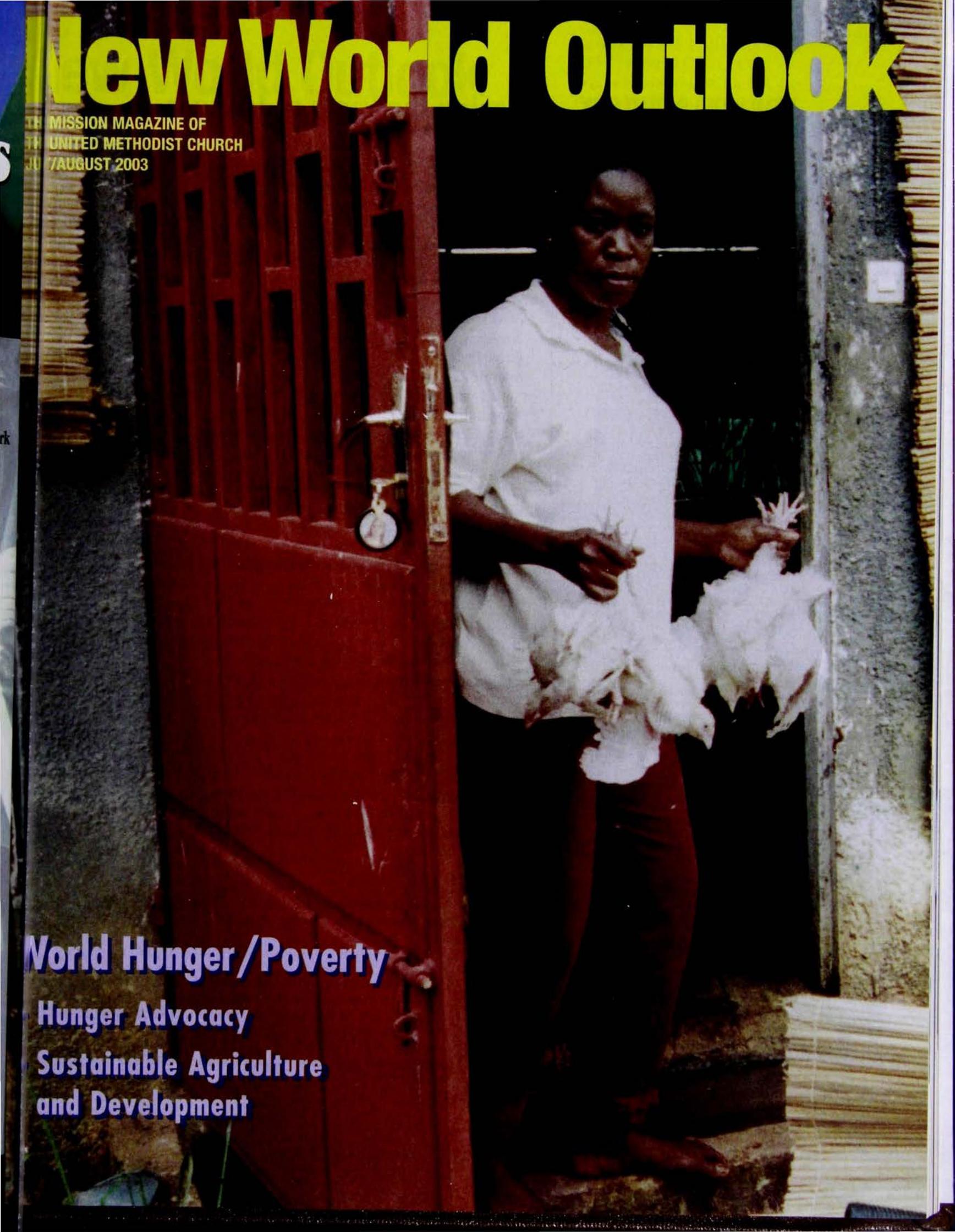


New World Outlook

THE MISSION MAGAZINE OF
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
JULY/AUGUST 2003

A woman with dark skin, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and red pants, stands in a doorway. She is holding several white chickens. The doorway is framed by a red wooden door with a lattice pattern. The walls on either side are made of grey concrete or plaster. The background is dark, suggesting an interior space.

World Hunger/Poverty

Hunger Advocacy

Sustainable Agriculture
and Development

NEW WORLD OUTLOOK

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Cover: photo by June H. Kim. The chicken project at the Songhai Center in Benin, a sustainable-agriculture teaching facility.

Seeing the Faces of Hunger

A friend once said to me: "I don't know how you can do your job. You have to read devastating stories about starving children, wars, and people cheated out of their land. It would just depress me."

When I visited her home, I discovered that she surrounded herself with beautiful works of art, received no newspapers, and preferred to watch fantasy, "reality shows," and sci-fi flicks on TV. She insulated herself from the outside world pretty well, avoiding depression.

Truthfully, the research for this issue was pretty depressing. Hunger is a devastating human condition. I learned about the four major areas of the world where famine and hunger are severe: Africa, Central America, North Korea, and the Middle East. For Iraq alone, the World Food Program has asked \$1.3 billion for emergency food, part of an overall \$2.2 billion recommendation for humanitarian assistance.

I learned that chronic hunger and malnutrition are growing problems in the United States. The US Department of Agriculture estimates that 33.6 million Americans are "food insecure," which means they are forced to skip meals or they survive on a diet that is not nutritious enough to keep them healthy. Thirteen million of this number are children. In Oregon, 22 percent of the children face food insecurity. Since 9/11/01, food pantries and feeding services across the country have seen an increase in clients. Check with your local pantries to see what the situation is in your town.

Despite these depressing statistics, caring people in churches and towns throughout the world wage a decisive battle against hunger. They read the statistics, watch the news, and greet the people in their neighborhoods. They collect, prepare, and distribute food to those in need. They write letters to their government leaders to urge legislation that will help the hungry and give generously to famine appeals and projects that support long-term development in developing countries. Courageous survivors who recover from malnutrition fight particularly hard to find solutions so that others will not have to suffer. Stories about these faithful responses to Jesus' entreaty to Peter, "Feed my sheep," (John 21:17) are what *New World Outlook* reports.

Imagine what would happen if the time, money, and energy that many Americans spend to insulate themselves from "bad news" were turned into creative efforts to answer need and solve problems. That would be "Good News" for all.

Christie R. House

Beginning with this issue, *New World Outlook* will be using the  symbol to indicate an Advance asking that is also eligible for Supplementary Gifts. The asking will be referenced to this page for instructions about giving to the Advance.

 **To Give to the Advance:**

For United Methodists: Make the check out to your local church and write the Advance name and code number on the check. Give your gift to your church treasurer so that your local church and annual conference receive Advance credit. Outside UM channels: make the check payable to "Advance GCFA" with the project name and code number on the check. Send the check to Advance GCFA, P.O. Box 9068, GPO, New York, NY 10087-9068. To contribute with a credit card, call 1-888-252-6174.

All Advance projects are also eligible for Supplementary Gifts through United Methodist Women's giving channels.

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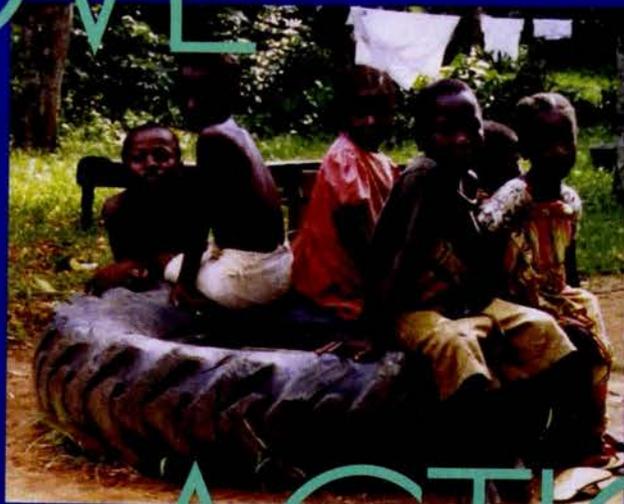


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LOVE



INTO ACTION

UMCOR'S World Hunger/Poverty Program

by June H. Kim

The World Hunger/Poverty Program has been an integral part of the United Methodist Committee on Relief's (UMCOR) mission to enable United Methodist congregations to put love into action. More than 800 million people in the world go hungry every day. This fact is difficult to comprehend since we live in a world that has unparalleled wealth and food production capacity. It is not a question of whether there is enough food but a matter of accessibility and equal distribution to all people, regardless of their class, gender, geography, religion, earning power, or status.

The task of trying to resolve the problem of hunger and poverty is by no means simple. It involves many layers of socio-economic and political structures and systems that may be difficult to influence or control. As a church that follows the teachings of Wesley and Christ, we have a responsibility to share the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. We must also be of a mind to do this "sharing" in the spirit of sacrifice rather than

charity. Charity is giving out of one's excess. Sacrifice is giving when we ourselves may not have enough. As Christ sacrificed himself for us, so we must strive to follow his example.

The World Hunger/Poverty Program

UMCOR's World Hunger/Poverty Program strategies develop and support integrated programs that emphasize:

- Agriculture, rural development, and food security;
- Stewardship of natural resources and the environment;
- Education, training, and literacy;
- Microcredit and enterprise development;
- Urban agriculture;
- Leadership development;
- Supplemental food programs;
- Advocacy to alleviate hunger and poverty;
- The mobilization of resources through United Methodist connections;
- Eradication of the root causes of hunger and poverty.

HOW TO COMBAT HUNGER

United Methodists can help alleviate hunger and poverty around the world by choosing to observe, participate in, and support hunger/poverty programs and activities through UMCOR and its partners.

OBSERVE THE DAYS

World Food Day: October 16th

The United Nations passed the World Food Day resolution in 1979 to set an annual international observance. World Food Day brings people around the world together to focus on ending hunger and on the problems of food insecurity.

Want to Know More?

Resources

To order, go to <http://www.worldfooddayusa.org>

- *Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger*, a global education initiative available in 10 languages for grades K through 12.
- Teleconference Study/Action Packet
- *Fighting Hunger Today*, a film by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization. Contact the World Food Department office or Michael Hage at Michael.hage@fao.org

National Hunger Awareness Day: June 5th

National Hunger Awareness Day, sponsored by America's Second Harvest, was created in 2002. The events of September 11 contributed to a significant increase in the number of Americans who suddenly found themselves unable to feed their families. Hunger-relief organizations experienced a drop in food surplus and a decrease in charitable giving.

America's Second Harvest and its network of more than 200 food banks and food-rescue organizations developed an aggressive plan of action. National Hunger Awareness Day, an effort to raise awareness and generate contributions, was one aspect of the plan.

Want to know more?

Go to: <http://www.hungerday.org>

JOIN ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Bread for the World and Bread for the World Institute (Advance #982325-3)

Bread for the World (BFW) is a nationwide Christian citizens movement seeking justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying the nation's decision makers. United Methodist churches are encouraged to build a covenant partnership with BFW and observe BFW Sunday in the fall.

Want to know more?

Go to <http://www.bread.org>

See the article in this issue, p. 8.

Agricultural Missions, Inc. (Advance #982065-8)

Agricultural Missions, Inc. (AMI) is an ecumenical organization that accompanies rural peoples in their efforts to address the root causes of impoverishment and injustice in their communities. Since its founding in 1930, and as a longstanding partner with UMCOR, the organization has been a ministry striving to fulfill the Gospel's promise of abundant life for all.

Agricultural Missions addresses "cutting edge" issues, such as land and agrarian reform, the rights of indigenous peoples, the rights of small and minority farmers in the United States, gender equity, sustainable use of natural resources, globalization and trade, and the use of biotechnology in agriculture.

Want to know more?

An UMCOR/Agricultural Missions brochure can be requested through the GBGM Service Center, Stock #5572. Call 1-800-305-9857. For AMI, call: 212-870-2553.

WORK FOR HUNGER PROGRAMS

Souper Bowl of Caring

The Souper Bowl of Caring is a simple but significant youth- and young-adult-led effort to fight hunger and poverty. The Souper Bowl of Caring encourages people to give one dollar and/or a canned food item as they leave worship on Super Bowl Sunday. All collections are sent by the youth to the kitchen, food bank, or other hunger organization of their choice. In addition, the youths are encouraged to participate in a "Service Blitz," in which they volunteer at a local food bank or charity in their neighborhood.

Since Souper Bowl's inception, youth participants have generated a total of more than \$16.6 million.

Want to know more?

Go to <http://souperbowl.org>

Foods Resource Bank (Advance #982493-1)

Foods Resource Bank (FRB) is modeled after the successful Canadian Foodgrains Bank and is a new "Christian response to world hunger." FRB is a nongovernmental humanitarian organization that supports sustainable development programs which address food security.

Want to know more?

See the article in this issue on p. 40.

Go to: <http://foodsresourcebank.org>

UMCOR Coffee Project

What kind of coffee is served in your church? Is it fairly traded coffee? The UMCOR Coffee Project is a partnership with a Fair Trade organization called Equal Exchange, whose products are 100 percent fairly traded (coffee, tea, cocoa products). Products that are "fairly traded" ensure that farmers and workers receive fair pay for their labor. For every order through the UMCOR Coffee Project, Equal Exchange contributes a portion of the proceeds back to UMCOR for programs of sustainable agriculture and empowerment.

Want to know more?

See the article in this issue on p. 18.

Go to <http://gbgm-umc.org/umcor/hunger/coffee.cfm>

Society of St. Andrew

The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) is an ecumenical Christian ministry that feeds the hungry all year long by saving fresh produce that would otherwise go to waste and giving it to the needy. SoSA's unique approach is the "Gleaning Network," a project that coordinates volunteers, growers, and distribution agencies to salvage food for the needy. Each year, 35,000 volunteers from churches, synagogues, scout troops, senior-citizen groups, and other groups coordinated by Hunger Advocates participate in Society of St. Andrew gleaning activities. They salvage over 11 million pounds of produce for the poor.

Want to know more?

Go to: <http://www.endhunger.org>

"Whose Birthday Is It Anyway?"/UMCOR Christmas Cards

"Whose Birthday Is It Anyway" is a great resource for people and congregations who are searching for deeper meaning in the Christmas holiday. Stories, games, Bible studies, and much more help you, your family, and your congregation to approach the Christmas holiday from a perspective of faith and spirituality. You will also find a "different kind of Christmas list," which is designed to feed, heal, and educate and to spread the love that Christ brought to the world. United Methodist churches can purchase UMCOR Christmas cards as an alternative to ones purchased at a retail store. The proceeds support UMCOR.

Want to know more?

Order Christmas cards by sending an e-mail to UMCOR@gbgm-umc.org or calling 1-800-554-8583.

Order "Whose Birthday Is It Anyway" from the Service Center, 1-800-305-9857.

SUPPORT SA&D

UMCOR, through its Sustainable Agriculture & Development (SA&D) program, supports and implements sustainable agricultural projects directly, especially in West Africa. The SA&D program emphasizes farmer-to-farmer training, beekeeping, snail farming, and integrated pest-management practices. Many people affected by civil war are being empowered with new skills and technology to help them make their food sources secure. Support for this program can be channeled through Sustainable Agriculture, Advance #982188.

Want to know more?

See the article in this issue on p. 26.

Put Love Into Action

Through the various partners and projects of UMCOR's World Hunger/Poverty Program, United Methodists can become advocates, raising awareness for and being in partnership with those who are oppressed, poor, and hungry. Whether seeking out and purchasing fairly traded or organically grown products, using environmentally safe or recyclable items, wearing clothing that was not made with child labor, or writing letters to Congress, we, as faith-based consumers, have the power to influence the marketers, multinational corporations, and even our own government. Adhering to Christ's call to serve one another, we recognize that the lifestyle choices we make every day can have an impact for better or for worse.

June H. Kim is the Executive Secretary for World Hunger/Poverty and SA&D in UMCOR.

UMCOR works ecumenically in collaboration with many different organizations in its effort to fight hunger and poverty. United Methodists' financial support of the World Hunger/Poverty Advance (#982920-4) enables UMCOR to continue the work of this mission. In addition, increased participation by United Methodist churches in One Great Hour of Sharing is crucial for UMCOR's continued growth and its effort to carry on the relief and development mission of The United Methodist Church.

