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# 75 YEARS WITH UMCOR

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UMCOR



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The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) began 75 years ago in the midst of very turbulent times. The world was being engulfed in a war—in 1940, German troops were already advancing across Europe and into North Africa, and Japanese troops were advancing in China.

The Methodist Church was celebrating a merger—the 1939 reunification of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church—to form the new Methodist Church. The 1940 General Conference was its first official legislative gathering.

To download the timeline and photo pages "75 Years with UMCOR," [click here.](#)

# New World Outlook

THE MISSION MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH • JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

75 YEARS OF  
**Being** with  
those in  
**Times of  
Crisis**



**UMCOR**  
United Methodist Committee on Relief

**75<sup>th</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**

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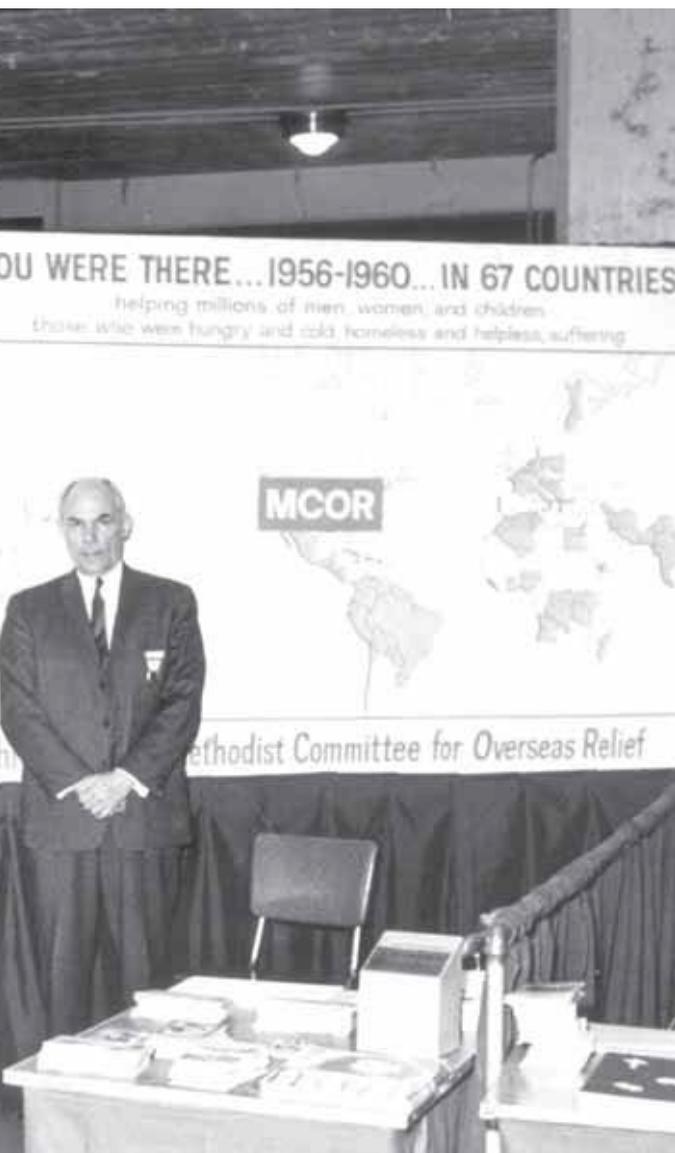
COVER: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS

A young boy carries food for his family from a food distribution by the United Methodist Committee on Relief following Typhoon Haiyan in Dagami, Philippines.



75 years OF BEING WITH THOSE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

## UMCOR'S 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



**Above:** The Rev. Dr. Gaither P. Warfield stands at a display commemorating MCOR's 20th anniversary.  
PHOTO: GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

**Left:** A logo commemorating this year's 75th Anniversary of UMCOR.

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*by Thomas Kemper*



# From the editor

## CELEBRATE 75 YEARS WITH UMCOR

**M**y research for this issue of *New World Outlook* turned up all kinds of facts and figures I didn't know about the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). This relief organization, set up by General Conference in 1940, was constantly working to improve how it did its work—as it continues to do today. It has been ahead of its time in many of the programs and projects it has pioneered.

I turned up a few surprising facts—even in its first decade, the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief was stretching its services beyond relief and emergency care to long-term development needs. In typical 1940s literary style, MCOR directors proposed that reconstruction, rehabilitation, repatriation of refugees and prisoners of war, restoration of churches and civil operations, and reconciliation between warring parties—a run of “Rs”—should all be part of MCOR's mission in working with the displaced and destitute refugees of World War II.

In its second decade, MCOR was already figuring out loan programs to help foster home reconstruction and livelihood projects among European refugees. Land reclamation in Hebron through terracing was another project.

The facts, figures, and photos pretty much speak for themselves, and I hope readers will enjoy this journey through UMCOR's history. There is much for the church to be proud of in this 75 year legacy, and, as always, it is up to United Methodists to pray about this ministry and decide what shape it will take in the future.

The poem below by Jack Amick describes the cover photo so well. Look closely. There is a package of cookies on top of the boy's food package, and it really did bring a broad smile to his face.

*Christie R. House*

## RICE AND COOKIES

*They gave me the job of giving out biscuits.*

*Maybe they figured that it would be light and easy and inconsequential.*

*Maybe they knew something I didn't yet see.*

*I stood at one end of the truck and passed out boxes of cookies*

*to the families who had already received their food packages.*

*I had wondered why we bothered including a frivolous thing like cookies.*

*When a boy came up holding his food bag and I piled a package of cookies on top,*

*a smile broke across his face*

*and told me by his actions that,*

*even in times of hardship,*

*it is good for people to experience grace upon grace,*

*abundant grace,*

*something extra,*

*like cookies.*

The Rev. Jack Amick  
International Disaster Response  
United Methodist Committee on Relief



## Greetings in Christ!

**T**his has been an exciting year in the life of the church! We have heard about new annual conference initiatives and new local church ministries. Participants in the United Methodist Women's Mission u disability study returned home to ask questions and find answers as to how their churches could be more disability-friendly. Congregations are raising funds to build ramps, install automatic door openers, and add lifts and elevators. The Spirit is on the move!

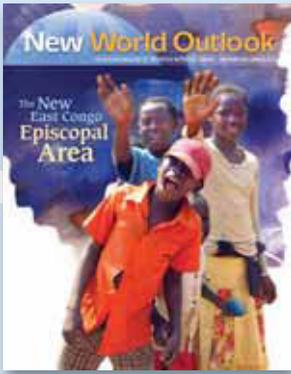
One thing many of these ministries share in common is a local church committee, which assesses, initiates, implements, and monitors improvements in accessibility and inclusion. Check out our new online article (<http://www.umdisabilityministries.org/welcoming/start.html>) to learn how your congregation can start a disability committee.

*Lynn Swedberg*

The VOICE of the United  
Methodist Disability Connection  
Fall 2014

Dear Editor:

I like all the issues of the *New World Outlook*, and particularly this month's issue (Nov-Dec 2014) on the new East Congo Episcopal area. Not only are all articles informative and inspiring, they are com-



## Letters from Readers

elling...moving me to humbly honor and receive the gifts of East Congo people to local and global mission.

*Elizabeth Tapia  
Director, Mission Theology  
Global Ministries*

Dear Editor:

The story by Bishop Unda is misleading (November-December 2014). My parents were missionaries at Tunda and Wembo Nyama in 1920-21 and were still there until at least sometime in 1923. They are never mentioned in any stories about the area. I am not sure of the exact dates, but my sister was born in 1921 and lived in Wembo Nyama as an infant and small child while Dad served that station and Tunda. My father was the Rev. Victor P. Henry, my mother, Mary Allen Goodson Henry. They sailed to Tunda and Wyembo Nyama down the Congo River on the Belgium ship, *Thysville*. The area they served was in the Batatela tribal

area. They served that area until sometime in 1923, when they had to return to the States because of Mother's health.

After Mother regained her health they were assigned to Cuba and served Nuevitas and LaGloria areas. I hope this gives you something about my parents' service in the mission field. The only reference that I have found about them was an article where they are listed with several others, but it included no photos, just their names.

*Martha Henry Berry  
Campbellsville, Kentucky*

Dear Editor,

Just a note to say that I loved your video about the East Congo Conference and also the latest edition of the *New World Outlook*...excellent, excellent, excellent...you captured the spirit of the country and the ministry there....what a gift you are to the office!

*Bishop Peggy A. Johnson  
Philadelphia Area*

Dear Editor:

I am really frustrated with trying to read this magazine format on my computer. It's not easy to do—the formatting is all wrong for reading onscreen. Have you considered dropping the outdated print-magazine formatting and going to on-line formatting?

*Kristin Joyner  
Chair, Connecting for Missions Ministry Group  
PNW United Methodist Church*

Dear Kristin:

The entire magazine is offered in an online format on [www.umcmmission.org](http://www.umcmmission.org), the Global Ministries' website. But since it is a paid print publication, it is not offered all at once. It does offer a straight page format, much different from a magazine page.

*Christie R. House  
Editor, New World Outlook magazine*

From Kristin Joyner: Thank you for your response. Yes, I'd much rather read it that way! If a subscription to this page were offered, so that I could read one article at a time, that would be my preference.

The Rev. Victor P. Henry, Mary Allen Goodson Henry, and Mary. PHOTO: COURTESY MARTHA HENRY BERRY



# 75 YEARS OF ACCOMPANYING AND LEARNING FROM THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE

by Denise Honeycutt



In February 2014, about four months after Typhoon Haiyan had struck the Philippines, I traveled there with the International Disaster Response team of the United Methodist Committee of Relief (UMCOR). We were looking for a small Philippine community whose people would accept UMCOR's help in rebuilding their homes.

A government official who was working with us suggested a place where he thought we could find an open atmosphere and local residents willing to work with a United Methodist relief agency. Calogcog, a community of 300 families,

experienced approximately 200 fatalities and the destruction of 220 homes out of a total of 243. The need to provide high-quality permanent shelter was the first step toward re-establishing a thriving local community. As the mayor of this village led us on a walk around the community, his wife took hand and continued to hold it. "That was where our neighbor's house stood," she said, pointing. A husband, wife, and three children lived there...but we haven't found them yet. Over there, is where the school used to be."

Then, pointing toward a far-off grove of trees, she added:

"Yesterday, down below those trees, they found a man from our village who had been holding onto a tree as the typhoon struck—they found his body, but we don't yet know who he was." At that point she asked me, "But why would you help us? And how would we decide who would get the first house?"

I said: "What UMCOR does is to look for the most vulnerable people in the community. Any good humanitarian organization does that. We know that the best practice is to help the most vulnerable first. But another reason we do so is that we are followers of Jesus,

who made it clear that his followers should care for the least, the last, and the most vulnerable. That's why we do what we do."

Still holding my hand, she said, "I think we can work together."

### UMCOR's Beginnings

For 75 years, UMCOR has been in ministry with the most vulnerable—being present with and offering relief to those who have been

speech—delivered in 1940 by Bishop Herbert Welch—that launched the mission movement we now call UMCOR. Surprisingly, it was part of a report to the 1940 General Conference from the Methodist Committee for China Relief. Although many details of that General Conference were covered at great length by the media of the time, Bishop Welch's call to action was more like a side note. The delegates took an on-site offering

The 1940 General Conference was preoccupied with many important and politically charged internal matters. It was the first General Conference of the Methodist Church, which was formed in 1939 by a merger of the Methodist Protestant Church; the Methodist Episcopal Church; and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Methodist Protestant Church had already ordained several women, but the Methodist Church would not or-



displaced by war, other conflicts, or natural disasters. That's who we are as UMCOR—the globally connected United Methodist family. For 75 years, United Methodists have been journeying with communities on the long road to recovery and development, responding to the spiritual and emotional needs of those who find their lives turned upside down by disasters, and compelled by Christ to offer hope and healing to a hurting world. That's the community of faith that sends UMCOR out into the world.

As UMCOR's 75th anniversary approached, I searched for the original

dedicated to the relief work of the newly created Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief (MCOR). A committee was formed, with Bishop Welch as chair, and a day prayer and fasting, when the churches could collect an offering, was set aside for a Sunday later in the year. MCOR was authorized to funnel funds through six religious relief organizations. Behind the scenes, John R. Mott, Bishop Welch, Bishop Arthur Moore, and Ralph E. Diffendorfer (director of the newly constituted mission agency), added an amendment—calling for the creation of MCOR—to the China Relief committee's report.

dain women for another 17 years. Compromises had to be made. There were concerns over Methodist missionaries held as prisoners of war and prayers for those who had died while in service. Methodist churches in Europe and China were being crushed by the war. Every committee and agency had to be officially approved. Three Methodist women's organizations were being combined into one. There were many important issues to cover. Most of the compromises were worked out a year ahead, behind the scenes.

As a former missionary myself and as an ordained clergywoman, I can

especially appreciate and be grateful for the time and effort spent on those matters. But while there is a need for space and energy to deal with internal issues, they should never overwhelm our call to look beyond ourselves and focus on the needs of those who are the most vulnerable.

### UMCOR's Mission Ministry

As UMCOR heads with confidence and strength into the next 75 years, we continue to work on behalf of all United Methodists in our efforts to alleviate human suffering and to ad-

in relationship with the communities it serves. As Christians, we believe that all persons are created in the image of God and have the right to a full and abundant life. Through the work of UMCOR, lives are being transformed and communities, strengthened. Out of the tragedy of natural or human-made disaster, healing and hope take root.

As the church begins the next 75 years of life-giving ministry, we at UMCOR have reaffirmed our work to be among and with those on the margins—the vulnerable and the poor.

moving to sweep the church into a new mission age. With openness and gratitude we await the leading of the Spirit in ways not yet seen, as God continues to work God's purposes out in our own day in a new way." This theological understanding grounds UMCOR's work.

