was supporting the largest number of teachers and more schools and colleges than any other women's missionary organization.



Former students and faculty of Isabella Thoburn College in Lucknow, India.

The growth of educational, medical, and other social-service institutions in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century missions was the direct result of Methodist women's passionate and tireless advocacy of foreign missions.

Case Study: Fuzhou, China

Fuzhou, China, where Methodists founded their first college outside the United States, is an important case study of the struggle within the church over founding higher educational institutions that offered secular learning. Not only was Fuzhou the site of the first Chinese annual conference and Methodism's first mission college, but the first Methodist girls' boarding school in Asia began there and grew into the first college for women in all of China.

In 1881, Chinese pastors in the new Fuzhou Annual Conference petitioned for the mission to found a men's college. An unbaptized Chinese businessman donated

\$10,000 for purchasing the property on the condition that the college teach English. Not having time to consult the mission board in New York, a committee of missionaries accepted the money and formed a board of trustees. This decision instantly polarized the mission force, both male and female. At that time, the vast majority of missionaries of all denominations in China opposed the teaching of English, believing it would cause the Chinese to become denationalized and take jobs in the public sector rather than in the church.

The recriminations between the Chinese pastors and the missionaries who opposed the college reached all the way to the next General Conference. But the Anglo-Chinese College had begun anyway in 1881. Methodists in Fuzhou were thus ahead of virtually every other mission in China in the teaching of English and of advanced Western scientific subjects. By the time that the Second General Missionary Conference of China met, Methodists had nearly a decade of experience in the matter.

Pragmatic Patriotism

A third enduring feature of American Methodism's approach to missions has been its pragmatic patriotism. Twenty years ago, I was told that there was no use studying Methodism—it merely mimicked middle-class American culture. With other mainline churches, Methodism stood accused of being mere "culture Christianity." Scholars now realize that the largest and most popular Protestant denomination in the nineteenth century helped to create middle-class culture and form American identity, not just reflect it.

Missions have extended Methodism's pragmatic patriotism to global issues. In most situations, Methodism has compromised or

cooperated with worldly powers for the sake of continuing its mission work. Although Methodism has produced its share of prophets, its usual stance has been to push for change within political realities.

Case Study: India

American Methodists first entered India in 1856, founding churches, orphanages, hospitals, and excellent schools for both boys and girls. During World War I, Indian patriots began agitating for home rule within the British Empire. The colonial government reacted with brutality. During a protest against martial law on April 13, 1919, British troops opened fire, killing 400 and wounding 1200. The following year, the Hindu nationalist Mohandas Gandhi launched his famous non-cooperation campaign against the colonial government. Basing his program on the teachings of Christ, Gandhi steadfastly pursued a program of pacifist civil disobedience.

From World War I on, all non-British missionaries were forced to take oaths of allegiance to the British government as the price of working in India. Methodist missionaries were torn between their desire for political stability in which to do their work and their belief in democracy and human dignity. Fearing the expulsion of the entire mission from the country, the denomination publicly maintained its loyalty to the British government. For some missionaries, however, the missionary pledge created a crisis of conscience, as they supported Indian nationalism but maintained silence on political issues for the sake of working for change from within.

Evangelist E. Stanley Jones was a friend of Gandhi and firm supporter of Indian independence. By engaging in dialogue with Hindus and Muslims and by supporting Christian nationalists, he did what



Bishop Bashford, Alice Lacy, and Dr. and Mrs. W. H. Lacy: Shanghai, China, 1907. Dr. Lacy argued for the teaching of English in a mission college in Fuzhou.



Another Methodist, Frederick Bohn Fisher, was elected one of four bishops for India in 1920. Unable to support nationalism publicly without breaking the pledge, Fisher pushed indigenization in the church by lobbying for the election of an Indian bishop. In 1930, he resigned his bishopric to make way for Jashwant Chitambar, Methodism's first Indian bishop. Then, after Frederick Fisher left India, at last he was able publicly to become an ardent defender of independence for India.



By World War II, only five of the American Methodist missionaries in India—not counting Jones and Fisher—had made public stands against the British government and had been expelled. Elsewhere, too, pragmatic patriotism has been the chief stance of the Methodist missions toward world issues. Methodism's strong sense of public responsibility has not typically resulted in radical action but in solutions such as pragmatic cooperation, education for justice, and legislative initiatives.

Initiators, Not Recipients

What are history's lessons for Methodism in mission in the twenty-first century? In the past, Methodist mission has flourished where there has been a healthy balance between expansion and consolidation and where there has been a strong commitment to higher education. Another feature of past mission has been pragmatic patriotism, a pushing for change within current political realities.

Looking back, there is another lesson to be learned. Mission has flourished when ethnic minorities, women, and indigenous Christians have been *initiators rather than objects of mission*. The Ohio Conference answered the African American John Stewart's call for help with his Wyandot converts. Chinese pastors, businessmen, and American missionaries worked in partnership to launch Methodist higher education in Asia. Methodist women supported missions when they could set their own priorities and send their own personnel, even as the first expenditures made by the Woman's Foreign Missionary society in 1869 went to support indigenous women workers. Wherever John and Helen Springer pioneered, they discovered individual African Christians already there who requested their assistance and became their allies.

The church becomes inclusive when people are considered partners rather than objects. Being a mission *of* the people is significantly different from being a mission *to* the people.

Finally, history's lessons for Methodism in mission show that the greatest thing to fear is not making mistakes but losing one's Gospel calling. The lines of mission history are messy and convoluted rather than pure and straight. Compromises and disagreements abound. The "pearl of great price" has been carried in clay vessels. Yet even when the clay cracks and breaks, the lustrous pearl retains its value, radiating grace and beauty throughout the world. □

Dana L. Robert is Professor of International Mission at the Boston University School of Theology. She is author of American Women in Mission and coauthor of Christianity: A Social and Cultural History.



Advocates of Indian independence: (Top) Mohandas Gandhi. (Middle) E. Stanley Jones, banned from India during World War II. (Above) Bishop Frederick Bohn Fisher, who resigned so an Indian bishop could succeed him.

he could for nationalism without overtly breaking the missionary pledge. A pacifist, Jones believed that his work in reforming character and communicating the underlying principles of democracy was more valuable than publicly chastising the British. The colonial government finally banned him from India during World War II.



Christian Mission: The End or a New Beginning?

by S. Wesley Ariarajah

In order for us to arrive at a credible and meaningful understanding of mission as we stand at the threshold of a new millennium, I believe there need to be four important "shifts" in our mission thinking. These shifts would take us from an exclusive to an inclusive understanding of God's mission, from a focus on conversion to a ministry of healing, from the intention to be the majority to a willingness to be a minority, and from an insistence on doctrinal conformity to a search for an authentic Christian spiritual life.

From Exclusive to Inclusive

Are we in mission because God is *absent* in the world or because God is *present* in it? If God is active and present in the world to bring it unto Godself, does God use forces other than us in the healing of the world?

When the first World Mission Conference was called to order in Edinburgh in 1910, mission was seen primarily as the work of *individual Christians* who had formed missionary societies to make their task more effective. But by the third World Mission Conference in Tambaram, Madras, in 1938, the emphasis changed to an advocacy of *the church* as the primary agent of mission. Soon mission was seen as the basic rationale of the church.

With the integration of the missionary movement into the World

Council of Churches, the emphasis changed again. At the first meeting of the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in Mexico City in 1963, the concept of the *mission of God* emerged as a primary paradigm of mission.

This shift from the "mission of the church" to the "mission of God" places the mission concern in the Trinitarian life of God and helps to put many things into perspective. First, it sets forth the primary motive of mission as the love of God toward all of God's creation. Second, this shift understands the church as an instrument in the hand of God, participating in God's mission for God's own purposes. The church does not justify the existence of mission, but the mission of God justifies the existence of the church. The church is called to participate in the movement of God's love toward people.

Third, the concept of the mission of God in the world enables us to make sense of all the creative and healing activities that do not come under the umbrella of the church. This understanding enables us to join hands with all who are committed to the cause of justice for the poor. It helps us to affirm the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of those who do not bear the name we bear. It opens up a new awareness of God's presence and activity in the religious life of our neighbors.

To me, contemporary in the East, the virtue that has churches, kind of nineteenth centuries. The however, in most of it is an un that divid world into 'unsaved,' on the nu church, an common c and forces dom and mission ap end. It is, reconceive based on mission of

An Example I am from south of I people. S population cent is Hinduity account the whole

Opposite, religion Hindu, an nets on the a slum in

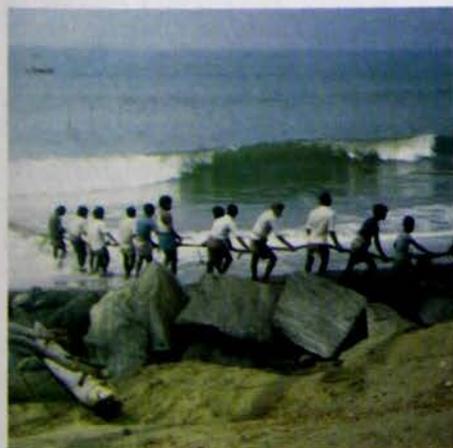


To me, it appears that complex contemporary developments, both in the East and the West, along with the virtual missionary paralysis that has befallen the mainline churches, point to the end of the kind of mission envisaged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That paradigm of mission, however, has remained dominant in most of our churches to this day. It is an understanding of mission that divides the peoples of the world into the "saved" and the "unsaved," that puts its emphasis on the numerical increase of the church, and that would not make common cause with other peoples and forces striving "for the kingdom and its righteousness." This mission appears to me to be at its end. It is, therefore, important to reconceive an *inclusive* mission based on a new discussion of the mission of God.

An Example From Sri Lanka

I am from Sri Lanka, a small island south of India of some 16 million people. Sixty-five percent of the population is Buddhist and 18 percent is Hindu. The Christian minority accounts for only 6.8 percent of the whole and is divided into many

Opposite, p. 10: Some of the faces of religion in Sri Lanka: Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist. Below: Pulling in nets on the shore. Right: Children living in a slum in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.



confessions and denominations. The chief problem facing Sri Lanka is an armed conflict between the island's two major ethnic groups.

If one were to conduct a survey among the churches with the question: "What constitutes the mission of the church in Sri Lanka today," a majority would no doubt answer: "The church's mission is to preach the Gospel and to bring the Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims to Christ." However, most people are well aware that only a small fraction of these Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims would be open to the Christian message to the point of accepting Christ and becoming part of the church. The history of missions in Sri Lanka bears this out.

At the theological level, we have to affirm that God—whom we know in Jesus Christ as one who seeks to redeem all of life from the forces of death—is also in Sri Lanka. We have to affirm that God participates in the sufferings of the people; that God loves and heals them; and that God is working in them to bring about a just peace.

Most Christians in Sri Lanka, however, would not readily discern

or acknowledge God's presence except in an activity in which Christians are engaged or one aimed at making Christians of people. The suggestion that God may be calling them for a healing and reconciling mission *alongside* Buddhists and Hindus, rather than for the mission of making *Christians* out of Buddhists and Hindus, would offend them.

Three factors, which have not been seen in their interrelationship, thus contribute to the missionary paralysis of the church in Sri Lanka: the church's conviction that its missionary task lies in making all the people of Sri Lanka Christians; the reality that Sri Lanka, in the foreseeable future, would remain a Buddhist-Hindu country; and the inability of the church to affirm God's presence in the lives of Buddhists, Hindus, and others.

Christians can only be engaged in mission because of their belief that God so loves the world that God is *already* in a mission of healing and of reconciling the world unto Godself. Christians witness this truth because of what they have experienced of God through



their participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. In the power of the Holy Spirit, they are also called to demonstrate what a healed and reconciled community can be and what the demands of discipleship are in our world.

From Conversion to Healing

Some years ago, a Hindu in India told me that, while Hindus admire Jesus for his teaching, life, and spirituality, they have a real problem with conversion. "Conversion—in the sense of dragging a person from one community to another—is not the aim of Christian mission," I said. "Most Christians believe that conversion is what God does in people's lives. Christians believe that God's forgiving love is offered to all people in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and that, by believing in him and becoming part of the community, they participate in this new life."

"I don't understand this," my Hindu friend responded. "The love and forgiveness of God are also in Hinduism. Why should one move from one community to the other to receive God's forgiveness? God is everywhere, in everyone's life?"

I recall this incident to indicate the second "shift" that I believe

needs to take place in a new paradigm on mission—a move away from conversion to healing.

The call to repentance (to a life oriented toward God and one's neighbor), and to healing, teaching, and casting out evil spirits constituted the mission and ministry of Christ. No doubt the idea of conversion, through which one became part of the community, is present in the Acts of the Apostles. Rightly understood, *conversion* can have rich meaning, referring to the transforming activity of the Spirit in our lives. But it is misunderstood among peoples of other faiths because of missions that place the emphasis on gathering converts.

The words that can truly capture the mission that the church needs to engage in with God are *healing, wholeness, and reconciliation*. The word *healing* has a connotation that goes beyond physical well-being to spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions. The intention of healing is to bring all of life to what God intends it to be.

Some would argue that the emphasis on healing moves away from the traditional word in mission, *salvation*. Jesus is the Savior of the world. Conversion is necessary because one participates in salvation by believing in him.

In more recent mission discussions, there is less insistence on the unqualified affirmation that there is no salvation outside the act of becoming part of the Christian community. The report of the World Mission Conference at San Antonio, Texas, in 1989, shows some signs of a new willingness on the part of Christians to do fresh thinking on this issue. While affirming the belief that salvation is offered to all through Christ and that our mission to witness to Christ can never be given up, San Antonio confessed that there is a tension between our call to such witness and our affirmation about "God being at work in people of other faiths."

If there is to be a genuine shift in the missionary paradigm for a new period ahead, it has to do with our attempt to resolve this tension.

From Majority to Minority

To some, the goal of mission is to make everyone accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, because otherwise they would be lost. It is natural that this thinking persists, because much of Protestant missiology took shape before the shift to the concept of the mission of God and within a theology that saw no possibility of a life in God through other faith traditions. The intention to be the majority also comes from the imperial and colonial history of the church. Political power held the possibility of Christianity's becoming the religion of all people.

In the Old Testament, there is no anxiety that the people of God should be extended to include all nations. On the contrary, there is greater interest that the small nation of Israel should remain faithful to Yahweh. Israel—despite the fact that it is small, weak, and often overcome and scattered—is called to be a "light to the nations" and to "live out the righteousness of God among the nations."





Top: Terraced rice paddies in the Sri Lankan countryside. Above: A Buddhist monk.

Various perspectives on mission can be drawn from the New Testament. The passage in Matthew on going out into the world and making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20) confirms what mission eventually became after the earthly life of Jesus. In his own mission, however, Jesus appears to shun any attempts to form a community that would rival his own Jewish community. He insisted that

only a few would find the narrow path that leads to life. Jesus also spoke of the community that has come under the reign of God as a lamp that is put on a lampstand or a city that is set on a hill. The essence of such a community is its willingness to be a minority. Its missionary vocation includes its willingness to live a vicarious life on behalf of others.

It is in this context that the Protestant community's anxiety about souls' being "lost," its activism in wanting to convert the world to Christ, its self-flagellation about the lack of interest in evangelism in its churches, its sense of defeatism when other religions increase in their numbers, and its triumphalism about the little advances it is making in Africa and Asia in adding more members for the church—let me be honest here—is quite troubling.

What is troubling is the assumption that the success or the

failure of mission can be quantified. It is troubling because every Christian, at least in my part of the world, lives and dies with a sense of guilt for not having made Christians of their immediate neighbors. It is troubling because it discounts the many other ways and means by which God can and does draw the world unto Godself.

We need to learn to be at home as a minority mission community whose life is rooted in God and whose life is lived in, for, and on behalf of the world.

From Doctrinal to Spiritual

Some years ago, I asked a Hindu Brahmin young man for his view of Jesus. He wrote in answer: "Deeply attracted as I was by the ideal of the Hindu *sannyasin* (monk), I was able to immediately see in Jesus many of the qualities of this ideal. Here also was a wandering spiritual teacher without home or possessions, fired by the true spirit of renunciation



(*vairagya*). Here also was one who spoke with authority about the limitations and futility of a life spent solely in the selfish accumulation of wealth (*artha*) and transitory sense enjoyment (*kama*)...."

What initially attracted him in the personality of Jesus, he continued, was "the embodiment in him of what I consider to be, from my Hindu viewpoint, the ideals and values of the authentic spiritual life." To this Hindu, the challenge that Jesus presents is clear. It is for an authentic spiritual life that is centered in God and that moves away from an ego-centered view and pursuit of life.