 See p. 2 for Advance giving.

HUNGER ADVOCACY

A New Twist on Global Mission

by David Beckmann

In the tiny village of Chimboata, high in the Andean mountains, a woman digs for potatoes to feed her family. Alejandrina Quinto Dolicio and her family have known hunger. Their home country, Bolivia, is one of the poorest nations in Latin America, where it is second only to Haiti. Although malnutrition remains a problem, Alejandrina is confident that her family and her village have brighter days ahead.

Guided by the Ecumenical Foundation for Development (FEPADE) and supported by the Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia and the General Board of Global Ministries, the people of Chimboata have already worked to improve their way of life. Through a program of comprehensive community-based projects, villagers have been able to diversify their agriculture, immunize their children, and upgrade traditional dwellings that may harbor disease-

Bread for the World advocacy encourages legislators to allocate funds so that the hungry can be fed.

bearing insects. Not only have these changes directly improved the nutrition and overall health of people in Chimboata, they are empowering the villagers to become self-reliant—to establish development priorities for their community that will help them escape hunger and poverty for good.

The struggles faced by Alejandrina and the village of Chimboata mirror the challenges faced by hungry and poor people around the world. Despite the efforts of churches and charities, the suffering remains enormous: more than 800 million people in developing countries still endure chronic undernutrition. About 31,000 children under age five die each day in developing countries, half from hunger-related causes. Here in our own richly blessed nation, one family in ten lives in poverty and struggles to put food on the table.

Yet widespread hunger is no longer necessary. The resources, technology, and knowledge needed to end this kind of routine, pervasive hunger that the world now tolerates are readily available. If this is the case, why does hunger persist? Besides charity, what can be done to end hunger in God's world?

Advocacy as Mission

Compared to our brothers and sisters in the rest of the world, Christians in the United States live



In Mali, Africa, a healthy vegetable garden can mean the difference between life and death.

in relative luxury. We are also citizens of the world's most powerful nation, and our democratic government really does respond to what active US citizens advise our elected leaders to do.

Because we live in the United States, we have a special privilege and responsibility to use the power of our citizenship to promote justice and to reduce hunger. When Christians use their voices to advocate for an end to human suffering, they proclaim God's justice in the world and participate in mission.

If US Christians would use their citizenship on issues that are important to hungry people, they

could quickly become the driving force toward ending hunger everywhere. For almost 30 years, Bread for the World's members have successfully lobbied Congress and various administrations to bring about public policy changes that address the root causes of hunger and poverty in our nation and around the world.

Advocacy has been proven to make a huge difference in the lives of hungry and poor people. For instance, in 1999, Bread for the World members played a key role in winning US support for debt relief to the world's poorest countries. So far, the international debt relief initiative has reduced the total debt obligations of 26 relatively well-governed poor countries by \$34 billion. These countries' combined populations total 322 million people, and nearly half of them live on less than \$1 per day. Lowered debt-service payments have resulted in significantly increased poverty-reduction efforts, notably in education and health. Because Christians actively supported debt relief for poor

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church in 2000 adopted a resolution endorsing Bread for the World: "Therefore, be it resolved that The United Methodist Church encourage its members to support Bread for the World, and urge all local churches to celebrate an annual 'Offering of Letters' for as long as God's children go hungry." (Res. 201) Thousands of individual United Methodists have joined Bread for the World, and hundreds of local congregations celebrate the Offering of Letters annually, with more than 75 of them committing to advocacy for hungry people as Bread for the World Covenant Churches.

countries by writing letters and meeting with their representatives in Congress, there are more medicines in rural clinics and many more children in school.

United Methodists and Advocacy
The United Methodist Church has a long history, going back to its founder, John Wesley, of taking positions on a wide variety of social and political concerns. The General Board of Church and Society, the international program board of The United Methodist Church tasked with implementing the Social Principles, has networks of advocates organized to influence US public policy on current issues ranging from environmental justice to workers' rights to immigration. In partnership with Bread for the World, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) of the General Board of Global Ministries is working to end hunger by addressing its underlying causes in over 80 countries, including the United States. More than 4000 United Methodists are current members of Bread for the World, including nearly 1000 local United Methodist churches.

An Offering of Letters

Each year, Bread for the World asks churches and other groups to take part in a nationwide offering—not an offering of money, but an "Offering of Letters." Churches ask their members to learn about a specific hunger issue and then consider writing a letter to Congress. The annual Offering of Letters mobilizes as many as 250,000 letters to Congress to get action on hunger legislation. Hundreds of United Methodist congregations across the United States hold an Offering of Letters annually.

This year, Bread for the World's Offering of Letters campaign, "Rise to the Challenge: End

Writing Letters to Members of Congress

Writing a letter is one of the most effective ways Christians can communicate with elected officials and advocate for hungry people. Most representatives and senators tally handwritten letters from their constituents to gauge public opinion, so the more letters we write, the greater influence we have over public policy.

Letter-Writing Tips

Be personal. A mailed handwritten letter attracts much greater attention than does a preprinted letter or card, or e-mail. Be sure to include your postal address on both your envelope and letter so your member of Congress can know you are a constituent.

Be concise. Express your request clearly in one or two paragraphs.

Request specific action. Ask your representative and senators to support and provide full funding for Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) legislation that is focused on poverty reduction. With this focus, the MCA will help poor people feed their families, fight infectious diseases, and put their children in school. As the time approaches to write your letter, please consult the Bread for the World (BFW) Website (www.bread.org) or contact your BFW regional, campus, or local church organizer at 1-800-82-BREAD for an update on the legislation.

Sending a Letter to Your Member of Congress

Ever since anthrax was found in congressional buildings in 2001, mail to Congress takes a bit longer because all letters go through a decontamination process. Here is what we recommend when mailing your letters.

- Always send the letters to your members of Congress' Washington, DC, office, not the local office. (The DC office handles matters related to legislation; the local office usually does not.)

Rep. _____

US House of Representatives

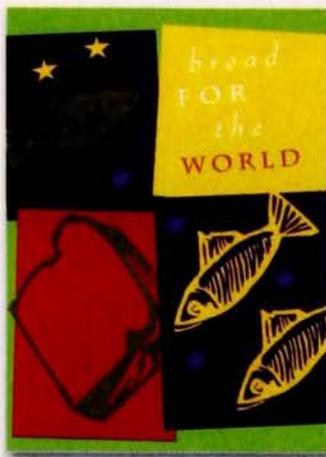
Washington, D.C. 20515

Sen. _____

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510

- Assume your letters will take about a month to get to your members of Congress.
- After mailing the letters, call the office of the senator or representative. Tell the office the basic message of the letters and how many were sent by your group or church.



Join Bread for the World

Your letters and phone calls to your representatives in Washington can be even more effective when you join Bread for the World. As a member of Bread for the World, you'll get the information and encouragement you need to send the right message at the time when it has the greatest impact. And you'll have the benefit of knowing that thousands of other Bread for the World members across the country share your conviction that hunger is one problem we can actually solve.

How to Become a Bread for the World Member

1. Visit Bread for the World's website, www.bread.org, and click on "How to Help." You can print out a membership form to mail in or use your Visa or MasterCard to make a secure transaction.
2. Call toll-free 1-800-82-BREAD (1-800-822-7323) between 8:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. Eastern Standard Time and ask for membership services. Have your credit card ready so you can make a gift over the phone.
3. Write to UMCOR, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 330, New York, New York 10115. Send your name, address, and a membership contribution, designating Bread for the World's Advance number (#982325-3) on your check.  See p. 2 for Advance giving.

Bread for the World members are asked to make an annual gift of \$25 or more. Students and others with special circumstances are encouraged to join at whatever level of support is possible for them. All members receive *Bread*, an informative newsletter published nine times a year, as well as occasional Action Alerts about critical legislation before Congress. Your financial support as a member will help underwrite research, publicity, and grassroots organizing.

World Hunger," will seize an extraordinary opportunity to make progress against world hunger. Last March, President Bush called for a \$5 billion increase in international development assistance through a new initiative—the Millennium Challenge Account. This effort, which Congress is considering this year, would double the current amount of US development assistance focused on eliminating poverty. Only those countries that have demonstrated a commitment to use the money well would be eligible.

The Millennium Challenge Account could help poor people feed their families, provide access to clean drinking water, fight infectious diseases, and enable more children to go to school. This new source of funding could be an answer to the prayers of many hungry people. But it's crucial that our



African women prepare a meal in their village.

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Resources on Hunger

Acting together, Christians can create a powerful voice on behalf of our hungry brothers and sisters around the world and here at home. You can enhance the life of your church—and make a big difference for hungry people—by getting your church involved with Bread for the World. Here are just a few resources for churches available through Bread for the World:

Rise to the Challenge: End World Hunger 2003 Offering of Letters Kit

A handbook, poster, and 9-minute video provide everything you need to organize an Offering of Letters, including facts on world hunger and poverty, an overview of the Millennium Challenge Account initiative, a sample presentation and letter, personal accounts of successful development, worship aids, and more.

Make Hunger History: Teaching Youth and Children About Hunger

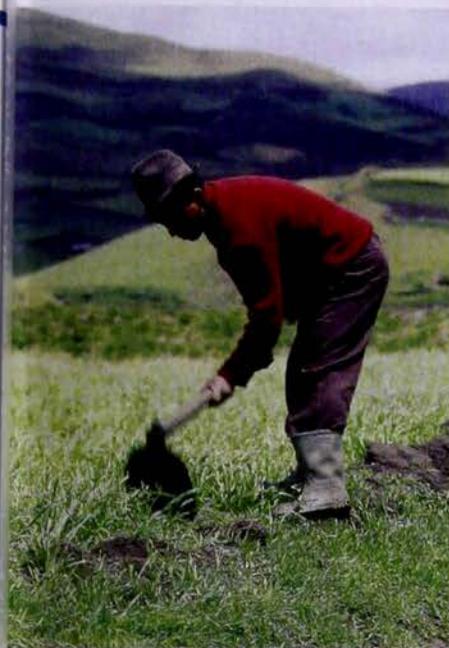
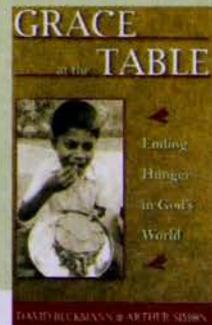
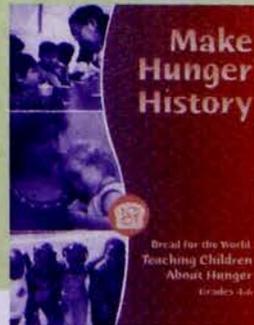
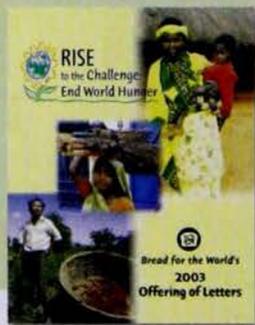
With games, exercises, stories, and prayers, these two editions—for grades four through six and for grades seven through nine—draw students into greater understanding of the problem of hunger and provide them with tools to make a difference.

Grace at the Table by David Beckmann and Art Simon

Written in an easy-to-read, question-and-answer format, *Grace at the Table* is a primer on the causes of hunger and what we as ordinary citizens can do to end the problem at home and around the world. It comes with a study guide.

Lazarus: A Musical on Hunger and Poverty by Joel Underwood

Designed for local-church productions by a United Methodist minister, this full-length musical brings to life Jesus' parable about the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). The introductory packet includes conductor's score, singer's edition, CD, videotape of the performance, user's guide, and program covers.



A farmer in Ecuador breaks ground to plant seeds.

government actually follows through on its promises—despite all the other concerns that are preoccupying our political leaders. At this historic moment, people of faith are called to speak out, more strongly than ever before, on behalf of the world's hungry people.

The dramatic changes in the village of Chimboata would not have been possible without the prayers and generous contributions of United Methodists here in the United States and the hard work of missionaries in Bolivia like Nora Quiroga Boots, community-based health care program coordinator for Latin America. But lack of funding threatens to slow the community's progress against hunger and poverty. Fortunately, Christians in the United States can do something to help. By writing letters to Congress and advocating for a poverty-focused Millennium Challenge Account, people of faith can make it possible for people in poor countries to rise to the challenge of ending hunger and poverty.

The Rev. David Beckmann is president of Bread for the World.

But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed....

Luke 14:13-14a

Coop. RAFAELA
HERRERA. R.L.
EL ENSAYO.
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Hunger, Land, and

Free Trade in Exploited Nations

by **Nah McGurdy**



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A Nicaraguan campesino (peasant farmer) leader, Jorge Alberto Mayorga, said: "How can it be that in this rich agricultural country of 5 million inhabitants, 2 million people live malnourished in extreme poverty, and 800,000 are so poor and malnourished that they're on the brink of disappearing? Last year, 20 Nicaraguans, mainly children, died of starvation. And those are only the official government statistics."

Mayorga and hundreds of other men, women, and children from the campesino cooperative Rafaela Herrera, on Nicaragua's Pacific plains, walked 140 kilometers to Managua over five days to demand legal title to their land. Thirty members of the group spent their first week tied up on large crosses in front of the Nicaraguan Congress. Then they embarked on a hunger strike. When that didn't get action from the government, 40 campesinos began a nude protest march, but they were quickly beaten and rounded up by hundreds of police. Their land is under illegal title to a wealthy family with connections in the government. For the campesino families, the land symbolizes the struggle between food and hunger for their children.

Hunger and Land

The number-one reason for hunger in Nicaragua, according to Carlos Pacheco of the Center for International Studies, is land: who owns it, who works it, and who benefits from the production. Low

Campesinos in Managua protest against the illegal transfer of their land titles to wealthy government-connected families.



The faces and postures of these two women reflect the hardships of campesino families under unfair farmland acquisitions that affect their livelihood.

farm-worker wages, lack of bank credit for small-scale farmers, and high interest rates, especially for small-scale farmers, conspire against the campesinos.

Leonsia Tremenio is a health promoter with the Women and Community Association, an ecumenical farm women's group in San Francisco Libre (SFL), Nicaragua, that received support from UMCOR to build 350 homes after Hurricane Mitch. In response to the high levels of malnutrition and disease in the population, she promotes the use of alternative high-protein beans like soy, medicines made from local plants, and family planning as means for the survival of her community. Her husband, Ramón Godines, is a poorly paid cattlehand (earning less than \$2 a day) for a Costa Rican business that owns 1500 manzanas (about 2400 acres) of land in SFL. Until five years ago, they were one of 26 families who cooperatively owned this piece of land. When I asked them how much they sold the land for, Ramón looked down, shook his head, and answered, "We gave away the land to them for 200 cordobas a manzana [\$15 an acre]."

Their reason for selling was that they couldn't get credit. Ramón said, "The truth is we were scared we'd lose the land and be left with nothing." Now they understand that they were fooled.

Sadly, the US government has played a very active role since 1990 in pressuring the Nicaraguan government to return property to former land owners from the Somoza dictatorship years. With the overthrow of

the 45-year reign of the Somoza family dictatorship in Nicaragua and the beginning of a revolution in 1979, all properties belonging to the Somozas and their cronies were confiscated. Land from other owners was confiscated for decapitalization (taking loans and sending the money out of the country instead of investing it in the land or business). Property was massively redistributed in the 1980s to over 120,000 families representing one-third of the country's population. Many people whose lands were confiscated went to the United States and became citizens. The United States defends property rights of naturalized citizens. Over 1000 US claims have been resolved. There are about 800 more claims in process.

During the 1990s, the United States regularly threatened to cut off aid if the US claims in Nicaragua were not resolved. With this threat as a backdrop, the Nicaraguan government made its own threats to poor campesinos who had received land—threats that it would revoke the titles and take the land without paying for it if the campesinos did not sell it. The campesinos were also afraid because former owners sometimes

buy a local judge and come in with paid thugs to throw families violently off the land or out of their homes. Those buying up the land are well-off nationals and foreigners who swallow up the land for a song. Most of the beneficiaries of agrarian reform are back to eating dust.