### Hope in Times of Crisis

When a crisis disrupts life and overwhelms a community's capacity to respond, UMCOR works to empower the community's full recovery. Part of our covenant with community members is staying until the recovery is complete. Beyond the initial emergency response, proactive steps are taken to train and equip communities to prepare for future scenarios. Thus UMCOR works with communities on Disaster Risk Reduction projects so that community networks can identify local hazards and design local strategies to prepare communities for action before the next crisis comes. Working at times with missionaries, local leaders, and partner organizations, UMCOR responds to disasters whether or not they have captured the attention of the global media.

UMCOR has earned a global reputation for its ability to provide professional humanitarian assistance that meets international standards for best practices. Not only is UMCOR present with people in the face of crisis or disaster, but we also stay to address long-term development needs. In part, this is possible because UMCOR works with and supports our central conferences, Methodist and United Methodist bodies, local and international relief agencies, and other secular and faith-based partners to assess community needs and assets. A primary goal is to meet the development needs and local goals of the people being served. Future regional offices will enhance and enrich



Health worker Kadie E. Koroma (right), part of a team with The United Methodist Church's Imagine No Malaria campaign, processes a voucher that will provide mosquito nets for the family of Gbassay Foday (seated at left) for use in her home in Baoma village, near Bo, Sierra Leone.

PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS

vance hope and healing. As the global humanitarian relief and development arm of the church, UMCOR is called by Christ to work with the poor—with all those on the margins—acting, as Bishop Welch challenged, “in the relief of human suffering without distinction of race, color, or creed.”

That is UMCOR's mandate, mission, and ministry. The agency does its work boldly because it is grounded in Christ. It lives out this mission

UMCOR's work is marked by mutual-ity, empowerment, and sustainability. We strive toward a rights-based approach in all that we do.

The mission of UMCOR is God's mission. As such, it is centered in relationships—relationship with God through the living Christ, relationships with one another, and relationship with all of creation. As Global Ministries' Mission Theology statement affirms: “The Spirit is always



Denise Honeycutt meets with some of village leaders and UMCOR staff in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan.

PHOTO: J. ROLLINS

this work. Currently, UMCOR's country offices connect with community-based as well as national and international organizations to build the capacity of local communities. Throughout this work, vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, are always the main focus.

### Sustaining Life and a Healthy Planet

Our current sector-specific work includes WASH (Water and Sanitation Hygiene), which ensures sustainable, safe water usage. In the United States, many of us take a clean, reliable water source for granted, yet for many in the world, the search for clean water is a daily struggle. Similarly, access to a nutritious and sustainable source of food is beyond the reach of many. Besides rural farmers in developing countries, low-income urban neighbors and impoverished war refugees are among those that UMCOR's Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security programs serve. The elimination of hunger and poverty continue to be primary goals for UMCOR. An integrated, holistic approach connects community-based primary health care, water,

and agricultural ministries for a maximum healthful benefit.

UMCOR, like many humanitarian and development organizations, is finding itself at the intersection of its historic mission to alleviate human suffering and the realities of climate change and other environmental devastation. In

many parts of the world, our suffering planet causes its inhabitants to suffer. Changing weather patterns caused by global climate change are often felt most severely by those living in the poorest countries, rendering their land and ways of living unsustainable. As the church actively pursues its mission of alleviating human suffering, the necessity of embracing a ministry that includes all of God's creation becomes clear. The myriad and complex webs that connect and sustain fragile ecosystems support life for everyone. We are beginning to work more deliberately with communities in adapting to and mitigating the harmful effects of climate change so that their people might not simply survive, but thrive.

### Into the Future

Cutting across all of UMCOR's work is a continuous drive toward efficiency, measurable impact, and learning. Developing deep, meaningful relationships with those we serve allows us to truly listen and refine our work. UMCOR continues to be diligent in its responsible use of the funds entrusted to its care. We are often able to leverage UMCOR resources to

gain institutional donors and strategic partnerships. As a result, the faithful giving of Methodists is multiplied, providing even greater impact.

We are excited about being a part of God's mission, of following the "Spirit in ways not yet seen, as God continues to work God's purposes out in our own day in a new way." The great needs of our world have not diminished since Bishop Welch's call to action 75 years ago. As we head into the future, we are grounded in Christ, confident of our call, and ready to offer God's love in action.

*The Rev. Dr. J. Denise Honeycutt serves as deputy general secretary for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the General Board of Global Ministries.*

## SUPPORT ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

**UMCOR is able to allocate 100 percent of the money raised for disaster response or development work to the projects designated by the donors. This is possible because administrative costs are covered through one special annual offering, "One Great Hour of Sharing." This offering, to be taken this year on March 15, enables UMCOR to carry out its work throughout the entire year. Even today, no World Service or apportioned funding supports UMCOR. As in its beginning, UMCOR is supported by the second-mile giving of United Methodists members.**

**This year, Bishop John Schol, Bishop Hee-Soo Jung, and the Rev. Dr. Denise Honeycutt will be celebrating One Great Hour of Sharing in Atlantic City, New Jersey, where the 1940 General Conference was held. They invite all United Methodists across the connection to celebrate UMCOR's 75 Anniversary with them on March 15 in their local churches. A tool-kit can be downloaded from the UMCOR website, <http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/umcor75>.**

# A MUSTARD SEED MULTIPLIED

by Linda Unger

Pouring over the history of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), it is hard to resist the image of the mustard seed—that “smallest of all the seeds on earth” that Jesus uses to describe the kingdom of God. From a tiny seed, new life grows from obscurity to become “the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.” (Mark 4:30-32)

Now, UMCOR itself may not be the kingdom of God or “the greatest of shrubs,” but, like the mustard seed, its beginnings were small and humble. At its founding, it was not intended to survive much beyond World War II but to help and comfort those who were impacted by the violence of that period. Nevertheless, nourished by faith and self-giving love, it has sunk deep roots in Methodist soil and extended leafy branches both to those in need and to all who would partner with them to respond.

Over the course of seven and a half decades, UMCOR has modified its size, reach, and approach. Yet, certain constants have developed within the organization from the days when the seed was first sown to the present. Those constant concerns are:

- Responding in faith
- Partnering with others
- Alleviating human suffering
- Serving refugees

## Responding in Faith

In September 1940, just a few months after General Conference approved the formation of the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief (MCOR), the forerunner of the present-day UMCOR, Bishop Herbert Welch, who is credited with its founding, made the public case for faith-based relief agencies.

While holding up the good work of secular agencies for war relief, he said, “There is, in this critical time, [a] need for church agencies of relief, to bear their part and make their distinctively Christian contribution to a suffering world.” That contribution was one of “mercy and reconstruction” among the affected civilian population, Welch wrote. It could make no distinction “of race, creed, or color” among those it sought to assist, and would “bear witness to Christ by serving all in the name of Christ,” he said.

Even in 1942, when MCOR began to prepare for its role after the end of World War II, MCOR leaders foresaw the extension of relief work to include a continuum of recovery and development. A report on the 40th anniversary of the agency, written in 1980, described this shift as “evidence of a radical change in the Church from a mode of faith that emphasized the relationship of the individual to God to a mode of faith that emphasized the relationship of belief to social interaction.” In other words, United Methodists felt called by their faith to respond as long as there was need.



That sense of obligation to be the “hands and feet of Christ” for no other reason than Christian call, continues to motivate United Methodists in their support of UMCOR and their solidarity with people in need around the world.

### Partnering With Others

When Bishop Welch made his case for MCOR as a faith-based relief agency, he didn't see it as one more religious entity working in the field of relief in competition with others. On the contrary, MCOR's activities were to be “primarily aimed at reinforcing the efforts of relief agencies of an interdenominational character.”

MCOR had been created as a successor to the Methodist Committee for China Relief, with an expanded mandate. It was meant to appeal for funds and disburse them for relief aid through an initial six approved Methodist or other denominational and ecumenical agencies.

Far from being in competition with other Christian denominations, MCOR was expected to work alongside them. UMCOR has continued and expanded this collaboration to include interreligious partnerships. UMCOR's work with organizations such as Muslim Aid and International Blue Crescent have allowed it to extend assistance to communities served by these partners in Pakistan,

Somalia, and Syria, among others. UMCOR also partners with secular organizations, such as GlobalMedic, pooling knowledge, capacity, resources, and expertise.

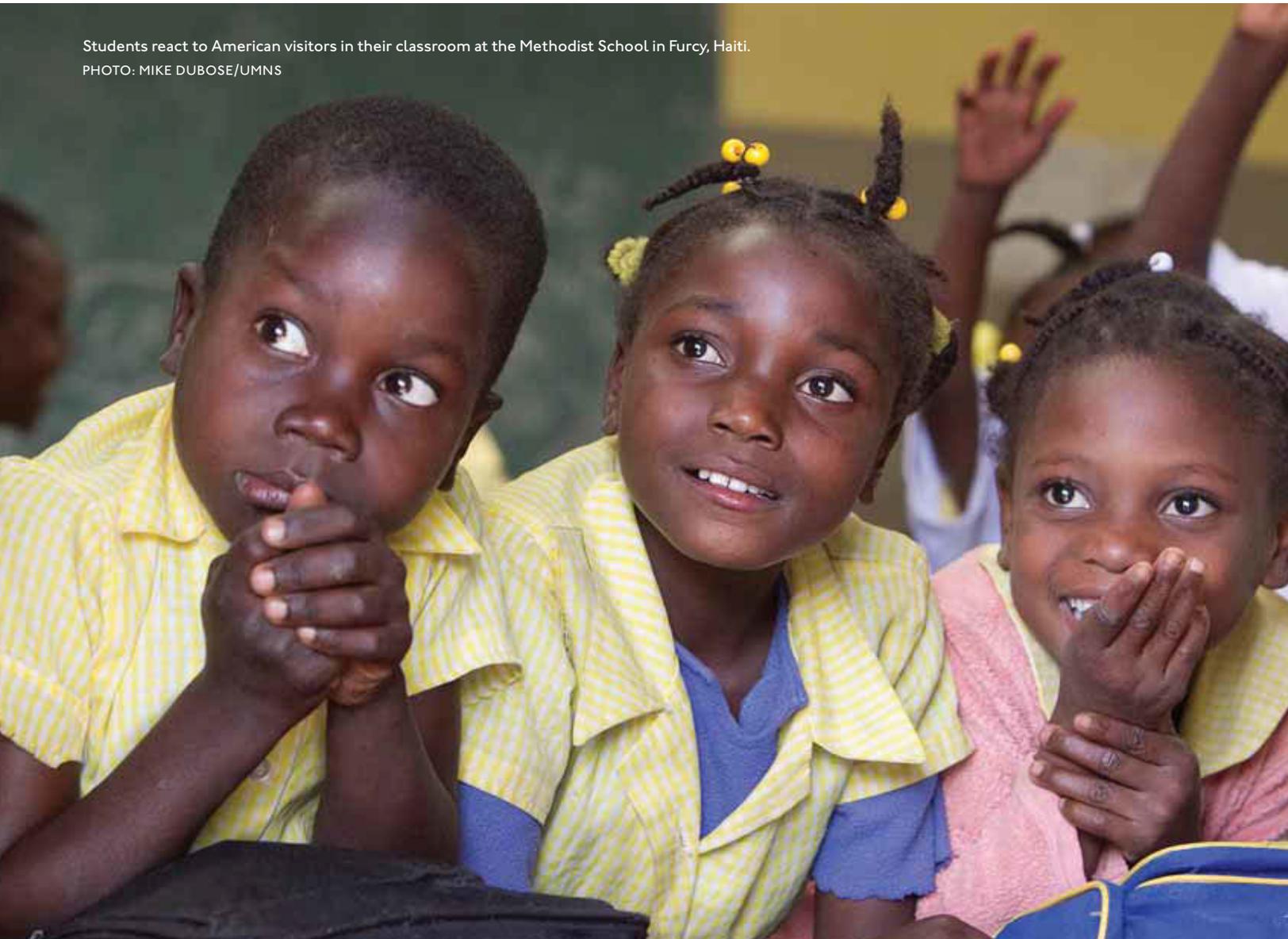
UMCOR's first partners in the wake of a disaster, though, are the impacted communities themselves. Their insight and local knowledge help UMCOR to target aid effectively to the populations most in need.

### Alleviating Human Suffering

When MCOR was founded, war raged in Europe and Asia. Methodist missionaries were often caught in the crosshairs, and some of MCOR's early work was to “bring out stranded missionaries from war areas, to

Students react to American visitors in their classroom at the Methodist School in Furcy, Haiti.

PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS



send supplementary subsistence to pastors and Bible women whom it had called out to do the church's work, to feed teachers fainting from malnutrition in their classrooms," says a report on the organization's 20th anniversary.

"But," the document continues, "its task was bigger than this because the need was bigger. The need was staggering. MCOR undertook to do everything in its power to succor suffering people anywhere, of whatever race, nationality, creed or

recovery. The need for reconstruction, rehabilitation, repatriation of the displaced, and reconciliation following not only the war but the many other kinds of emergencies to which UMCOR continually responded, became evident.

In 1960, MCOR was responding to 14 or 15 appeals for funds annually; by 1980, the number had risen to 30 or 40. Today, UMCOR responds to about 100 disasters a year, around the world and in the United States.



A GlobalMedic staffer takes buckets through a throng of curious onlookers after Typhoon Haiyan, Leyte Province, Philippines, 2013.

PHOTO: JACK AMICK

no creed.... No one knew then that [MCOR] would last so long or extend its mercies so far."

By the time that report was written, MCOR had taken on "a sad permanency." Originally founded to respond to the exigencies of World War II, MCOR's mission was renewed by seven more general conferences, for a total of 32 years, before it became a permanent fixture in The United Methodist Church.

While carrying out relief work, the agency always felt the tug toward long-term, sustainable

address before disaster strikes, thus helping them to reduce casualties and costs of recovery after a calamity.

United Methodists and others participate directly in disaster response after training in any of these areas. They also extend support through UMCOR's material resources ministry, by purchasing supplies and assembling relief kits either in their home congregations, at the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot in Baldwin, Louisiana, or at any one of a network of eight United Methodist depots in different parts of the United States.

Relief supplies are shipped around the world and across the United States.