We live in a period of history in which there is an intense search for meaning and for authentic spiritual life. In a civilization that is being built on confidence in wealth and power, one that is rife with violence, there is a quest for the forces of reconciliation at all levels of life. The new thinking on mission can never emerge and become part of mainline thinking if we seek to fit new perspectives into the theological and doctrinal presuppositions of bygone centuries. New wine needs new wineskins. (Luke 5:38)

Conclusion
As part of the search for a new paradigm on mission, I have suggested four important shifts that should take place within mainline missiology: from exclusive to inclusive, from

conversion to healing, from majority to minority, and from doctrinal to spiritual. A genuine breakthrough would happen only when such shifts become part of the missionary perceptions in our churches.

If Christian mission is about participation in the mission of God, perhaps no other aspect of our Christian discipleship calls for greater discernment and greater willingness to change and to be led into new ways of thinking and being. It is precisely at the time of the restoration of Israel after the painful experience of exile that God also tells the Israelites not to think as they have always thought or to expect things to be as they have always been. "Do not remember the former things, or consider the

things of old," God says in Isaiah 43:18-19. "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

What we appear to need in our day are signposts for a new mission that would still be a mission about Jesus Christ and what God has done among us in him. □

S. Wesley Ariarajah, a Methodist minister from Sri Lanka, is Professor of Ecumenical Theology at the Drew University School of Theology, Madison, New Jersey.



Clockwise from top right: Dr. S. Wesley Ariarajah. A Sri Lankan woman and child. The Kollupitiya Methodist Church in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

MIS
Russia Init
The Russia
sultation in
speaker to
pants that
don't mere
Rich Goo
Conference
surprise to
we went
received th
Billington,
books and
Billington
age visits to
Russian lea
Iliff Semina
the consult
United Me
States and
Moscow. T
24 current
the hope of
United Me
adopt a spe
lion for the
Response
Money to h
expelled fr
ed, accordi
bishop for
Methodist
ing to the K
and Monte
(Action by
includes fo
medical su
gifts to U
#982450-8,
church co
Riverside
UMCOR D
donating h
Flooding i
The worst
some tow
country in
ple homele
Inhamban

MISSION MEMO

Russia Initiative Consultation

The Russia Initiative held its seventh international consultation in Dallas, Texas, February 25-27. Speaker after speaker told the 250 American and Russian participants that United Methodists from other countries don't merely go to Russia once—they go back. The Rev. Rich Goodrich, who heads the Texas Annual Conference work in Tomsk, Siberia, said: "The biggest surprise to the people in Tomsk was not the first time we went but the second." The Russia Initiative received the blessings of keynote speaker James H. Billington, US Librarian of Congress and author of books and a TV series on Russian history and culture. Billington suggested that United Methodists encourage visits to the United States by the new generation of Russian leaders. The Rev. Donald Messer, president of Iliff Seminary in Denver, was another key speaker at the consultation. Iliff is the central link between the 13 United Methodist-related seminaries in the United States and the Russia United Methodist Seminary in Moscow. The Russian seminary now has 16 graduates, 24 current students (two-thirds of them women), and the hope of finding a permanent home. Messer urged United Methodists to petition General Conference to adopt a special quadrennial emphasis to raise \$21 million for the Russian church and seminary.

Response to Kosovo Emergency

Money to help feed and shelter ethnic Albanian refugees expelled from Kosovo is desperately and quickly needed, according to Heinrich Bolleter, United Methodist bishop for Central and Southern Europe. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is responding to the Kosovo refugee crisis in Macedonia, Albania, and Montenegro through an ecumenical partner, ACT (Action by Churches Together). Immediate assistance includes food, water, cooking utensils, bedding, tents, medical supplies, and sanitation facilities. Designate gifts to UMCOR's International Disaster Response, #982450-8, for "Kosovo Emergency." Place checks in church collection plates or mail to UMCOR, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 330, NY, NY 10115. Call the UMCOR Depot at 1-800-814-8765 for information about donating health kits and Medicine Boxes.

Flooding in Mozambique

The worst flooding in Mozambique in 40 years turned some towns in the central and southern parts of the country into virtual islands and left about 40,000 people homeless. The main route to Chicique Hospital in Inhambane was closed because of road damage.

Bishop João Machado reported that mosquitoes and the lack of clean drinking water are causing outbreaks of malaria and cholera. The bishop has requested \$25,000 from UMCOR for food, shelter, medicines, and road repairs. Donations can be designated to UMCOR Advance #156500, "Mozambique Emergency."

DEATHS **Uniola Adams**, retired Women's Division missionary with 33 years of service in China and Liberia, died November 3, 1998...**Burr H. Baughman**, retired missionary with 43 years of service in Malaysia, died December 3, 1998...**Elizabeth Bandel**, retired Women's Division missionary with 17 years of service in Japan, died December 7, 1998...**Evelyn McClean**, retired Women's Division missionary with 16 years of service in China and Malaysia, died December 17, 1998...**Tae Young Lee**, the first female lawyer in Korea, winner of the World Methodist Council's Peace Award, died December 17, 1998...**Ivan H. Nothdurft**, retired missionary with 12 years of service in Peru and Bolivia, died December 31, 1998...**Marian F. Weppeler**, retired missionary with 5 years of service in Bolivia, died January 8, 1999...**Rose Waldron**, retired Women's Division missionary with 43 years of service in Japan, died January 18, 1999...**Frederick Maitland**, retired missionary with 20 years of service in Brazil, died January 19, 1999...**Bess L. Persson**, retired missionary with 16 years of service with the Women's Division and 2 years of service with the World Division in South Africa, died January 20, 1999...**Cora Lee Glenn**, retired deaconess with 42 years of service in the Southeastern United States, died January 24, 1999...**Arthur L. Mansure**, retired missionary with 8 years of service in Zimbabwe, died February 5, 1999...**Leah I. Hatrick**, retired missionary with 5 years of service in Korea and the Philippines, died February 6, 1999...**Bethany E. Routh**, retired Women's Division missionary with 13 years of service in Brazil, died February 9, 1999...**Verna W. Willis**, retired deaconess with 15 years of service in the United States, died February 9, 1999...**Fred C. Wray**, retired missionary with 39 years of service in India, died February 10, 1999...**Eunice W. Duncan**, retired missionary with 12 years of service in the Philippines, died February 12, 1999...**Elizabeth L. Roby**, retired missionary with 4 years of service in Nigeria, died February 16, 1999...**Florence R. Ford**, retired Women's Division missionary with 17 years of service in Brazil, died March 1, 1999...**Deena M. Umbarger**, consultant for UMCOR in Kenya, was shot and killed on the Kenya-Somalia border on March 20, 1999, a week before her 36th birthday. □

THE RUSSIA INITIATIVE

BY JOHN LOVELACE



The World Almanac and Book of Facts identifies the chief religions of Russia as "Russian Orthodox, Muslim, and others."

Since 1991, United Methodists have been a lively and growing part of the amorphous "others." The Russia United Methodist Church—officially registered by the Russian government in 1995 and re-registered in January 1999—is part of the church's new Eurasia Area, which has its own episcopal leader, Bishop Ruediger R. Minor.

The Russia UMC has provisional status as the Russia Annual Conference, giving it certain rights of self-determination, such as ordination of clergy, as it moves toward permanent status in the global United Methodist Church. It has about 60 congregations slated to register with the government by the end of 1999. United Methodist congregations and fellowships are found in at least 22 Russian cities, with several sites for new development having been identified. In fact, the Russia UMC plans to purchase and refurbish a building in Moscow to house the Russia United Methodist Seminary, which the church supports and which is assisted by an advisory committee that represents the 13 United Methodist seminaries in the United States. And it has hosted some 3500 United Methodists from the United States—many more than once—for endeavors ranging from prayer vigils to sweat-labor construction projects.

The main propulsion for these and other successes in a land where Methodism had been forced underground for seventy years by the Communist regime is a unique program named the Russia Initiative.

A Call to Action

In 1992, the Rev. R. Bruce Weaver was on the road to retirement after a stint as interim director of the United Methodist Committee on

Relief (U...
had inclu...
manent...
gry, fear...
1990s.

Base...
ences, W...
retireme...
new Ru...
descripti...
of Glob...
amounte...
in resp...
General...
told him...
give us a...

Since...
23 more...
ken abou...
of the 50...
Initiative...
his travel...
his uncom...
commitm...
specific...
participat...

The...
three wa...
in the U...
involved...
Supporti...
Churches

Supp...
vidually...
provide...
program...
some de...
Methodi...
The Russ...
the US a...
Supporti...
ed to m...
ment to...
support...
church d...

Part...
Methodi...
districts...
the Unit...
in a re...
Belarus,

Relief (UMCOR). That assignment had included four trips to the "permanent disaster" that was the hungry, fearful Russia of the early 1990s.

Based partly on those experiences, Weaver was asked to delay retirement and to head his church's new Russia Initiative. His job description from the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) amounted to a clarion call for action in response to need. Deputy General Secretary Robert Harman told him essentially: "Go do it and give us a report each quarter."

Since then, Weaver has made 23 more trips to Russia and has spoken about the Russia Initiative in 36 of the 50 US states. But the Russia Initiative grows not so much out of his travels or his speeches as out of his uncompromising insistence on a commitment to mission and a time-specific volunteer response by participating United Methodists.

The Russia Initiative offers three ways that United Methodists in the United States can be directly involved in hands-on ministries: as Supportive Congregations, Partner Churches, and Volunteers in Mission.

Supportive Congregations (individually or in clusters) covenant to provide \$300 in salary and \$200 in program expenses each month for some designated Russian United Methodist churches and pastors. The Russia Initiative office connects the US and Russian churches. Each Supportive Congregation is expected to make a three-year commitment to the program, including support for evangelism by Russian church districts.

Partner Churches are United Methodist congregations, clusters, districts, and annual conferences in the United States that agree to work in a region of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, or Kazakhstan where there

is as yet no United Methodist presence. The purpose of the Partner Church program is the development of personal relationships, cultural exchanges, and humanitarian aid projects—and, if feasible, the establishment of a United Methodist church. In most Partner Church linkages, Russian citizens also visit the United States.

United Methodist Volunteer-in-Mission teams (UMVIMs) find work opportunities in orphanages, clinics, hospitals, and other ministry sites. They may make one or more trips to the same site.

The Russia Initiative Begins

What, Weaver was asked, motivates United Methodists in the United States to enter into partnership with Russians? He dates his answer to 1991, the year the GBGM's two top officials—Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn, then Board President, and the Rev. Dr. Randolph Nugent, the General Secretary—conducted a fact-finding tour of Russia and concluded that there was both the need and the opportunity for United Methodist mission there.

"The Berlin Wall had fallen," Weaver says. "The Cold War had ended. The Communist government had decayed, and the country was collapsing from within. The people were bereft and emotionally bankrupt, hungry, and cold."

"Many American Christians, including some Methodists, viewed this as an opportunity to 'convert those Communists to Jesus,'" Weaver added. "But Jesus was already in Russia. In fact, the Russian Orthodox Church had celebrated its first millennium in 1988."

In 1991, the time was ripe for a rebirth of Christianity in Russia. And Methodists, whose ancestors in faith had been there in the nineteenth century, were ready and

eager to return. "Methodists have always responded to Matthew 25 and 28 to serve human need and make disciples of all nations," Weaver noted. "Those verses have meant more to me than any other during my years with the Russia Initiative. We respond out of a sense of being a part of the global church."

"The problem was to move from the novelty of just *going* to Russia to *being there* as witnesses for Jesus Christ. So our ministry was transitional, ranging from mass efforts at evangelism to the quiet, compassionate witness of sharing bread, thanks to millions of dollars in humanitarian aid."

Partnerships Develop

In 1992, Bishop Minor and Weaver met in Samara (in southwestern Russia; see map, p. 21) with pastors of 13 Russia United Methodist churches and fellowships. Most of the pastors were young, newly converted to Christianity, and without financial support.

"I approached them with the Supportive Congregation idea," Weaver recalls. "I said: 'You name the churches needing help, and I'll find a partner.' This would address the financial need. But it didn't address another concern. People had been calling me wanting to do hands-on ministries in Russia."

"From Samara, I made an eight-hour trip to Saratov, where there was no Methodist presence. I met with the local branch of the Russian Peace Foundation and offered them the Partner Church idea. 'What if teams from the United States came to your city,' I asked, 'and together you and they decided on the needs in your city? Then a covenant to work together could be arranged for several years. The visiting teams could also invite you to the United States, because mission is a two-way street.' And I



Top: Bishop Ruediger Minor ordains Russian pastor Elena A. Stepanova (1995). Above: Associate pastor Elena Tischenko (left) and the Rev. Betsy Bauer of Little Rock, AR, with a model of the now completed Return to Christ UMC in Ekaterinburg. Page 16: The Orthodox Cathedral in the Kremlin, Moscow.

said other teams of volunteers might come for short periods and repair local orphanages, clinics, and other facilities. They were interested. That was the start of the Partner Church program.

"The idea of people coming as volunteers was hard for the Russians to comprehend. They had been brought up to believe that the state told people what to do. But they were intrigued."

In 1993, a team from Highland Park UMC in Dallas made the first Partner Church trip to Saratov. This was an interesting test, Weaver says, in linking affluent United Methodists in the United States with Russians in dire poverty. But together they proved that partnership is a sharing. In 1995, a United Methodist church in Saratov was organized. Highland Park continues as a Supportive Congregation to that church and as a Partner Church to the Saratov Russian Peace Foundation.

Distinctive Contributions

Bishop Minor has identified the Russia Initiative's distinctive contributions in this way: "Groups from *Supportive Congregations* have strengthened the ministry to our local congregations. *Partner Church* teams have continued to build an atmosphere of friendship and of better understanding between our nations. The *UMVIM* teams have shared their skills—and, most importantly, have shared the love of God in social projects. Please pray for and help us in this new branch of the Methodist movement."

With Bishop Minor, the three GBGM officials who are closest to the program—General Secretary Randolph Nugent, Deputy General Secretary Robert Harman, and Dr. Weaver—celebrated the Russian government's re-registration of the Russia United Methodist Church in January. This re-registration, they said, provides unlimited opportunities for the denomination's eight-year-old Russia Initiative to expand its model for future ministries elsewhere in the world.

The Global Ministries officials also recognized supportive efforts by other United Methodist agencies that participate in the Russia Initiative. Among them are the Council of Bishops; the general boards of Higher Education and Ministry, Church and Society, and Discipleship; the General Council on Ministries; the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns; the 13 United Methodist seminaries; the United Methodist Publishing House; and United Methodist Communications. □

John Lovelace is Editor Emeritus of The United Methodist Reporter. In 1998, he was inducted into the United Methodist Communicators (UMAC) Hall of Fame.

Re-registering in Russia

The Russia United Methodist Church was re-registered in January, allowing it to continue to open local congregations in all parts of the Russian Federation as well as to use the word *Russia* in its name. Re-registration, made necessary by a 1997 Russian law, affirms that the Russia United Methodist Church is a centralized *religious organization*, with full rights to conduct public activities. By contrast, members of a *religious group* have only the right of private exercise of their faith.

What separates one category from the other, explained Bishop Ruediger R. Minor, is the requirement that a *religious organization* has to have been in existence in Russia for at least 15 years. The 1997 law also restricts the use of the words *Russia* and *Russian* to organizations that have existed in Russia for at least 50 years.

The United Methodist application for re-registration included documentation from archives in St. Petersburg citing the existence of Methodism in Russia in the nineteenth century. A Methodist, B.A. Carlson, organized a small congregation in St. Petersburg in 1889. In 1907, the Rev. George A. Simons was appointed pastor. Police informers came to Simons' sermons and lectures as spies. They also arrested Methodist lay preachers for their supposed "propagandistic" work. Even so, by 1909, the Methodist Church in Russia had won legal status. Ironically, the "sufferings and hardships of those mothers and fathers in the faith turned out to be a blessing for their spiritual grandchildren," Minor pointed out, for early records of police harassment "gave ample proof of Methodism's existence [in Russia] more than 90 years ago."

INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP RUEDIGER R. MINOR



Bishop Ruediger Minor is the episcopal leader of the Eurasia Area of The United Methodist Church. Based in Moscow, he oversees United Methodist work in the Commonwealth of Independent States, which includes most of the former Soviet

Union. Born into a Methodist family in East Germany,

which enjoyed greater religious freedom than other Communist countries, Minor was elected Bishop of the East Germany Central Conference in 1986. When the two Germany central conferences merged in 1992, the Council of Bishops invited him to help in the redevelopment of Methodism in Russia. Excerpts from my January interview with the bishop follow.