Thousands of campesino families who lose their land move to the circles of misery around the cities. The reconcentration of land in the hands of the wealthy has resulted in increased unemployment, crime, gangs, and the emigration of over a million people to Costa Rica and the United States in the last decade. The growing sweatshop

industry in the free-trade zones in Nicaragua enjoys the cheap labor that results from massive unemployment and immigration to the cities. Large numbers of young people end up fighting over jobs in which they often work 12-hour days in subhuman conditions for slave wages.

Free-Trade Agreements

Next to land issues, the biggest threat to food security in Nicaragua are the free-trade agreements. In a free-trade agreement, goods are bought and sold between two or more partners without trade barriers or protection. The United States is pressuring the countries of Central America to capitulate and sign free-trade agreements. The big winner in these agreements would be US-based transnational companies and agribusinesses in particular.

Here's an example of what happens when a wealthier country with more power and technology forms a free-trade agreement with an unequal partner. Mexico and Nicaragua signed a limited free-trade agreement in 1998 in which each country agreed to buy certain products from the other. The agreement has favored Mexico to the tune of \$70 million in exports to Nicaragua per year while Nicaragua has exported only \$10 million a year to Mexico. Mexico agreed to buy thousands of tons of black beans from Nicaragua, but Nicaraguan campesinos traditionally produce red beans because that's what Nicaraguans eat. The World Bank encouraged the Nicaraguan government to convince campesinos to produce black

beans for the export market rather than producing red beans for local consumption. Aid for International Development (AID) and the Inter-American Development Bank gave loans to campesinos to produce black beans. However, the United States flooded Mexico with cheap black beans produced by farmers who received US subsidies. In January 2003, Mexico refused to buy the crop of black beans from Nicaragua. Some of these farmers will lose their land because they grew produce for export rather than for the local market.

In May of 2002, a US farm bill passed that provides \$248 billion in subsidies for US farmers. However, the Center for Rural Affairs says that this farm bill provides a larger share of payments to the nation's largest farms (agribusinesses) than any other bill in history. The subsidies allow US farmers to sell corn 20 percent below the cost of production and wheat at 46 percent below the cost of production. Large companies have other advantages over third-world farmers, such as modern mechanization on a large scale.

Peasant farmers from exploited nations, even middle-sized farmers, cannot compete. It's cheaper to buy US corn and rice in Nicaragua or Haiti than to buy locally produced corn and rice. In fact, the Haitian rice producers have almost all been put out of business. It's the same story in dozens of third-world countries: cheap, subsidized produce from the United States inhibits the sale of local production. Farmers lose their land and move to the cities. Wealthy families and foreign corporations buy up the land.

"Improved Seed"

Governments of the exploited nations, on recommendation from the US government, the World



A mother holds her child, who later died of starvation.

Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) encourage campesinos to buy improved seed from transnational companies like Monsanto.

Methodist missionary Miguel Mairena grew up in a poor farm family on an island in Lake Nicaragua. "My dad and all the farmers we knew selected the best corn and beans each year to store carefully for planting the next season. Farmers throughout the country and all around the world have local seeds they've modified over generations so that they are well adapted to their particular zone. But the improved seeds from the United States usually provide a better yield. The problem is that the farmer cannot select seed to plant the next year from the crop because of patent rights. Hybrid seeds will not reproduce themselves so the family has to buy new seed. If the seeds are genetically modified and the family replants the next year, Monsanto could force them to pay. Some of the genetically modified seeds

are manufactured to produce only one yield. Or a second planting will give a good yield only if a certain chemical produced by the same company is applied. Either way, farmers are forced to purchase the seed from the company every year."

"It's all so perverse!" exclaims Carlos Pacheco. "The US is creating a captive market for its transnational companies. On the one hand, local farmers are becoming dependent on foreign seeds. On the other hand, cheap US corn, beans, rice, and other commodities are putting third-world farmers out of business and forcing them off the land. The

Hunger, a Peace with Justice Issue

We can follow in Christ's footsteps and carry out a peace with justice mission that releases the captives, frees the oppressed, and unmasks hypocritical leaders who live well at the cost of more than 3 billion people on the planet. We can commit ourselves to living more simply, serving others as Christ did. We can participate in our democracy by influencing our leaders to invest in people for a better world. Write, call, and e-mail your senators and congressional representatives. (See page 9.) Urge them to cancel the crushing debt of the exploited nations. Suggest that they vote against US involvement in property disputes in other countries.

Our church can work with Congress and human-rights and development organizations on many peace with justice issues through the General Board of Church and Society. We can help fund the Peace with Justice program, which includes grants for organizations and churches that engage in peace with justice mission work, by supporting Peace with Justice Sunday through offerings and education.

Peace with Justice Sunday was celebrated on June 15, 2003. The next offering will be taken June 6, 2004. However, a church can send funds to the conference for the offering at any time of year.



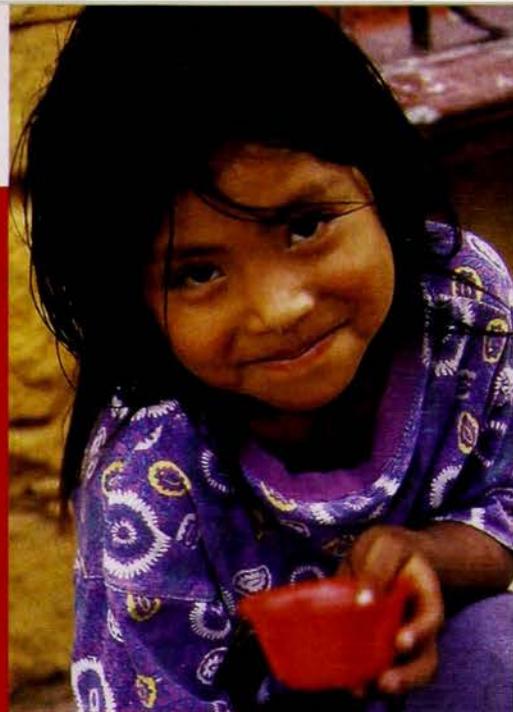
same companies can then buy up the land, mechanize, and exploit the cheap labor in order to sell corn and beans to a captive local population. The people of these countries are losing their sovereignty because they are losing their food security."

Justice for the Exploited

As a backdrop to this theater of the absurd, the debt of the exploited nations continues to bleed their people. Seventy-five percent of Nicaragua's population lives on two dollars or less a day. In 2003 in Nicaragua, 35 cents of every dollar collected in taxes will go to pay

interest on the debt. In 2004, 66 cents will go to pay interest. For about 15 years, the exploited countries have been paying interest on the debt instead of investing in their people. The former Nicaraguan Assistant Secretary of State, Alejandro Abendaña, says that if Nicaragua continues to pay, it has no future. "We shouldn't pay the interest on the debt as long as one child is without health care and education."

Nan McCurdy is a United Methodist missionary serving in Nicaragua with her husband, Miguel Mairena.



UMCOR's Response to Famine in Central America

UMCOR's involvement in Central America came to the forefront after Hurricane Mitch devastated the region in 1998. While UMCOR is still responding to the needs caused by that catastrophe, Central America faces another potential disaster—hunger caused by an ongoing drought. Crops have been lost, affecting hundreds of thousands of people. UMCOR has responded to the needs in three countries: Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

Honduras

In 2001, UMCOR received a request for emergency assistance for food aid from a small faith-based organization, *Comite Regional Cristiano de Desarrollo (CORCRIDE)*, in the rural El Triunfo area of the Choluteca region. Southwestern Honduras is wracked by periodic droughts, but the latest one, which has been ongoing since 2001, is acute and long-lasting. UMCOR initially replied with a \$10,000 grant used to purchase food for the affected communities. In 2002, with persistent drought, CORCRIDE decided to take a more proactive stance to alleviate the effects of famine in the rural neighboring villages of Matapolas and Las Bateas—an irrigation project that would allow the communities to access a source of groundwater to irrigate nine shared agricultural plots. This would enable the farmers to collectively grow their staples of maize and beans without having to completely rely on rainfall. With a small grant from UMCOR, the irrigation project is under way, and it is hoped that the families of Matapolas will be able to cope better with any future droughts.

El Salvador

In 2001, the eastern part of El Salvador experienced acute food shortages because of drought. UMCOR sent a shipment of over 100,000 Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) to El Salvador. UMCOR's partner within the Action by Churches Together (ACT) network, Lutheran World Federation, oversaw the distribution of the MREs.

Nicaragua

The people of northern and western Nicaragua were greatly afflicted by the regional drought. The drop in the international price of coffee at the time also caused great economic hardship among the agricultural communities where coffee is a primary crop.

Consejo de Iglesias Evangelicas, or Council of Evangelical Churches for a Denominational Alliance (CEPAD), was funded through UMCOR to implement a project that would assist 200 families suffering from famine in 18 communities. The project provided food for these families for four months, money to start small family vegetable gardens, and pastoral counseling.

In addition to working with CEPAD, UMCOR lent a helping hand to another faith-based organization engaged in development work in Nicaragua, the Missouri-based Rainbow Network. Since 1995, Rainbow Network has carried out programs in health care, housing, education, and economic development. Rainbow Network, partly with a grant from UMCOR, purchased and distributed much-needed food and medicines. Bishop Anne Sherer of the Missouri Conference traveled to Nicaragua and witnessed the initial distribution of these supplies for an estimated 8000 people in 11 communities.

To help those suffering from drought, floods, and hunger in Central America, please give to UMCOR Advance #501300, "Central America Emergency." See p. 2 for Advance giving.

Mission Memo

Hmong Community Celebrates Its New Hymnal

A hymnal in the Hmong language was introduced and celebrated on April 26, 2003, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the Hmong Christian Community United Methodist Church. The *Hmong United Methodist Hymnal*, which took 17 years to complete, includes traditional music and lyrics of Southeast Asia, translations of hymns familiar to most English-speaking United Methodists, and hymns written by John Wesley.

In 1986, a text-only, 323-song version was prepared by the congregation at Hmong Community United Methodist Church in St. Paul, Minnesota.

UMCOR Responds to Liberian Humanitarian Crisis

In Liberia, tens of thousands of civilians are being displaced as a result of renewed fighting in the civil war.

Civil unrest is forcing refugees to return to their homelands and the hardships from which they had fled. In April 2003, shooting that occurred behind two camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) in Brewerville, Liberia, forced refugees to flee toward Monrovia. As the political struggle intensifies, hundreds of refugees originally from Côte d'Ivoire are moving back to their unstable country.

Church leaders in Liberia are calling for cease-fire negotiations and a peace-building political process. Although some food aid and shelter is being provided by The United Methodist Church of Liberia, food aid is needed immediately to avert starvation. To support this work, donate to UMCOR's "Liberia Emergency," Advance #150300-7.

GBGM Resolutions for the 2004 General Conference

In response to the war in Iraq, the General Board of Global Ministries affirmed the social principle that war is incompatible with the teachings of Christ (*Book of Discipline 2000*, ¶165C). At the GBGM's semiannual board meeting, directors affirmed the sanctity of all life, the value of diversity, and, despite the polarization of the global Christian community, unity in Christ.

All United Methodists were urged to support policies and efforts to ensure that civilians in Iraq receive adequate food and medical supplies distributed by nonmilitary organizations. Other affirmations included the right of Iraqi people to build their own system of government; continuation of interfaith dialogue; and a call to respect international agreements. Contribute to Advance #623225-4, "Iraq Emergency."

Resolution #309, "Korea—Peace, Justice, and

Reunification," in *The United Methodist Book of Resolutions 2000* was affirmed by the GBGM Board of Directors.

In support of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was an affirmation to foster a more positive relationship between the United States and North Korea. This includes dialogue to resolve nuclear proliferation issues and encouragement of peace and reconciliation advocacy through the Council of Bishops Advisory Committee of the General Board of Church and Society. United Methodist congregations were invited to help provide humanitarian aid to North Korea. Also recommended was the lifting of economic sanctions and providing humanitarian assistance. Contribute to Advance #226435-0, "North Korea Emergency."

Day's First Address

In the Rev. R. Randy Day's first address to the General Board of Global Ministries' board of directors on April 8, 2003, he described the GBGM's challenges as spiritual assets that develop as faith, hope, and love. These assets can lead to acquiring and using material resources to respond to mission opportunities. One achieves the goals of mission by "making disciples and making a difference for Christ in the world."

The Rev. Day cited four factors that can help sustain and expand mission in this time of economic crisis: mission leaders' having a passion for mission; utilizing financial and human resources wisely and strategically; cultivating partnerships and mission constituencies among central conferences, districts, national agencies, and other denominations; and spreading the Gospel through effective written, audio-visual, and electronic communications that are clear and courageous.

DEATHS Helen May Smith, retired deaconess with more than 38 years of service in the United States, died January 9, 2003...**Thelma Stouffer**, retired deaconess with more than 42 years of service in the United States, died January 10, 2003...**Asbjorn Leiknes**, retired missionary from The United Methodist Church of Norway with nearly 26 years of service in Zimbabwe, died January 28, 2003...**Carol L. Scott**, retired missionary with nearly 16 years of service in India, died March 15, 2003...**Pauline Humphrey**, retired missionary with 9 years of service in China, died April 15, 2003.

 See p. 2 for Advance giving.

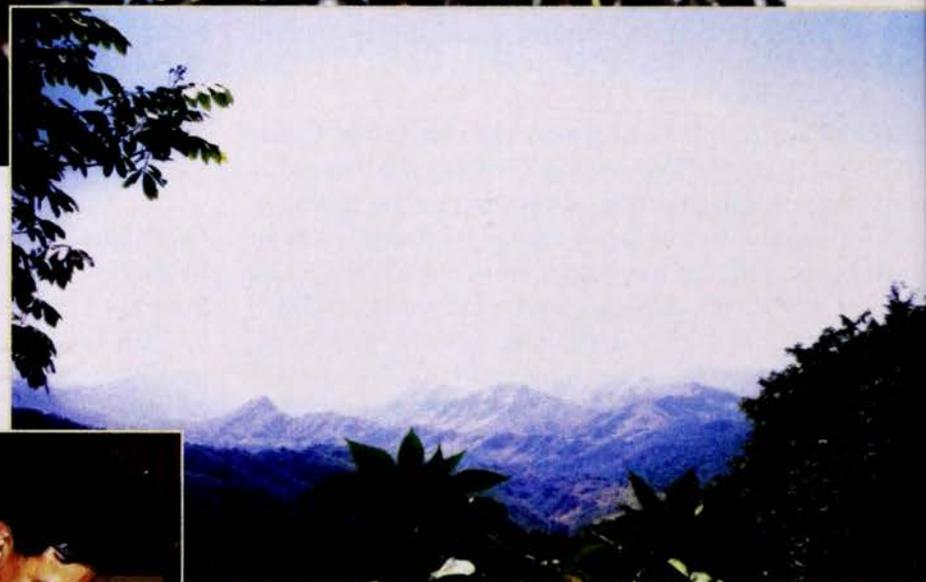
A Close-Up Look at Fair Trade in the

Coffee Lands of El Salvador

by Mary Dipboye

Center: Coffee plants grow in the highlands of El Salvador. Below: A "cupper" tests the aroma of freshly roasted coffee.

I enjoy coffee every day, including Sundays in my home church, Bellaire United Methodist Church in southwest Houston. Until recently, I did not think about the men and women who labored to grow the coffee in my cup. Now I see how a small decision, like the brand of coffee I buy, can make a difference in their lives. I was privileged to see this connection firsthand when I traveled to El Salvador in January 2003. Equal Exchange, UMCOR's partner in the Fair Trade UMCOR Coffee Project, organized a weeklong trip. The participants included three Lutherans, an Episcopalian priest, a Catholic nun, an Evangelical environmentalist, and me, along



with three members of Equal Exchange's Interfaith staff. Our local guide and interpreter was a staff member of Christians for Peace in El Salvador (CRISPAZ). The highlight of the week was our visit to meet the coffee farmers who operate the two cooperatives in El Salvador from which Equal Exchange purchases coffee: Las Colinas and El Pinal. (These were the very same co-ops that produce Equal Exchange's Fellowship Blend coffee that we use each Sunday in my church.)