## Serving Refugees

UMCOR is perhaps best known for its work in response to disasters—including major disasters such as the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004; Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Ike in the United States in 2005; and the Haiti earthquake of 2010. These events generate displacement, and UMCOR has helped provide services—and in the case of the US hurricanes, case management—for communities forced by these disasters to evacuate.

Since its founding, UMCOR has also worked with communities displaced by war—from Europe and Palestine after World War II, to Central Americans who sought refuge in the United States in the 1980s, to today's displaced persons and refugees from Syria, Sudan, Ukraine, and Iraq.

From 1948 to today, UMCOR has worked with Church World Service to resettle war-displaced persons in the United States and has supported the efforts of individual congregations to welcome these refugees.

UMCOR also is currently working with United Methodist conferences and congregations along the US-Mexico border to provide food, shelter, and legal services for the thousands of women, children, and unaccompanied minors who are fleeing gang violence and a dearth of livelihood possibilities in Central America.

## Mustard Seed Multiplied

The tiny mustard seed sown 75 years ago has not only grown but multiplied, as the spirit that moved Bishop Welch and 1940 General Conference continues to nurture the church in collaboration with UMCOR today.

*Linda Unger is the senior writer for the General Board of Global Ministries.*

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# 75 YEARS WITH UMCOR

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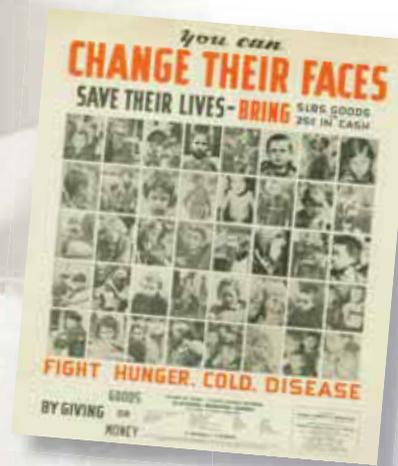
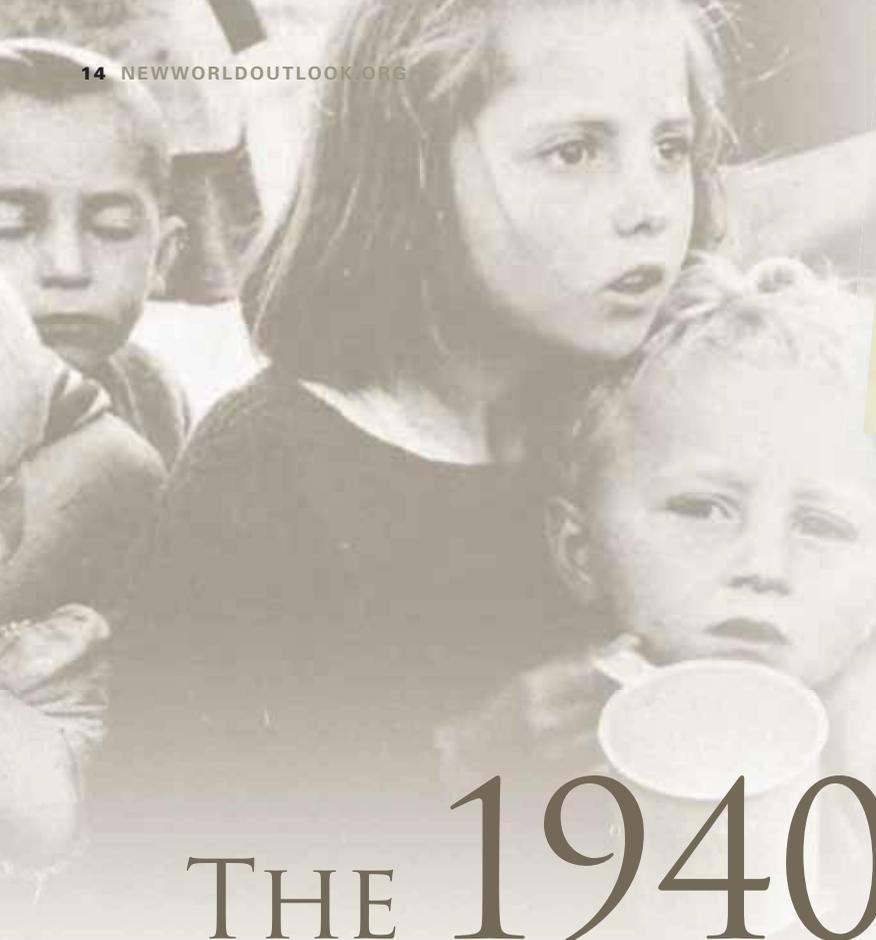
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The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) began 75 years ago in the midst of very turbulent times. The world was being engulfed in a war—in 1940, German troops were already advancing across Europe and into North Africa, and Japanese troops were advancing in China.

The Methodist Church was celebrating a merger—the 1939 reunification of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church—to form the new Methodist Church. The 1940 General Conference was its first official legislative gathering.

To download the timeline and photo pages "75 Years with UMCOR," [click here.](#)



**Far Left:** Internally Displaced children in Greece receive food as part of MCOR relief operations in 1949. **Below:** Boys in Naples, Italy, line up for a hot lunch—World War II relief efforts. PHOTOS: GCAH. **Left:** An early relief poster showing child war refugees.

PHOTO: GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY (GCAH)

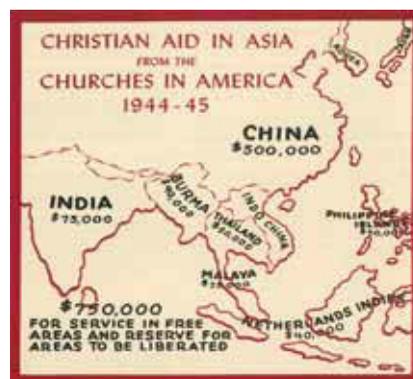


# THE 1940s

## The Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief (MCOR)

The Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief was created by the 1940 General Conference in response to a proposal presented by the Methodist Committee for China Relief through its chair, Bishop Herbert Welch from New York. The bishop, then 78, had already retired once. He was called out of retirement to head the Committee for China Relief and he would continue to serve for another eight years as the director of MCOR. The Rev. Floyd Shacklock, a missionary in Japan, was chosen to be MCOR's treasurer and staff.

General Conference approved a Self-Denial Offering for June of 1940 that raised the initial funding for MCOR's work and its first grants. Six ecumenical Christian overseas relief agencies were



Distribution of Funds Graphic for MCOR, 1944-1945. PHOTO: GCAH

approved to receive funds from the Methodists.

In the early years, 1940-1944, China relief efforts received four times as much funding as Europe relief efforts. In 1943, the agency also responded to famine and refugee needs in India and Pakistan. By 1948, more funding was flowing to relief and resettlement efforts in

Germany. Palestinian refugees from the creation of Israel became another major focus in the late 1940s.

In 1942, a proposal from MCOR to the Board of Directors suggested that war relief would have to be more than just providing necessities to refugees and displaced populations. In addition to relief, the proposal suggested that MCOR should be involved in reconstruction, rehabilitation of refugees and prisoners of war, restoration of churches and civil operations, and reconciliation—an effort to restore peace and goodwill.

In 1946 Church World Service was formed as a merger of several Protestant relief organizations—the Central Bureau for Interchurch Aid in Europe, the American Christian Committee for Refugees, and the American Commission for World Council Service. CWS grew to be one

“Our motto is ‘Giving by Christians for the needy, without distinction for race, creed, or color.’ We bear witness to Christ by serving all in the name of Christ.”

—Bishop Herbert Welch  
Welch Papers, August 27, 1940, General Commission  
on Archives and History



PHOTO: GCAH

of the largest faith-based relief agencies in the world. According to CWS records, 80 percent of all the relief goods from voluntary organizations in the United States were shipped through CWS, and Methodists were among its top donors.

In 1948, Bishop Titus Lowe was appointed to replace Bishop Welch. He worked with the Rev. Gaither Warfield, a missionary to Poland. Warfield started with MCOR in 1946 as the executive secretary. During his missionary assignment, he had been taken as a prisoner of war during World War II, held first by the Germans and then by the Russians. In 1952, it was decided that MCOR needed a full-time executive staff director, and Gaither Warfield became

MCOR's general secretary. By then the staff had grown to 19.

With the US passage of the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, MCOR began working with Church World Service to resettle displaced war refugees from Europe and Palestine. Congregations in the United States volunteered to assist refugee families with material supplies, shelter, and employment opportunities to help them resettle in US neighborhoods.

In addition to relief for refugee populations, MCOR provided funding for work among prisoners of war and displaced missionaries of China and Malaysia. A heifer project provided farm animals as part of the agency's relief work.



In the early 1940s, relief operations for displaced persons, orphans, and refugees in China received the majority of funding from MCOR. PHOTO: GCAH

## TIMELINE FOR 75 YEARS OF UMCOR

### — 1940

1940

**General Conference establishes MCOR.**

**Bishop Herbert Welch serves as MCOR's executive director.**



Dr. Floyd C. Shacklock  
PHOTO: GCAH

1941-1944

**Dr. Floyd C. Shacklock joins MCOR.**

1946

**Gaither Warfield begins work with MCOR.**

**Church World Service (CWS) is created.**

1948-1952

**Bishop Titus Lowe is elected as executive director for MCOR.**

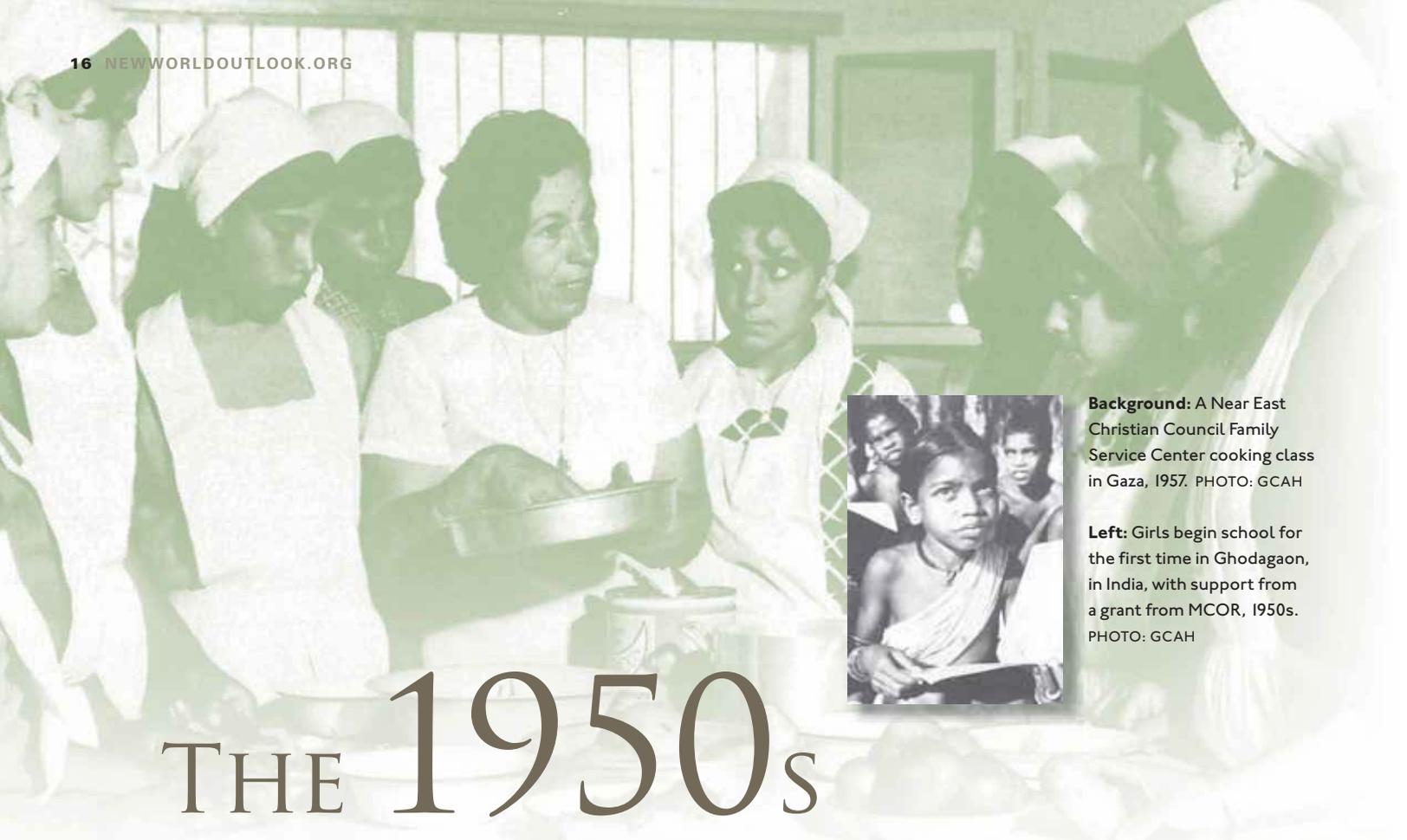
1948

**US passes Displaced Persons Act of 1948. Refugee resettlement begins.**

**“Rehabilitation” is added to MCOR's relief mandate.**

**Church World Service introduces “One Great Hour of Sharing,” coinciding with the “Methodist Week of Dedication.”**

### — 1950



**Background:** A Near East Christian Council Family Service Center cooking class in Gaza, 1957. PHOTO: GCAH

**Left:** Girls begin school for the first time in Ghodagaon, in India, with support from a grant from MCOR, 1950s. PHOTO: GCAH

# THE 1950s

As early as 1948, MCOR added "rehabilitation" to its relief mandate. Providing food and emergency supplies did not create stability. During the 1950s, well-building in Pakistan, shelter building in Greece, and work to improve people's livelihoods began. Youth amputees in Korea were taught to make and fit their own prosthetics. Even a revolving loan fund was instituted so that those who needed relief could also start small businesses or buy seed or other inputs for farming. Widows were trained in small crafting work and given start-up supplies to support themselves and their children. In Mokdong, Korea, a community of North Korean refugees received an MCOR loan to build a flood-control dam, and the loan was repaid.