—Alma Graham, Editor.

Methodism did not go into Russia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but Methodists returned to Russia. Methodist work started in Russia in the late nineteenth century when the Russian Orthodox Church was even more visible than it is today. So it was a question of coexistence of Christian communities. I personally believe that the church always has existed in plurality.

The Russia United Methodist Church is convinced that it has a mission and that it owes the Christian message to *all* the people, including the Russian people. We did not come to *compete* with the other group but with the concept of working *alongside* other groups.

My goal is not to have as many United Methodist churches or members as possible but to have as many people as possible who have found a personal relationship with the Christian faith. In my conversations with Russian people, including local authorities, I've been told: "There is something special about your Methodist groups. First, these people are ready to *listen*. The others come and tell us what we have to do, but the Methodists listen. And secondly, they come back—unlike the many "hit-and-run" evangelists. Methodism went back to Russia with a determination to stay.

Where the Lutherans say with Martin Luther, "Here I stand," we say with John Wesley, "Here I stay."

One basic principle of witness and evangelism for me is freedom. The basic difference between genuine evangelism and proselytism is this: Proselytism is trying to win followers for my cause. True evangelism is the winning of disciples for Jesus Christ. It is not that we are recruiting people but that the Lord gives grace to help us bring this person into a relationship with God.

There are a lot of issues that we should address together—a lot of possibilities for partnership and sharing. What happens between the United Methodists in the United States and other Western countries and those in Russia is not charity—not giving from the surplus. It's really sharing. People are giving from what they could use themselves.

The Finnish United Methodist Church had started some humanitarian work in northwest Russia among the Vepsa. Elderly members of this ethnic group speak a Finno-Ugric language, but the younger

ones don't. The Finnish Methodists said: "We would like not only to give them charitable goods but to share the Gospel with them. But most people there speak Russian." So they invited the Russia UMC to join them. People from the United States gave money so that church people from St. Petersburg could travel to the Vepsa's region. When these Russians came back to their churches in St. Petersburg, they said: "Friends, our lives are not very nice, but it's much harder there." And they collected money to buy food and collected toys for the children. They went back, sharing the Gospel and sharing their earthly possessions in an area where, for miles around, there are no churches. And people accepted the faith and were baptized. This spirit of sharing is one of the most hopeful signs.

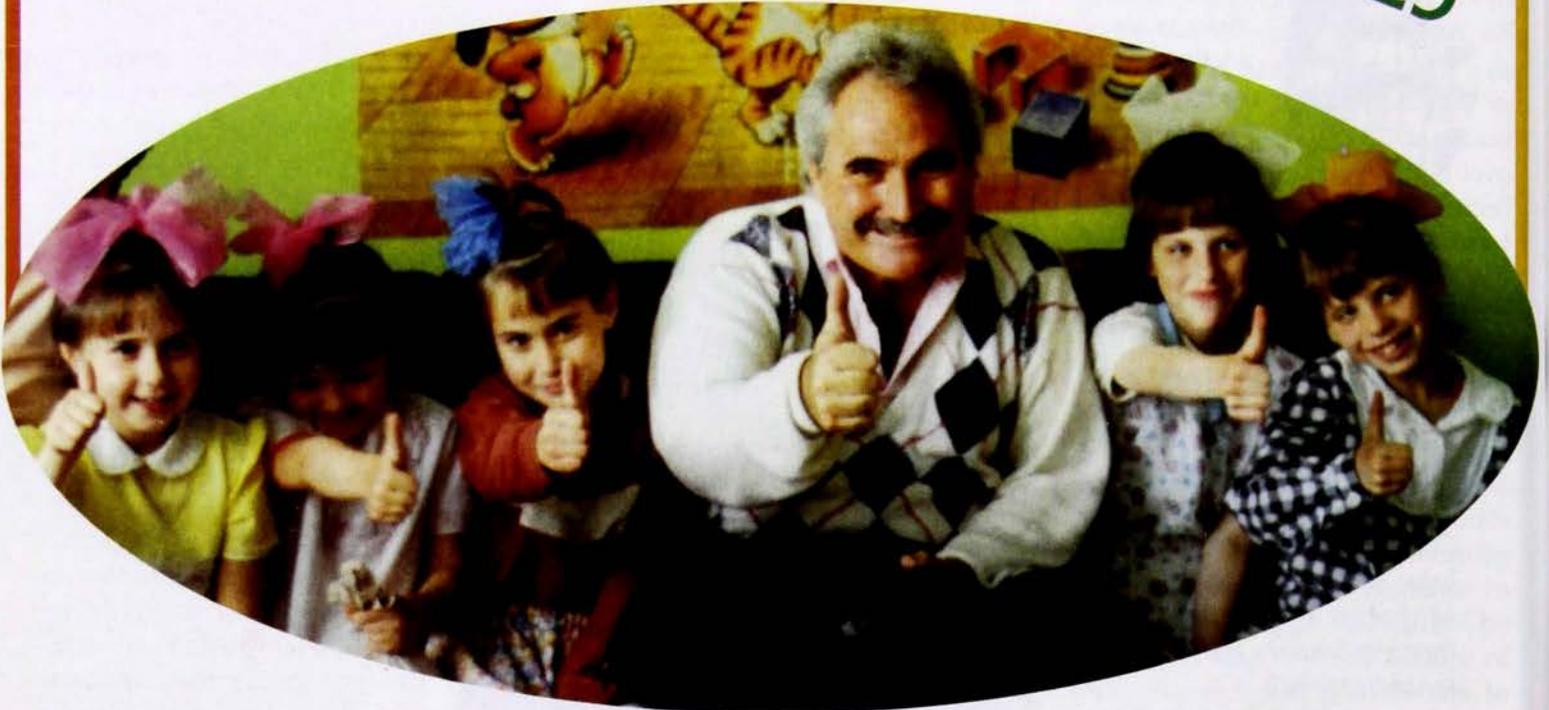
One of the ways to share is through the Millennium Fund. It was set up to celebrate the church's great history of mission. Buildings for worship and education can be established with this created fund. □



Bishop Ruediger Minor at the Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality consultation at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY, January 1999.

CASE HISTORIES: PARTNER CHURCHES

BY JOHN LOVELACE



As United Methodist congregations, districts, conferences, and clusters in at least 26 states have discovered, linking into the Russia Initiative can stimulate a church's local ministries as well as its global outreach.

Arkansas Area

Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church—a congregation of 3100 in Little Rock, Arkansas—became a Supportive Congregation in 1995. It covenanted to provide about \$6000 in program and pastoral support per year for the Return to Christ United Methodist Church in Ekaterinburg, Russia. The covenant is renewable every three years, and the Arkansans are in their fourth year of support. The Return to Christ UMC grew out of First UMC in Ekaterinburg, a long-time partner with the Louisiana Annual Conference.

Since 1995, the Pulaski Heights UMC members have made five

trips to Russia. In 1997, two mission teams—including one made up of older youths—helped to construct a multipurpose building for the Return to Christ congregation. The building happened to be in front of Russian Men's Prison #2, a primary recipient of the Return church's mission work. On Sundays, the building is a church sanctuary. During the week, it's a rehabilitation center for prison inmates.

In 1998, the Rev. Elena Stepanova (the Return church's pastor when the partnership began), her associate, Elena Tischenko, and Men's Prison #2 Warden Sergei Vetoshkin visited Pulaski Heights UMC in Little Rock and toured Arkansas prisons.

Today, the Rev. Betsy S. Bauer is the Pulaski Heights staff member related to the Russia Initiative. "Because of the Return to Christ prison ministry," she said, "we now work at the women's prison in central Arkansas, offering weekly Bible

study and monthly birthday parties for women incarcerated there. We have also recently expanded our support to the juvenile detention unit at Alexander. And we are working with the ecumenical Kairos-Torch, a pilot program for spiritual retreat weekends (like Kairos, Cursillo, and Emmaus) for juvenile offenders."

Arkansas Area Bishop Janice Riggie Huie recently signed a partnership agreement for evangelism and church development with Stepanova, who is now superintendent of the Russia UMC's Ural-Siberia District. In May, the Arkansas Area task force for the Russia Initiative—which Bauer chairs—was scheduled to go to Ekaterinburg to explore sites for church growth and mission. Also in May, a group from St. Paul UMC in Little Rock was scheduled to deliver the first stained-glass windows it has designed and made for the Return church.

Opposite, p
Custer Road
children at
Below: Some

"I look
an indige
Methodist
said. "I thi
could rein
Methodism

West Virgi
The Wes
Confere
involved w
the Rev. T
organize a
lowing sur
Ives not on
but he an
among 43
worked th
projects in

"In fiv
have sent
involving



Opposite, p. 20: Bob Kirkpatrick from Custer Road UMC in Plano, Texas, with children at a shelter in Torjok, Russia. Below: Some Partner Church locations.

"I look forward to seeing what an indigenous Russian United Methodist Church will be," Bauer said. "I think its power and spirit could reinvigorate other parts of Methodism."

West Virginia

The West Virginia Annual Conference VIM program got involved with Russia in 1993, when the Rev. Tom Clark was asked to organize a work team for the following summer. Bishop S. Clifton Ives not only promoted the project, but he and his wife, Jean, were among 43 West Virginians who worked that summer on housing projects in Russia's Orel region.

"In five years," Clark said, "we have sent nine teams to Russia involving 167 people. Since 1996,

we have worked exclusively with Russian orphanages, believing that they are the most needy. Our latest project was construction of playgrounds at three orphanages last year." The playgrounds were conceived and the sites selected at a meeting with representatives of the Russian Peace Foundation.

Clark and 15 others were scheduled to take a weeklong trip to Russia in March to examine the newly built playgrounds and to visit eight more orphanages as possible sites for playgrounds and other VIM projects. Clark said he has 16 West Virginia VIMs going to Russia in May, and 50 more have signed up for the summer. A new twist to this year's trip to the Bykovo orphanage will be the introduction of a sports component for the playground. "The administration asked that we teach the children American softball, volleyball, and basketball," Clark said. "In

turn, they will teach our youths much about soccer.

"The emotional ties that we have at the Bykovo orphanage run deep," Clark continued. "It is a painful place to work, but it is also a place where we have formed profound and lasting relationships with the administration, the staff, and especially the children. My visits have shown me that many children are destined to live unfulfilled lives because they are physically, psychologically, or situationally limited. My dream is to take them the care they need or to have them brought to centers here in West Virginia where they can receive the proper care that will set them free."

Texas Conference

In 1994, nine people from the Texas Conference (Houston Area) rode the Trans-Siberian Railroad for three and a half days to Tomsk, Siberia, 2000 miles east of Moscow.





A mission team from Custer Road UMC in Plano, Texas, outside a Russian Peace Foundation office, ready to march in the Tver City Day Parade.

Each summer since then—now traveling by air—teams from the conference have gone to their Partner Church site to work on orphanage facilities and teach Bible schools. For example, the Texas Conference raised over \$140,000 to construct a two-story masonry building to house 25 children at the orphanage in Bakchar, 200 miles north of Tomsk. The conference also celebrated the formation of a United Methodist fellowship in Tomsk and plans to help that fellowship purchase a building.

North Texas

The Paris-Sulphur Springs District, a predominantly rural unit of the North Texas Annual Conference, got involved in the Russia Initiative in 1996. Then, the Rev. Scott Jones asked District Superintendent Walter Zimmerman if he could invite other congregations to become Partner Churches. The District Program Council resoundingly adopted the Partner Church program districtwide, and about 30 congregations have raised money or gathered items for the Russia Initiative. About a dozen have sent people on trips to Russia since 1997.

“In reaching out to the Russian people with love and faith through the Russia Initiative,” Zimmerman observed, “we have continually had to answer the question: ‘Why are you doing this?’ Our answer in both words and deeds is to share the love of Christ with all persons who have needs, especially the Russian people, as we reach out through this program.

“Both Americans and Russians who have interacted on the trips have suddenly found that people whom we have been taught to mistrust and even hate are just like us,

We are all God’s children. As we realize this, barriers start to come down. Sharing the love of Christ with those who are hungry and ready to hear—giving them an example of that love in action so that they have a chance to respond—is the greatest hope of all.”

Volunteers in Mission

The Rev. Stephen Darr of Blacksburg, Virginia, who coordinates the Volunteer-in-Mission portion of the Russia Initiative for the GBGM, said the first VIM team to Russia—26 volunteers from all across the church—went in August 1993. Since then, he said, demand has been steady, with a list of 26 locations where teams are needed and with groups scheduled into the year 2000. Most of the VIM projects have involved renovations and outreach with Russian orphanages, though some groups have also



Top: The Rev. Elena Stepanova with Sergei Vetoshkin, warden at Men’s Prison #2. Above: Inmates worship at the United Methodist Chapel in Men’s Prison #2. Chaplain Maxine Allen of Philander Smith College is seated in their midst.

worked on hospitals, churches, housing for the elderly, and Russian Orthodox monasteries. He said about one-fourth of all teams were sponsored by campus ministries and college-chaplain programs.

"While the brand of religious faith called United Methodist was a completely new concept for most Russians," Darr pointed out, "our friends and partners in Russia readily identified with the volunteer interests of the VIM teams and their means of sharing the Good News through service.

"Our volunteers have always been received with open arms and great enthusiasm. The main hope on both sides of the ocean is that these wonderful relationships continue—both the mission work and the personal contacts—and that, by some means, we find the way to keep the spirit and the hope alive between the peoples of our two nations."

Louisiana

Connections between the Louisiana Annual Conference and First United Methodist Church in Ekaterinburg, Russia, date to 1991. Trips have focused on Vacation Bible Schools, teacher training, spiritual seminars, and Bible studies for Russian church members.

Louisiana United Methodists have provided their Russian counterparts with relief support and financial aid, along with opportunities for personal contact and education. For example, they provided financial support for three young members of First UMC, Ekaterinburg, to attend and graduate with honors from United Methodist-related Centenary College in Shreveport. And they received a special offering of \$100,000 toward construction of a sanctuary and multipurpose building for the Ekaterinburg church. This gift has been combined with a \$350,000

grant from the GBGM, with construction scheduled for completion in July. They have also delivered critically needed food and medical supplies to Russia and have hosted many visits by Ekaterinburg members to Louisiana churches.

Dr. James Gillespie, who coordinates Louisiana Conference involvement in the Russia Initiative, said: "The Russian Christians have a deep and profound faith. The years of persecution have created in them an admirable sense of resiliency. Their belief that God is faithful is a lesson that they live. My hope for the Russia Initiative is that we will continue to develop and help Russian congregations grow. My dream for the Russian people is they will be able to experience the religious freedom they so strongly desire." □

John Lovelace is Editor Emeritus of The United Methodist Reporter.



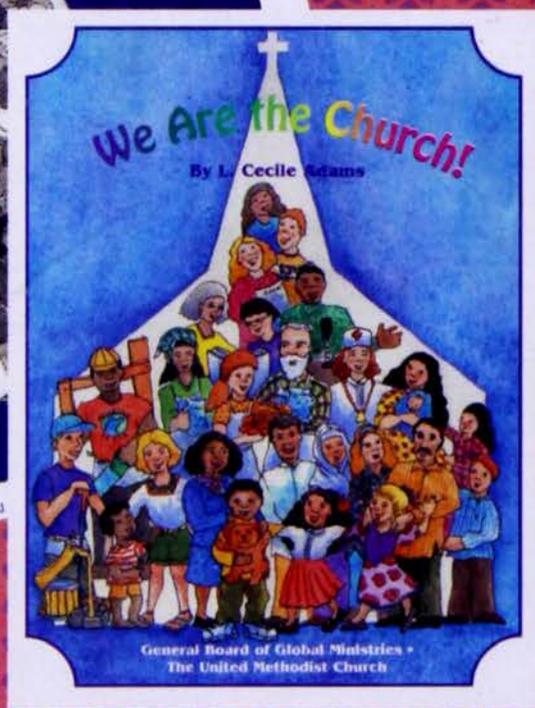
MISSION STUDY RIG

MISSION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

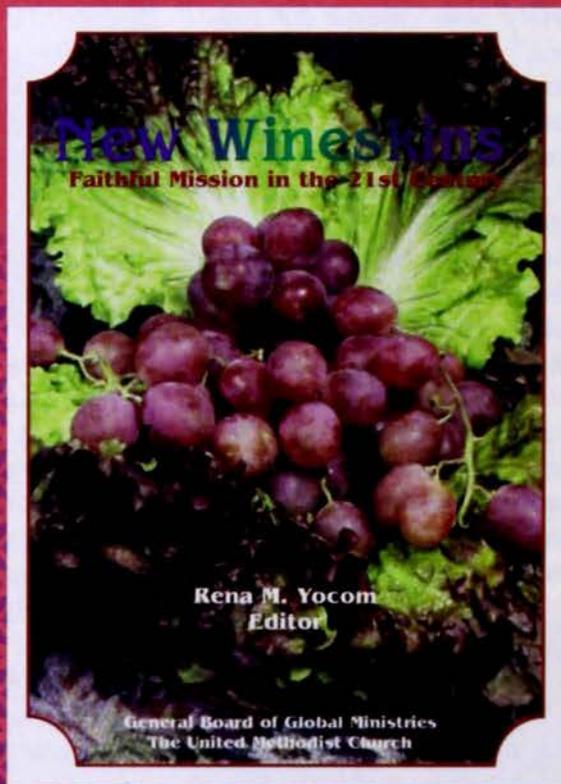
Children's Resources

Teacher's Guide to
We Are the Church!
By L. Cecile Adams

\$5.95



\$3.50 single copy; \$3.25 each, 5-9 copies;
\$3.00 each, 10 or more copies.