Fair Trade Provides a Lifeline

At Las Colinas, a farmer said, "Thanks to God—and fair trade—we're not starving." While many small-scale farmers are being forced off their land by depressed prices for coffee, the co-op members at Las Colinas and El Pinal are hopeful that they can survive the current economic hard times. They have hope because the price paid by Equal Exchange for their gourmet-quality, shade-grown coffee is the fair-trade minimum price of \$1.26 a pound. In contrast, the world market price has been as low as \$.40 to \$.50 during the past two years, well below the \$.80 to \$.90 it takes to grow and harvest a

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pound of coffee beans. Farmers who are not organized into co-ops are forced to accept the price offered by local "coyotes." This year, that price was \$.15 to \$.20 a pound in El Salvador.

Because of fair-trade relationships, members of these two co-ops have been able to build homes of adobe instead of cornhusks. And they have been able to improve their elementary schools, establish a retirement fund for elderly members, and provide members with transportation to hospitals. But fair-trade relationships have not made them immune to the current coffee crisis. The president of Las Colinas told our group that in 2002, the co-op produced five containers of gourmet-quality coffee. Equal Exchange purchased two containers at \$1.26 a pound. The other three containers were sold on the commodities market at \$.45 a pound.

While the co-op was able to cover many of its expenses, it was not able to make its loan payment of \$32,000 to a major bank in San Salvador. The loan carried an interest rate of 18 percent. This year, the

with small landholders pooling their holdings to form the cooperative.

After I heard the story of this co-op, it was clear to me that fair trade was providing these farmers with a vital lifeline during stormy economic times. To make that lifeline stronger, more churches must order fair-trade coffee from Equal Exchange. At present, only 367 of 37,000 United Methodist churches are buying Equal Exchange coffee, so the potential for growth is great.

El Pinal Co-op

In addition to economic challenges, the farmers at El Pinal have been struggling to recover from widespread devastation in the wake of earthquakes in 2001. Every home in the community was destroyed. While co-op members worked hard to help their neighbors, they had few resources to pay for building supplies. During our visit, co-op leaders expressed their deep appreciation of the faith organizations, including UMCOR, which had sent funds to help with recovery efforts. We saw the new homes and co-op buildings for which these funds had been used. We learned that these

new structures included features designed to reduce damages in case of future earthquakes.

Las Colinas Co-op

At Las Colinas, we were treated to evening meals and an overnight stay in the houses of co-op members. The homes in the community were made of mud bricks and tin roofs. A latrine and pila (cement wash basin) stood outside each home. Steep hillsides were being used as gardens to raise beans and corn. Allison Booth from Equal Exchange and I were partners for this evening. Our host family gave us a dinner of pupusas (thick tortillas), beans, and a small piece of meat. Several dogs and cats bounded at our feet, including a dog named Kitty and a very tiny puppy named Rex.

We exchanged information about our respective families and learned that many of the families in the community had members living in the United States. In fact, the father of our host family was in Houston working construction jobs while I was visiting his home! When we asked the 18-year-old

Because of fair-trade relationships, members of these two co-ops have been able to build homes of adobe instead of cornhusks.

co-op was expected to produce fewer containers, and the president did not know if the co-op would be able to make payments on the loan. These costly loans originate from the days of agrarian reform in the early 1980s. Formerly landless campesinos were given land but were saddled with high interest loans from banks controlled by the country's elite. Legislation calling for forgiveness of these loans has gone unheeded.

Las Colinas was created as a result of agrarian reform in 1980,



During the earthquakes in 2001, El Salvadoran homes were devastated.

daughter of the family what she planned to do, she said she wanted to go to college to study human rights. I was struck by her response. The yearning for justice in her answer was a message that our group would hear many times during the week.

The Coffee Harvest

The next morning, we presented our hosts with gifts from back home, and they looked at my tin of pecans from Texas with polite curiosity. Then our group was off to the fields to see how coffee is harvested. Here in the highlands of El Salvador, the coffee harvest is in full swing in January. Families leave for the fields at 5:30 A.M. Several crews of 25 to 30 pickers are each assigned a section of the field. We saw men, women, and teenagers picking the red and green coffee cherries and placing

them in baskets tied to their waists. Children played nearby. The school term begins in February here in El Salvador.

We were invited to taste the red coffee cherries the size of small grapes. They have a mild sweet flavor, but there is little pulp in this fruit because the two seeds we know as coffee beans are relatively large.

"Thanks to God—and fair trade—we're not starving."

Coffee plants can grow to 30 feet, though they are usually trimmed to a height of 8 feet to make harvesting easier. The red and green cherries are stripped off the branches by hand and put into baskets tied at the picker's waist. Once the baskets are full, they are

emptied into burlap bags that hold up to 120 pounds of coffee. We saw small men and women in sandals carrying these very heavy sacks up and down steep hillsides.

After visiting the fields, we walked to the road where pickers had spread out the contents of their sacks on plastic sheets. They were sorting the red and green coffee cherries into separate piles.

Then the coffee cherries were weighed on the scales operated by the co-op, and the weight of the beans and the pickers' names were recorded. Families, working together from dawn to midafternoon every day, can earn \$40 every two weeks. The hours are long and the loads are heavy. Co-op members and pickers from outside the co-op are needed to bring in the harvest.

The moisture content of the beans is closely monitored to achieve a specific level. Once the drying process is complete, the beans are placed into burlap bags and stored in the warehouse. A few months later, the beans will be trucked to San Salvador after undergoing sorting by machine and by hand to ensure that beans going to market have a consistent shape and size. About 25 women will work at long tables in the co-op warehouse to remove excess debris from the beans before the crop is loaded into bags for the last time before leaving the co-op.

At Las Colinas, co-op members numbered 200 and supported a community of 4200. Co-op leadership is rotated. While serving as co-op leaders, individuals draw a salary that can often turn out to be less than what the pickers receive.



Coffee harvesters sort red and green coffee cherries, a task that takes long hours and yields low wages.

Fair Trade and the Environment

As a fair-trade coffee wholesaler, Equal Exchange encourages farmers to practice environmentally sound farming practices, such as using organic methods of fertilization. At Las Colinas and El Pinal, farmers use the pulp from the coffee cherries as fertilizer. Also, co-ops are encouraged to grow their plants as nature intended, in this case, under taller plants and shade trees in the forest. At both co-ops, we saw tall, native trees towering over the coffee plants. The forests preserved on coffee farms are the last remaining forests in El Salvador after five centuries of heavy agricultural activity. Wildlife and many migratory birds depend on these forests for survival.

Providing Links to Markets

Our picture of the coffee industry was expanded by a visit to the Salvadoran Association of Small Coffee Farmers (APECAFE), founded in 1997. Membership consists of 11 co-ops, including Las Colinas and El Pinal. The APECAFE representative explained how fair-trade relationships have been key to helping these small-scale farmers understand and meet the demands for gourmet coffee in international markets. In the case of El Salvador, Equal Exchange, Oxfam America, and Neighbor-to-Neighbor collaborated with co-ops in the 1990s to bring the coffee to market under a project called Café Salvador. Without assistance like this, small-scale farmers would not have the resources to compete against the plantation owners and corporations that dominate the coffee market.

Quality control is a critical concern at all steps in the coffee process. In El Salvador, APECAFE monitors the quality of the beans to make sure that they meet the strict standards set by Equal Exchange. A professional cupper is

What Your Church Can Do

1. Serve fairly traded coffee, tea, and cocoa at church events and at fellowship hour, and offer them to members for home use.
2. Design fund-raising projects for church events, youth programs, or mission trips by offering fairly traded coffee, tea, and cocoa. Offer gift baskets at a church or community bazaar. Share the proceeds with your church hunger committee or UMCOR's World Hunger/Poverty Advance #982920-4.
3. Discuss fair-trade issues with children's, youth, and adult groups. Provide local businesses with information about offering fairly traded products from Equal Exchange.
4. Order additional resources by calling Equal Exchange at 781-830-0303, x228. Pamphlets, table tents, posters, and other educational materials can be included with your order.

How To Order

By mail: Contact Equal Exchange for a full order list of fairly traded coffees, teas, cocoas, and educational materials, 781-830-0303, x228. Ask for the UMCOR Coffee Project.

Online: Visit <http://store.yahoo.com/equalexchange> to order online with a credit card.

For more information: Call Equal Exchange at 781-830-0303, x228, e-mail interfaith@equalexchange.com, or visit www.equalexchange.com/interfaith.

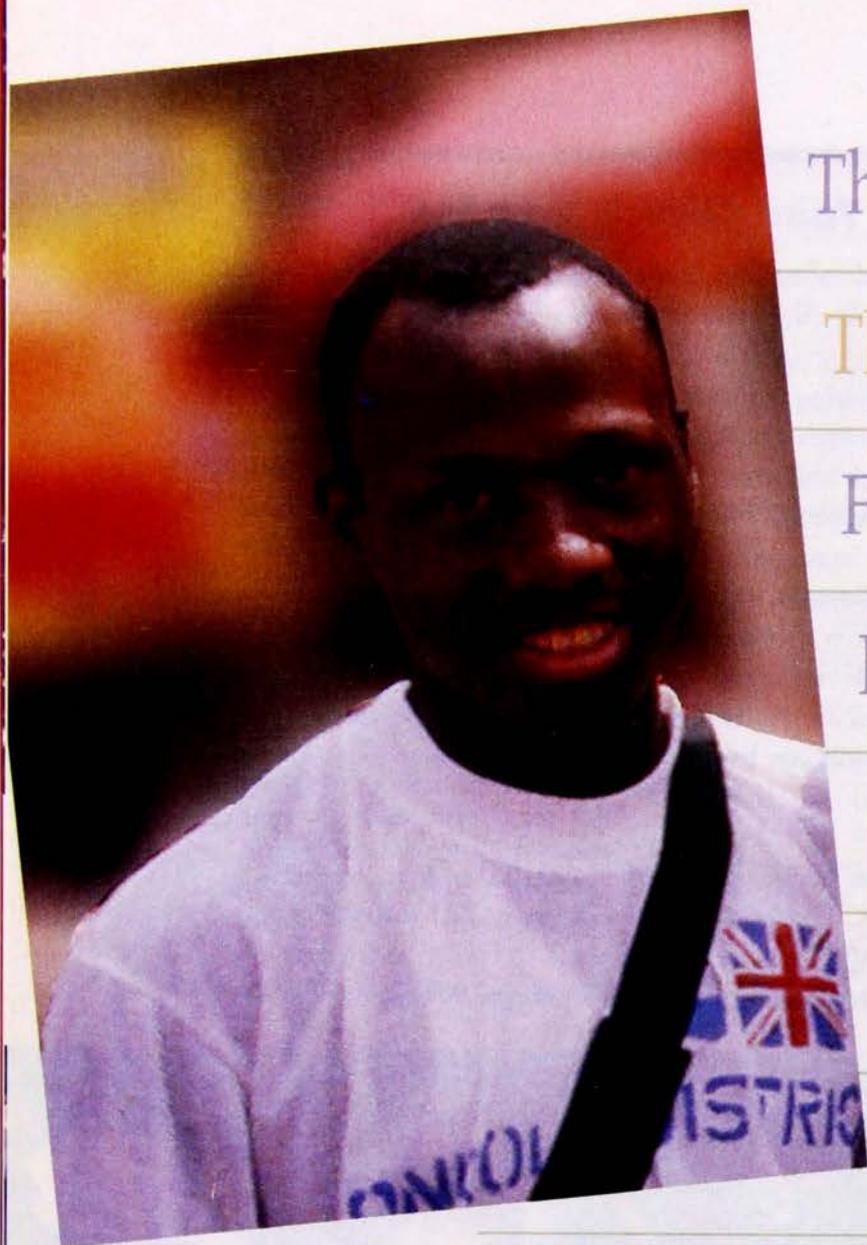
employed by APECAFE to monitor continuously the aroma, appearance, and taste of the beans destined for Equal Exchange and its other customers. Our group was given the opportunity to observe and then participate in a "cupping," in which the smell and taste of freshly roasted coffee is tested. The correct technique for cupping includes making a loud slurping sound so that the coffee reaches the taste buds at the back of the tongue. Spitting out the coffee into a spittoon follows the slurping, so the usual rules of etiquette don't apply!

Reflections on Fair Trade

I came home convinced that fair trade represents a viable business model that works for the coffee

farmers in El Salvador despite severe market conditions. My dream is that United Methodist congregations will take the opportunity afforded by the UMCOR Coffee Project to support justice by learning about and using fair-trade coffee. Equal Exchange sends a portion of the proceeds to UMCOR to support sustainable agriculture projects. And reader, I encourage you to sign up for a Learning Tour of one of the coffee lands led by Equal Exchange. That way, you'll see firsthand how coffee can be a cup of justice.

Mary Dipboye is President of Ten Thousand Villages in Houston, Texas, and a member of Bellaire UMC.



This land is my land,

This land is your land,

From the Bitumani

Mountains,

to the Mano River,

From the Plains of Koindu

to the shores of Freetown,

THIS LAND IS MY LAND

This land was made for you and me.

by Edward Mansaray

Yes, the land of Sierra Leone was made for the people of Sierra Leone. This was and is still the view of a one-time load carrier, child soldier, and now ex-combatant and war victim. In his view, he was a freedom fighter but also a perpetrator of wickedness, as well as a harvester, game hunter, and farmer. He was 10 years old and huddled in one corner of

his parents' hut when he heard them say in their local dialect, "Dem don cam oh," meaning "They are here."

Gbashhh! Down went the door that protected him from the biting cold; and before he knew what was happening, he was kicked in the side and ordered to get out of the hut, which he did, looking at his parents. That was the last time he saw them.

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The 10-year-old boy was forced to leave his family and travel with the rebel group in the bush. He was under the supervision of Lieutenant Blood, a ruthless person known for his predilection for gang rape. There were about 30 members of the group he commanded, most of whom had been captured like the 10-year-old boy. Already most of them had given up any hope of escaping, as any attempt was frustrated and could lead to death.

Life on the Run

He was carrying half a bag of rice and some condiments tied in a bundle. On many occasions, others in the group handed him small pieces of raw cassava to eat, and whenever they had the opportunity, they would drink water from streams or rivers. After some days of bush trekking with very little to eat, he started to feel the pangs of hunger. He was urged onwards, "or else."

"I am hungry," he screamed when he could bear it no longer, and a hush descended on the group.

"How dare you?" retorted one member of his group. All were now quiet. Bra Blood, the notorious lieutenant and leader of the group, was called forward. He quietly scrutinized the face of the young boy who had the guts to cry about an empty stomach.

A series of questions followed: "Why are you here? Did you see us partying? Have you ever slept on an empty stomach?" Bra Blood then loosened up and said: "What you are experiencing is not new to us. Hear this, all you people, as from today, this cry baby will lead a crack team called 'Operation Feed Yourself' for the rest of his life in this camp." Bra Blood then turned to the frail young boy and said, "Your code name for the operation will be 'Base Marine,'" and he burst into a guttural and maniacal laugh. In the next moment, he was dead serious and told one of his younger aides to teach the young boy the new task he had ahead of him.

His mentor was a little older than he, bold, courageous, and very well informed about the task they had at hand. His name was Big Up. He told him he would need a gun.

"What for?" Base Marine asked.

In a monotone, Big Up said, "To enable you to harvest some of the crops you have not planted," and he burst out laughing.

"Do I need a gun for that?" asked Base Marine.

"No," replied his mentor, "but you need a gun to fire at wild animals that will be used for food."

This made some sense to Base Marine, so he mustered the courage he needed to ask Bra Blood for a gun. He had been forewarned that demanding a gun

from Bra Blood could be a scary thing and that he should be mentally prepared to face him or else he would get the boot.

Bra Blood took delight in punishing his boys by telling them to bend over and touch their toes while he took two steps back and landed his right boot, with all the strength he could muster, on the buttocks of his hapless victims.

With feelings of fear and caution, Base Marine stood at the door of the makeshift hut of their leader in Camp Zogoda for a long time before he could muster enough courage to announce himself. Immediately, he was summoned in and led to a figure that he recognized as Bra Blood sitting close to a smoldering fire.