Although World War II had ended, the world was far from peaceful. War relief continued to dominate MCOR's work. Korea, China, India-Pakistan,



A mother and her children in transit, refugees of the Korean War. MCOR provided relief supplies, food, and clothing. PHOTO: EASTERN PUBLISHERS PHOTO IN *WORLD OUTLOOK* 1951



Vaccination in Taiwan, where “ouch” is the same in any language. PHOTO: GCAH

Israel-Palestine, and Eurasia were engulfed in revolution and civil conflicts.

In the health-care arena, tuberculosis was a major concern after World War II. It affected refugee populations everywhere—in India, Pakistan, Korea, China, Japan, Malaysia, and Europe. MCOR worked with other agencies to provide medical supplies and with the Methodist Board of Missions to channel funds through missionaries in the refugee populations. In some cases, the missionaries were part of the refugee populations, and they continued their mission work wherever they were.

In 1952, MCOR began making monthly allocations to India, as a drought and then severe flooding disrupted the normal planting seasons and famine was causing widespread starvation. Major attention was focused on the 4 million refugees in Korea, resulting from the Korean War. Many in North Korea fled to the South. Multi-Purpose Food, devised by the California Institute of Technology, was introduced—a high-quality protein food fortified with minerals and vitamins. In 1953, CWS and MCOR were agencies that took part in a new US government

“*Well-fed, well-clothed America dare not turn away from the hoarse cry of the starving nor from the over-thin outstretched hands. They lift piteous eyes and ask for bread—multiplied thousands have died for lack of it. He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.*”

—Bishop Titus Lowe  
*Inasmuch* MCOR newsletter,  
October 1949

food surplus program. The first shipments of powdered milk were sent to Korea and India.

In 1957, MCOR sponsored a land reclamation project in Hebron with Arab farmers. MCOR paid the wages



A new hand-pump installed in a Pakistani village, MCOR project, 1950s. PHOTO: GCAH

of the skilled laborers needed for terracing, and half the cost of 10,000 almond trees. The farmers bore 60% of the cost of the project themselves.

By 1960, MCOR had assisted in the resettlement of more than 12,000 refugees in the United States across 47 different states.



PHOTO: GCAH

## — 1950



Rev. Gaither P. Warfield  
PHOTO: GCAH

### 1952

**Gaither Warfield becomes the full-time director of MCOR. General Conference votes to reorganize MCOR with a new committee.**

### 1953

**Worldwide Communion Sunday, 1/2 of receipts go to MCOR.**

### 1953

**Refugee Act of 1953 passed—214,000 people enter United States.**

### 1954

**Bishops' Appeal for Korea provides 70% funding for mission and 30% for MCOR.**

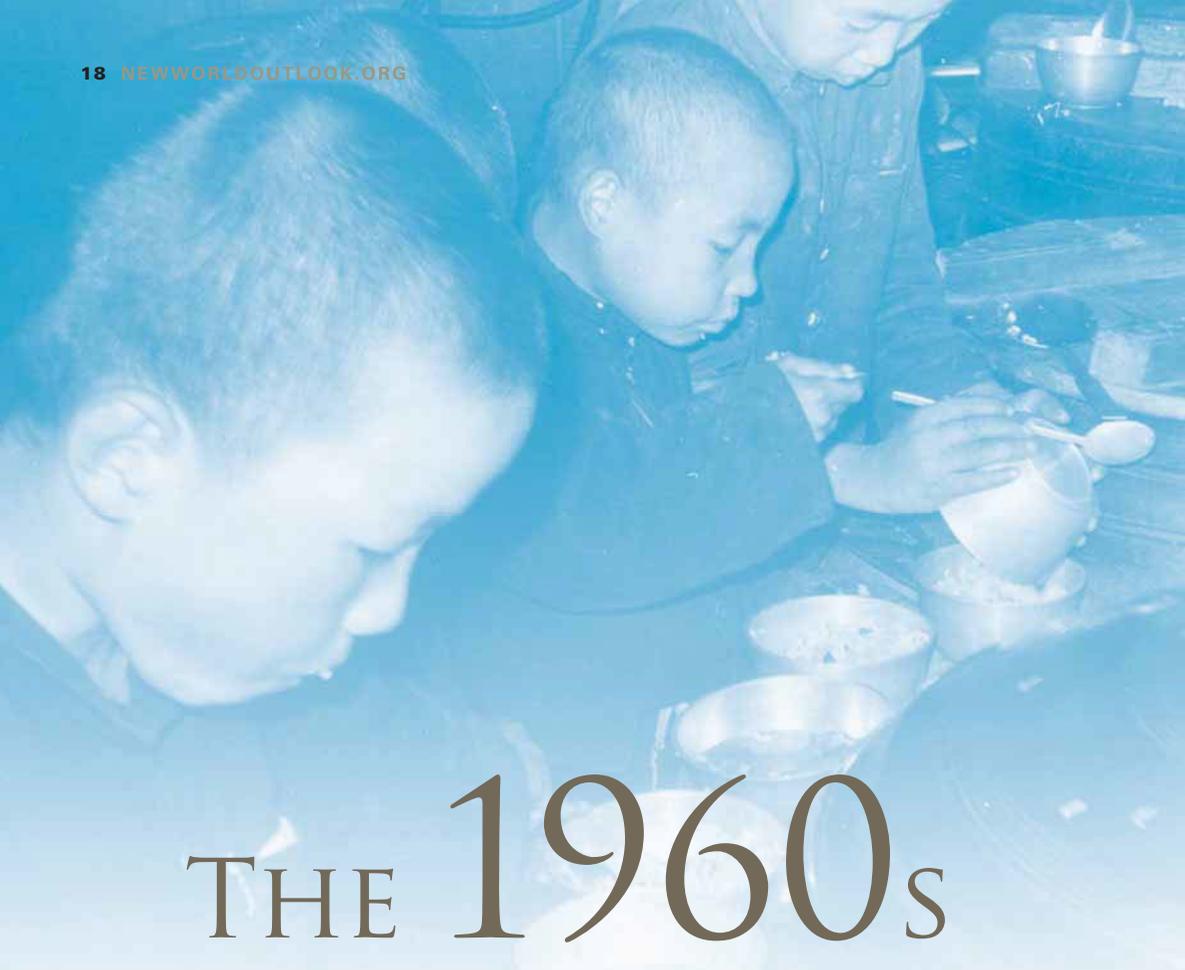
### 1954

**The US government makes available to worldwide relief agencies \$7,500,000 in surplus foodstuffs.**

### 1957

**MCOR launches land reclamation project with Arab farmers in Hebron.**

## — 1960



**Background:** Boys receive a meal at an MCOR orphanage in South Korea, 1965. PHOTO: GCAH. **Above:** Refugees from Calcutta, India, arrive for resettlement in the United States, 1964. PHOTO: WCC, WORLD OUTLOOK 1964.

# THE 1960s

While continuing to work with other Christian relief agencies to meet the needs of refugees in Asia and the

Middle East, MCOR was also confronted with refugees much closer to home—Cubans arriving in Miami, Florida. Meeting the needs of war

refugees continued as a major priority for MCOR in the 1960s. New places were added to ongoing operations: Africa, particularly the Congo, Nigeria, and Algeria. Newly independent nations of Africa became a concentrated focus for MCOR. In 1965, Africa was home to 36 independent nations—compared to just three in the 1940s. Development was a major emphasis.

Relief and aid for Vietnam was another major concern for MCOR in the 1960s. In 1967, not only did MCOR send relief to Vietnam, but doctors, nurses, and other staff members, later termed “volunteers,” were sent to work through the Vietnam Christian Service agency.

In 1962, the United Nations declared the 1960s as the “Development Decade,” and MCOR increased its funding to agricultural and community development projects, particularly in Africa and India.



Refugees stream out of Biafra, a state of Nigeria, as Nigerian forces battle Biafran separatists who tried to secede, 1967.

PHOTO: MCOR

“Material relief should never be used as an instrument for evangelism.”

—Rev. Gaither P. Warfield  
Report to the general secretary, 1966.



PHOTO: GCAH

As the 1960s progressed, MCOR placed increased emphasis on medical relief and development.

In January 1966, the MCOR board elected Dr. J. Harry Haines to succeed Gaither Warfield as general secretary of MCOR. Born in New Zealand, Haines had served as a Methodist missionary in China from



UMCOR began working with farmers in Botswana on sustainable agricultural practices, 1968. PHOTO: GCAH



In 1960, MCOR began working with and resettling Cuban refugees who were flooding into Miami.

PHOTO: TOGE FUJIHIRA

1941 to 1947, and then in Malaysia from 1950 to 1960. He also served the World Council of Churches in Geneva as the secretary for Asia in the Division of Interchurch Aid, Refugee, and World Service. At that time, MCOR had relief and rehabilitation programs in 46 countries.

In 1967, when the state of Biafra attempted to secede from the newly independent Nigeria, a devastating war broke out. Millions of people died in this conflict—if not from direct combat, from starvation and disease. MCOR joined church coalition and US government efforts to airlift food to Biafra refugees.

In 1968, MCOR created a “Personnel Readiness Bank” of skilled volunteers that, for a small stipend, served anywhere from one to six years in placements coordinated with the mission agency’s World Division. A second bank of volunteers served one-to-three-week terms on building projects, medical teams, and other volunteer projects—an early version of Volunteers in Mission.

Also in 1968, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) Church merged to form The United Methodist Church. EUB relief and disaster ministries were also merged with MCOR, which became the United Methodist Committee on Overseas Relief (UMCOR).

— 1950

— 1960

1960

**MCOR settles and aids Cuban refugees.**

1962

**The United Nations declares the 1960s the “Development Decade.”**

**MCOR assists in war relief for Algeria.**

1965

**Gaither Warfield visits sub-Saharan Africa, the first MCOR executive to do so.**



PHOTO: WCC, WORLD OUTLOOK 1964

1966

**J. Harry Haines is elected general secretary of MCOR.**

1968

**Merger with EUB creates UMCOR United Methodist Committee on Overseas Relief.**

1969

**UMCOR begins work among refugees of Biafra/Nigeria.**

— 1970

# THE 1970s

**Background:** UMCOR worked with survivors of an earthquake in Nicaragua in 1979, which gave rise to CEPAD, a Nicaraguan emergency aid agency. PHOTO: THERESE DRUMMOND  
**Right:** Mother and child refugees from Vietnam, 1975. PHOTO: UMCOR



*“If there is one word by which we could capture this moment in history, I believe it would be the word ‘migration,’ as one billion two hundred million people move from the past of unimaginable poverty, illiteracy, feudalism, ignorance, exploitation, and colonialism. Everywhere [people] are on the march. Western colonialism is dead, but new forms of colonialism are in our midst.”*



PHOTO: GCAH

—J. Harry Haines  
1966 MCOR *Inasmuch...*

In the 1970s, UMCOR continued to support Vietnam Christian Service. In 1973, care for 30,000 orphans in South Vietnam, a clinic for amputees and the blind, refugee care, and shelter ministries were ongoing. In addition, UMCOR supported the Asian Christian Service in Laos. Haines reported that one person in three was a refugee in Laos, mainly because of a prolonged US bombing campaign. In 1973, UMCOR also pledged half a million dollars from the Fund for Reconciliation, created by General Conference in 1968, as a contribution toward the World Council of Churches' \$5 million program for reconciliation and reconstruction in Indo-China. This work continued through the 1970s, even after the fall of Saigon. In 1978, UMCOR put out a churchwide appeal for churches willing to help with the resettlement of refugees from Vietnam and Laos.

An earthquake struck Managua, Nicaragua in 1979, which gave rise to the development of the *Comite Evangelica Por Ayudua los Damificados* (CEPAD), a Nicaraguan emergency aid agency. UMCOR continued to support CEPAD's work for decades.

In 1972, General Conference added the work of Disaster Relief in the United States to UMCOR's mission, and a name change created the United Methodist Committee on Relief, still UMCOR. UMCOR's first major US disaster, Hurricane Agnes, occurred that year. The storm affected five states, but Pennsylvania sustained major damage along the Susquehanna River and its tributaries.

“Wind and water have unleashed furious destruction in the United States so often in recent years that UMCOR has established a network of coordinators to facilitate the mobilization of relief supplies and temporary shelter for victims of sudden disaster, in whatever



An UMCOR project in Kenya with a new technique to protect seed beds, 1977.  
PHOTO: UMCOR

communities may be affected," Haines wrote of the 1970s. The Disaster Response Network developed by UMCOR in the 1970s, which included training workshops for volunteers before disaster struck, is a major contributor to US relief efforts today.

A headline appeared in the UMCOR *INASMUCH* publication in 1973 referring to the October War in the Middle East: "Nobody won the Middle East War...but it's already clear who lost." UMCOR worked through the Near East Committee for Palestinian Refugees to reach refugees in Egypt and Syria. Another global crisis that produced millions of refugees in the 1970s was the drought and resulting famine in the Sahel region of Africa, an area just South of the Sahara Desert that spans 13 countries in Africa from the Atlantic to the Red Sea.

Later in the 1970s, UMCOR developed a series of "Steps Beyond"

programs that involved a new depth of development work. Response to the 1976 earthquake in Guatemala was followed by support for agricultural programs. Disaster Risk Reduction programs, though not called that yet, were being implemented in Mauritania in the form of grain storage silos and in Senegal with tree planting to reclaim the desert.

UMCOR was experimenting with all kinds of cutting-edge development techniques during the 1970s. Some worked well; and others, not so well. Stack-sack housing, used after an earthquake in Peru in 1970, was one example. Cloth bags filled with sand, cement, and gravel dipped in water were stacked to form a solid building wall, reinforced with steel rods and cement. "Seaponic" beds, developed in Haiti, used a mixture of seawater and fresh water on vegetation daily as a natural pesticide.