\$6.95

RELATED RESOURCES

Map—The United Methodist Church in Mission: A World of Faith and Facts
the church is in mission. \$3.00

New World Outlook Special Issue on Mission in the 21st Century, April 2000

Response Special Issue on Mission in the 21st Century, April 2000

Concepts of Mission by Glory E. Dharma, 2000

Video—God's Transforming Mission: The 21st Century, Summer 2000

Video—Mission Magazine, Special Summer Issue, 2000

Video—Portraits of Age: A Journey of Faith, 2000

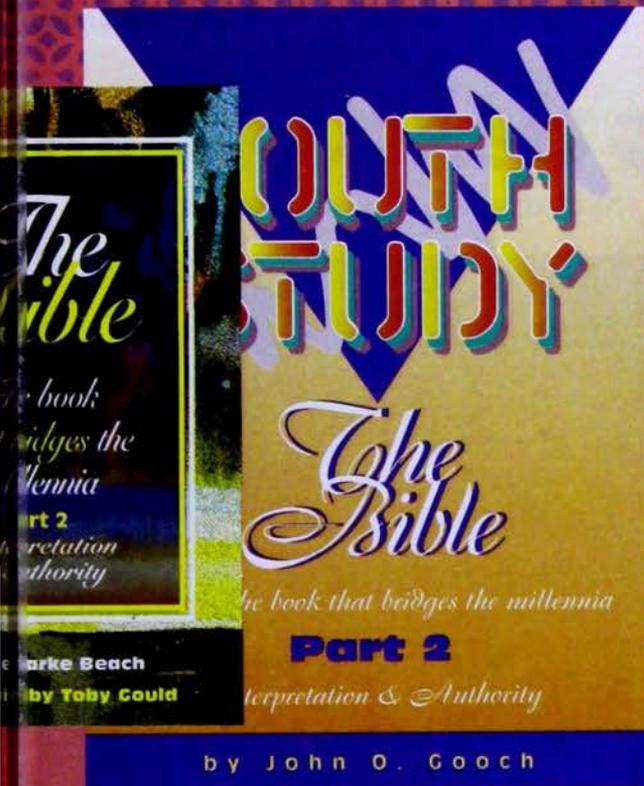
Six vignettes of older persons around the world, 2000

Response Special Issue on Humanity and the Church, May 2000

Order from SERVICE CENTER, 7820 Reading Road, Columbus, OH 43235
Inquiries: 1-513-761-2100. Poster prepared by Communications and Public Relations, General Board of Global Ministries

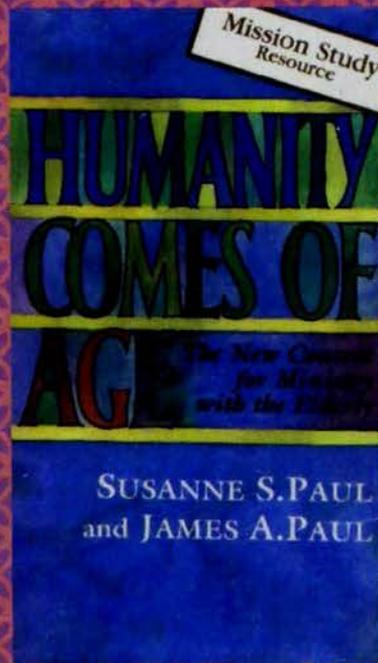
SOURCES 1999-2000

Annual Growth Study



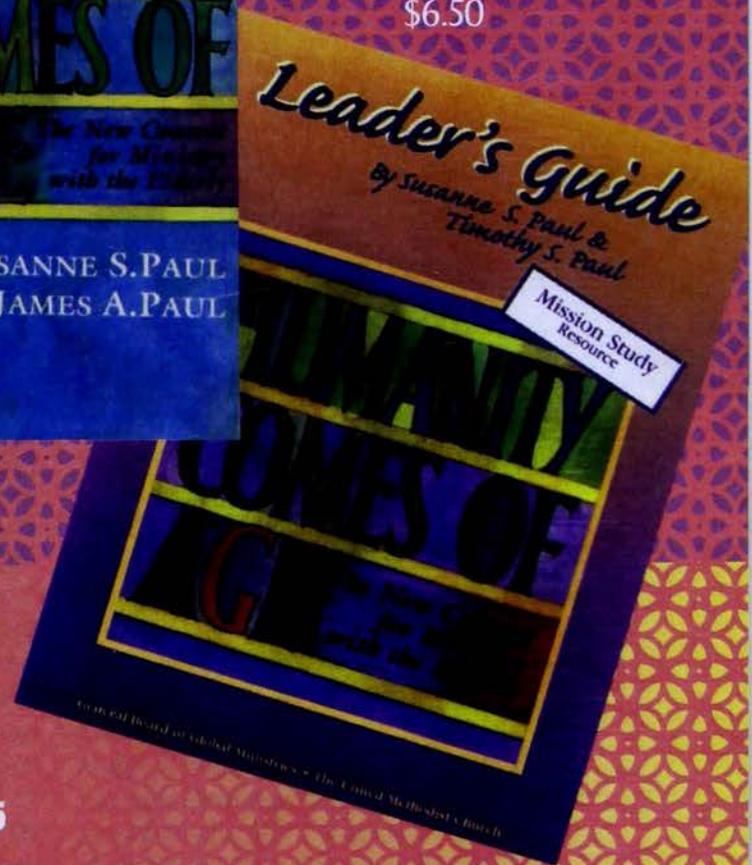
(Korean) \$2.75

HUMANITY COMES OF AGE



\$8.00

\$6.50



With Facts and Figures. Shows countries where

the 21st Century. May/June 1999 \$3.00

Century. April 1999 \$1.50

0

Century. Supplements the text *New Wineskins*. \$19.95

Mission Edition 1999. \$19.95

Illustrate gifts, as well as concerns, of older adults. \$45.00

May 1999 \$1.50

Cincinnati, OH 45222-1800. Order: 1-800-305-9857 Fax: 1-513-761-3722
 General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church

IT IS DIFFICULT TO FATHOM the traumatic situation of the people of southeastern Kazakhstan in the 40-year period from 1949 to 1989. During that time, 467 nuclear devices were detonated in the semi-desert region around the city of Semipalatinsk, an area that served as the nuclear-testing ground of the

Overall, in an area of about 4 1/2 acres, a total of 346 underground, 87 atmospheric, and 25 surface nuclear explosions occurred, some involving multiple weapons.

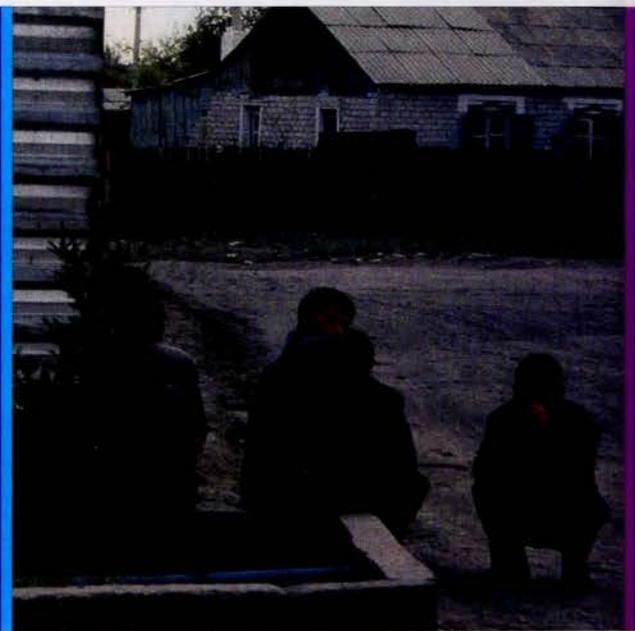
The Disaster's Magnitude

As a result of the nuclear tests, 1.2 million people—over 7 percent of

In fact, all the data collected during the Soviet era has not been made public. Even so, ample evidence has been found about the continuing negative impact the slow-onset disaster has had on the lives and livelihoods of entire villages. Alarming end-stage phenomena—such as a massive out-migration,

United Meth
The United M
the tragedy in
1991, when
Hearn of Ho
of the Gene
Ministries,
Randolph M
general sect

TRANSFORMING DESTRUCTION INTO



Soviet Union. What happened there is a reminder of a literal "Hell on Earth" that all the world could experience if we are not willing to hear the message of love exemplified in Jesus Christ.

After the four decades of earth-shaking explosions finally ended, Kazakhstan's Minister of Health referred to the Semipalatinsk region as "our place of weeping and our place of sorrow." (See *New World Outlook, March-April 1994, pp. 4-9.*) This was the supposedly "uninhabited" place chosen by Stalin to be the Soviet Union's nuclear-testing range, or Polygon. The first atomic test there in 1949 exposed more than 25,000 people to radiation.

Kazakhstan's total population—are affected today, directly and indirectly. Of these 1.2 million, about 100,000 were affected most directly: the 27,000 people immediately exposed to radiation during the testing; their offspring, a second generation of 39,600; and a third generation of 28,900. Affected communities are located in the oblasts (administrative divisions) of East Kazakhstan: Karganda (with 48,000 people) and Pavlodar (with 52,000).

The military nature of the nuclear testing shrouded it in secrecy, with a resultant lack of information on the nature and extent of contamination and on the preventive measures that might be taken.

Left to right: A hospital in Kazakhstan; Semipalatinsk; a Russian Orthodox child; the river Irtysh in Semipalatinsk.

rising infant mortality, and stress-related family breakdowns—are continuing to occur.

There is a complex and still unfolding interplay among the various demographic, psychosocial, economic, and health effects of the nuclear testing in Semipalatinsk. Many local and international efforts have been made to alleviate the suffering of affected individuals and communities. But there is still an urgent need to provide more comprehensive assistance—help that can preserve the glimmer of hope that still remains visible among the affected and suffering population.

there. Than
GBGM, al
Health Care
Texas, and
Medicine, e
ship spons
Internation
erally funde
1997, the G
ences in Ka
consequence
and a third
requested fo

The Social
Representat
invited by
Program to
ducting fo

United Methodists Respond

The United Methodist response to the tragedy in Kazakhstan began in 1991, when Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn of Houston, then president of the General Board of Global Ministries, and the Rev. Dr. Randolph Nugent, the GBGM's general secretary, first traveled

Semipalatinsk region in June 1998. From a focus group of local women in the village of Znamemka, we learned that five out of thirteen households contained at least one disabled child or adult. More than 60 percent of the women interviewed had seven or more children at home. More than 30 percent of

All residential-care institutions visited were overcrowded and provided limited services. Yet more families are bringing children or adults to these institutions because the families are migrating or can no longer afford to provide custodial care at home. Despite the increasing demand for these government

INTO HEALING IN KAZAKHSTAN

by Robert B. Howerton, Jr.



there. Thanks to their efforts, the GBGM, along with Methodist Health Care Systems of Houston, Texas, and the Baylor College of Medicine, entered into a partnership sponsored by the American International Health Alliance, a federally funded program. In 1995 and 1997, the GBGM conducted conferences in Kazakhstan on the social consequences of the radiation issue, and a third conference has been requested for 1999.

The Social Impact

Representatives of the GBGM were invited by the UN Development Program to serve on teams conducting focus groups in the

these women had lost the jobs they once held in farming or at the nuclear-testing site.

All the villages and towns visited in the region have experienced closure of in-patient health-care facilities, kindergartens, primary schools, and boarding schools. Thus households with children or disabled adults who require residential care or daycare can no longer access these services. In Kurchatov, seven of eight kindergartens are now closed, as is the only primary school in Agzharski. Several households faced the prospect of spending their meager resources to send their children to a primary school 37 miles away.

institutions, they actually receive only 40 percent to 80 percent of the budgets they are allotted.

In a 1977 survey funded by the Japanese Red Cross, 2791 households were interviewed in seven regions of Kazakhstan, including Semipalatinsk. The survey showed that almost 11 percent of children aged 7 to 15 were not attending school. Among families with four or more children, 15 percent of the children were school dropouts. Reasons given by parents for taking their children out of school included lack of winter clothes (cited by 37 percent) and lack of shoes (cited by 44 percent). During the winter months, the temperature can drop

to minus 40 degrees in areas such as Semipalatinsk. The worst situation was among multichild families, where often none of the children went to school. The young ones stayed at home and the older children looked for temporary jobs.

Most vulnerable families have to rely on irregular state pensions or social-welfare payments, which are typically delayed for more than six months. During a meeting at one city's social-welfare department, a severely distressed young mother of two anxiously asked for the state child allowances that had not been paid to her for nine months. Similarly, the most common complaint of village elders

and also of household heads in Znamemka concerned the constant delays in receipt of pensions or other social allowances that are their only source of income.

In addition to the economic decline of the Semipalatinsk region, the fear of irradiation has clearly contributed to the massive out-migration of able-bodied adults—particularly adolescents and young adults who fear the negative effects on their fertility and health. In turn, out-migration is very often the cause of widespread disruption in families, including the abandonment or institutionalization of children and the elderly. Almost every family interviewed by the UN Development Program reported at least one family member who had migrated to another region of Kazakhstan, to Russia, or to other parts of the former Soviet Union.

More Economic Effects

The 1997 Japanese Red Cross survey conducted in seven regions of Kazakhstan determined that one in seven respondents earned less than \$13 per month—only one-ninth of the \$111 per month determined by the government to be subsistence income. More than 400,000 jobs were lost in the region after closure of the nuclear-test site in 1991. With 6.4 percent of its workforce unemployed, the Semipalatinsk region has the highest rate of official unemployment in Kazakhstan. This amounts to 27,968 people registered as unemployed. But the actual rates and numbers of unemployed people are probably 50 percent higher than these official numbers show. Indeed, 25 percent of working-age respondents in the seven surveyed regions of Kazakhstan were found to be unemployed. Other negative socioeconomic effects of the nuclear testing include the considerable loss of agricultural land and the pollution of the water supply.

The Health Impact

In comparison with other parts of Kazakhstan, the Semipalatinsk region has alarmingly high rates of diseases, disorders, and abnormalities related to nuclear exposure. As early as 1997, a UN Development Program report identified the Semipalatinsk area as having the second-lowest life expectancy in Kazakhstan. The region has higher rates of cancer—particularly of breast cancer—than other parts of the country. In one affected district close to the nuclear-test site, there were 1730 cancer cases per 100,000 people.

A survey by the local Union of Nuclear Testing Victims, a non-governmental organization (UNTV IRIS) showed that 98 percent of women in two districts immediately adjacent to the testing site (Abai and Abraly) were affected with various cancers and blood disorders. Given the low occurrence of other risk factors for such cancers—such as smoking, an unhealthy diet, alcohol abuse, or pesticide pollution—the organization concluded that nuclear testing was clearly implicated as a causal agent. The same study showed that, for at least one of the districts immediately adjacent to the testing site (Abraly), the infant mortality rate in 1996 was 64 infant deaths per 1000 live births—much higher than the rate for Kazakhstan as a whole.