Base Marine Tells His Story

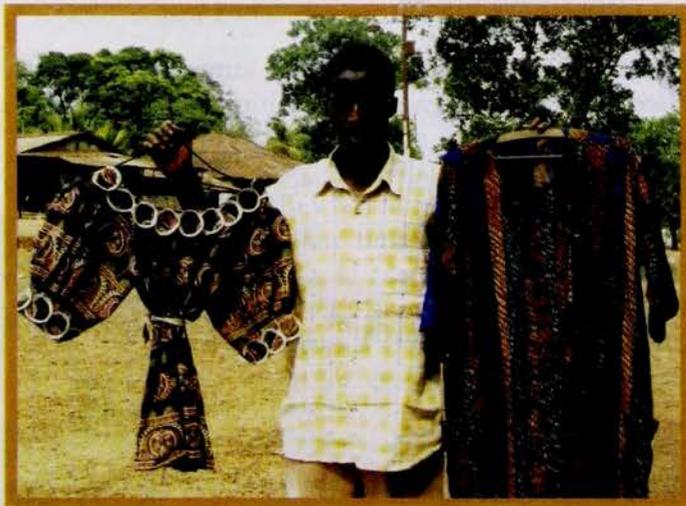
From this point, Base Marine narrates the story in his own words.

"Good evening Base Marine," Bra Blood said to me. I murmured back a reply. He asked me to sit down. Seeing no chair, I decided to make myself comfortable on the floor. "That's my boy," he said in the friendliest voice I had heard since the day I left home. I really missed home, the hospitality of my mother, the zest with which my father approached life, the serenity of our village, and the boys and girls of our playing squad.

"What are you staring at?" The question brought me back to reality and to the fact that I was in the presence of Bra Blood.

"Er, um, nothing, sir."

"What brings you here?" It was the question I dreaded to answer.



Opposite, p. 22: Base Marine. Above: Shaka Sankoh, a clothing designer and tailor in Tonkolili District, teaches ex-combatants clothing design and repair. Upon their graduation from his course, supported with a grant from UMCOR, they receive a tailoring kit and sewing machine.



Above: Isatu Bamgura (center) with two elders of Matotoka Village in Tonkolili District. UMCOR provided their clothing as a service to village elders. Below: Saoltigie Koroma, a carpenter who teaches ex-combatants carpentry skills. Products produced are then sold.

"I need a gun to fire at wild animals and to harvest crops that I did not plant." I noticed that Bra Blood was shaking his head as if acknowledging my reply. "Who told you that's what a gun is used for?" he asked.

"Big Up, sir."

Again he burst into a mirthful laugh that sent chills down my spine.

"Have you used a gun before now?"

"No," I replied.

"Then you are starting your training tomorrow and I will personally supervise you. Any blunder will be severely dealt with. Do you understand me?"

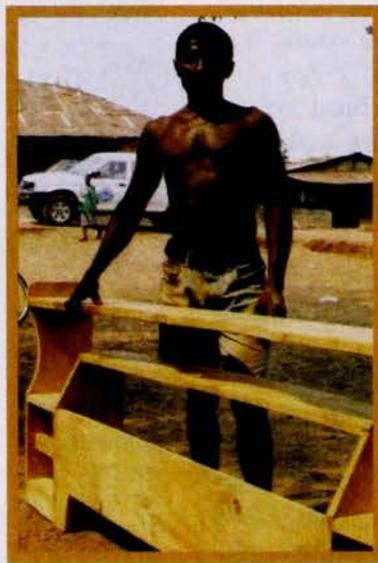
"Yes sir."

"You are dismissed."

"Sir."

At the break of dawn, I was summoned by Bra Blood and asked to accompany him. I hesitantly followed at a safe distance. All of a sudden, he called me, pointing to a tree at the far end of the valley. He said, "Take the gun and make sure you bring enough meat to serve the camp for a day or two." He turned and left me. The first thought that came to my mind was to run away.

Big Up then told me he would be supervising my hunting expeditions and that I should stop being the mama's boy they brought to camp a few weeks ago and become the man they expected me to be. He ordered me to take aim with the gun and fire at any living thing I saw. In the distance,



I saw a group of monkeys enjoying themselves...bam! The pack took flight except for the fallen. I had killed the biggest monkey I had ever set my eyes on.

"You did it," shouted Big Up. "And with your first shot. You'll be a wonderful marksman in the future if you continue like this. Bra will appreciate this very much."

On returning to camp, I felt elated at my success. My mouth watered at the thought of having a decent meal for the first time in weeks. Big Up advised me to report to Bra Blood. I was all smiles as I displayed my catch to Bra. His comment, when it finally came, was a devastating blow.

"How dare you waste my bullet on a monkey, and a single one at that? Look here, young man, your task was to provide enough meat to feed the camp, and until you can do so, you ain't getting any food from this camp. That's an order!"

"Sir," replied the rest of the team. I could not believe what I was hearing. I stood there speechless. Big Up came and relieved me of the dead monkey. I was then dismissed amid the noise and haste to prepare my catch for Bra Blood and the other big shots. After what seemed like eternity and hours of salivating, the food was finally prepared.

"Ge me me beef" ("Give me my meat"), shouted one of the top leaders.

"You ought to be ashamed fighting over meat hunted by a boy young enough to be your son. Your son is much older than that boy and should have been sent to get meat so his daddy can have a bigger share of it," the big shots argued.

"Shut up and don't try to lecture me about what my son is capable of doing," said Bra Blood.

In the midst of this argument, I emerged from the rear of the hut with a solemn face, indicative of my hunger and disappointment over the food that was eaten moments ago.

Later, Bra Blood came to see me. "I kept some food for you, Base Marine, despite the fact that I told you you're not getting anything," said Bra Blood.

"Thank you, sir," I replied.

He handed me a big bowl full of leftover bones. "When next you go hunting make sure you bring more meat or else...."

My future hunting expeditions were only slightly different from that described above, which left me with

no alternative but to find other ways of securing my own food. To be able to do this, I sought the assistance of Big Up, who, despite his reservations, was quite willing to help. Together with Big Up, I made sure that we always secured some food or meat that we would cook in the bush. We were well-fed before venturing into camp.

At the end of the first six months of my assignment, I became a hardened fighter. The use of an AK-47 was a daily routine. I searched fields and towns. In fact, I searched for any information about where food could be found.

Food was a rare commodity in our camp. I heard stories of unimaginable things being done to people in a bid to secure food for the camp. For my part, I went through the challenges of the camp with a dull and sober face, knowing full well what I would do in the future, if I had any. I would become like my daddy, who spent most of his time on the farm, providing his family that coveted food supply.

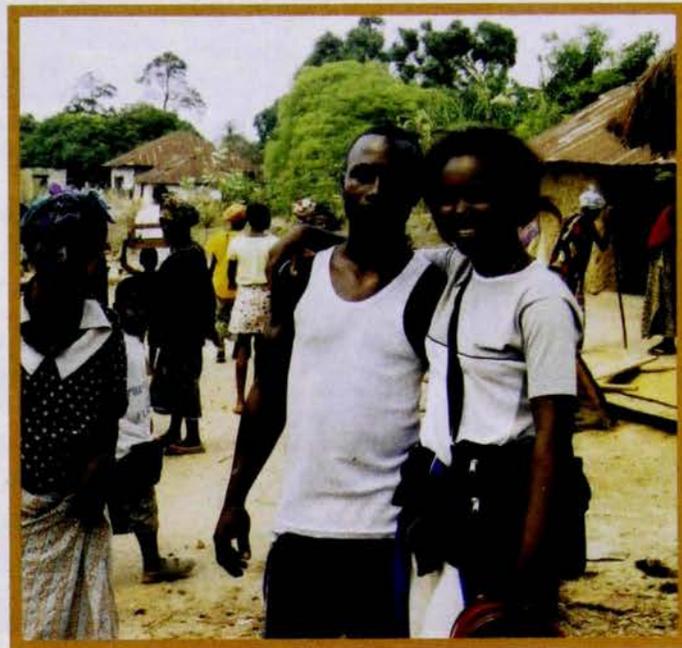
After making up my mind about this, I started hearing about disarmament and the reintegration program. When I heard I could be reintegrated into agricultural training, it looked as though my dream would finally materialize.

UMCOR and Reintegration

UMCOR-Sierra Leone was reestablished late in 2001. It now has over 40 projects. The US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) supports the Kailahun District Reintegration project, the Department for International Development (DFID) funds the ex-combatant training in Tonkolili District, and UNICEF WAT-SAN funds a project for Liberian refugees in the new Tobanda refugee camp. UMCOR has proposals out or in preparation for other projects in the area for refugee assistance and prevention of HIV/AIDS and malaria.

UMCOR is helping more than 2000 returning Sierra Leonean refugees in the Kailahun project through agricultural assistance and up to 10,000 Liberian refugees in the UNICEF project with water and sanitation needs. In the DFID project, which is assisting Base Marine, 471 ex-combatants are being trained. Many other vulnerable groups may be assisted if funding is granted.

At present, Base Marine is in the northern District of Tonkolili. With very few resources, he has been able to secure over 500 acres of land courtesy of the chiefdom people.* He has organized a large group of fellow ex-combatants to help on the farm and frequents the head office of the Department for International Development Community Reintegration Programme (DFID/CRP) to secure assistance



Top: Ex-combatant Edward Gblah and UMCOR worker Fatmata Kanu. Gblah is now reintegrating in a village in Tonkolili district and studying carpentry in an UMCOR program.

in the realization of the dream he held fast to while in the bush.

UMCOR NGO in Sierra Leone is presently beginning skills training and literacy programs for over 400 ex-combatants in Tonkolili District sponsored by DFID.

*Sierra Leone has several civilian structures. Within local government, chiefs are elected by communities such as the Tonkolili District. There are 150 chiefs in the country. These chiefs are primarily responsible for adjudicating local disputes, assigning land (communally held) to beneficiaries such as Base Marine, and other civil and legal matters. They are sometimes, though not always, ethnically based, as some chiefdoms have various ethnicities resident.

Edward Mansaray is a program officer for the UMCOR NGO in Sierra Leone. He interviewed ex-combatant "Base Marine" from Magburaka, Tonkolili District, in the Northern Province.

Peace in Sierra Leone

United Methodists can support the work of UMCOR NGO in Sierra Leone by giving to "Global Peace Building and Reconciliation, Advance # 982353-7, and designating "Sierra Leone."

 See p. 2 for Advance giving.



Participants in a farmers' training program examine a livestock pen in Ghana.

Shaping the Lives of Postwar Farm Families in West Africa

by Mozart Adevu

William Zayolo of the Pleadehyee community in Nimba County, Liberia, has turned into a prosperous farmer within the last two years in spite of the constant threat of unrest in his native country. Mr. Zayolo currently uses the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to make informed decisions about the management of his farm. "My vegetable seedlings now grow healthier than previously and are soon ready for transplanting. The overall yields have also improved tremendously and I can now boast an income that is about double what I earned prior to the training in IPM."

Mr. Zayolo pointed to his blooming rice field and showed the visiting UMCOR Sustainable Agriculture & Development

(SA&D) staff the effect of nursing rice and transplanting it in an orderly manner instead of by the "broadcast" system he had used. He indicated that weeds are easier to control, with an overall increase in yield as a result of the new techniques.

Mr. Zayolo is also the first postwar beekeeper in Liberia. He currently has 10 beehives, which he constructed himself. He recently harvested honey using the prototype solar extractor made in Ghana. Mr. Zayolo summed up his experiences after IPM training: "I previously used a lot of expensive chemical fertilizers, but since the IPM Farmer Field Schools, I've learned to use more poultry manure as an alternative. Neem, a substance made from an evergreen tree, is a new alternative pesticide.

It is available right here in town and we now know how to prepare it. Almost all participants are using it on their fields. The neem extract has visibly repelled white flies, which had attacked our bitterball and cabbage in the nursery. The nursery therefore produced more healthy seedlings, which we gave out freely to neighboring farmers. This is the first time we have had such good results from the nursery."

About the IPM training, Madam Sennie Gofan of Pleadehyee said: "This has been my first experience in dealing with my nursery in such a successful way. We had very severe losses of vegetable seedlings from what we now know as nematode [a worm] infestation in the nursery. We learned to give a hot water treat-

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ment to the nursery bed prior to nursing the seeds. This destroys the nematodes and results in healthy seedlings."

Farmer Field Schools

Theobald Anyomiasem and Anasthasia Draï are master farmers from Ghana who have played a pioneering role in introducing IPM into postwar Liberia and Sierra Leone. The two master farmers, with the guidance of the UMCOR-SA&D program, initiated a learning and sharing process among farmers whereby 12 to 15 farmers of each community meet once a week for 18 weeks. They discuss a whole range of issues that affect their farm production and try to find common solutions to the problems. Through these Farmer Field Schools (FFS), farmers are introduced to techniques in biological control of pests and alternative methods of farming that use sustainable and ecological principles of production, with good stewardship of the natural resources and the soils. Such Farmer Field Schools have been organized for more than 120 farmers across Liberia and Sierra Leone and have already impacted 1000 more farm families in these two countries over the last 18 months.

The Mission of UMCOR-SA&D

The program supports the efforts of church and community-based partners in West Africa with activities that promote economically and environmentally sustainable community development. While most of this support is channeled through the United Methodist and other Methodist agriculture and rural-development programs, assistance is also provided to community-based organizations that have similar goals and programs.

William Zayolo, Sennie Gofan, Theobald Anyomiasem, Anasthasia Draï, and several others are

Moringa Miracles

UMCOR-SA&D has recently introduced the miracle moringa plant into Liberia and Sierra Leone. It is used for the treatment of abdominal pains, headaches, and common colds and has also been proven to keep the blood pressure and sugar levels of hypertensive and diabetic patients at normal levels. Up to 100 farmers have started cultivating moringa for diet improvement programs in rural communities of Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the rate of malnutrition is very high.

among the team of West African farmers whose competencies are being developed in sustainable agriculture to help provide the necessary leadership for sustainable development within their communities. The need to help reduce hunger, malnutrition, and poverty among communities of GBGM partner churches has been the major thrust of the program. These ends can be achieved to a large extent by strengthening the capacity of the partners to improve the productivity and stewardship of agricultural and related resources, including crops, livestock, and forestry.

In order fully to engage the partners in the development of the program across West Africa, UMCOR-SA&D began its work by

visiting all potential partners in 2001 and soliciting their views and suggestions on approaches. During these visits, the West Africa Regional Coordinator, Mozart Adevu, sought to assess and mobilize available human and material resources. The process culminates in the development of common programs in which the partners participate and in specific projects referred to the GBGM for further discussion and possible support. Follow-up visits are made by the Regional Coordinator and sometimes by GBGM staff and consultants.

Study Tours

Two very successful study tours have been organized and are yielding high results. Follow-up visits are planned to the communities



Women of an agricultural development group in the Bailargo community of Sierra Leone celebrate the arrival of UMCOR Sustainable Agriculture & Development staff.



A member of the Women and Children Development Organization discusses her intercropping work with members of UMCOR SA&D.

where participants have engaged their colleague farmers to try out the technologies they learned during the study tours. The first study tour was organized for 15 leaders from five partner countries (Ghana, Gambia, Nigeria, Liberia, and Sierra Leone) in October 2001. Study-tour participants visited the following institutions: International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan and Benin; Songhai Project in Porto Novo, Benin; and the Institute of Renewable Natural Resources, Bunso, Ghana. The following are some of the proven technologies currently yielding positive results:

- Multiplication of soybean seeds and the introduction of soy as a nutritional supplement for rural communities. These are being tested in pilot programs in Tikonko Chiefdom, Sierra Leone, and in Upper Cardwell, Liberia, respectively. Current information from Upper Cardwell indicates that the Women and Children Development Organization (WOCHIDO) partner program has already chalked up great successes in multiplying soybean seeds for distribution to members. WOCHIDO has organized sessions in which

women process and incorporate soybeans into different local foods in order to improve nutrition. WOCHIDO also recently organized a UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-sponsored workshop and has engaged in an outreach program promoting soybean for consumption.