## — 1970

### 1971

**UM receives for OGHS go entirely to support of UMCOR for first time.**

**Bishops' appeal in November asks for \$1 million for Bangladesh famine relief. By March 1972, the goal is met.**

### 1972

**Development of UMCOR's Domestic Disaster Response System.**

**UMCOR is institutionalized as part of the General Board of Global Ministries, and renamed the United Methodist Committee on Relief.**

### 1975

**UMCOR opens a lay-training center in Haiti in conjunction with the Methodist Church in Haiti.**

### 1976

**Earthquake relief begins in Guatemala.**

## — 1980



Saline bottles hung on the cross in a UMC that became a shelter and emergency clinic during the Johnstown Flood of 1977.

PHOTO: JOHN C. GOODWIN



**Background:** UMCOR  
Food for Work program,  
Ramniwasapura, India, 1985.  
PHOTO: JOHN C. GOODWIN  
**Below:** UMCOR work among  
refugee children in Africa,  
1981. PHOTO: ROY KATAYAMA



# THE 1980s

In her book commemorating UMCOR's 50th anniversary, *Love in Action*, Norma Kehrberg describes the 1980s as follows:

*The optimism of the seventies, the ability to make changes, to "make things right" gave way to the stubborn realities of abject poverty; the seeming impossibility of ending numerous small and large wars; and a reluctance to risk peace as against the sacrifice of lives in wars. The Sahel drought returned much more quickly than expected, and, in 1984, over 26 African nations faced famine as a result. All the problems facing UMCOR in its first 40 years seemed to recur, although often in different countries, such as Mozambique and Afghanistan, while old problems continued.*

Starting in 1980, refugee operations in Cambodia and Afghanistan began. Unrest in Cambodia/Kampuchea followed the Vietnam



In 1980, UMCOR began working with Haitian refugees arriving in Miami.  
PHOTO: ARCHIE HAMILTON

War, with the rise of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. Millions of Khmer refugees sought refuge in Vietnam and neighboring countries. UMCOR

partnered with the Church World Service Kampuchean Program, loaning UMCOR staff members Dean and Margaret Hancock for three years,

for rehabilitation work in rural areas. The United States provided asylum for Khmer refugees, and UMCOR coordinated the resettlement and sponsorship of many Khmer families in the United States.

Afghanistan relief in 1980 was necessary as Russian troops pushed Afghan refugees into Pakistan. Church agencies stepped in to set up camps and receive refugees until international refugee agencies arrived. Work in Pakistan with these refugees continued throughout the decade. UMCOR coordinated with Church World Service and Christians in Pakistan to send mobile health teams and material supplies.

In 1983, J. Harry Haines retired after 17 years as UMCOR's director. Norma Kehrberg, who served with



A devastating drought and resulting famine engulfed the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1984. UMCOR contributed to ongoing relief work. PHOTO: PETER MAGUBANE

Global Ministries as a missionary in Nepal, focusing on education, public health, and community development, was elected to replace him. She served as associate general secretary until 1991.

Ethiopia and Eritrea experienced a drought and resulting famine in 1984 that caused a million or more deaths in the region. Before the world's media outlets broke the

story, UMCOR was working with Church World Service on relief efforts with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. A 1984 Bishops' Appeal for Africa provided funding for programs in Ethiopia and in 25 other African nations that were also affected by the long-term drought. Other efforts in African countries included work with CEMUDRI in Mozambique on agricultural programs, food production, and livelihood programs, as well as support for South African families through the South African Christian Council, at a time when the struggle against Apartheid was gaining worldwide attention.

Mexico City was hit with a major earthquake in 1985. UMCOR worked with the Methodist Church of Mexico to rebuild homes after the disaster.

In a major development effort, UMCOR brought together all the bishops of the African churches to visit the rural development programs of OFADEC in Senegal. OFADEC was a Muslim-Christian agency developed by Jean Carbonare and Mammadou Ndiaye. Carbonare had previously worked with UMCOR on a project to reclaim the desert in Mafre, Senegal. During the 1980s, UMCOR sought to discover new approaches to development, concentrating on smaller projects implemented by local organizations. A new health emphasis on Mother-Child Survival was introduced that included the promotion of vaccination programs, rehydration solutions, and support for better health services for mothers and their newborn children.

The operations of UMCOR during this decade were characterized as the four "Rs": Relief, Rehabilitation, Refugee Ministry, and tackling the Root Causes of Hunger.

## — 1980

### 1980

**UMCOR begins relief operations for Afghan and Cambodian refugees.**

### 1983

**More than 1,200 United Methodists serve as UMCOR volunteers in Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, and other Caribbean countries.**

### 1984

**An Ethiopian famine reaches acute proportions. UMCOR requests a Bishops' Appeal for Africa to bring relief to Ethiopia and 25 other African nations affected by drought.**

**Norma Kehrberg becomes UMCOR's Associate General Secretary (executive director) and serves until 1991.**

### 1985

**An earthquake strikes Mexico City. Through gifts contributed by United Methodists to the Methodist Church of Mexico, lives are restored through reconstruction of homes.**

“UMCOR makes a difference simply because people of faith believe they can make a difference by sharing Christ's gift. The 'body broken for you' is Christ's gift to us. This gift frees us to participate—frees us to empty ourselves for others, frees us to make incarnate that which we have received.”



PHOTO: GCAH

—Norma Kehrberg  
UMCOR Update, February 1991.

## — 1990



**Background:** Refugees from Kosovo follow the train tracks out of the country as Yugoslavian forces bore down on Kosovar rebels, 1998.

PHOTO: UNHCR **Left:** A Kiowa-Guarani baby rests comfortably as her family harvests crops and fibers to weave hammocks. UMCOR supported livelihood projects in her village in Brazil, 1996.

PHOTO: CHRISTIE R. HOUSE

# THE 1990s

During the 1990s, UMCOR underwent a major shifting in its operations—moving from a faith-based agency that partnered to support the work of many other direct, mostly faith-based service agencies—to a model of a direct implementing relief agency. This shift began with the response to Hurricane Andrew, which struck the Eastern Coast of the US in 1992, particularly Miami-Dade County in Florida and parts of Louisiana. Hurricane Andrew was a large storm that ranked as the costliest storm in US recorded history. Since then, only Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012 have exceeded that record.

Although special appeals and connectional fundraising days had always funded UMCOR's work, with

Hurricane Andrew, the amount of giving to UMCOR doubled in just one year, from \$9.4 million in 1991 to \$19.2 million in 1992. This kind of supersized giving, which thereafter accompanied major disasters that attracted intense media coverage, enabled UMCOR to expand its ministries and solidify its expertise in disaster response, development, and health ministries.



Volunteers pack school kits in the newly renovated UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot, 1997.

PHOTO: COURTESY SAGER-BROWN

As a result of Hurricane Andrew and Hurricane Hugo (1989), UMCOR developed a Catastrophic Disaster Response Team—an assessment team that would head out after major storms to collect information and work with whatever on-the-ground conference (US) or global church partner requested help in the area. At the same time, the agency shored up its connection with conference disaster response teams and began coordinating direct relief in a much more organized way.

In 1992, the Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Lutgen, Jr., was elected to head UMCOR as its Deputy General Secretary. Lutgen was a pastor from Missouri who had led mission trips in a number of different countries.

In the early 1990s, as the Soviet Union was dissolving, travel to Russia and its former states became easier and meeting



UMCOR disaster response assessment team in Antigua, after Hurricane Luis, 1995.  
PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY

people face-to-face without Soviet oversight became possible. As the strong central government fractured, former Soviet states began declaring their independence, yet the growing pains of independence meant gaps in services, failing social nets, and intensified suffering for the most vulnerable populations. The Board of Global Ministries had moved quickly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 to establish a new mission initiative in Russia. One of the challenges of independence was an increasing need for humanitarian relief, which the Russian government was not able to meet at the time.

In 1992, the World Council Churches (WCC) was setting up relief segments in the former Soviet states by regions. The United Methodists were assigned Moscow. Working with the existing Russian Orthodox Church, UMCOR organized a volunteer food drive in which US churches packed up boxes of food, according to a defined contents list, and the US government paid to ship the boxes, 100,000 in all, to Russia. Russian churches distributed the boxes to families in Russia, and they made the decisions about the most vulnerable populations to receive them.

“We are a people committed and prepared to respond in ‘fantastic’ ways when need arises because we take seriously a gospel mandate that calls out to us to reach out to those in greatest need.”



PHOTO: COURTESY  
GRACE UMC,  
OLATHE, KANSAS

— Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Lutgen, Jr.  
Comments made after attending a 1992 White House press conference that recognized UMCOR as one of eight agencies that made “fantastic” contributions to Hurricane Andrew relief and recovery.

1980

1990

1991

**Bruce Weaver becomes the interim associate general secretary.**



PHOTO: ARTHUR KEYS

1992

**The Rev. Kenneth R. Lutgen, Jr., becomes the associate general secretary of UMCOR—his position changes to deputy general secretary in 1996.**

**Hurricane Andrew devastates the southeastern United States.**

**UMCOR opens offices in Bosnia and takes part in a food mission to Russia.**



Food is unloaded as part of the Noah's Ark food program, UMCOR Armenia, 1995. PHOTO: UMCOR ARMENIA

At the same time, Yugoslavia, a former Soviet satellite state, became a battleground, dividing into Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Croatia. UMCOR partnered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the WCC to open an office in Zenica, Bosnia, in 1993. At first, the proposal was to complete three shelter projects; but over 10 years, the office expanded to additional sites and a variety of programs. This step aligned UMCOR with nongovernmental organizations (NGO) working in conjunction with the United Nations, a model that enabled multimillion-dollar operations. Funding from United Methodist donations gave UMCOR leverage to offer proposals on an international scale, which, in turn, brought in additional funding from the US

government agencies, United Nations funds, and other sources of income. In the same year, Global Ministries Health and Welfare Department, which later became part of UMCOR's Health and Relief work, was seeking ways to ease the suffering of children in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, many of whom were born with debilitating birth defects from living in the Soviet Union's nuclear testing area. A hospital exchange program between US and Kazak institutions and personnel was devised under the leadership of Cathie Lyons.

In the United States, Sager Brown, a property owned by the Women's Division of Global Ministries, had been used since 1994 to store and process donations for hurricane relief. After renovations to the property,

the UMCOR Depot opened in 1996, one of the results of the experience of coordinating relief and recovery for Hurricane Andrew.

In 1993, UMCOR opened an office in the Republic of Georgia, followed by an additional office in Armenia in 1994. In Bosnia, Georgia, and Armenia, the offices hired local staff that knew the culture and languages of the local populations that benefitted from the ministries. Sometimes a blending of international and local staff occurred. The offices initially coordinated medical work and supplies in conjunction with a US State Department program. The Armenia and Georgia offices continue in operation today and have expanded into other kinds of health and development programming to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.

In Africa in the mid-1990s, unrest in Burundi and Rwanda claimed many lives and led to the Rwandan wars between Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups. Refugees fled over the border of Zaire (the DR Congo today) for safety, but militias, and sometimes state-sponsored military groups, fled over the border too, eventually leading to major fighting in Zaire. In 1994, UMCOR began an operation to help Rwandan refugees, who arrived in great numbers in Goma, Zaire, many of them unaccompanied children. UMCOR worked with Global Ministries and Congolese United Methodists to establish an orphanage and US volunteer ministries in Goma in the eastern part of Zaire. UMCOR supplied medical volunteers and supplies. Within a few years, fighting in the immediate area forced the closure of this work.

Along this trend, in 1996 UMCOR opened country offices in Liberia and Azerbaijan. At the same time, it coordinated with Health and Welfare to invest in Comprehensive Community-Based Primary Health Care, an asset-based model of health care developed in the poorest sections of Jamkhed, India. This model has been widely adopted for health ministries in Latin America and Africa.

In the Western Hemisphere, Hurricane Mitch made landfall in Honduras in 1998, destroying much of the country's infrastructure and affecting agricultural production in rural communities. UMCOR provided logistics, supplies, and personnel in a rebuilding program that brought scores of US volunteer teams to partner with local Honduran building teams in rural reconstruction projects.

In 1998, the Rev. Paul Dirdak was elected to serve as the deputy general secretary of UMCOR. Dirdak, from the California-Nevada Conference,

had served on Global Ministries' board of directors for 8 years. As pastor for San Francisco's Trinity Parish, he oversaw the development of the AIDS/HIV Life Center, which housed both church and a wide range of AIDS service agencies. Dirdak oversaw the work of UMCOR, Health and Relief, and Mission Volunteers as a DGS. His tenure continued to 2007.

In 1998, UMCOR opened a separate NGO office in Arlington, Virginia, close to Washington, DC, and the Rev. Sam Dixon was hired to direct the work of the UMCOR field offices that year. In 1999, Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON) was launched as an official United Methodist immigration program that provided referral, legal, and other kinds of immigration services for undocumented immigrants. JFON continued as an UMCOR program until 2012, when it was launched as an independent agency.