Extreme poverty, chronic malnutrition, and lowered immunity are indirect pathways through which the nuclear testing is reported to have caused an alarming rise in tuberculosis (TB). Deaths from TB over the past five years in the Abraly district, adjacent to the testing site, were twice the national average in Kazakhstan. Besides immune deficiencies, other effects on health include blood disorders, such as anemia and leukemia, and an increase in suicide rates.



A monument to a Kazak leader.



Robert B. H. Tumenova in

Seeking G

The level
tion at the
Semipalati
threat to K
neighbors
China. Cit
nuclear t
began in
national
Once Kaz
pendent in
first count
of its nucle
But th
of nations
far greater
national t
Kazakh pe
tests. It is
lunge of
humanitar
off enviro
the whole
The C
Ministries
ple of Kaz
needs of t
the build
care facili
developm



Robert B. Howerton, Jr. and Dr. Bakhyt Tumenova in Kazakhstan.

Seeking Global Solutions

The level of environmental pollution at the nuclear-testing site in the Semipalatinsk region is not only a threat to Kazakhstan but also to its neighbors, notably Russia and China. Citizen protests against the nuclear testing in Kazakhstan began in 1989 and soon led to a national antinuclear movement. Once Kazakhstan became independent in 1991, it was one of the first countries to initiate the closing of its nuclear-test site.

But the issue facing the family of nations in the third millennium is far greater even than the scale of national tragedy suffered by the Kazakh people as a result of nuclear tests. It is nothing less than the challenge of undertaking global humanitarian tasks in order to head off environmental catastrophe for the whole planet.

The General Board of Global Ministries is working with the people of Kazakhstan in addressing the needs of the area. Our plans call for the building of a primary-health-care facility in Kurchatov and the development of a community-

based primary-health-care program to serve about 80 small villages in Pavlodar.

There is a great need in Kazakhstan for properly functioning and cost-effective integrated health-care facilities. The long-term consequences of people's weakened immune systems are of major concern to the physicians in the Semipalatinsk region. A full understanding is needed of the relationship between radiation exposure and the development of disease. Early and improved diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation for people with post-radiation conditions is also essential and can be aided by the modernization of equipment, the updating of professional education, and the increased availability of medical supplies.

A community-based health program will be of great help in small villages of 300 to 500 people. A community health worker from each local group will be sent abroad for training and then will bring the village knowledge and basic skills.

Calling for the Church

Having come to know United Methodists through their work in

community health care, many people in Kazakhstan—which is 45 percent Muslim and 45 percent Orthodox—have asked to have a United Methodist church established there. As a result, a pastor from Russia has been assigned to the Pavlodar region. In this way, working together in faith and hope, we continue to transform the rubble of destruction into gifts of healing that exemplify the Gospel in action.

In Kazakhstan and in the wider world, this is a time for the church to proclaim a message of holistic redemption. We can truly say with the psalmist: "O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures....When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground." (Psalm 104: 24, 30) □

Robert B. Howerton, Jr., is assistant general secretary for Health and Welfare Ministries in the Health and Relief program unit of the General Board of Global Ministries. Before joining the GBGM, he was senior vice president for Health and Welfare Ministries for a 15-hospital system in Memphis, Tennessee.



Children at a Russian Orthodox Bible-study class in Kazakhstan.

Restoring the Church in Cuba

by Philip Wingeier-Rayo

Two years ago, a young student at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba, 20 miles east of Havana, missed the train to his weekend student appointment as an associate pastor in a town two hours away. Rather than revising his pastoral plans and catching up on classwork, Enoc Rodríguez ventured forth on his bicycle, riding around Matanzas' industrial section looking for an old downtown Methodist church.

The Dubrocq Chapel was one of 120 church buildings owned by the Methodist Church in 1959, at the time of the Cuban revolution. However, when the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba in January 1961, all of the US missionaries in Cuba were recalled. Many Cuban pastors also began to leave the country. This old chapel, located near the port on the outskirts of Matanzas, was one of the churches left unattended owing to the lack of pastors.

In 1997, Enoc Rodríguez stumbled off his bike as he spotted the

old church building in shambles. It looked to him as though a bomb had hit it. The building had been abandoned since the early 1960s, when the last Methodist pastor had left the country. The roof over the Sunday-school classrooms had been completely removed by neighbors scavenging old roofing tiles.

Enoc peered in through a broken windowpane and was startled to see a woman inside. He knocked on the door, identified himself, and asked for permission to come in. Over a cup of coffee, the woman, Jasmine, apologized for residing in the building. Abandoned by her husband three years earlier, she and her three young children had been left without a home. Desperate for shelter, Jasmine had managed to make a home for them out of this abandoned building.

Assuring her that the church would not put her out on the street, Enoc requested permission to resume worship services in the sanctuary. Jasmine was not a Christian but she respectfully offered to move her furnishings off the altar to one side of the building.

Finding the Faithful

After sharing the discovery of the old church with his district superintendent, Enoc was officially transferred by the Cuban bishop to a new student appointment at the Dubrocq Methodist Church. There, he began a groundbreaking ministry by wandering around the neighborhood asking old-timers if anyone knew the previous church members. The neighbors pointed the determined young man in the direction of Juana Madrugá Noda. Juana was now a 60-year-old grandmother, but in her youth before the revolution, she had attended Sunday school at the chapel. Enoc asked her why she had stopped coming to church.

"Since we are located near the seminary," Juana said, "we always had student pastors. But when the young people stopped entering the ministry, we were left without a minister. After that, it was just a matter of time before the people stopped attending."

Then Enoc turned to Juana and said: "I have felt the call to the ministry and am studying at the seminary. If we were to reopen the church, would you be willing to come back?" In that instant, Juana turned back the clock, showing a youthful smile. She asked Enoc if he would be the pastor. "I want to be your pastor," Enoc replied.

Then Enoc was led to the home of another former member, Angela Onelia Díaz. Nearly 70, she had been active in the church youth group before the revolution. After Enoc explained what he wanted to do, Angela told him why she had stopped coming to church. "A state security agent visited my home one



day and tol
away the f
said, loweri
asked why,
could cause
my family."
youthful e
have passe
church has s
alive and lo
today as be
reopen th
answered w
"Reopening
the happiest
Reaching a
So Enoc con
the neighb
that the gra
the Dubroc
would be o
former men
children an
old enough
church. Th
schools whi
not exist. Th
revolution
believe that
dated instit
and 1991, th
and the coll
caused Cul
Communis
As Enoc
people, his
gious as h
loved them
live abunda
Communis
vided educ
the basic f
knew that
missing in
deep spirit
A Chapel I
When the c
Enoc came
and a small
He prayed
merciful to

day and told me to hide or give away the family Bible," Angela said, lowering her voice. "When I asked why, he said that the Bible could cause problems for me and my family." Enoc responded with youthful exuberance: "Those days have passed, Angela, and the church has survived. Jesus Christ is alive and loves you just as much today as before. Will you help us reopen the church?" Angela answered with a tear in her eye: "Reopening the church would be the happiest day of my life."

Reaching a New Generation

So Enoc continued to visit around the neighborhood. He announced that the grand reopening service of the Dubrocq Methodist Church would be on Saturday. Besides the former members, Enoc found many children and youth who were not old enough to remember the church. They had been raised in schools which taught that God did not exist. They had come after the revolution and had been led to believe that the church was an outdated institution. Yet, between 1989 and 1991, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union caused Cubans to question many Communist dogmas.

As Enoc talked to the young people, his enthusiasm was contagious as he explained that God loved them and wanted them to live abundant lives. Although their Communist government had provided education, health care, and the basic food staples, the youth knew that there was something missing in their lives. There was a deep spiritual void to be filled.

A Chapel Is Reborn

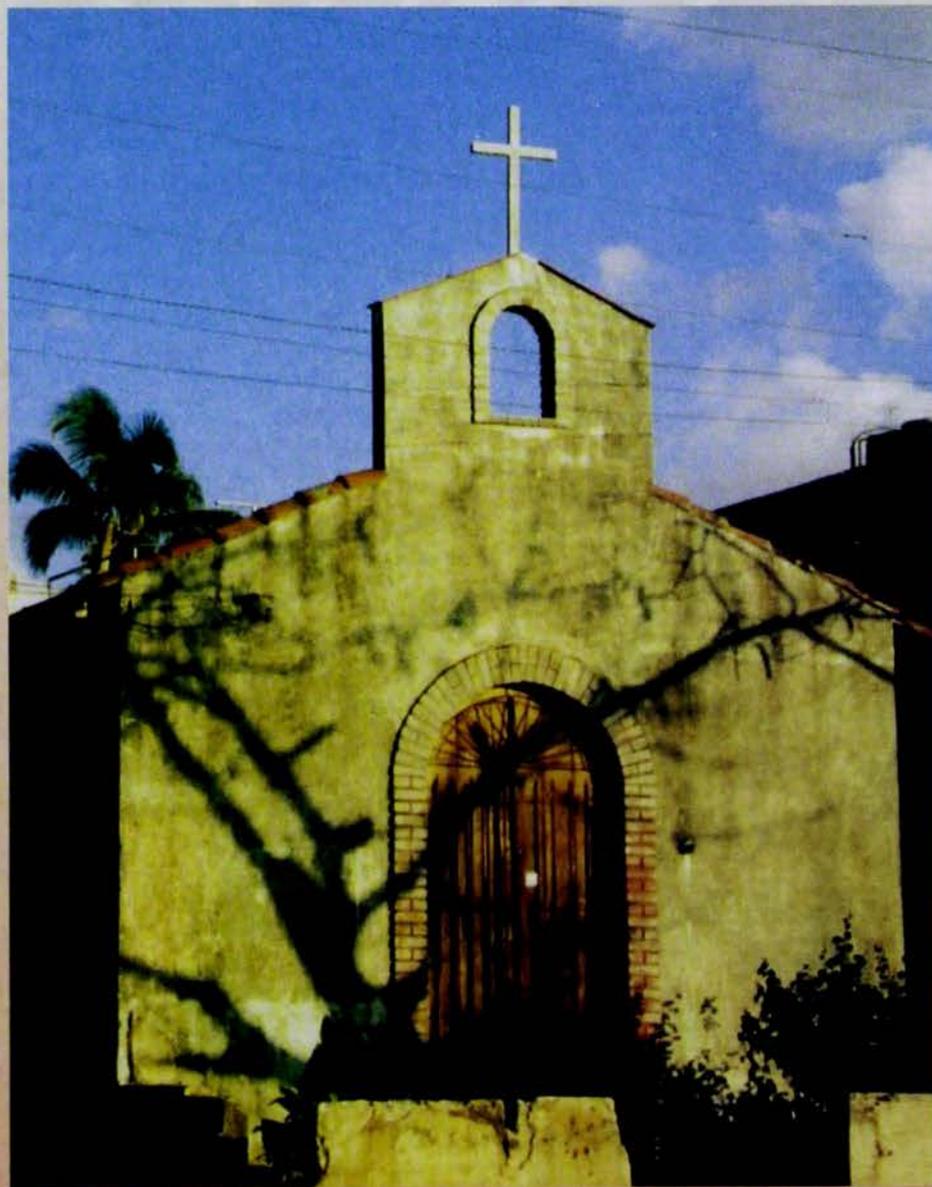
When the day of reopening arrived, Enoc came early to set an altar table and a small cross in the vacant altar. He prayed and asked God to be merciful toward those who had

turned their backs on God. He asked God to touch the lives of the former church members, to remove their fear, and to open the hearts of the young people to receive the love of God. As he opened his eyes to begin the service, the young seminary student saw 19 people who had come to take part in the first worship service in the Dubrocq Chapel in nearly 40 years!

Juana and Angela were standing right in the first row. Tears were shed that evening as the old hymns were sung, the Bible was read, and

the Word was proclaimed. Former members shared memories and young people shared dreams. Together, the two generations would again become the church.

As the congregation began to grow, it became obvious that the church must undertake the difficult task of relocating the single mother and three children who lived in their building. After several meetings with the local authorities and a lot of red tape, a small dwelling in poor condition was finally made available. Enoc Rodríguez and the



Above: The Dubrocq Methodist Chapel in Matanzas, Cuba, has been reopened. Opposite, p. 30: Two original members of the Dubrocq congregation worship together.

congregation purchased some supplies and fixed up the shack until it was adequate enough to house Jasmine and her family.

Then Enoc and the small congregation turned their sights on repairing the old chapel. They had to replace the roof on the Sunday-school room, to repair the broken windows, and to paint. However, there was still one important item missing: the pews. Worship services were held for several weeks with the worshipers standing up!

The congregation continued to work and pray to improve their worship setting. However, the humble offerings of the people were barely enough to make minor repairs, and the lumber needed to make pews was available for purchase only in US dollars. By the grace of God, the district superintendent, moved by the rebirth of Dubrocq Chapel, brought a visiting United Methodist caravan from Tampa, Florida, to worship with the congregation. Moved by the Spirit, the caravan left a love offering to be employed for a few pews.

Methodism Is Reborn in Cuba

The story of the Dubrocq Methodist Church in Matanzas is an illustration of the rebirth of Methodism in Cuba. While the Methodist Church in Cuba never disappeared, its congregations dwindled down to a handful of faithful believers. Some churches were closed entirely.

Even though the Methodist Church in Cuba retained the majority of its properties throughout Communist rule, the lost properties will be difficult to recover. The schools and clinics were nationalized by Cuba and, for the most part, are being used for their original purposes. The churches and parsonages were retained through the courageous efforts of many clergy and laypeople who sacrificed to keep the church alive. After the revolution, all but eight of the 70 ordained elders fled the country, leaving a great shortage of clergy. While appointed to oversee large circuits, day in and day out, the laity retained church ownership of many properties only through their own heroic efforts.

There are approximately 10 occupied buildings that will be difficult to recover, even though Cuba recognizes the church as their legitimate owner. The real challenge is to relocate the families currently living in the church buildings. This is a very costly process and one that requires good stewardship of church resources and sensitivity toward the inhabitants.

Certainly, the Methodist Church is growing and is in need of church buildings in order to assemble its congregations. Statistics show that, over the last decade, the Methodist Church in Cuba has grown in attendance from 10,000 to 40,000 worshipers. Many believers crowd into private homes, backyards, and tin-roofed shelters. Since the Cuban government is not yet permitting the Methodist Church to build new buildings, the restoration and maintenance of existing buildings takes on a heightened significance.

We can all be thankful for the enthusiasm of young Cuban Christians like Enoc Rodríguez. He had an appreciation for the past and a vision for the future. He believed in God's promise that the dry bones would dance once again (Ezekiel 37:1-14). If you are interested in helping the Methodist Church in Cuba work toward this vision by helping to repair its buildings, please contact the office of Mission Volunteers, General Board of Global Ministries, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 330, New York, NY 10115, and inquire about Volunteer-in-Mission teams to Cuba. □

The new congregation at the reopened Dubrocq Methodist Church in Matanzas, Cuba, with student pastor Enoc Rodríguez (far left, back row).

Philip Wingeier-Rayo is a United Methodist missionary who served in Cuba 1991-1997.



Missionaries Return to Cuba

by Philip Wingeier-Rayo



The Milk family with former workers of La Escuela Agricola. Ann Milk Klotz, Robert Milk (third and fourth from left), Juliet Milk, Martha Milk (fourth and first from right).

Robert Milk never thought he would return to Cuba. In 1961, when his parents—longtime missionaries Richard and Juliet Milk—told 15-year-old Robert to gather up a handful of belongings, he was deeply saddened. He had known no other home. The Milks began serving in Cuba in 1947 when Robert was just a year old. He had grown up at the Agricultural School at Playa Manteca on Cuba's northeast coast. On that abrupt exodus in 1961, he left his childhood behind.

On Monday, November 30, 1998, Robert's dream of returning to his boyhood home came true. The Methodist Church in Cuba organized a conference to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first Methodist missionaries on the island. On Thanksgiving Day 1898, Bishop Candler had led an expedition to Cuba to explore the possibilities for sending missionaries to support the already existing Methodist work. Traveling with him was H. W. Baker, the first North American missionary assigned to work on the island. Exactly 100 years later, 27 former missionaries and their children traveled to Cuba to renew old memories and to share the history of the Methodist Church and the role of mission.

There had been no missionaries serving in Cuba from 1961 until the first missionary returned in 1991. The visiting delegation was pleased to see that the seed which missionaries planted early in

the century had been harvested by Cubans, who were now an autonomous Methodist Church with their own annual conference and bishop. Not only had the Cuban church survived, but it is now thriving. In 1958, before the revolution, the Methodist Church in Cuba had 5000 members. Now there are 40,000 Methodists in Cuba.