- Processes adding value to cassava. The crop, which had limited use (fresh boiled roots and leaves in soups and sauces) in Liberia and Sierra Leone has been promoted by IITA-Ibadan for baking and bread making. In Tikonko, Sierra Leone, and Upper Cardwell, Liberia, cultivation and use of cassava has been growing.

A second study tour (which also served as an exchange visit) took six indigenous community leaders from Liberia to Ghana to learn new technologies and microenterprises, such as snail farming, beekeeping, rabbit production, yam production, soy utilization, and moringa production. Five out of the six were from communities in Nimba County, Liberia, and had already taken the 18-week-long Farmer Field School practice in Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The sixth farmer was selected from WOCHIDO.

Reaching Out Farther Afield

The enthusiasm of farmers in Liberia and Sierra Leone to undertake agricultural activities tested over the last 18 months is testimony to their determination to take their destiny into their own hands. The initiatives made by UMCOR-SA&D in introducing the novel approaches to sustainable farming currently being adopted need further strengthening and support. Rather than "mission sites," investment in people and their desire to help themselves are what make this program so valuable, especially in regions where civil unrest is still rampant and postwar recovery is slow. Program and project support for these initiatives are made possible by contributions to "World Hunger/Poverty," Advance #982920-4 and "Sustainable Agriculture," Advance #982188.

 See p. 2 for Advance giving.

Moringa

UMCOR-SA&D's representation in the international workshop on Moringa held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in November 2001, has been a great boost for many communities.

The two representatives, William Datsa of Ghana and Ruth Andrews of Nigeria, have since extended the knowledge gained from the workshop to many communities and groups. Mrs. Andrews has had an overwhelming response from communities in Zing and Bambur, where the UMC in Nigeria has a strong presence.

Moringa has been called the "Divine Tree" in these communities in light of the tremendous impact it has had, in so short a time, on the lives of the poor in these communities. There have been testimonies on the use of moringa for the treatment of several ailments, such as abdominal pains, headaches, and common colds. Moringa has also been proven to treat hypertension and diabetes. Farmers in Liberia and Sierra Leone have special interest in the crop, and efforts are being made to send sufficient quantities of seeds to these two countries.

New Techniques

During the very first mission of the Regional Coordinator to Liberia in February 2001, indigenous farmers in Nimba County were encouraged to try out alternative farming methods and gradually relinquish their dependence on chemical pesticides and fertilizers. This early vision crystallized in December 2001, with the support of four communities in an 18-week long FFS in IPM. Up to 50 proud participants of this program now use alternative pesticides, such as neem extracts and hot pepper sprays, with good results. Knowledge in the use of

animal droppings for increased soil fertility has improved, along with nursery management and other cultural practices.

The FFS program has fostered community development through group formation and cohesion. Most illiterate women farmers who participated in the FFS program were enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn together with their literate male counterparts for the very first time. This opportunity presented an atmosphere in which gender issues in agriculture could be openly discussed and understood. It was not surprising, therefore, that three communities selected women to represent them in the study tour to Ghana.

UMCOR-SA&D works diligently to achieve its objectives by providing increased access to improved technologies for testing and adaptation. For example, William Zayolo has increased the value of his own forest trees by turning some of them into beehives for honey production instead of relying on honey in the wild, which is otherwise harvested through the burning and felling of trees. Mr. Zayolo manufactured his beehives using the skills he acquired in training during the study tour to Ghana. He has since harvested honey from his hives.

Bees in Liberia

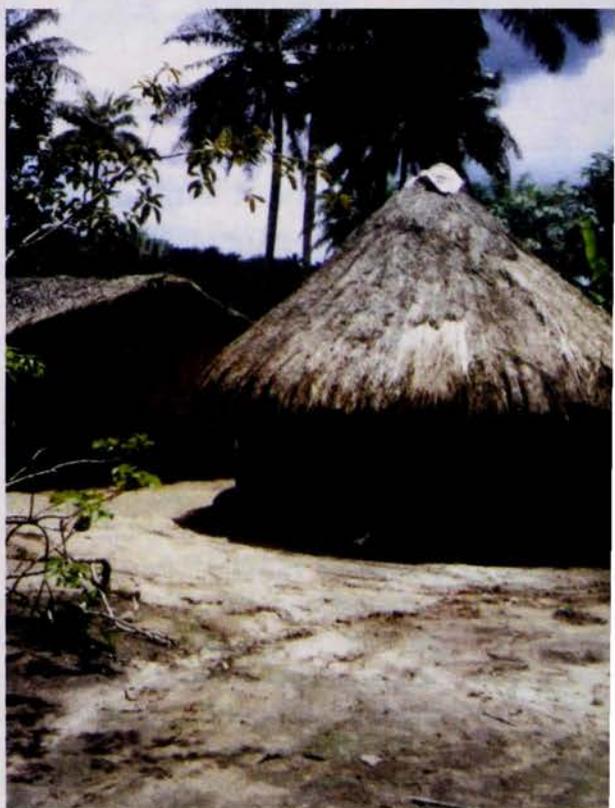
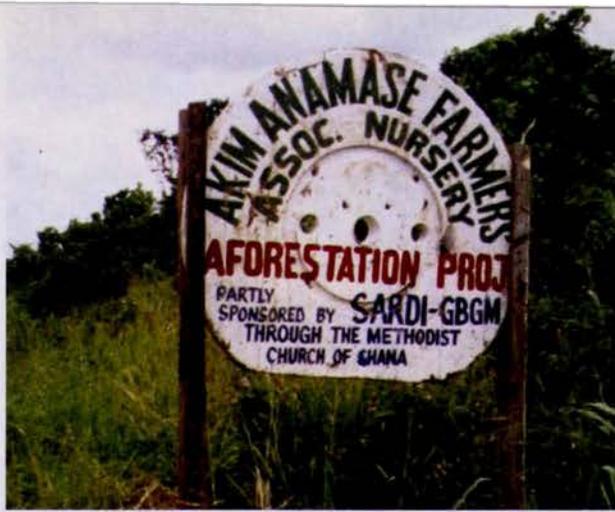
Until recently, all honey harvested in Liberia and Sierra Leone was collected in the wild after felling tree trunks colonized by bees. In the process, most of the honeybees were killed and the forest cover was destroyed. William Zayolo and about 100 other farmers are early innovators engaged in reversing this trend through the adoption of the improved Kenyan Top Bar Hive.

Significant Achievements

The UMCOR-SA&D West African program is the very first to introduce the following technologies into post war Liberia and Sierra Leone.

- Beekeeping
- Soy production and processing
- Moringa production
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Farmer Field Schools (FFS)

Mozart Adevu is the West Africa Regional Coordinator for the UMCOR-SA&D Program.



Top: Gateway to the forestation project in Ghana. Center: Beekeeping in Sierra Leone. Above: A village in Liberia.



Famine in Africa

by Christie R. House

When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you keep looking at one another? I have heard," he said, "that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die."

Genesis 42:1-2

Persistent famine is a theme throughout the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament. Abraham and Sarah suffered famine in their time and had to move the whole family and all they possessed into Egypt. Their son, Isaac, suffered through another famine. Isaac's son, Jacob, endured yet another famine. Jacob's son, Joseph, saved his family and many thousands more from a terri-

ble famine that encompassed Egypt and surrounding countries in the Middle East.

Chronic hunger is also a modern problem that has not been conquered by advanced technology or improved growing methods. In Africa, nearly 30 million people are at risk of starvation.

Contributing Factors

Poor weather conditions, such as drought and flooding, are the most immediate causes of famine. Yet other areas of the world are able to weather drought, live on reserves, and purchase enough food from neighboring countries to sustain their populations. Many countries in Africa are not able to do so.

Even in a year when harvests are good, people in many African

countries go hungry. Armed conflicts, corruption in government, mismanagement of food supplies, environmental degradation, unfavorable trade policies, and the irreversible effects of HIV/AIDS contribute in a deadly combination to food insecurity. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that every year, 40 to 50 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa suffers from hunger. The region today is worse off, in terms of nutrition, than it was 30 years ago.

Areas in Food Crisis Ethiopia, Eritrea

Eastern Africa has experienced the failure of two successive rainy seasons. Estimates put 6 million people at immediate risk of starva-

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Left: Children are served at a feeding program and school in Balamanja, Malawi, where drought has caused a famine crisis.

tion and 8-9 million more in jeopardy in the coming months. In Eritrea, roughly two-thirds of the entire population, 2.3 million people, will need food aid.

Southwest Africa: Angola

Emerging from more than 40 years of civil strife, Angola has 1.5 million people who suffer from acute malnutrition. A significant number of these are the former UNITA rebels who are gathered in demobilization camps in the country.

Southern Africa:

Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe

In the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 14.4 million face food shortages because of droughts and the scourge of AIDS. Young adults who would normally be productive farmers either are too sick to work or have succumbed to and died of HIV/AIDS. The burden of AIDS orphans has strained the community fabric of many towns and rural areas.

Report from Zimbabwe

Six million people, half the population of Zimbabwe, require food aid. Bishop Herbert Skeete has been assisting church leaders in the area. The Zimbabwe Methodist Church identified 20 of the most needy families, orphans of the AIDS program, and the blind to receive UMCOR's first shipment of maize from South Africa.

The Zimbabwe United Methodist Church has proposed a program to order food from South Africa once a month and deliver it to four key industrial areas of the country: Harare, Bulaway, Musvingo, and Mutare.

"Zimbabwe's food situation is getting critical," said Bishop Skeete. The "land reform" that should have happened at independence didn't happen. So



Two workers deliver an UMCOR food shipment in Zimbabwe.

President Mugabe recently decided to institute a new policy of taking large farms away from white industrial farmers and distributing them to black Zimbabweans. However, the former firms took the equipment and the new farmers have little experience, so Zimbabwe has seen a great dip in food production in addition to drought and floods.

Despite all the problems, the Zimbabwe church is providing

comfort, safety, and food. "The situation of the AIDS orphans is very difficult," Bishop Skeete said. "School administrators come to the churches with children whose parents have died. The children have no means of support to pay for their school fees. Now the church is moving to a model of small groups to care for orphans living together rather than the large orphanages of the past."

St. Andrew United Methodist Church in Seke, Zimbabwe, recently presented the schools with a check for \$48,000 (Zimbabwe dollars) for school fees.

"In Africa, they give out of their scarcity," said Bishop Skeete. "It is a whole different kind of giving than we do here in the United States, where we give out of plenty. Out of their meager resources, they respond to the need."

Christie R. House is the editor of New World Outlook.

Africa Famine Relief

UMCOR has released funds from the churchwide Southern Africa Famine Appeal, working through African United Methodist churches and ecumenical partners. Namibia has received \$17,500 for seeds and a borehole well project, in addition to food assistance. Through Church World Service, \$60,000 was sent to Malawi for an Action by Churches Together (ACT) appeal. Zimbabwe has received \$180,000 to buy grain from South Africa through Christian Care, a South African organization. The Zimbabwe UMW has also received funds to provide food relief and implement health and nutrition programs.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa received \$114,801 for food aid, tools, and facilities for schools in Swaziland. The United Methodist Church of Mozambique has used \$20,000 for food aid.

Southern Africa Famine, Advance #101250-4, continues throughout 2003. Contributions may be given through local United Methodist churches. Funds from this asking may also be used in Eastern Africa for famine relief.



See p. 2 for Advance giving.

The People of North Korea: Peace, Reconciliation, & Hunger

by Youngsook C. Kang
and Gail V. Coulson



Above: Residents at the Pyongyang children's home enjoy a game under the supervision of a staff member. UMCOR shipped blankets and clothing to the home. *Below:* Director of Pyongyang Children's Home.

With this article, *New World Outlook* begins a three-part series on North Korea. The first article presents a brief history of the current division and a look at the continuing famine that plagues the country. The second part, to be published in the September-October 2003 issue, considers the political realities, the question of nuclear weapons, and the steps taken toward reconciliation. The third article, which will appear in the November-December 2003 issue, looks at the role and state of the church in North Korea and its efforts toward reunification.



The Korean peninsula, with a 5000-year history as one people and culture with common ethnic origins, language, and traditions, was annexed as a Japanese Protectorate in 1910. The liberation of the peninsula from Japanese occupation in 1945, after World War II, left a geopolitical vacuum. Forces from the Soviet Union, through the northern border, and from the United States, through Japan in the south, filled the vacuum. The country was divided along the 38th parallel. The United States, the Soviet Union, and Koreans were all dissatisfied with the division and the Korean people had no say in the matter.

A People Divided

The US-backed Republic of Korea (ROK) was proclaimed on August 15, 1948. The Soviet-backed Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) proclaimed independence on September 9, 1948. The Korean War (1950-1953) followed, as US-led forces fought Chinese- and Soviet-backed North Korean troops. This ended in an armistice—a cease-fire—but a peace treaty has never been signed by the United States and North Korea. So the conflict continues.

After the Korean War, the 38th parallel became known as a demilitarized zone (DMZ), which extends over a mile on either side of the military demarcation line (MDL). About 600,000 North Korean soldiers are stationed 35 miles from Seoul. There are 37,000 US troops in South Korea. Yet, both the North and South Korean governments hold that the division along the 38th parallel is not a permanent border but a temporary administrative line implemented as a result of the 1953 armistice.

Families on both sides of the DMZ, divided by the war, did not know who had survived. They had

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Above: A clear view of Mount Myohyang from the top level of a nearby home.
Right: A staff member at Pyongyang children's home and four of the youngest orphans.



“North” and “South” and more of Korea as a people divided. North and South began as early as 1971 to reunite separated families.

The tragedy of the 58-year division is deepened by the 2002-2003 international stand-off concerning nuclear arms. This causes tremendous concern and suffering for both South and North.

Sanctions

Since 1950, US sanctions have been in place against North Korea. Regulated by the US Treasury Department, all US exports to Korea are banned, and goods from North Korea may not be imported into the United States.

Energy is a continuing problem for North Korea. The country has no oil reserves. In the early 1990s, the government began to construct two graphite nuclear reactors, but the Clinton Administration insisted that the refined nuclear materials could also be used for weapons. In 1994, the Agreed Framework was negotiated whereby the reactors would be shut down and UN inspectors allowed into North Korea. Part of this deal was that the United States, South Korea, Japan, and the others would assist North Korea in building two light-

no contact at all. More than five decades later, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the country is still divided. Unwavering political tension, a legacy of dictatorship and militarization in North Korea and hostility between Washington and Pyongyang, has outlasted even the Cold War.

Genuine security and peace in the region requires that the armistice be replaced by a peace agreement that formally ends the Korean War and provides a foundation for a unified Korea. This necessitates a formal negotiation of a non-aggression treaty between the United States and North Korea, with support from the governments of South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the European Union.

Apart from the DMZ, the DPRK shares a border with the People's Republic of China along the Yalu/Ammock River and with China and Russia along the Tumen River. Given the Korean peninsula's strategic location, it is not surprising that Korea, throughout history, has suffered 900 invasions, great and small, and has experienced five major periods of foreign occupation: China, the Mongols, Japan, and, after World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union. In the event of conflict in the region, Russia, China, and Japan will have serious refugee concerns.

Christians have sustained their faith through the turbulent times in Korea's modern history. Today, Koreans speak less of Korea as



Noodles are a precious food produced by the Korean Christians Federation. They are factory-processed when flour, a rare commodity, is available.

water reactors for generating electricity by 2005. North Korea was promised 500,000 gallons of fuel oil each year until the new reactors were fully operational.

On June 19, 2000, US sanctions were further eased by the Clinton Administration. Trade in most products was allowed. Only goods and commodities that could be used for military purposes were still banned.

According to the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia, who visited North Korea in October 2002, North Korea admitted to having nuclear weapons. So amidst political tensions at the start of the usual bone-chilling Korean winter, the Bush Administration announced that it was stopping all oil shipments and humanitarian aid to North Korea. The Administration insisted that even the reprocessing of stored fuel rods by North Korea would be a threat to the entire region. In response, the DPRK expelled UN inspectors and declared that it was resuming its nuclear program. As the con-

frontation unfolded, North Korea admitted that it had developed nuclear weapons. By April 2003, there were talks among North Korea, the United States, and China in Beijing, and inter-Korean talks were renewed.