## 1993

**UMCOR opens an office in Georgia**



PHOTO: COURTESY  
SAGER-BROWN  
UMCOR DEPOT

## 1996

**UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot is opened.**

## 1997-98

**Lee Adkins and Bonnie Totten-Adkins become interim directors.**

## 1998

**Paul Dirdak becomes deputy general secretary of UMCOR.**

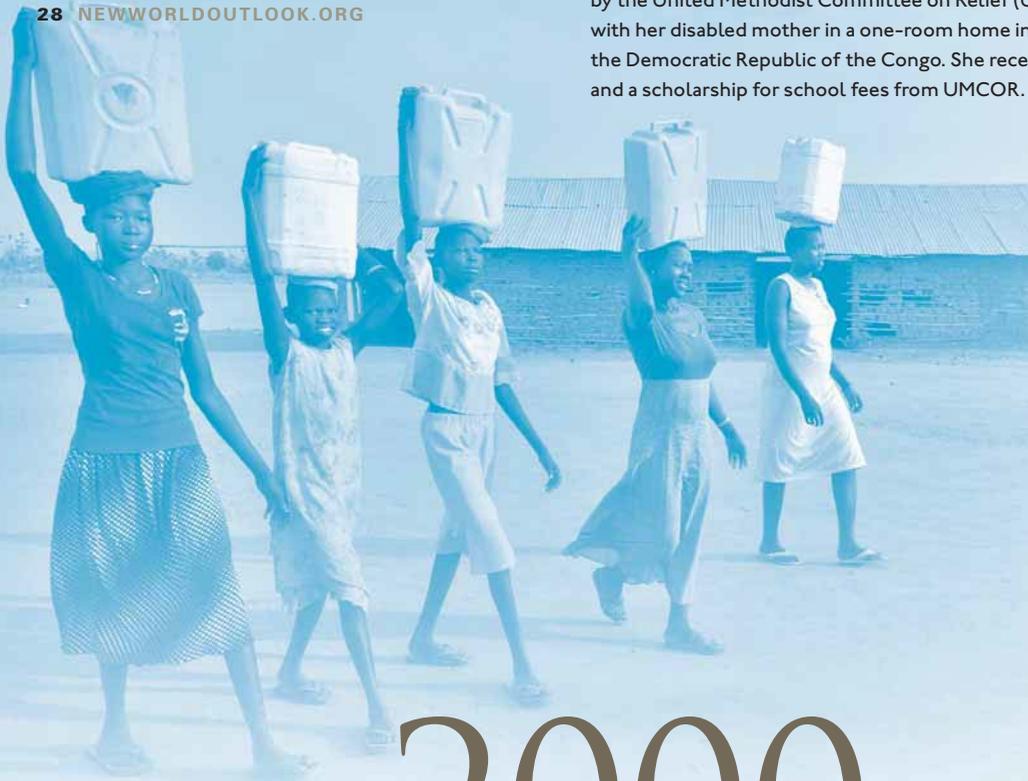


Jack and Alice Provost at the Gulfport Warehouse, UMC Disaster Relief, 1990s.

PHOTO: UMCOR

— 2000

**Background:** Girls in Yei, Southern Sudan, walk home after getting water from a well provided by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), 2009. **Below:** Banza Mujinga, 7, lives with her disabled mother in a one-room home in the Rwashi neighborhood of Lubumbashi, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She receives school supplies, mentoring, a uniform, and a scholarship for school fees from UMCOR. PHOTOS: PAUL JEFFREY



# THE 2000s

A defining moment for the United States—9/11/2001, with the realization that the United States was targeted in a series of terrorist attacks from New York to Washington, DC, was also a defining moment for United Methodists through the work of UMCOR. *Love in the Midst of Tragedy* was a program made possible initially by an outpouring of an unprecedented \$20.8 million in donations from church members. An office opened in New York to coordinate case management for those affected by the destruction of the twin towers, with satellite offices open in key parts of New York City.

Partnerships with conferences affected by the event—in New York, New Jersey, Baltimore-Washington, and Virginia—were formed so that churches could address needs in their local areas. An additional office was opened in Afghanistan in 2002 for



The aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, New York City, 2001.

PHOTO: ANDREA BOOHER/FEMA

refugee relief and to work collaboratively with local Afghan communities, assisting them to build peace, restore social stability, and revitalize community structures. An additional \$9 million was raised for the work of this office through the US Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, UNICEF, and Action by Churches Together International.

Also in 2002, UMCOR opened an office in Katanga, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to provide programs involving sustainable agriculture, microfinance, and girls' education.

In 2004, General Conference established the Global AIDS Fund with a challenge to churches to raise \$8 million. In the United States, multiple hurricanes devastated regions of the United States, Haiti, and Grenada, for which UMCOR provided long-term recovery programs. In December 2004, an earthquake in the Indian Ocean caused a tremendous tsunami that wiped out whole coastal communities. It's estimated to have killed a total of 230,000 people. In response, United Methodists donated more than \$32 million between December 2004 and March 2005, enabling UMCOR to open offices in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, two of the hardest-hit countries. Also



Graduation day for refugee women learning hairdressing in a skills-training program run by UMCOR in the capital of Azerbaijan. PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY

in 2005, an office was established in Tirana, Albania, to implement agricultural development initiatives, funded by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In the United States, Hurricane Katrina made landfall along the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005. Less than a month later, Hurricane Rita caused further damage to western Louisiana and eastern Texas. A \$66 million grant from FEMA allowed UMCOR to organize Katrina Aid Today, a consortium of case-management organizations that assisted survivors. At its peak,

the consortium included 138 offices in 34 states. In 2006, UMCOR awarded \$5 million in grants for Katrina recovery to benefit an additional 6,600 families, while UMCOR directors approved \$52 million from church donations for hurricane recovery.

Also in 2006, the Sudan office opened after assessment teams determined that UMCOR's experience could add to the humanitarian effort to alleviate suffering in South Darfur. Initial programs focused on providing essential non-food items to displaced people living in camps. UMCOR's

*“In every aspect of UMCOR’s humanitarian witness, we looked on suffering people not as victims but rather as survivors and implementers of assistance. We understood that those who survive are our best partners and are often, in their own way, more generous than official aid agencies. We included people of all faith traditions in our work. When we were involved in post-war return and recovery, our workers represented all sides of the conflict. We showed what peace would look like in places where people had forgotten.”*



PHOTO: GCAH

—The Rev. Paul Dirdak

Comments on the occasion of UMCOR’s 70th anniversary in 2010.

## 2000

### 2001

The 9/11 terrorist attack in the US.

### 2002

UMCOR rolls out “Love in the Midst of Tragedy” 9/11 relief.

UMCOR opens offices in the DRC and Afghanistan.

### 2004

Multiple hurricanes devastate regions of the US, Haiti, and Grenada.

UMCOR offices in Indonesia and Sri Lanka open in response to the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.



PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE

### 2005

Hurricane Katrina: UMCOR organizes Katrina Aid Today.

The Sudan office opens.

### 2006

UMCOR directors approve \$7.6 million for development programs in Pakistan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia.

### 2007

The Rev. Sam Dixon becomes UMCOR’s deputy general secretary.

UMCOR and Muslim Aid, one of Britain’s most influential Muslim charities, announce a landmark partnership to work together to relieve the suffering of millions of people across the globe.

### 2008

A Nothing But Nets distribution takes place in Côte d’Ivoire, Africa.

### 2009

UMCOR Philippines office opens.

UMCOR’s Western Jurisdiction Office and Depot in Salt Lake City opens.



A mother in Lekki, Nigeria, protects her child behind an insecticide-treated mosquito net provided by the Nothing But Nets campaign, 2007.  
PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS



A dentist works on a patient in the UMCOR Armenia office, 2003.  
PHOTO: UMCOR ARMENIA

directors also approved \$7.6 million in 2006 for development programs in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, as well as Sudan.

The Rev. Dr. Sam W. Dixon was elected to be UMCOR's deputy general secretary in 2007. Dixon had served as a pastor in the North Carolina Conference for 24 years. After first working with the UMCOR field offices, Dixon was moved to Global Ministries as director for the

United Methodist Development Fund. Before being assigned as UMCOR's deputy general secretary, he served as deputy general secretary for Global Ministries' Evangelization and Church Growth unit.

UMCOR entered a landmark partnership with Muslim Aid, one of Britain's most influential Muslim charities, in 2007. The two agencies continue to work together to relieve

*“UMCOR's future continues to evolve. In wonderful ways, it engages the church in serving others and serving with others in the name and spirit of Christ. UMCOR continues to move closer to the people it seeks to serve.”*



PHOTO: RANDY DAY

—The Rev. Dr. Sam W. Dixon  
*New World Outlook*, November-December 2009, “UMCOR in the 21st Century.”

the suffering of millions of people across the globe.

In 2008, UMCOR joined in partnership with the UN Foundation's Nothing But Nets campaign to distribute 1 million treated mosquito nets to at-risk communities in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa. UMCOR was one of many partners in the project, including The United Methodist Church of Côte d'Ivoire, the Texas Annual Conference, the United Nations Foundation, the Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of Health, and United Methodist Communications. This operation germinated the Imagine No Malaria campaign.

The UMCOR Philippines office opened in 2009, facilitating communication between United Methodist conferences in the United States and the Philippines. Training in disaster-response planning for church superintendents, disaster response coordinators, and bishops was a major goal, along with distribution of relief supplies.

Also in 2009, UMCOR's Western Jurisdiction Office and Depot in Salt Lake City opened and served as a material resources depot to assemble, store, and ship UMCOR supply kits.

# THE CURRENT DECADE

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake devastated Haiti, driving millions of people out of their homes and leaving estimates of more than 160,000 dead and many more injured. UMCOR's deputy general secretary, Sam Dixon, and Mission Volunteers executive for Global Ministries, the Rev. Clinton Rabb, just happened to be meeting in Port-au-Prince that day with representatives of some other relief agencies. The floor of their hotel collapsed. Both Dixon and Rabb died as a result of being trapped in the wreckage of the Hotel Montana. James Gulley, a Global Ministries missionary, survived, along with a former staff member, Sarla Chand, and staff from another agency. UMCOR reopened an office in Port-au-Prince, working with the Methodist Church of Haiti (EMH) to respond to the tremendous loss of life, infrastructure, and homes. The Haiti Emergency Advance received \$45.6 million.

The following month, a magnitude 8.8 earthquake struck off the coast of south central Chile on February 27. Hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed and hundreds killed. UMCOR supported the work of the Methodist Humanitarian Aid Team (EMAH) of the Methodist Church of Chile in rebuilding homes and providing spiritual and emotional care for survivors.

The United Methodist Church joined the United Nations Global Fund in 2008 with a commitment of \$75 million to fight malaria. UMCOR, as an implementing partner in the Imagine No Malaria campaign, has taken part in malaria control through a variety of methods, including education, prevention, treatment programs, and support for existing health facilities and hospitals.

In 2010, the Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey was elected to serve as deputy general secretary for UMCOR.

*“I love the part of our vision statement that says, ‘UMCOR works to strengthen and transform people and communities.’ By being with people in the midst of their suffering, we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, because Jesus brings healing and hope. We also see that in the symbol of the cross—out of death and destruction, God brings life and new hope. We seek to partner with God in that mission.”*



PHOTO: CHRIS TRICOMI

—The Rev. Dr. J. Denise Honeycutt  
deputy general secretary, United Methodist  
Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

PHOTO: GLOBAL MINISTRIES



*“No one can deny that the work of UMCOR is unique and effective and that it strengthens and transforms people and communities around the world. Today we must work more efficiently and nimbly than ever before, remaining accountable to those we serve as well as to our donors by being good stewards of all of our resources.”*

Interview with Cynthia Harvey by Klay Williams, April 2012.

## 2010

PHOTOS: GLOBAL MINISTRIES



### 2010

**Haiti is struck by an earthquake, January 12. Deputy general secretary Sam Dixon and Mission Volunteers executive for Global Ministries, Clinton Rabb, die as a result of being trapped in the wreckage of the Hotel Montana.**

**A magnitude 8.8 earthquake strikes off the coast of south-central Chile.**

**Imagine No Malaria campaign begins.**

**The Rev. Cynthia Fierro Harvey is elected deputy general secretary.**

### 2011

**A tremendous 9.0 magnitude earthquake strikes Japan.**

**Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.**

Harvey was a pastor in the Texas Conference who served as the director of missional excellence for the Texas Annual Conference. In that role, she led the Texas Conference in establishing a conference to conference partnership with the UMC in Côte d'Ivoire. In July 2012, she left UMCOR to accept her election as a bishop in the South Central Jurisdiction.

UMCOR continues to develop a strategic model for developing health boards for United Methodist-related facilities and health workers in Africa. Training for health board members began in Sierra Leone, and continued for UM health workers in Nigeria, DR Congo, and Zimbabwe. United Methodists in health facilities of Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola, and Mozambique have also received training.

In 2011, a tremendous 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck Japan. This created a tsunami, which in turn affected a nuclear power plant, causing a radiation disaster. UMCOR has responded through the Kyodan

Church in Japan and a number of other Japanese and international organizations.

Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee impacted islands in the Caribbean, the Outer Banks of North Carolina, and communities in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. UMCOR responded with grants and coordination of conference disaster response teams in those areas.

A year later Hurricane Sandy made landfall, striking Jamaica, Cuba, and other countries in the Caribbean before it hit the New Jersey and New York coastal areas. In total, 24 states were affected by the storm. It was the largest Atlantic storm on record to that date, costing 286 lives across seven countries and an estimated \$68 billion in property damage. UMCOR worked with Greater New Jersey and New York conferences as well as Peninsula-Delaware and Baltimore-Washington conferences on storm relief, recovery, and renovations. UMCOR had now begun a more intentional focus on Disaster



Pierre Michel repairs a wall outside the Methodist Guest House in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS



Survivors of Typhoon Haiyan leave with emergency food rations provided by the United Methodist Committee on Relief following a distribution in Dagami, Philippines.

PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS

Risk Reduction for communities in the US and globally.

In 2013, UMCOR partnered with International Orthodox Christian Charities, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, International Relief and Development, American Near East Refugee Aid, International Blue Crescent, and the UMCOR Armenia country office to supply relief kits, psychosocial support, education, and child-friendly spaces to displaced populations in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Armenia because of the Syrian conflict.

In 2013, the Rev. Denise Honeycutt was elected as deputy general secretary for UMCOR. Honeycutt had served on the Global Ministries' board of directors for eight years and as director for mission and global justice for the Virginia Conference, her home conference. She and her husband Pat Watkins had served as missionaries in Nigeria for three years.

In November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan destroyed regions of the Philippines. As part of its emergency plan, UMCOR pitched a mobile tent

office in Leyte Province, Philippines, and entered an agreement with a local community, Calogcog in Tanuan, to rebuild houses that were lost and damaged across the community. UMCOR also continued to work with its international partner, Global Medic, in providing water purifiers, and training, as part of the response.

UMCOR announced a Mother and Child Health initiative in partnership with United Methodist Women at the United Methodist Women's Assembly in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2014.

During the current year, UMCOR has made grants and material donations for relief for Iraqis, Syrians, and Ukrainians displaced by conflicts in their countries. The agency has responded to the Ebola crisis in West Africa by working with United Methodist leadership in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire, and providing grants for supplies and medical equipment to UMC hospitals in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Personal protection kits were a primary request, necessary to keep medical workers from being exposed to the virus.