Following the Thanksgiving conference and celebration, missionaries were invited to travel to their old assignments. The Milk family flew 700 miles east to Holguin Province. "Instead of experiencing the sadness many had predicted, I felt thankful," said Robert's mother, Juliet. "The first thing I saw was the unparalleled Nipe Bay—blue, blue rippling water—unchanged! True, the school was far from the way it was 40 years ago, but there *was* a school with 121 children, 7 to 17 years old. They had learning disabilities and were being taught employable skills. They looked happy and healthy."

The real highlight of the visit was discovering how the missionaries' witness had impacted the lives of their former students. "The crowning event of the whole trip was the *Escuela Agricola* student reunion," Juliet recalled. "There were 52 people present. Many had not seen their classmates for years. Over and over we heard: 'I never thought I'd see any of the Milks again!' Some former students were active in the church. Others were not but still had tremendous respect for the honesty and discipline that the school had instilled. It was awesome!" This was the true reward of a missionary: seeing the fruits of one's labor.

For all the missionaries, the week in Cuba was a realization that, despite setbacks, God always multiplies our efforts through His unending grace. □

MODELS FOR NEW MISSION: CAMBODIA AND SENEGAL

In 1998, New World Outlook covered new United Methodist mission initiatives in Cambodia (July-August), and Senegal (September-October). In Cambodia, United Methodists from the United States, France, and Switzerland are working in partnership with members of the Wesleyan Church of Cambodia and Methodists from Korea and Singapore to create a coordinated Methodist mission. Two Cambodian missionary families—Pitou and Sally Lao and Marilyn and Joseph Chan—represent the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) in this effort, both couples returning to their original homeland after years of service in the United States. Before emigrating to the United States, the Chans spent two years in enslavement under the Khmer Rouge; they converted to Christianity after escaping to a refugee camp in Thailand.

Greetings from Cambodia by Pitou and Sally Lao

March 1998: On February 1, we arrived from Singapore at the Pochentong International Airport, where we received a warm welcome from a line of old and young folks waiting for our arrival. The weather was very hot and humid. It is only 15 kilometers [9 miles] from the airport to our new home, but it takes about 30 minutes to get there because of all the traffic. There is only one main road, and it is used for all kinds of transportation. Cars, pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, joggers, cats, dogs—all have rights to use the same road, depending on who gets there first.

People here have made us feel at home. Every day we receive new

visitors who want to talk about the meaning of life and their search for a relationship with God. Did you know such a place existed?

The Pastors' School—sponsored in February by the General Board of Global Ministries and the Singapore Methodist Church—was a success. About 100 pastors and lay leaders attended the training, representing 61 congregations from around the country.

We just returned from visiting Prey Veng, Kampot, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, and Poipet. In Poipet, we saw first-hand what is possible when young children come together in a supportive setting. A gentleman had opened a small school there, near the Thai border, to teach the Khmer language to 400 poor or orphaned children. He uses his own money to pay six teachers \$10 per month each plus housing. More than 1000 of



Top: A young lay pastor of the Cambodian Methodist Church. Above: Inside a Cambodian home, Takadol, Kandol Province.

the children in
but this scho
accommodate
Many children
cocaine and are
the Bang Thom
The found
asked us to t
Christian instit



*Top: The Silver
water fountain*

the children in that area need help, but this school can't afford to accommodate more than 400. Many children not in school use cocaine and are under the control of the Bang Thom (big brother) gang.

The founder of the school has asked us to transform it into a Christian institution and to set up

programs for prayer, worship, and Bible study to enable the children to explore the Christian faith. I asked several small children why they attended the school. They said: "I want to learn and listen to my teacher." We were most impressed by their spirit of openness and expectancy.

The health status of the people is very poor, so we are opening a medical clinic at the Methodist Church in Cambodia. We need volunteer medical doctors and nurses. As of today, we have received five requests for new congregations in the provinces. Please pray for leaders to guide these new groups, whose members are all new in Christ. We need to recruit lay leaders from the Phnom Penh Bible School and to provide financial support.

October 1998: Praise the Lord Jesus Christ who has widely opened the door to reach the Cambodian people and prepared their hearts to receive Him as Lord and Savior. Many people are hungry for the Gospel. People sent their representatives to visit us in Phnom Penh to

talk about establishing new congregations in their villages. What were the possibilities, they asked. As of today, we have established 32 new churches.

We are requesting your prayers to find 50 churches in the United States to sponsor 50 new churches in Cambodia. Besides a registration fee, each church will need 10 Khmer Bibles, 10 Khmer hymnals, a small sound system, a shade for the worship area, a well for drinking water, and a motorcycle.

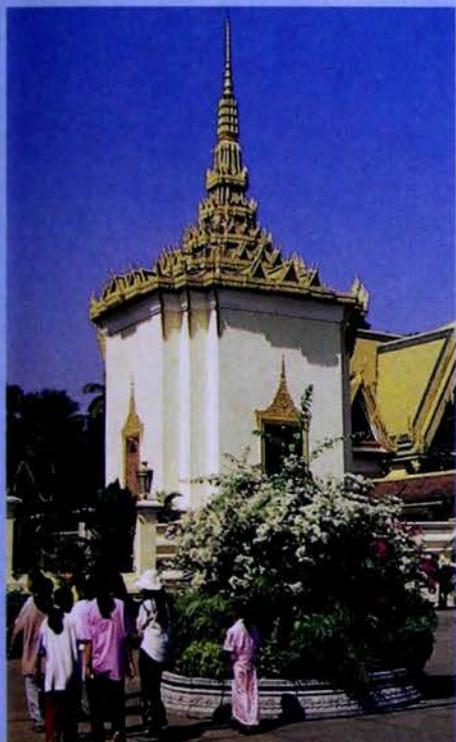
Joyful and Grateful

by Joseph and Marilyn Chan

November 1998: Marilyn, our daughter Christina, and I are joyful and grateful to the Lord for this great privilege to serve His people in Cambodia, in encouraging them to help and care for each other with Christian love.

We participate in the monthly Pastors' Meeting, where pastors and missionaries from the different organizations and denominations serving around Phnom Penh meet for a time of prayer and sharing of vision and mission. We also continue to be part of the Central Committee that meets once a month to work on common projects, such as the Bible Women Conference held in October and attended by 110 women from all over Cambodia.

We thank God for the Women's Division of the GBGM, which sponsored the Bible Women Conference. Like the earlier Pastors' School, it was a resounding success. We met the twofold objective given by the Women's Division—to train the Cambodian women to share the Gospel of Christ through storytelling and to provide them with workshops on Christian community, family structure, child care, and health and hygiene. □



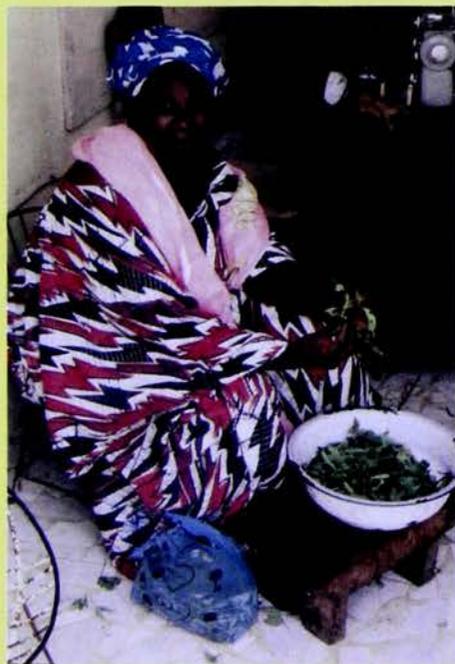
Top: The Silver Pagoda of the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Above: A clean-water fountain in Cambodia funded by The United Methodist Church.

The United Methodist Church in Senegal has established a Christian presence in a predominantly Muslim country. While forming partnerships with Muslim youth to find common beliefs and attainable community goals, the mission also supports a growing Christian community in the suburbs of Dakar. Included in this update are letters from the most recently assigned missionaries in Senegal—Nkemba and Mbwizu Ndjungu, from the Southern Congo Annual Conference, and Karen and Sebastine Ujereh, who have served in both Congo and Zimbabwe—as well as updates from their fellow missionaries Harold and Roberta Smith and Alan and Mavis Streiffeler.

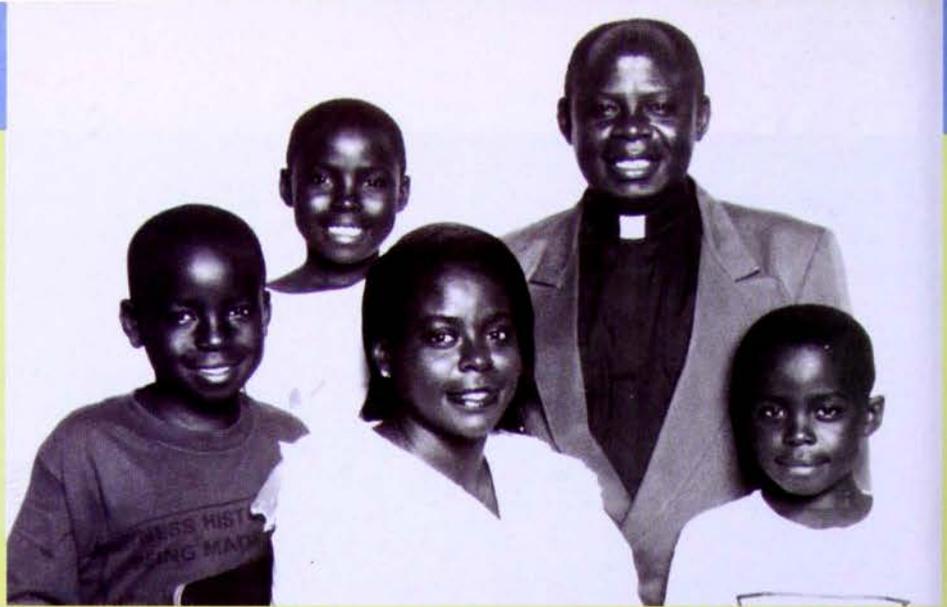
Daily Dialogue in Senegal

by Harold and Roberta Smith

May 1998: To live out our Christian faith in a city of nearly three million Muslims is to live in daily dialogue with our faith story and the faith story of our neighbors. The New Year began two days after the start of Ramadan—a 28-day period of daily fasting, one of the Five Pillars of Islam. The festival of Korite at



A member of the microenterprise group in Senegal, learning how to create a business of sewing and cooking.



The Ndjungus from Congo, shown with three of their children, are missionaries with the United Methodist Church in Senegal.

the end of the fast came in the same week as Ash Wednesday for us. Thus the question of fasting as a spiritual discipline was always before us.

Two months after Ramadan, the Feast of Tabaski was celebrated. This is the annual commemoration of God's providing a ram to substitute for the firstborn son of Abraham. Here in Senegal, every Muslim household with the means is expected to buy, kill, and eat a sheep. In 1998, Tabaski fell on the Wednesday of Holy Week. Thus, the question of the meaning and place of sacrifice in the salvation story took on a new power and presence. The Muslims sacrifice a lamb each year, while the Christians commemorate "the Lamb of God given for the sins of the world."

Joy for Surprises

by Alan and Mavis Streiffeler

December 1998: We live in a land of loudspeakers and daily announcements. "God is Great!" comes the cry from the mosque at dawn's early light. In the midst of this comes the announcement of the birth of a Savior, Christ the Lord. On noisy Dakar streets, with sheep, goats, and children foraging in garbage bins, and in residential neighborhoods, where children play soccer on sandy streets, angels

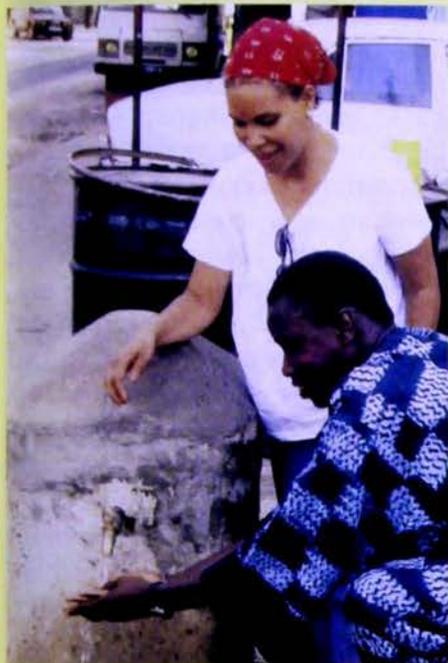
disguised as missionaries and as Senegalese lay pastors announce to the world: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy!"

Alice Saperau, lay pastor for the United Methodist Church in Senegal, says: "We have outgrown worship in my living room. Our expectation for Advent is to develop two other house churches that meet during the week in the community of Parcelles Assainies. We are preparing for God's surprise to us and through us."

Last night, we held the first prayer service at *Kër Rammu Yàlla*, God's House of Mercy. Upstairs, on the balcony roof, we have an exercise area with stationary bicycles and a makeshift piece of "step" equipment made from plywood and a truck tire. When we finish exercising, we descend into the living room, which has been turned into a community center. There Rama, the prayer leader, teaches classes in microenterprise for women. The women have been working out on the blackboard all the costs of cooking a meal of fish and rice for 20 people. Could they reduce their costs so that the price of the meal could be lowered?

After they leave for their meal preparation, the room is rearranged for prayers. An Advent candle sculpture is placed on the table. Roxaya returns from changing her

gym clothes. As a third wife and a Muslim, how will she relate to the witness of our faith? François prays for a job. Awa is looking for just a



Lay pastor Alice Saperau at a clean-water fountain funded by The United Methodist Church in Senegal.

room for herself, her husband, and her three children. Fatuu is in her first days of being with Christians. What does she feel about the good news of great joy?

Some 15 people—adults and children—make up a circle of faith and friendship as we read from Scripture, share prayer concerns, sing to the rhythm of a drum, and gaze at each other in candlelight since the electricity has been out all day. Mavis and I return to our home some 10 minutes away. Behold, the electricity returns. We feel great joy for the surprises that God gives us.

A Church Is Being Planted

by Nkemba and Mbwizu Ndjungu
December 1998: A United Methodist Church is being planted in Dakar, without a lot of noises. When we arrived in Dakar in March, the first Sunday we went to the worship

service, not more than 15 people were present. Last Sunday, we were more than 40. We don't have a building but have been worshiping in the living room of someone's house until now. We hope that, with God's help, things will happen quickly here for the planting of The United Methodist Church.

Mbwizu leads a Bible study session every Wednesday afternoon for all the women—both missionaries and Senegalese—to empower them to follow the example of some strong women in the Bible. She also teaches at a shelter for girls. This house takes in young girls who have been rejected by their families for different reasons.

Instead of six, our children are now five. Tantine, our 10-year-old daughter, is gone. On September 6, our dear Tantine Ndjungu Mbwizu drowned in the ocean and died at the Principal Hospital of Dakar. We know that she is now in the hands of Jesus, the friend of all the children of the world. We know also that we shall see her one day. Meanwhile, we shall be living with a tearful remembrance.

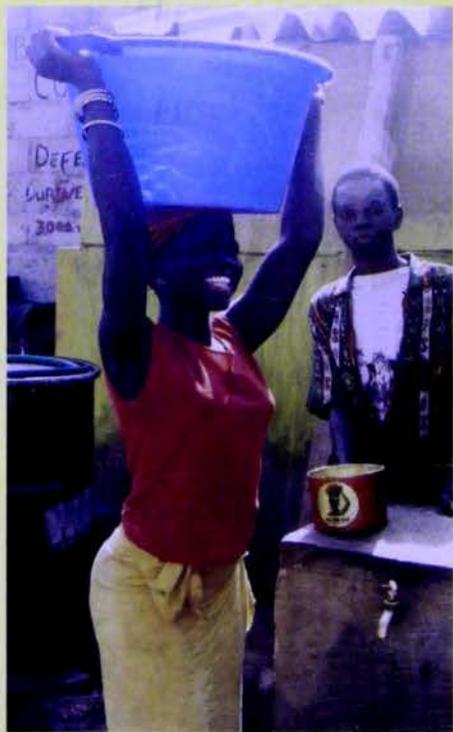
Economics and Growth

by Karen and Sebastine Ujereh
October 1998. Sebastine is continuing the Economic Empowerment Program (EEP) here in Senegal. The purpose of EEP is to alleviate poverty. We train groups of people and provide the seed money to get them started in a microenterprise project. (Dakar has an extremely high unemployment rate, even among young people who have high school and college degrees.)