Bleak Economic Conditions

The DPRK, facing desperate economic conditions, is one of the world's most centrally planned and isolated economies. Much of its industry is beyond repair as a result of years of underinvestment and shortages. Both industry and power output have declined. Despite a rare good harvest in 2001, the nation faces its ninth year of food shortages owing to a lack of arable land, collective farming, weather-related problems (including a major drought in 2000), and chronic shortages of fertilizer and fuel. International food aid deliveries have allowed the population to escape mass starvation since 1995, but the population remains vulnerable to prolonged malnutri-

In April 2003, the General Board of Global Ministries' Board of Directors drafted a resolution on North Korea to send to General Conference, meeting in Pittsburgh, 2004. The resolution urges The United Methodist Church to hold firm to the work of solidarity and support for North Koreans and affirms the continuing partnership with the Korean Christians Federation, both bilaterally and with the ecumenical family.

Congregations may provide humanitarian assistance for the DPRK through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), by contributing to Advance #226435-0, "North Korea Emergency."

tion and deteriorating living conditions. Ever-present defense concerns mean that large-scale military spending eats up the resources needed for investment and civilian consumption.

Recently, the DPRK placed emphasis on earning hard currency, developing information technology, addressing power shortages, and attracting foreign aid, but it will not pursue these goals at the expense of relinquishing central control over key national assets or under going widespread market-oriented reforms. Some privatization and development of a Special Economic Zone bordering China has been developed. During 2002 and early in 2003, heightened political tensions with key donor countries, as well as general donor fatigue, drastically reduced the flow of desperately needed food aid.

The lack of peace and appropriate government policy in the Korean peninsula stands cruelly in the way of overcoming widespread starvation. Reports in recent years estimate that at least one million people have died from famine and disease. Life expectancy of males in 2002 was 68 years, and that of females, 72 years.

The Land

The entire Korean peninsula is the size of New York State and Pennsylvania combined, and the total land area of North Korea, at 120,540 sq. km., is just slightly smaller than Mississippi. Isolated and sparsely populated mountainous terrain and deep, narrow valleys comprise 80 percent of the North's land area, with the remaining 20 percent scattered lowland plains. The country has some resources, such as coal, lead, tungsten, zinc, graphite, magnetite, iron ore, copper, gold, pyrites, salt, fluor spar, and limited hydropower, but arable land is scarce. Of the total land area, only 14.12 percent

is suitable for agriculture.

Permanent crops are minimal, as farming is hampered by climatic extremes. Long, bitterly cold, dry winters and short, hot, humid summers are the norm. Too often, there are late spring droughts followed by severe flooding and occasional typhoons in the early fall. Water pollution, an inadequate supply of potable water, water-borne disease, deforestation, and soil erosion are chronic problems. Successive years of monocropping led to declining yields and created desperation in finding even marginal land for food production. In harsh conditions, frantic searches for household fuel have devastated hillsides through rapid deforestation.

DPRK lacks sufficient capital to pay for commodities required to meet the chronic grain shortage. There is no functioning industrial sector for fertilizer production, irrigation, farm mechanization, or the development of food-processing facilities. The transport sector, essential for delivery of fertilizers and seeds and for distribution of produce to areas with greater food deficits, is nonfunctional.

North Korean Recovery

Humanitarian assistance, development solutions with realistic targets based on available financial and human resources, advocacy, and realistic programmatic response are vital for North Korea's transition to self-sufficiency.

Finding acceptable economic and cultural solutions to help North Korean families, primarily the more vulnerable women, children, and elderly, demands fresh energy. There must be assurances that humanitarian assistance will reach the sectors of the population in greatest need. Gaining access for monitoring and evaluating humanitarian aid and finding support for local capacity building is

crucial, as distribution of assistance goes where access is granted.

The humanitarian response to the emergency in the DPRK is about human development, which starts with meeting people's basic needs and rights. They can then expand their choices to solve problems through their own initiatives and strategies.

In recognition that the family is the community's basic cell, the overarching goal for humanitarian partners during 2003 is preserving lives and promoting the well-being of vulnerable populations, including children and women, through an integrated, rights-based strategy.

The United Nations estimates that 4.4 million people are vulnerable to a national food supplies gap of more than one million metric tons. Children under the age of seven are at high risk for disease and possible death from malnutrition and poor growth because of food shortages in the region. The 420,000 pregnant or nursing women receiving poor nutrition are at high risk of developing iron deficiencies and anemia. Reproductive health services are inadequate, leading to increased maternal mortality. Reduced learning capacity and decreased quality of education affect 3.9 million children. Nearly all of the population is at risk from inadequate food and a lack of essential social services, in particular, health, water, sanitation, and education.

In addition to a decade of crop failure brought on by monocropping, drought, and flooding, vulnerable North Koreans were further weakened because they suffered a harsh winter without fuel. The United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warns that unless there is a sustained recovery in the North Korean economy, this crisis, now in its tenth year, will not be overcome.

United Methodist Support

During the height of the North Korea famine and US media coverage in the late 1990s, The United Methodist Church raised over \$1.3 million and sent hundreds of emergency relief boxes for humanitarian assistance through UMCOR between 1995 and 2000.



UM Bishop Joel Martínez and GBGM director Mary Baldrige present 70 Medicine Boxes to a representative of the Korean Christians Federation.

Though the UMC support for continuing North Korea emergency relief drastically declined over the past three years, UMCOR partnered with the Korean UMC Reunification and Reconciliation committee to support two noodle factories and provide boots for children's homes through the Korean Christians Federation and the Aiding Committee of Overseas Koreans.

We pray that United Methodists and Christians around the world will resume humanitarian support for North Korea and join in solidarity to fulfill peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula.

Gail V. Coulson, who previously served as the United Methodist China Program Liaison in Hong Kong, is an executive secretary for Asia Pacific, and Youngsook Charlene Kang is the Deputy General Secretary for Mission Contexts and Relationships at the General Board of Global Ministries.

For I Was Hungry and YOU GAVE ME FOOD



The United Methodist Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina



UMCOR has supported various projects in Bosnia to promote food security. This couple stands in a greenhouse built by United Methodist Volunteers in Mission in Mostar, Bosnia. Small businesses (right), such as furniture making, fix-it shops, or bakeries, can provide income that enables families to buy food and other necessities.



by Guy Hovey

When Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1992, the conflict between the Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Croats (Catholic), and Bosnian Serbs (Serbian Orthodox) focused world attention on the tiny Balkan republic. After three years of destruction, terror, and genocide, in which Bosnia and Herzegovina's ethnic groups fought themselves to a virtual standstill, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervened with military and diplomatic force. Millions lost their homes and hundreds of thousands were killed or injured. The country lay in ruins.

Although much of the country has been rebuilt, there is still plenty left to do. State structures, such as social support systems, have failed. Very little support exists for the poor of the country, as money is sucked out of the system by corrupt officials who rule over a still-divided land.

Hunger in Urban Areas

A casual visitor to the urban areas will see evidence of ongoing reconstruction, food in the shops, and expensive cars, a highly visible sign of the modicum of wealth from relatives abroad who regularly send money back to their families in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, this picture is misleading; hundreds of thousands from all strata of prewar society now find themselves in a state of abject poverty. In rural areas, the population has developed better mechanisms for coping. They have land on which to grow subsistence crops. In contrast, in urban areas, many people live in flats allocated under the old Communist regime in exchange for a lifetime of work in heavy industry. These flats usually have only one bedroom and no garden in which to grow food. The residents trusted that the state would

provide for them in their old age, but the state has now all but disintegrated. The most disadvantaged of a disadvantaged group are the elderly urban poor.

Miroslav and his wife, Mirjana, are elderly pensioners. Miroslav is 80 years old, a Bosnian Muslim who fought in the partisan resistance during World War II against Germany and then against postwar insurgents. Mirjana is 75, a Bosnian Serb who watched her parents die at the hands of pro-fascist Yugoslavs in World War II. As a newly married couple in 1950, they moved from their home in Northern Bosnia, then part of Yugoslavia, to take a state apartment and jobs in Sarajevo. Life was looking up after the terror of World War II. There was an economic revival and the state promised to provide everything—all Miroslav and Mirjana had to do was pledge obedience, which they did. They became Communist Party members and identified with the multiethnic, powerful Yugoslavian state. Time passed and they watched with pride as their country grew in strength and status, forming the Union of Non-Aligned States, with a growing army that was respected by other nations. The crowning glory came when Yugoslavia played host to the 1984 Winter Olympics. Life was good, international travel was

permitted, and the currency traded on the international money markets. President Tito commanded with a benevolent but iron grip.

When Tito died in 1980, Miroslav and Mirjana cried not just for their deceased leader but for an uncertain future. Things went rapidly downhill. The Yugoslav economy faltered and then collapsed completely. Old ethnic tensions reared up and the country split apart as first Slovenia, then Croatia, and then Bosnia each declared independence.

War came in 1992, causing the economy to free-fall and inflation to rocket. Miroslav and Mirjana's life savings disappeared as a result. They became trapped in a city surrounded by Bosnian Serbs. Shelling and sniping killed thousands. In 1995, the United States brokered a peace deal. To survive, Miroslav and Mirjana were forced to rely on humanitarian aid from organizations such as UMCOR. They had no children to look after them, and their neighbors had fled or been killed. Miroslav and Mirjana had, quite simply, nowhere else to go.

Today, this poverty-stricken elderly couple receives a state pension of US \$60 per month, which, when they receive it, buys little food. Heating bills can exceed \$80 per month in a city where the temperature often falls to -20 degrees in



Greenhouse produce supplements the food supply in rural and urban environments.

the winter. This couple's only wish was to live out the rest of their days with some semblance of dignity. They now find themselves reduced to competing with others in the same situation to find the best food in rubbish bins. They face a constant struggle to find enough food to stave off the pain of hunger and the all-too-likely possibility of starvation. Their pride and self-respect are long gone. Mirjana is in ill health, but they don't have the

gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?"

"And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25:35-40)

It is undoubtedly our duty to alleviate suffering of this nature by feeding the poor. How can we do this if donors such as the United Nations, the United States, and

formed partnerships with other ecumenical groups and churches of various faiths. In Sarajevo, for example, UMCOR works with Franciscan monks who run a soup kitchen that serves more than 300 people daily. Participants receive a three-course meal: soup, a main course of meat, vegetables and bread, and a dessert of fruit. The program could feed ten times as many people, but it lacks the resources.

UMCOR assists the program by providing vegetables and meat from its agriculture programs. It donates seeds and tools or 15 sheep to a family in rural Bosnia and Herzegovina. The family does not need to repay in cash but rather repays in kind—giving UMCOR back a certain amount of vegetables at harvest time or a certain number of lambs when they are born. UMCOR then donates the "in-kind" to the soup kitchens. UMCOR provides the support regardless of the recipients' religions or ethnicity.



In urban Sarajevo, Bosnia, the lack of income and the plight of retired pensioners force people, such as these children, to live out of dumpsters.

money for the medicines she needs. She won't go out because she has only ragged clothes.

For I Was Hungry

The Bible couldn't be clearer on this point:

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and

European governments don't provide funds for such support?"

UMCOR Work in Bosnia

UMCOR in Bosnia helps by reconstructing ruined homes, providing small cash credits and grants to enable people to restart micro-businesses, restarting agriculture in rural areas, reconciling former enemies, and bringing young people together in specially created youth houses. UMCOR urgently needs funds to assist in the feeding of the elderly urban poor.

In response to the problem, UMCOR provides seeds, tools, and livestock to beneficiaries who live in rural areas. With this help they can eat, sell, and barter their produce. In towns and cities, the problem is harder to solve: UMCOR has

Income Fights Hunger

In addition to working with soup kitchens, UMCOR runs an income-generation (IG) program. This program is designed to enable poor entrepreneurs to start or restart micro-enterprises. UMCOR gives cash grants to those impoverished people who live in economically deprived areas such as Srebrenica, where the war destroyed everything. UMCOR gives partial repayment loans to those who have a better access to markets to sell their goods. In this way, UMCOR has helped people lift themselves from poverty by enabling them to start urban community-based businesses such as shoe repair shops, bakeries, and tailor shops. There has been particular success in the distribution of urban greenhouses, providing the opportunity for the urban poor to grow and sell vegetables right in their towns and

cities. "Dedo," a Muslim returnee in the Serb town of Sipovo, was shot in the back in 1993 by his Serb neighbor and longtime friend. Dedo returned in 1997 to his house that bordered the town's river and has started a small fish farm, breeding trout to sell to restaurants and private individuals.

Each week brings more grim news: the suicide rate is increasing in Bosnia. People are killing themselves rather than undergoing the type of indignity suffered by Mirjana and Miroslav. But there is hope. UMCOR was able to help a family in the town of Banja Luka. The mother had been a cake baker before the war. As a Muslim returnee to a Serb town, she had attempted suicide. She could find no work, had no money to feed her young family, and was desperate. UMCOR gave her a grant and business training to start her own cake-making business. Money will be tight for a long time, but she can now make ends meet. Above all, she has hope and a vision for the future.

UMCOR also advocates on behalf of the urban poor with those responsible for social welfare in the legitimate government structures. It is a part of the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan.

There is no doubt that The United Methodist Church directly saves lives through this type of assistance and has been doing so since UMCOR set up soup kitchens in the Central Bosnian town of Zenica in the dark days of the war. This type of work also introduces United Methodism to diverse groups of people. UMCOR has a well-won reputation for being fair, proactive, and professional in its work. Above all, people have a deeply held respect for UMCOR and the faith it represents. It also forges religious links and dialogue with other faiths for a common cause, which can only

be beneficial for international ecumenical relations.

Competing for Funds

What does the future hold? Around the time I first joined UMCOR, our Deputy General Secretary, Paul Dirdak, said to me: "People should not have to compete to prove that they are suffering more than others. Misery should not be a competition." This phrase stuck with me and it guides our programming. Unfortunately, the way that funding functions, we are often forced to compete with other NGOs and providers for scarce international financial resources to enable us to continue our various projects on behalf of those in need. Subsequently, hungry people are forced to compete with other hungry people for help. Sometimes the responsibility is

overwhelming. How do we decide where to allocate our limited resources? Can we make decisions that will mean some people will eat tomorrow and others won't?

We don't have the answers. All we can pledge is that we will stay here for as long as we can, helping the poorest of the poor regain their lives, their hope, and their dignity, however, wherever, and whenever we can.

For more information on UMCOR NGO's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere and how you can help, please log onto our website at www.umcor-ngo.org.

Guy Hovey is the Head of Mission for the UMCOR NGO in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is currently on special assignment with UMCOR in Iraq to facilitate work in Iraq for Action by Churches Together (ACT).

UMCOR NGO is deeply concerned because the US government has withdrawn funding from Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are hundreds of thousands of refugees in nearby foreign countries trying to return and tens of thousands of internally displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina who wish to return home. Others who are already home have inadequate assistance to rebuild their lives. An overburdening of state resources and increased competition for scarce job opportunities could easily lead to renewed ethnic tensions, interethnic conflict, and a breakdown in security. This would be seen as a failure in foreign policy. Donors are moving away from direct relief assistance to government-run development assistance, but the shift from direct aid to a self-sufficient economy is being made too quickly. A mix of different types of assistance would better serve the transition.