## 2012

Millions of dollars are raised for the DR Congo aviation program, Wings of the Morning, to purchase a new plane.

Hurricane Sandy makes landfall.

## 2013

UMCOR partners with International Orthodox Christian Charities, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, International Relief and Development and American Near East Refugee Aid, International Blue Crescent, and the UMCOR Armenia country office to supply relief kits, psychosocial support, education, and child-friendly spaces to displaced populations in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Armenia because of the Syrian conflict.

October—The Rev. Dr. J. Denise Honeycutt is elected deputy general secretary of UMCOR.

November—Typhoon Haiyan hits the Philippines. UMCOR enters an agreement with a local community, Calogcog in Tanuan, to rebuild houses that were lost and damaged across the community. UMCOR also supports partner Global Medic in providing water purifiers, and training, as part of the response.

## 2014

Grants and material donations are distributed for relief for Iraqis and Ukrainians displaced by conflicts in their countries.

UMCOR responds to the Ebola crisis in West Africa with grants to provide supplies and medical equipment to UMC hospitals in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Global Ministries sends medical and administrative personnel to assist African personnel.

UMCOR holds its first regional training in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response, in Arica, Chile. Participants hail from national Methodist churches of 10 countries across Latin America. Subsequent regional trainings are planned to take place in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Students were able to return to their classrooms at the Methodist Church's Freres School in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, some nine months after the January 2010 earthquake.

PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS

# AND INTO THE FUTURE...

UMCOR has entered into another time of transition in 2015. As a ministry component of the General Board of Global Ministries, its headquarters will be moved to Atlanta, Georgia, in 2016, in alignment with the mission agency's recently approved plans for a transition to regional offices. UMCOR will be leaving New York City, its home for 75 years.

With this transition will come evaluation of current practice for all units within Global Ministries. What challenges and opportunities 2020 will offer is yet to be seen. No one in 1940 could have foreseen the depth and breadth of what UMCOR is today. Yet, wired into its DNA is the hope and expectations put forth by those Methodists of that first General Conference of a newly united church, who earnestly desired in some way to answer the cries of their suffering world. They dug deep during wartime, and their church assured

them that their sacrificial gifts would be "used for the relief of human suffering without distinction of race, color, or creed." After 75 years, United Methodists are still discovering the best ways to accomplish that mission.

*Compiled by Christie R. House, editor, New World Outlook magazine. Main sources for reference include: The Herbert Welch Papers, the Helen Buckley Papers, UMCOR's 40th Anniversary booklet (1980) by Nancy Sartin, and UMCOR's collection of Inasmuch and UMCOR Update newsletters, 1940 to 2000, all part of the collections of the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and*



Children pray during worship at Charles Davies Memorial United Methodist Church in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on the Sunday prior to a distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets by the denomination's Imagine No Malaria campaign in the Bo District, 2014.

PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS

*History in Madison, New Jersey. In addition, some facts were drawn from Norma Kehrberg's book on the 50th Anniversary of UMCOR, Love in Action (1990).*

# missionmemo



## United Methodist Agency Reshapes Its Global Mission and Ministries

In October 2014, the General Board of Global Ministries announced that it will create a network of offices around the world linked and accountable to a new headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. The Global Ministries' New York offices would then close by October 2016. The Georgia-based headquarters would also have mission responsibilities within the United States.

Part of the plan needed the property purchase approval of denominational coordinating entities—the General Council on Finance and Administration and the Connectional Table, which serves a coordinating role for the church's general agencies. Both agencies have approved the move.

Global Ministries' board of directors also voted to set up regional offices in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, in what was considered a historical action.

## UMCOR Board Approves Grants

During the semiannual meeting last October, the board of directors of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) approved more than \$1.5 million in grants to support ongoing disaster recovery work in Alabama and the Florida Panhandle.

Part of those funds will underwrite efforts by the Alabama-West Florida Conference to respond to a disaster last spring that brought record rainfall to coastal and inland areas—21 inches fell within a 24-hour period.

An UMCOR release stated that in Baldwin County, Alabama; and Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties in Florida, rivers rose as high as four feet inside some homes and knocked others off their foundations.

In Florida, Gulf Breeze United Methodist Church rescued and fed people and organized hundreds of Early Response Team volunteers, who removed debris and mucked-out waterlogged and muddy homes. UMCOR directors approved two new grants totaling \$1 million to complete repairs, rebuilding, and case management for a total of 350 families affected by this disaster.

Directors also approved \$500,000 to support the North Alabama Conference in the aftermath of a record 62 tornadoes that touched down in one day back in April 2011. Conference churches were quick to respond, serving as Red Cross shelters, feeding centers, and distribution points for relief materials and host sites for volunteers.

## Mission Agency Matches \$1 million on UMC #GivingTuesday

Last month, United Methodists and friends once again had the opportunity to maximize their giving through the General Board of Global Ministries' UMC #GivingTuesday, "When Methodists Are United" campaign. On December 2, 2014, more than \$2.5 million was donated online through The Advance to support mission and ministries around the world. More than 770 projects and missionaries received more than 8,700 gifts through UMC #GivingTuesday. Donors from 25 different countries gave generously.

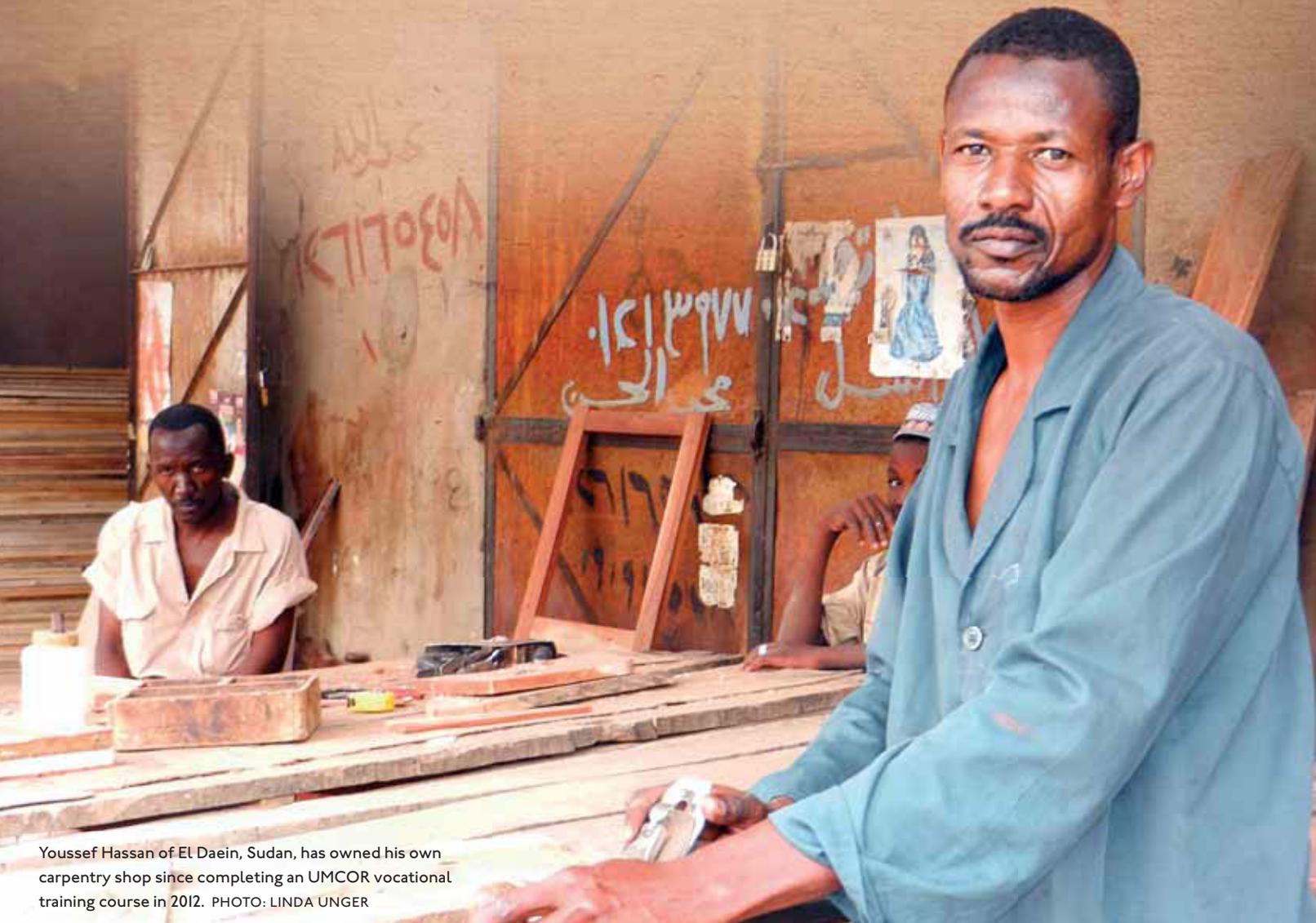
Directors approved allocating matching funds dollar for dollar up to the first \$1 million in gifts to Advance projects received online that day.

**DEATHS—William Jones**, retired missionary with 47 years of service in India, died June 15, 2014...**Maude Goff Kwak**, retired missionary with service in Japan and Korea, died June 25, 2014...**Martha Kent**, retired missionary with service in Bolivia, died September 14, 2014...**Laura B. Wells**, retired Church and Community Worker and Deaconess with 36 years of service in North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, died September 21, 2014...**Lucille Baresch**, retired missionary with more than 13 years of service in Peru, died September 27, 2014...**Gilbert Galloway**, retired missionary and mission executive for Global Ministries, with 14 years of service in India and New York, died September 29, 2014...**Noel D. Osborn**, retired missionary with nearly 38 years of service in the Philippines, died October 2, 2014...**Gilbert F. Bennett**, retired missionary with 4 years of service in the DR Congo, died October 19, 2014...**Darrell Huddleston**, retired missionary with more than 4 years of service in the DR Congo, died October 23, 2014...**Jean E. Liles**, retired missionary with more than 6 years of service in South Africa and the DR Congo, died October 28, 2014...**Charles Owen Butler**, retired missionary with 26 years of service in Panama, died October 29, 2014...**Vera Woodcock**, retired missionary with 41 years of service in the DR Congo, died October 29, 2014...**Jean T. Budding**, retired missionary with 3 years of service in Nigeria, died November 1, 2014...**Alida Rodriguez**, retired missionary with 3 years of service in Honduras, died November 2, 2014...**Nell Krueger**, retired deaconess with more than 33 years of service in the United States, died November 16, 2014.

FAITH-BASED RELIEF IN THE 21ST CENTURY

# HOW UMCOR CONTINUES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

by the Staff of UMCOR



Youssef Hassan of El Daein, Sudan, has owned his own carpentry shop since completing an UMCOR vocational training course in 2012. PHOTO: LINDA UNGER

The busy sound of planing tools scratched the hot, dusty air of an outdoor market in El Daein Town in East Darfur State, Sudan. In a short series of stalls separated only by poles holding up a shared tin roof, carpenters were creating beautiful, functional household items—building their businesses and improving the quality of life of their families.

“I’ve owned my shop since 2012, when I completed a vocational training course with UMCOR,” said Youssef Hassan, 38, formerly a farmer and seasonal laborer and now the owner of his own carpentry shop. “I developed my skills and learned a lot about business management, including the importance of coming to work every day. Sometimes the market is slow, but I continue to work so I will have items ready to sell.” Hassan’s business acumen and work ethic have translated into greater security for him and his family.

In the still volatile Darfur region, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) provides conflict-affected persons with nine-month vocational training courses. Mohammed Kabir Mia, a Bangladeshi national and manager of UMCOR’s economic recovery work in Sudan, said, “UMCOR’s vocational training program is designed so that displaced people and returnees can acquire specific skills and afterward secure employment, especially self-employment.”

A total of 120 youth and women are enrolled in the UMCOR training courses, which cover basic and advanced skills, business management, and hands-on apprenticeships in East Darfur and South Darfur states. Literacy and numeracy classes also are available for those who require this extra support.

## Constance in a Changing World

The world of 1940, in which the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief (MCOR) came into existence, was one of rigid borders. Travel was challenging and communications were slow and less than reliable.

Today, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) can reach some of the most remote areas on the planet with a simple phone call, as long as someone in the community has a working cellphone. The UMCOR staff depends on instantaneous communication between disaster-affected communities and its headquarters, sometimes thousands of miles away. Online shopping and having Facebook friends from other countries would have seemed strange to Bishop Herbert Welch at the time he proposed that Methodists should be a voice of conscience for the world, “to act in the relief of human suffering without distinction of race, color, or creed.”

But then, there are other places in the world today, like El Daein in Darfur, where the lives of displaced residents have been so disrupted, they are slow to trust any organization that has not proven itself with long-term strategies that address the real challenges of their daily living. UMCOR has built up this trust in Sudan over nine years. In this world, the only way to make an impact and a difference is to be there. This too, is the world in which UMCOR operates.

UMCOR’s 75th anniversary inspires us to ask a hard question—and seek a fair answer—of this organization that embraces the principles of integrity and resilience: *In our current hyper-connected world, does UMCOR still hold relevance as a “voice of conscience,” and, if so, in what way?*

## Faith, Hope, and Healing

Health and wholeness and the human body and spirit are interconnected.

When communities cannot achieve health and wholeness because of natural or political disaster—or because of a chronic lack of access to food, clean water, or good nutrition—UMCOR works to identify solutions that promote stability, abundance, and peace in the community. The goal is to help people in communities find their own solutions and tools.

As a faith-based organization, UMCOR understands the unique role the church and other faith communities play in promoting good health and peace. In the wake of disaster or turmoil, it is often the church—which was present before, during, and remains long after the disaster—that can wrap the community in a unifying social fabric of God’s love. Church networks not only facilitate UMCOR’s relief and development assistance, they help communities sustain change that can make their lives more stable and fruitful.



Mike Barbee, UMCOR’s WASH coordinator, inspects a latrine with a family in Guatemala. PHOTO: COURTESY MIKE BARBEE

### “Doing Good” Better

The UMCOR staff today is inspired by what UMCOR has done in the past and continues to eagerly look for both old and new ways to continue to meet the agency’s mission.