Now, Sebastine is studying the economic, social, and cultural environment in order to determine what methodology will be most appropriate for the EEP in Senegal. The approach to EEP here will be different from that in Zimbabwe.

With each move, there are small differences and adjustments I have to make in my method of work as a treasurer. Senegal is no exception. My plan was to arrive in September, train with the outgoing treasurer, and start working on my own and studying the Wolof language in October. But when we arrived, the outgoing treasurer was already in the United States, so I began working on my own immediately. As for the Wolof lessons, I was told by two French-speaking Senegalese that they did not understand my *English*—when I was speaking to them in my best *French*! So, I've decided to study French again to see if I can improve before taking on Wolof.

Exciting things are happening with the house church in Senegal. One of the key components of our mission here is church planting. The United Methodist Church in Senegal is growing. We've set up a committee to identify an alternative place of worship that can accommodate this growth. □



Thanks to another United Methodist fountain, this young woman no longer has to walk long distances for water.

Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality

by Alma Graham

"I'm glad I'm in this safe house," the Rev. Dr. Randolph Nugent said on an icy January day as he looked out over the snow-covered grounds around St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary near New York City. "This is a place where we can explore things that in other settings might be disturbing."

It was the final plenary session of a weeklong consultation entitled "Orthodox and Wesleyan Spirituality." For six days, clergy and lay scholars from the United Methodist, British Methodist, Singapore Methodist, and Nazarene churches had met, studied, talked, and shared worship with Orthodox scholars from the United States, Russia, Greece, and Bulgaria. An atmosphere of peace

and collegiality prevailed as participants relaxed and talked about what the week had taught them.

In this closing discussion, the participants were most struck not by the details of scholarly papers they had delivered or heard but by what they had learned about one another. "There are other people who love *their* traditions as much as we love *ours*," said Father Thomas Hopko, St. Vladimir's dean. "We tend to forget that. We need to meet together and let God decide what comes of it."

"If we want to come closer, we have to go deep to our roots," said Professor Dimitar Kirov of Bulgaria. That's exactly what the consultation was designed to do—to help Methodists and Orthodox

find common ground by going back to their shared Christian beginnings. Two major splits in Christendom occurred in the millennium now ending: the divergence of the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity as the millennium began and the Protestant-Catholic division at the millennial midpoint. Now at the close of that thousand-year period, the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, and The Orthodox Church in America were undertaking a small, quiet, but resoundingly important ecumenical initiative. Dr. Nugent, the GBGM's general secretary, called it "Forward to the Past" because, he said, in looking back,



ve might
head in
John
Methodis
r, as t
Richard
Divinity
ead in
Hebrew,
panish;
oot, on
nd urge
ive hour
reading
such as
phrem
Macariu
thers w
o all c
given
Orthodo
explored
individ
nces of
nd Cha
Far
Protesta
encount
of Chur
who gat
of St. V
sions of
of Chri
Eastern
shared.
principle
ty...the s
West," I
Greek O
great de
is basec
heritage
Hie
of Maro
ther. He
Wesley'
the writ
century
that th
division
who k
hope th

we might see "how we might move ahead in the future."

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was a voracious reader, as the paper given by Dr. Richard Heitzenrater of Duke Divinity School pointed out. He read in English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, French, and Spanish; read while traveling on foot, on horseback, or in a carriage; and urged all his pastors to read five hours each day. Included in his reading were early Eastern fathers, such as Augustine of Hippo, Ephrem Cyrus, Justin Martyr, Macarius, Origen, Polykarp, and others whose works were common to all Christians. Other papers given during the week by Orthodox and Methodist scholars explored these common texts of the undivided church, tracing the influences of the Eastern Church on John and Charles Wesley.

Far from the Orthodox-Protestant conflicts sometimes encountered in the World Council of Churches, the clergy and laity who gathered together in the refuge of St. Vladimir's avoided discussions of dogma and kept to the path of Christian spirituality that the Eastern fathers and the Wesleys shared. Finding "the fundamental principles of Christian spirituality...the same in the East and in the West," Dr. Petros Vassiliadis of the Greek Orthodox Church felt that "a great deal of Wesleyan spirituality is based on the Eastern Christian heritage."

Hieromonk Alexander Golitzin of Marquette University went further. He found in John and Charles Wesley's welcoming response to the writings of Macarius, a fourth-century Syrian, "a kind of proof that those ages of difference and division can be transcended and—who knows?—perhaps even the hope that they can be reconciled."



Opposite, p. 38: The chapel at St. Vladimir's. Above: Jean Davis, GBGM Women's Division director; Dr. Frances Young, U. of Birmingham, England; Bishop Heinrich Bolleter, Central and Southern Europe Central Conference; Professor John Erickson, St. Vladimir's.

To Dr. S T Kimbrough, Jr., music is an important part of the reconciling mix. (Dr. Kimbrough, associate general secretary for mission evangelism at the GBGM, was an organizer of the consultation, along with Dean Hopko of St. Vladimir's and the Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, ecumenical officer of The Orthodox Church in America.) "Sharing in one another's worship life is foundational to spiritual growth and mutual understanding," Kimbrough said, "and music is at the heart of the spiritual journey with Christ."

Father Ioann Economtsev of the Moscow Patriarchate was of a like mind, affirming that, for him, "studying the poetry of Charles Wesley had a very special personal influence." He had translated "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" into Russian and played for the group a tape recording of that hymn sung by a monastic choir. On another occasion, after a presentation by Dr. Carlton Young, editor of *The United Methodist Hymnal*, the group sang hymns and liturgical music from Wesleyan and Orthodox traditions.

Music was also part of the daily worship shared in St. Vladimir's chapel—an important aspect of the weeklong consultation. Each day participants attended morning and evening services in the chapel, with the Orthodox and the Wesleys taking turns in leading worship.

Those from the Wesleyan heritage were especially grateful to the Orthodox for their willingness to share their sacred space.

The mutual understanding that was built incrementally during the week found a chorus of voices to affirm it at the close.

To the Rev. Lorna Khoo of the Singapore Methodist Church, moving closer together was a step-by-step process: "I know you exist. I can tolerate you. I think I like you—some of you. I need you." She pointed out that "we can't get there just by sharing papers but from learning from each other how to pray."

"It's not the doctrinal questions but the Christian life that is important," affirmed Dr. Roberta Bondi of the Candler School of Theology.

"We think Protestants don't regard their own traditions as being relevant today," said the Rev. Kishkovsky, "but Methodists *do*. Finding our common ground is of profound value for the whole ecumenical hope."

"I'm confident that lots of things could happen from here," Dr. Nugent said as the consultation concluded with plans for a second gathering next year. "God has kept us open to reach to one another. We'll never be the same again." □

Alma Graham has been Editor of New World Outlook since 1991.

Ideas for Ministry With Older Adults

by Brenda Connelly



"I am new in your community and looking for a church. What would you say?" I presented this scenario when

leading a workshop on older-adult ministries in a local church.

"Come to our church!" was the immediate, enthusiastic response of some in the group. "We have a good church-school program for our children and an active youth group." They added information on programs for young families.

"Well, my children are grown and don't live near. I've recently retired and want to be active. Do you have anything for me?"

"Umm....Well, we have a lot of volunteer work you could do in the church office...."

The leaders of this active, established church had not considered the need for programs planned by, with, and for older adults. This unintentional neglect is typical of many of our churches. If they have older-adult ministries at all, those ministries have often simply evolved as the members of an adult Sunday-school class or fellowship group have aged. Now, however, as the median age of our society increases and as a greater proportion of churchgoers become older adults, we need to be intentional in planning and expanding older-adult ministries within churches and communities.

It is important for older adults to be involved in the planning and development of ministries intended to serve them. Find out what older-adult age groups are present in your congregation. Then, working with seniors of various ages, find what ministries are already in place in your church and community.

Vigorous and physically fit adults in their 50s, 60s, and 70s require very different ministries from those designed for older people with physical disabilities.

Where you find gaps in service and ministry, is it feasible for your church to provide what is missing?

Consider the physical well-being and mobility of the older adults you plan to serve, taking into account both the young-old and the old-old. Are these older people living alone or with another or others? Do they serve as or are they served by a caregiver? Today, it is not uncommon to find an older adult providing care for an even older parent—the two having widely different interests and needs.

The following are models and suggestions for ministry with older adults—both those who are active and in good health and those who are less mobile or homebound.

Active, Healthy Adults

Talking, Touring Tuesdays is a group that meets weekly for 10 to 14 weeks at a time. One week, their program may be followed by a luncheon at the church. The next week, they may take a day trip, including lunch, and return to the church before dark. Many churches have a fellowship group of this kind for older adults. Such groups may be organized around devotions, Bible study, book reviews, current issues, art, music, or the like. Programs may be entertaining or may focus on such practical topics as tax assistance, financial planning, or health and safety. Often blood-pressure checks are done.

Most such groups organize two kinds of trips: day trips and overnights. Some older adults will participate only in one-day trips, either because short excursions enable them to be home by evening or because such trips spare them the expense of an overnight stay.

Talking and touring groups are often divided along age lines. If most members are in their upper 70s and their 80s, not many members in their 60s will participate. It

may be necessary to have two different groups, meeting at different times with different formats. But don't make the groups exclusive. There will be some crossovers who will participate in both.

Bible Study and Spiritual Growth. Churches should consider a Sunday-school class for older adults who have moved to the community in retirement. The needs of newcomers are different from the needs of longtime members who have been together in the adult class for decades. Also consider holding Disciple Bible Study groups, spiritual-growth studies, and prayer groups, tailoring the meeting times to the participants' needs. For example, one church had its Lenten study on Wednesday mornings, followed by a luncheon geared primarily to older retirees. The study was repeated on Wednesday evenings with a fellowship supper for younger retirees and people holding jobs.

Golden Life Circle began in 1985. Several churches in Murrayville, Illinois, joined together to start an older-adults group. One of the first things this circle did was to sponsor a health fair in the community and to prepare lunch for the day. The circle members take day trips to nearby places of interest in addition to their monthly luncheon and program meeting. This program provides a good model for small-membership churches, for they can join with other churches in the community to organize such a senior fellowship group.

The Walkers' Club is a means to encourage physical fitness for any age group. More active adults may walk or run in the neighborhood, while others may walk in the fellowship hall. Measure the distance around the fellowship hall so that

participants know how many circuits equal a mile. Then make and post a chart listing the names of all walkers. Open the hall during certain hours each week for people to come, walk, and record their distance on the chart. After three months, six months, or a year, there may be a party of affirmation and encouragement. Organized exercise groups that meet several times a week and are tailored to the needs of older adults are another option.

Holiday Dinner. A Christmas Day dinner at church was first proposed by a couple who were not going to be with family on Christmas Day, explained the older-adult coordinator at Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. This couple suggested that all in a similar situation might come together for a festive meal. Plans got underway. Some of the Sunday-school children made ornaments and decorated the Christmas tree two weeks in advance. The church provided the turkey and dressing, drinks, place settings, and decorations. Then everyone attending brought a covered dish and pitched in—as they would with any large family dinner—setting the table, putting out the food, and cleaning up. Upon arrival, they enjoyed hot apple cider and hors d'oeuvres. There was taped Christmas music in the background as they dined, and afterward they joined together singing Christmas carols. The dinner was billed for people (singles and couples of all ages) who would not be with family or other friends on Christmas Day. A similar event could be held at Thanksgiving.

Sewing for Missions is a group that meets on Wednesday mornings at Grace United Methodist Church in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, to sew items for outreach ministries. The

group members make clothing and layettes for mission projects serving infants and children. They make wheelchair bags, bibs, and lap robes for nursing homes. "Two of us don't sew on machines," says the senior member of the group. "So we do the cutting and pressing." Group members have been sewing for missions for about 15 years—taking off the summer months.

Both women and men can participate in groups like this—doing needlework, carpentry, crafts, painting, and repairs. Many older adults participate on Volunteer-in-Mission teams. Many also collect and pack needed emergency supplies for shipment to the UMCOR depot in Baldwin, Louisiana.

Respite. Many older adults are caregivers for a spouse or parent. Many times, caregivers are confined to their homes day in and day out. A few hours of respite each week can be a lifesaver for them. Respite may be provided through organized adult daycare centers or simply by training volunteers in the church to go into the homes and give the caregivers a morning or afternoon off.



Residents of the Ana Gonzaga Retirement Home in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Ana Gonzaga is a project of the Methodist Church of Brazil.

This enables the caregiver to shop, visit the doctor, lunch with a friend, or just enjoy some quiet time alone.

Good Neighbor Fellowship is a program that provides an evening of entertainment for mentally challenged adults, providing a time of respite for their caregivers. Such evenings are opportunities for fellowship, acceptance, and enjoyable activities for the participants and of rest and relaxation for the caregivers whose time they free.

Older, Less Mobile Adults

Homebound Bible Study is a weekly Bible study group that includes homebound members by meeting each week in a different home. Homebound members are called in advance to ask if they want to participate and to arrange a convenient time for the group to visit. Sessions may be recorded and taken to other homebound members who can attend in person only when the group meets in their home.

Homebound Visitation. Every six weeks at the Goodwater United Methodist Church, the name,

address, and phone number of each homebound member is put on a card and placed on the chancel railing during the Sunday morning worship service. At the end of the service, members of the congregation are invited to come up and select a name. For the next six weeks, each cardholder will have at least weekly contact with the person named. A cardholder may make a telephone call, send a greeting card or letter, stop by for a visit, or take flowers and a devotional book. At the end of the six weeks, the names of the homebound are listed once again on cards and the process begins anew.

Bac-A-Family is a list kept in the church office of volunteers who are available during the day to take older adults to doctor's appointments. Older adults in the church who need transportation know that they can schedule a ride by calling the church office. This service fills a major need for older adults who live alone and who no longer drive. Many times, the volunteer giving aid and the church member receiving it are both older adults. Daytime volunteers might also be called upon to sit for several hours with a hospitalized adult.

Work-study Program. "I really appreciated their coming," said Mrs. Pyles. "They helped me so much. I can't do much any more." This was in response to a summer work-study program for youth aged 14 to 17 in Anniston, Alabama. When you talk to the youth about going to Mrs. Pyles' house, their faces light up. Mrs. Pyles believes that making friends with the children keeps them out of trouble. The ministry enables youth and older adults to learn from one another and come to an understanding.

The summer program also teaches the teenagers how to get

and keep jobs. They visit job sites and hear working women and men tell about their employment. Through field trips, they learn from plumbers, carpenters, other craftspeople, legal secretaries, and social workers. They then apply some of what they've learned by doing repairs, such as roofing, painting, and cement finishing, on the homes of older adults. At the end of 15 training and work sessions, each receives a small stipend.

Christmas Lights Drive-Around.

Many older adults still enjoy an evening drive around town before Christmas to look at all the lights and decorations. What they need and often lack is someone to drive them. Vestavia Hills UMC in Birmingham has a church-sponsored pre-Christmas drive-around. Someone goes out a few nights in advance to find the best route for touring. Then, when the group gathers around 5:15 P.M. to climb aboard the church van, the route has been mapped out for optimum viewing. After touring for an hour or so, the participants return to the church for a party at which they share cookies each has brought, along with hot chocolate and spiced cider prepared at the church.

Other times of year might also be good for a church-sponsored drive, for example, to see flowering trees in the spring or to enjoy Fourth of July fireworks.

Continue to evaluate your ministries and to keep them fresh. There may be a tendency to provide only fellowship groups and trips, or the focus may be only on the homebound and those in nursing homes. It is important to have a well-rounded ministry by, with, and for all of your older adults—one that accommodates the fit, the frail, and the fragile from 55 to 105. □

Brenda J. Connelly, a Church and Community Worker/Home Missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries, is assigned as executive

director of Older Adult Ministries, a mission agency of the North Alabama Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.



Artist Charles Brooks illustrates a fellow retiree weaving a basket.

Wireless Worship

by Charles Cole

I was awakened by a ringing phone. I had gone to sleep the third time the preacher used the word *eschatological* and was thoroughly enjoying my nap.

This rude awakening came because someone in the congregation had a cellular phone. This person not only allowed the phone to ring in the sanctuary but insisted on answering it. The ushers showed the person out, phone still held to the ear.

Does this portend our future in worship? Not the sleeping—that's a traditional right all Protestants are entitled to. I mean using cellular phones during church.

If people are so obsessed with cellular phones that they will use them while driving, they would hardly balk at interrupting worship, would they?