UMCOR helps to ensure that The United Methodist Church not only “does good,” but also “does it well.” The last 75 years have seen a changing landscape in the nature and structure of humanitarian aid. From learning the benefits of adding vitamin A to vaccination campaigns, to the creation of new and better ways of managing water resources, aid and development have come a long way from a time when charity work was unmeasured and unevaluated. UMCOR continues to learn about and apply generally accepted sector practices—sectors such as housing, health, livelihoods, sustainable agriculture, water resources—but also looks to innovate and discover new ways of working better. This, in turn, increases UMCOR’s impact in the communities in which it works and provides support to other organizations doing good so they can improve their effectiveness.

Currently, UMCOR’s team of technical review specialists processes millions of dollars of applications every year—grants that provide relief and promote development—while demonstrating and supporting adherence to best practices and lessons learned over the years. This continuity dates all the way back to the day Bishop Welch first planted the seed. Simultaneously, UMCOR field offices continue to serve many of the most vulnerable people in the world in direct ways, assisting

communities in their ability to become stronger and self-sufficient.

An example of an UMCOR grant that reaches people and makes their lives abundantly better in a place that few people have heard of is a Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) grant for Enduga Egu in Papua New Guinea. While the island of New Guinea is lush with vegetation because of the large amount of rainfall it receives annually, the sources of water that people in Papua New Guinea (which

of mountainous terrain to reach the village. Villagers who used to climb 650 feet up a cliff to get water now use public taps right in their village. The project not only improved the community’s living standard, it avoided the risk of falling taken by women and children who used to climb the cliff to get water every day. Thanks to the supporters of UMCOR, more than 17,000 villagers now have a reliable water supply system that brings clean water to their doorsteps.

What makes this community truly unique is that the people have come together to advocate for their needs, manage their own solutions, and confront their own challenges. They have tackled issues such as the social and health concerns of people living with AIDS, education for the youth, basic health-care needs, and access to improved sanitation. UMCOR’s support, in the form of small grants and a lot of enthusiasm, helps these Papua New Guineans move from surviving to thriving.

The years of working in relief and development have taught UMCOR that, ultimately, the most important thing you can do with a community that has experienced a disaster is to empower it to manage future

events on its own in a much better way. The correct starting point for any relief or development program has to be with the skills and capacity of the members of that community.

UMCOR finds the unclaimed disasters, responding not only to those events that make the front page of the newspaper but—by being present through its field offices and networks—also to many smaller catastrophic events that often overwhelm local communities. UMCOR’s staff



A sustainable agriculture project in Zimbabwe.

PHOTO: J. ROLLINS

takes up the eastern half of the island) have traditionally drawn from are often contaminated and dangerous to access. The people of Enduga Egu in the Kainantu District of Eastern Highlands did not want to live with the risk any longer, so they formed a community organization to help work on persistent problems that challenge their daily living. One challenge was access to clean, safe water.

Today, water pipes carry protected, clean spring water over 3.7 miles



A net distribution in Angola sponsored by UMCOR and Imagine No Malaria. PHOTO: TED WARNOCK

members are constantly listening, monitoring, and processing information about events that receive little news coverage. To continue the commitment to alleviate “human suffering without distinction of race, color, or creed,” UMCOR actively monitors the world to know whether a group of people or a community ignored by the larger society might be in need.

### Accountability

UMCOR ensures the accountability of its programs—to both the beneficiaries of its work and to those who support United Methodist relief efforts with donations. Sometimes this means working with volunteers to notice and correct the tiniest detail—a necessary practice in UMCOR’s kit ministry. That consistency is important. Problems arise if, after a disaster, someone receives an incomplete kit compared to what others have received. The kits not only fill a need, they are a symbol of hope. A cleaning bucket may not seem like much when you’re facing a flooded house, but it’s a symbol that you are

not alone. Someone made that kit, someone packed it, and someone’s prayers have arrived with it.

UMCOR is often among the first to respond, whether in the form of rapidly released grants to local partners on the scene so needs can be met quickly, or of country offices that encounter new challenges as new crises strike during ongoing programming. Assistance needs to be available as soon as possible, as the need is often greatest when an event is unfolding. UMCOR’s history in aid enables its staff to draw from previous experience and move rapidly without sacrificing its fiduciary duty to beneficiaries and donors.

### Long-term Response

UMCOR looks at the long term. The ever-shrinking availability of emergency funds, along with the increasing frequency of climatic and conflict-driven emergency events, means that UMCOR can’t only consider an immediate response. Over the decades, the agency has moved beyond addressing the symptoms of

calamity to developing strategies that avoid and decrease the impact of disaster. Through its development and health programming, UMCOR works to strengthen communities. With its new and expanding Disaster Risk Reduction portfolio, the agency seeks to help communities prepare for, mitigate, and respond to disasters before a catastrophic event even occurs. In the United States, UMCOR’s extensive training program looks to train and equip conference response teams and partners to better address and manage the effects of disaster. Such a response may include listening to survivors and, in some cases, providing case management to get them all the way through to the brighter days of their ordeal.

UMCOR is the channel for the expression of solidarity and love generated in the UMC by the hardship of people experiencing disasters. Grounded in the raw love of its constituent churches, it channels the energy and desire to help into responses that are culturally appropriate, technically sound, and forward looking. Supporters’ passion to help is translated into aid that promotes independence, does no harm, and respects and fosters human dignity.

The ever-connected nature of the world we live in has not diminished the importance of UMCOR. In fact, with a growing number of crises impacting communities across the world, the need for a “voice of conscience” has never been more apparent. We are honored that United Methodists worldwide have allowed us to serve as that voice for 75 years and look to continue to serve for seven times 75.

Sincerely and with gratitude,  
UMCOR STAFF

Visit [www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org) for updates on UMCOR’s latest activities.

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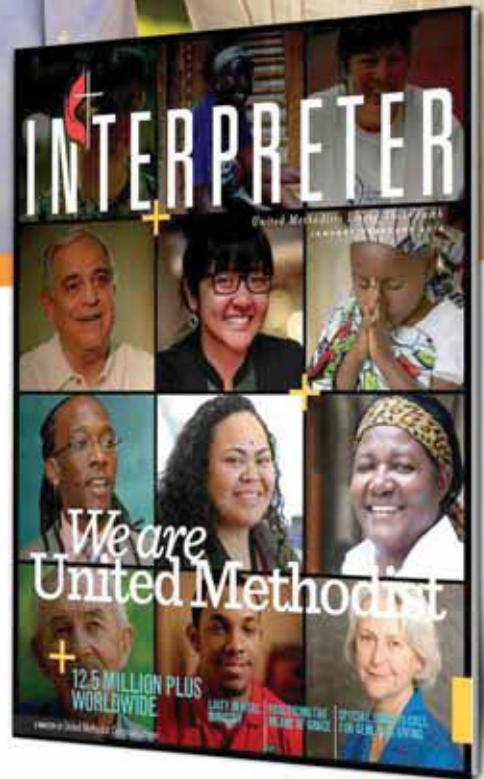
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## Compassion and Our Values

*The following is an article written by the Rev. Paul Dirdak, the former deputy general secretary for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), who served from 1998 to 2007. This article was originally published in an UMCOR Update newsletter dated Summer 1999.*

Relief work sometimes puts general social trends in stark perspective. Some weeks ago, there was a particular moment when the various relief agencies were sorting out which one would take responsibility for what in the Kosovo crisis. I noticed at that time that the number of displaced Kosovars was equal to the number of displaced, murdered, maimed, and violated Sierra Leoneans. Since then, of course, the Kosovo numbers doubled, but the irony during that particular week was the tremendous difference in the public's perceptions of the two disasters.



The Rev. Paul Dirdak  
PHOTO: GENERAL BOARD  
OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES

In both cases there was wanton killing of civilians. In both cases civilians, including the most vulnerable, were singled out for shameless brutal torture and mayhem. In both cases, invading rogue forces left a scorched earth behind them. But in one case, millions of dollars were available to help, and in the other cases all concerned parties were scrambling for thousands. I want you to know that our church is not immune to moral inequities. We experienced quite a disproportionate response from our church's donor-members. But I also want you to know that we see all of the present crises as demanding of our affection, and we give all the ingenuity we have to finding the needed resources—even in cases which the public has not noticed.

In the case of Sierra Leone, UMCOR is supporting an innovative response to the collapse of medical care throughout that country. A team of medical personnel who are former Sierra Leoneans and who now work throughout the world will join us to document and treat malnutrition and numerous diseases and afflictions in refugee camps and throughout the country.

While the public consciousness of all our neighbors' crises is uneven, UMCOR generally cuts against that grain to respond to human need. Among us are self-giving servants who hear God's call and know from experience the deep satisfaction of answering without reservations.



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## UMCOR Around the World

*The following article excerpt was written by the Rev. Kenneth R. Lutgen during his five-year (1992-1997) service as associate general secretary for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). The article, which promotes One Great Hour of Sharing, the financial backbone of UMCOR's worldwide ministry, was originally published in an UMCOR Update newsletter dated Winter, 1993-94.*

A trip to southern Asia allowed me to view a blanket-making project among Afghan refugees housed in Pakistan. The warm, cotton-filled blankets offered thousands of people protection from the severe winter cold. In Bangladesh, I traveled out to the silt islands where UMCOR has built cyclone shelters. These shelters provide the poor farmers and families protection from flooding and high winds caused by frequent cyclones that strike the region. In Moscow, once again I visited

a number of institutions serving disabled children. UMCOR has provided much-needed medicines and food for the children. Most recently, I toured Sager Brown, an institution in Baldwin, Louisiana, that was reopened after Hurricane Andrew and is now serving as a place of healing and hope to the once devastated community.

It is truly a remarkable story that is being written daily. If the story could all be contained in a single book, each page would take you to a different place and speak of different projects and faces. But while the story would take you around the world, the theme would be a common one of God's people bringing to a hurting world, compassion...hope...unqualified love.

Please help continue the writing and telling of this life-changing story through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing.

This year, One Great Hour of Sharing is observed on March 15, 2015. Visit [www.umcgiving.org](http://www.umcgiving.org) and click on Special Sundays for resources.



Ken Lutgen column in  
UMCOR Update, 1993

## Confessions of a Relief Worker

*The Rev. Jack Amick currently serves as the director for International Disaster Response, UMCOR.*

We are the ones who try to heal the wounds to make wrongs right; to bring about relief, recovery, and rehabilitation. And yet, our work feels like the smallest bandage on the seemingly forever festering sore of massive loss and grief and trauma.

We are using teaspoons, where bulldozers are needed. It breaks our hearts that we cannot do more, that we cannot work longer and harder, that we do not have more resources to apply to the problem.

And so, I suppose, the missed meals, the nights lost to transporting commodities, the sleeping on hard floors are unintentional signs of solidarity with the poor.

Because all we can do, and the most we can do, and the best we can do, is to be present and walk together on this Emmaus journey of bewilderment, confusion, and searching for hope.

Rodge Modesto (third from left) received the first house in Calogocog, Philippines, while Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, community officials, pastors, and UMCOR staff cut the ribbon on the new structure. PHOTO: MELISSA HINNEN



Pastor Iris Picardal Terana describes how floodwaters from Typhoon Haiyan washed through Light and Life United Methodist Church in Tacloban, Philippines. PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS



The Rev. Jack Amick visits with Sanyelle Eduarte, 7, atop bags of relief supplies at the offices of the United Methodist Committee on Relief in Manila. PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS

# From the General Secretary

by Thomas Kemper



German refugees from Siberia, taken as prisoners of war during WWII, arrive in Friedland Camp, West Germany, for resettlement, circa 1960. PHOTO: HILDENHAGEN/FOTO-PRESENT

## Serving Neighbors

I grew up in an Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) church in Hamburg, Germany. Many of the adult members were refugees who had fled into what was then West Germany as the Soviet Union occupied former German territories in the East. My godmother and her husband were refugees from East Prussia, an area from which all Germans were expelled when it was divided among Russia, Poland, and several other Soviet-controlled countries at the end of the disaster we call World War II. These refugees were reluctant to talk about their experiences, but I learned from them at a young age how displacement affects people's lives. They also taught me about the important role the church plays in responding to immediate and long-term needs. For my church, embracing refugees was a matter of serving neighbors.

The 1940 General Conference action creating what is now UMCOR (then, the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief) specified six initial partner organizations. All would deal primarily with refugees and prisoners of war. A resolution stated that relief work was a matter of serving neighbors, though they be far away.

Even in that earliest legislation, three aspects of church disaster response—emergency relief, advocacy on behalf of the needy, and efforts to help redevelop lives and communities, whether in new or old locations—were outlined. All three continue to this day in virtually all of UMCOR's work. An awareness of the importance of these ministries was woven into the fiber of my boyhood church.

Gaither Warfield, an early MCOR executive director, visited West Germany in 1953 and wrote about the continuing refugee crisis. He noted that emergency needs had been addressed, but jobs were scarce and services

for helping people plan their future were in short supply. In part, he said, this was because the government was ill-equipped to provide the services.

"Church counsellors must be provided to aid those who are caught in the present bureaucratic procedures, and special attention should be given to them during the time of resettlement in West Germany." He was talking about the role of advocacy on behalf of those needing assistance.

Today, much of this kind of hands-on advocacy is included in the term "case management," which focuses on a holistic approach to assisting those coming out of disasters, offering options and affirming their futures. UMCOR is now internationally known for its skills and proficiency in case management.

But church advocacy can also take the form of education for disaster preparedness, monitoring the adequacy of governmental disaster response, and advancing the causes of peace and justice. The latter is particularly important when faced with potential or actual armed conflict, which was the case in 1940. The General Conference made it clear that the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief would be an agency of peace and hope, focused on life. It would feed, nourish, rebuild, and represent the cause of God's love without regard to race, color, or creed. After 75 years, UMCOR is still doing just that—serving neighbors.

Thomas Kemper  
General Secretary  
General Board of Global Ministries



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