Cellular phones have their uses, but they can also irritate. Many travelers have been tortured by the nearby passenger in a train or plane who carries on a loud and sometimes lengthy conversation. For example, I have learned the following facts by being forced to listen to cellular-phone conversations:

"Last night was bad—but not as bad as the night before."

"The file on Fitch is in the right hand drawer of my desk."

"They're not going to get the bid. I don't care what they submit."

"You're not gonna believe this, but Wells pitched a perfect game."

"George has the body, but Alex has the brains."

Given the weightiness of these observations, it's no wonder that cellular phones are spreading like wildfire.

True, I have occasionally thought about getting a cellular phone myself, but I am stopped



every time by the question: "What would Jesus do?" Would Jesus use a cellular phone? If he had, I'm sure he would have had more profound things to say than: "Keep the biscuits warm—I'll be on the 6:25 train." Nor would he raise his voice, as most cellular phone users are wont to do. Sitting near one in a restaurant, I was assaulted by his shouting out: "JOYCE! THANKS FOR CALLING. HOW ARE THINGS IN THE OFFICE?"

Actually, I doubt that Jesus would have used a cellular phone. He was nearly always accessible, but he didn't have the obsession that many do today never to be out of touch with the rest of the world. He often went away to quiet places precisely to avoid the rest of the world. Nor was Jesus an incessant talker. He carefully chose times and places for listening and speaking.

This brings us back to worship. I was only joking about falling asleep in church. Sermons these days are so short you could hardly doze off before they are over. Nor do we sing a lot of hymns or read a lot of Scripture. I was in a service

last fall when the entire Scripture reading consisted of two verses. Sometimes we seem to have a form of rationing for Scriptures, the way we always used to skip the third verse of hymns.

Despite all these attempts to make the service of worship efficient, we still can't seem to provide for periods of silence. A typical United Methodist congregation allows a moment of silence after the call to confession. This period lasts from approximately 5 to 12 seconds—not even half a minute.

So while others are calling for the wiring of worship, for placing video screens and multimedia devices in the sanctuary, I yearn for a day when we might actually have a period of silence during worship.

What, you may ask, does that have to do with mission?

If we had moments of silence, we might do some of the following. We might contemplate how it is that in ours, the mightiest nation on earth, we can tolerate the production and use of landmines that destroy limbs and lives in other countries. We might ponder how it might be possible that, after two entire millennia, we Christians still cannot avoid name-calling over doctrines and practices. We might consider what would happen if, in our zeal to make Christian disciples, we made a catechism disavowing violence, hatred of any group, and self-hatred. We might open ourselves to the possibility that the Spirit might so move among people of faith that we would build homes for the homeless, provide health care for every person, and accept the stranger and the sojourner in our midst.

Silence could become the engine that drives mission. □

You may use the next four pages as bulletin inserts about mission. Remove this page; duplicate it freely, printing front and back; fold it in the middle, along the black line; and slip the copies into your Sunday bulletins.

Ministry in Magadan on Russia's Pacific Coast

by Carol Ann Seckel, United Methodist Missionary in the Alaska Missionary Conference



This quadrennium, the Western Jurisdiction has prioritized work with a children's shelter in Magadan, a Russian city on the Sea of Okhotsk. Magadan was the center of the former Soviet gulag system, a network of forced labor camps for political dissidents. It used to be served by Alaska Airlines and Aeroflot; but now, since oil has been found elsewhere and since no passenger ships use the port, the only way to get there is by Magadan Air flights once a week.

The children's shelter is for children and youth who come from homes where they are abused or where drug or alcohol use creates problems. I first became involved with the work in 1993, after being asked to provide Christian education resources for a school in a poor area. My first visits to Magadan led to jurisdictional involvement, with a focus on social ministry. In the summer of 1997, work teams connected electricity and water to the site for the shelter. This past winter, we sent humanitarian assistance to help with the great needs for food and clothing. More than 30 children a day have been coming to the shelter in addition to those who live there. Magadan is so isolated that the people there go long periods without receiving any pay or supplies.

We have stumbled into cultural and social differences. Volunteer-in-Mission teams often want at least six months' lead time for a project. But our contacts are too busy worrying about how to find food and heat in the winter months, with temperatures often lower than 40 degrees below zero, to think ahead about summer work to be done.

It is a challenge to begin ministry from the very beginning. Yet I discovered that many people survived their time in the gulag by their faith. I believe that the people in Magadan are open and ready for a Russian-speaking missionary, perhaps one with a church-and-community orientation, to bring them the living Gospel and to provide a base for mission work to help meet their needs in the name of Christ.

The United Methodist Church in Mission

Debt Relief for Poor Countries

by Karla Manternach, Local Church Outreach Associate, Bread for the World



This year, Bread for the World members and churches are urging the US Congress to help relieve the debt owed by the world's poorest countries. Hundreds of millions who did not borrow or often even benefit from the original loans are nonetheless enslaved by their countries' debts. These ordinary families bear the heaviest burden of payment. And they *have* paid. Because their health, nutrition, and education take a back seat to debt payments, they continue to suffer from malnutrition, unemployment, and a lack of adequate health-care services and affordable education.

For example, in Tanzania, only 25 cents is spent on health care for every dollar spent on the debt. Meanwhile, one child in six dies before the age of five. Each dollar paid to wealthy creditors is a dollar not spent on food, health care, schools, or agriculture.

In the Old Testament, God instructs Moses to celebrate each 50th year as a jubilee during which "you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land," forgive debts, free slaves, and celebrate the fact that all things belong to God (Leviticus 25). Today, Bread for the World joins the worldwide Jubilee 2000 movement in seeking to enact legislation based on this biblical principle. With Christians everywhere, we seek to cancel the unpayable debt of impoverished countries by 2000.

Since 1990, Bread for the World has helped win legislative provisions allowing the United States to provide more than \$2.3 billion in debt relief to the poorest countries. You can support Bread for the World by contributing to UMCOR Advance Special #982325-3.

Some Tips for Visiting Russia

by Jarrell and Natalie Tyson, United Methodist Missionaries
With the Russia United Methodist Church



Russians dress more formally than Americans do. Especially when talking business, negotiating, or working, you are taken more seriously if you are not dressed casually. Jeans and T-shirts are inappropriate unless you are picnicking, hiking, or doing manual labor, such as Volunteer-in-Mission work. When you enter a Russian home, remove your street shoes. Bring your own slippers for use inside. When visiting a Russian Orthodox Church, don't put your hands in your pockets or turn your back to the altar.

Remember that the US dollars (USD) you take must be in pristine condition, with no marks or tears, and must be dated 1993 or later. Western restaurants and stores in Moscow and St. Petersburg display their prices in "Y.E." One Y.E. is equivalent to one USD.

If you need a washcloth, bring your own. We also take a travel towel, which resembles a felt chamois. A compact mirror, lightweight flashlight, and travel alarm come in handy. Carry a small plastic bag to dispose of used tissues, cotton balls, and dental floss. Also, be sure to carry some toilet paper with you throughout your stay, especially for public buildings. In homes, request the separate "toilet room," not the "bathroom."

After you arrive, be careful of uneven steps and flooring and of slippery entranceways. Buildings with five or fewer floors don't have elevators and often don't have lighted halls and stairways, so carry your flashlight. And when crossing streets, don't assume that drivers will grant you the right of way.

We share with Russians the custom of giving gifts to our host family. Flowers should be given only in odd numbers, since an even number of flowers is for funerals. Russian hosts are warm, gracious, and very caring. They give gifts to their guests. This is good to remember when you host a Russian in your home.

Bible Study in Russia

by Jarrell and Natalie Tyson, United Methodist Missionaries
With the Russia United Methodist Church

Our area of assignment covers the whole country of Russia, though we work mostly in the European part, west of the Ural Mountains. We spend more time on the road than we do at home in Moscow, leading monthly Bible-study groups in and near the cities of Tver, Oryol, Novgorod, Volgograd, and Tomsk (Siberia). We delight in the fact that the Russian groups are growing and developing their own leaders. Several now meet in their own study sessions between our visits.

Occasionally, we travel with a Partner Church team. Partner Churches work with the Russian Peace Foundation to support their Russian partner communities in physical, financial, and moral ways. Russians want to know about God, Christ, and the Bible.

Thanks to thousands of dollars contributed by United Methodists from all over the United States, we have been able to buy and distribute thousands of Bibles for children and adults. We are still in desperate need of more study materials translated into Russian. We buy Russian Bibles at the Russian Bible Society in Moscow, which also supplies the Russian Orthodox Church. These Bibles are less expensive than those sold in the United States, the translation is good, and the purchases help the Russian economy.

Please keep us and the Russian mission in your prayers. The eagerness and excitement of the Russians as they study the Bible inspires us deeply! In the face of the terribly insecure economic and political situation, many Russians are coming to know that they can trust God.



“WE’RE BUILDING OUR CHURCH RIGHT NOW!

*Quayle United Methodist Church
Oklahoma City, OK*



The preferred experts in United Methodist church financing. Churches are and have been our only borrowers since our founding in 1960. That’s why we can be attentive to your particular financial needs and help you bring your plans and dreams to fulfillment.

More than just great rates. Because we’re part of the General Board of Global Ministries, we are familiar with demographics and program planning, architecture, and capital fund raising, and can refer you to other members of our GBGM team for assistance if desired.

Part of a team, a link in the Connection. Church financing isn’t something we’ve added on to banking in order to satisfy regulators. Congregational financing is our mission.

Know where your money goes. Your interest payments go back to United Methodist investors who support church extension through their purchase of UMDF notes. UMDF expenses are paid from interest income as well; we receive no apportionment dollars.

We finance new construction, renovations, additions, relocations, and parsonages.

*Current mortgage rates:**

First units 7.50% per year

All other projects 8.00% per year

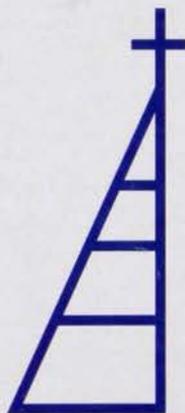
**Rates are subject to change at any time.*

*Call, write, or visit our website. Begin a relationship with UMDF,
the preferred lender to United Methodist churches.*

1 (212) 870 3865

Suite 1519, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115

<http://gbgm-umc.org/units/evgrowth/umdf.html>



**United Methodist
Development Fund**

MISSION MAGAZINE VIDEOS

ONE-YEAR
SUBSCRIPTION
4 VIDEOS - \$39

*1999 Edition
No. 1*

(30 min.)

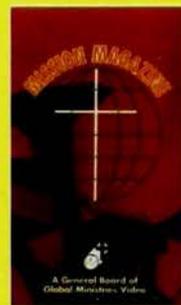
**Youth testimonials from the
Global Sacred Music Choir,
prison ministries’ initiatives,
and Mozambique footage—
“Swords Into Plowshares”**

1999 Edition No. 2

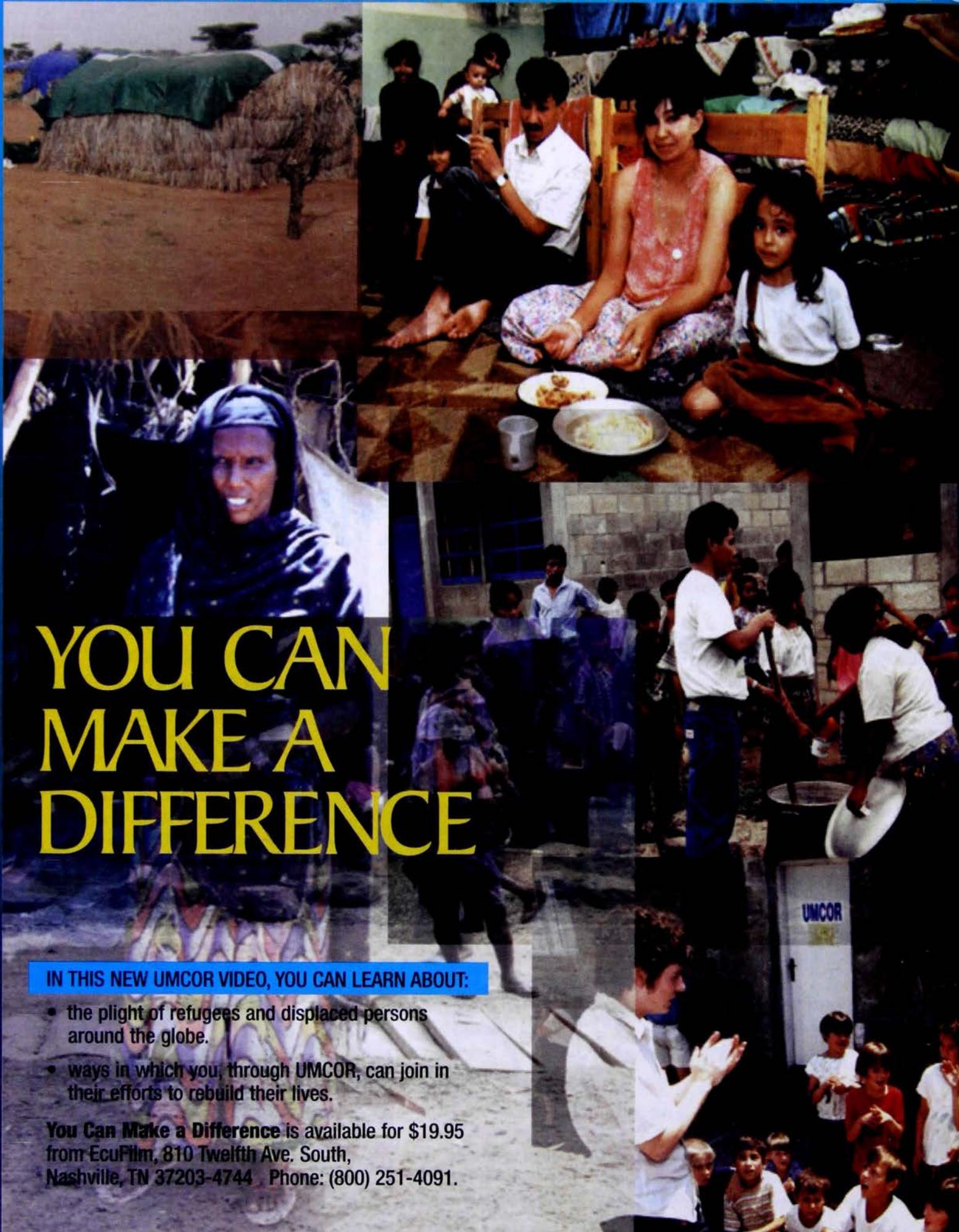
(30 min.)

**SPARV project in Houston,
agricultural missions, the
Honduras flood, and a larger
parish in Dallas, TX**

ORDER BY CALLING
1-212-870-3781
(ELECTRONIC MEDIA OFFICE)



Photo/Art Credits: Cover: Linda Rhodes • 4—GBGM • 5, 7, 9 (top)—New World Outlook Archives • 6, 8, 9 (middle and bottom)—General Commission on Archives and History • 10 (middle)—David Williams • 10 (top and bottom), 11 (left), 12-13, 14 (top left, bottom right)—Miriam A. Young, Asia Pacific Center for Justice and Peace • 11 (right), 14 (bottom center)—Toge Fujihira • 14 (top right)—Dan Hugos, GBGM • 16, 20, 22 (top)—Jennifer Goodrich • 18 (top)—Courtesy Bruce Weaver • 18 (bottom), 22 (middle and bottom right), 23—Courtesy Pulaski Heights UMC, Little Rock, AR • 19 (center)—Alma Graham • 21—map art: Emily Grote • 26 (left), 29 (top)—Courtesy Health and Welfare Ministries, GBGM • 26 (right), 27-28, 29 (bottom)—Lesley Crosson, GBGM • 30-32—Philip Wingeier-Rayo • 33—Courtesy Robert Milk • 34 (top) Alva Cox, GBGM • 34 (bottom), 35—Richard Lord • 36 (top)—GBGM • 36 (bottom), 37—Linda Rhodes • 38-39—Alma Graham • 40—Courtesy Clarice Cole • 42—Christie R. House • 43—art: Charles Brooks; photo: Brenda Connelly • 44—art: Roger Sadler.



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

IN THIS NEW UMCOR VIDEO, YOU CAN LEARN ABOUT:

- the plight of refugees and displaced persons around the globe.
- ways in which you, through UMCOR, can join in their efforts to rebuild their lives.

You Can Make a Difference is available for \$19.95 from EcuFilm, 810 Twelfth Ave. South, Nashville, TN 37203-4744 Phone: (800) 251-4091.

NEW WORLD JOURNAL