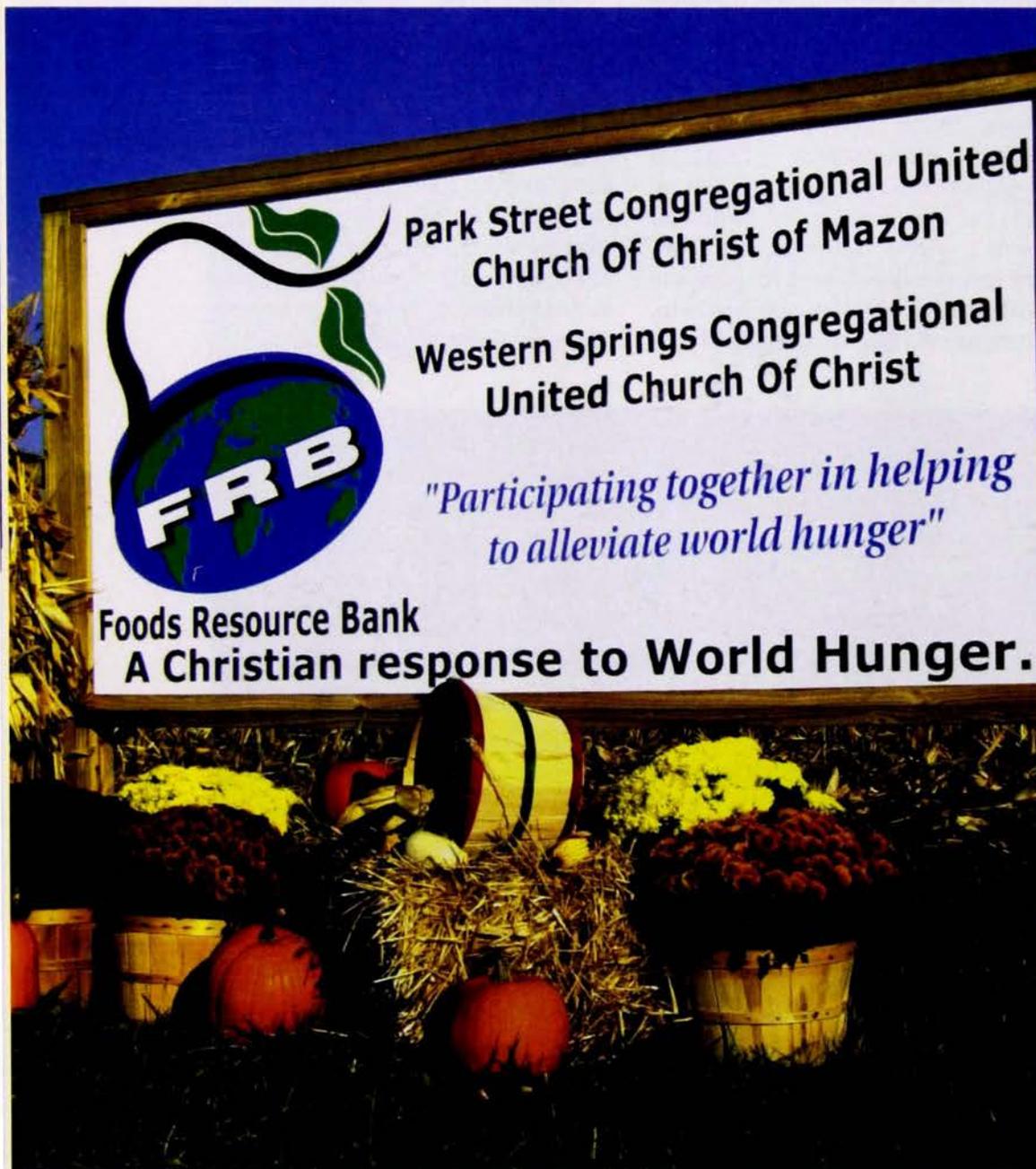
UMCOR urges the United States government not to lose its considerable investment by abandoning Bosnia and Herzegovina to an uncertain violent future. We call upon the government to renew the commitment it made in the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995.

From the Joint Advocacy Statement signed by UMCOR and World Vision, March 2003.

The Foods Resource Bank

SETTING ASIDE A PORTION FOR GOD

by Christie R. House



Above: A growing project in Mazon, Ohio, shows the ecumenical nature of Foods Resource Bank. Top right: A woman in Ghana peels cassava, a food staple in some parts of Africa.

Set apart a tithe of all the yield of your seed that is brought in yearly from the field....Every third year you shall bring out the full tithe of your produce for that year, and store it within your towns; the Levites, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you, as well as the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, may come and eat their fill so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work that you undertake.

Deuteronomy 14:22, 28-29.

Vernon Sloan's family has owned the Sloan Family Farms for six generations. He has worked as a farmer on his land all his life. He and his wife Carol had been searching for a way to help alleviate hunger in other countries, but they weren't sure how to get started.

"I'd read an article in an insert passed out at the church about an elderly couple who were farmers in Indiana," said Mr. Sloan. "The couple set aside a portion of their land to grow food to give to the hungry. I read the article and started praying, real serious praying. I just live a down-to-earth Christian life. I believe if you are sincere, God can work through you, no matter who you are. I prayed for several months. Then I started calling."

Mr. Sloan didn't know who to call or how to set up a project. He'd call people who said, "I can't help

you, but I know someone else who might be able to." In time, he connected with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and spoke with Lloyd Rollins, who helped him send two containers of high lysine (protein) corn to Haiti in 1996 through Catholic Relief Services. Ohio's Defiance District provided the personnel, the work force, and the finances to continue sending corn overseas for several more years but it was costly.

The UMCOR Connection

UMCOR had been looking at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank as a model for US farming communities. In 1998, Mr. Rollins suggested that Mr. Sloan attend a meeting with them in St. Louis to hear more about the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and consider starting an American counterpart.

In 1983, Canadian farmers formed a nonprofit company to set aside part of their land for hunger capital. They planted, raised, and sold produce and then donated the proceeds to fund hunger ministries, providing a more efficient use of the farmers' contributions than sending produce directly overseas. Last year, Canadian Foodgrains Bank had 153 growing projects using 15,000 acres of land, and \$6.1 million was raised from the sale of the grain.

In 1998, the meeting held in St. Louis resulted in the founding of the Foods Resource Bank (FRB). Two United Methodists, Lloyd Rollins and Dirk Van Gorp, both from UMCOR, launched the program and established it as a nonprofit 501c3 organization—a Christian response to world hunger. The main office is in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Norm Braksick, FRB's current director, says Vernon Sloan provided the backbone for the work—the farm connection. "He had this idea that

he ought to grow grain on his land and make it available to feed hungry people," said Mr. Braksick. "He just stuck with it." Vernon Sloan is a farmer: feeding people is what he has studied, practiced, and worked at his whole life. It is his calling—his gift from God.

A Growing Project

In 2001, FRB had 31 growing projects on 1123 acres in 11 states set aside for hunger work. By 2002, the farm contributors had grown to 55 projects, for a total of 2155 acres in 12 states. A total of \$445,000 was raised. "It blows my mind sometimes how God brings people together in just the right place," noted Mr. Sloan. Growing

Top: A Chipoka child in Malawi Center: Norm Braksick, executive director of FRB, talks to students at Kalamazoo Christian West Elementary School in Michigan. Below: Sifting cassava flour in Ghana.





Vernon Sloan (left), Rae Lynn Schleif (Defiance District Superintendent), and Pastor Jeff Ridenour of Stryker UMC at a Defiance District growing project in West Ohio.

projects have increased despite the economic hardships of many of the small and midsized family farms that contribute land, supplies, and labor to the project.

"Farmers in this country have seen tough times recently," said Mr. Sloan. "We've had tough economic times, and then the drought in the Midwest has compounded the problems the last few years. My son now operates the farm, and his son has also expressed an interest in farming, so we hope to keep it going another generation." Mr. Sloan says that most farm families are experiencing the same hardships, but they affirm their commitment to set aside land to feed the hungry.

FRB "twins" farmers with non-farmers—people from the towns, cities, and churches—who contribute to the operation in a number of ways. Congregations can raise funds and send cash donations; buy the seed, fertilizer, or other agriculture inputs to support the farmer; or send work teams to dig in. "When people come to work, it helps them see what we go through," comments Mr. Sloan. "It helps to lighten the farmer's load." Fourteen different denominations support the work as implementing members.

Security or Relief

Local farmers plant, tend, and harvest the food on the land they set aside for the project. Agricultural

businesses have become involved by providing favorable prices for—or outright donations of—seed, fertilizer, equipment, or other kinds of agricultural support. Individuals, church congregations, and community organizations donate time and money to cover the costs. FRB tries to raise \$100 per acre to cover expenses that are not donated.

"Our goal is to help people know the dignity of feeding themselves."

The harvested crop is taken to the local grain elevator for processing and then donated to FRB, which sells the crop and realizes the profit. Instead of paying high shipping costs to send food around the world, FRB, through implementing partners, purchases grain, seeds, tools, and other agricultural resources in or near the countries in which it sponsors projects. In this way, FRB seeks to respond to hunger by implementing sustainable food security programs. Buying grain locally to help feed hungry people stimulates the area's economy and encourages agricultural initiatives on the part of the local and national governments.

FRB places a high emphasis on

food security, encouraging programs that help people feed their own populations, as opposed to relief operations that provide harvested food to hungry people. About 75 percent of FRB's proceeds go to food security projects, while 25 percent support direct relief. "We are not an emergency or disaster relief operation," said Norm Braksick, FRB's director. "Our goal is to help people know the dignity and pride of feeding themselves. We engage after the immediacy of disaster and emergency subsides. We attempt to meet ongoing needs by enabling self-sufficiency."

Because the growing projects are supported by donor contributions, farmers who donate experience, and land, and agricultural inputs from agribusinesses, 100 percent of the proceeds from the sale of the produce is used for the hunger projects.

A Variety of Projects

The 14 implementing members of FRB sponsor or cosponsor sustainable projects in countries around the world. Contributing members can designate their funds to support ten projects in Africa, two in Asia, two in Central America, or one in Serbia. UMCOR implements the project in Ghana and cosponsors the Malawi Lakeshore Expansion Area Project (LEAP) with four other denominations: the Christian Reformed Church; the Presbyterian Church, USA; the Reformed Church of America; and The United Church of Christ.

The Ghana project in Moseaso helps small-scale farmers engage in diverse agricultural activities, including the cultivation of food crops, palm oil, citrus, acacia, and livestock. The goal of the program is to ensure adequate food security, reduce malnutrition and rural poverty, and help conserve the

environment. The project is implemented through the Methodist Church of Ghana, and the participants are assisted by residents of Asin Nyankomasi, a nearby village that has successfully implemented a similar project.

Malawi currently faces the worst food crisis it has seen in years. Food security is a major concern, as food reserves are depleted. Because of severe hunger, people have already harvested their grains early this year, leaving no food for the second half of the year. The Malawi Lakeshore Expansion Area Project, with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee as the lead organization, seeks to meet short-term needs while developing a means to ensure long-term development. The project uses traditional means to improve soil fertility, increase food production, and diversify the choice of crops. The monoculture of planting only maize has compounded the problems of the Malawian famine. Along with interventions to increase sustainable food security, the project seeks to address health needs, such as HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning, sanitation, and proper nutrition.

Peace Ingredients

Vernon and Carol Sloan were able to travel to Africa in 1999 to see some of the projects that FRB would support. They traveled to Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Kenya. "We saw some things that amazed us," Mr. Sloan noted. "Way out in the desert, they were doing irrigation. A Muslim tribe was planting corn, tomatoes, and other vegetables. It was so impressive to see what a few people and a little bit of money could do.

"We had a chance to visit the Masai in Kenya," he continued. "We attended the most impressive worship service I have ever experienced. Tears ran down my face for

a half hour, I was so moved."

Mr. Sloan recalled a number of times in his life when he felt God was setting him up for some task, though he didn't know what it was at the time. He served in the US military at the tail end of World War II in the Pacific. His life was spared because he was assigned to one place rather than another. He saw severe hunger overseas during his service, and he feels now that God was then preparing him for his trip to Africa much later. He never forgot the faces of hunger. The trip to Africa solidified his long-term conviction about what he was called to do.

"You cannot come back from a trip like that and be the same person," he said. "After going to Africa, seeing what the people there strug-



Food security project in Moseaso, Ghana.

gle with, I know, deep inside, that the kind of work that we are doing here is what will eventually prevent conflicts such as the one going on in Iraq right now."

FRB's executive director agrees. "There are many reasons for terrorism," Norm Braksick wrote recently for the *Chicago Farmer*, "but homelessness, hunger, and hopelessness are three uniting causes. We are all saddened by the very visible horror of September 11. But what we don't realize is that eight times as many people died that day around the world of



Women participating in the Moseaso project in Ghana.

hunger, malnutrition, and starvation, and that's not only on one day, but every day, and still today."

Vernon and Carol Sloan have a goal for Ohio farmers and churches. They'd like to see at least two growing projects in every one of the 88 counties of Ohio. Last year, the Ghana project was completely funded for its \$7000 asking in 2002 by the people of Defiance District.

"I am grateful way, deep down in my soul," Mr. Sloan said. "I have been able to get involved with this work. Our job is to motivate people and to take the Scripture seriously. It's taken me a long time to get what the Lord wanted of me, but now I know. When you don't worry about who gets the credit, you can do amazing things for God."

Christie R. House is the editor of New World Outlook.

Foods Resource Bank

For more information about the Foods Resource Bank, call 269-349-3467, or visit the Foods Resource Bank website at: www.foodsresourcebank.org.

You may use this page as a bulletin insert about mission. Remove this page; duplicate it freely; fold it in the middle, along the black line; and slip the copies into your Sunday bulletins.

Making a Difference

Marilyn Beecher is a Church and Community Worker with the Outreach Ministries of the Healthy Churches Initiative (HCI) in Orlando, Florida.

The Outreach Ministries of HCI is one of the official outreach ministries of the Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church. It works to support local churches in developing mission ministries. HCI helped establish and acquire funding for two after-school programs in the area. These programs facilitate not only the academic development of the students but also their personal development.

A student who participated in one of the programs was a boy who, because of the difficult marriage and divorce of his parents, had lost his self-confidence and had isolated himself socially.

Eventually, his mother was not able to supply the family with enough food. Sue Dalbey, after-school program director at First United Methodist Church in Pine Hills, took the boy to the food pantry at the church. She asked him, "Would you like to be the one to bring food to your family?" Being able to help his mother by contributing to the sustenance of the family helped him regain his self-confidence and sense of self-worth. He had found a purpose.

As the weeks passed, he became more outgoing and aspired to improve his school grades. By the end of the year, he had developed into a social child who enjoys life.

HCI has indeed made a difference for children and families in the community.

The Lord is
my shepherd
I shall not want
Psalm 23:1



Depleted Food Supplies and Unanswered Appeals Perpetuate Hunger in Palestine

Sandra Olewine is the United Methodist Liaison assigned to Jerusalem. Peter Hansen is the Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

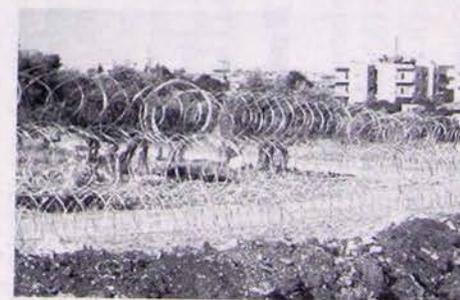
Hunger comparable to that experienced by the people of the Congo and Zimbabwe has manifested itself in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. However, none of the causes of hunger in these sections of the Middle East are natural disasters.

Palestinians are trapped behind barbed wire and armed Israeli soldiers. The Israeli occupation in these areas has led to growing poverty because of a high unemployment rate.

More than one million Palestinians are threatened with food shortages, but western governments have not answered a United Nations' appeal for funds. Palestinians in Gaza are suffering the most.

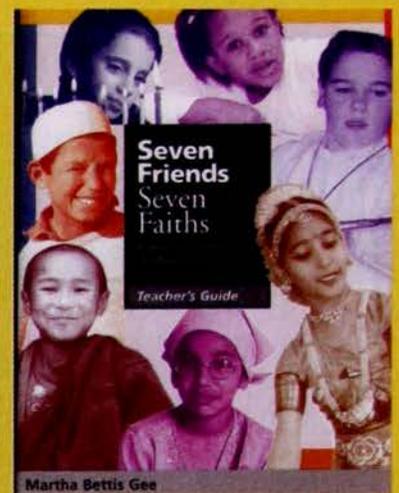
Even though the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) feeds 715,000 people on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, nearly one in four is malnourished. Twenty-two percent of Palestinian children are acutely or chronically malnourished. Pregnant women and nursing mothers suffer from lack of nutrition. The resulting conditions include damaged cognitive faculties, often severe and irreversible; compromised immune systems; blindness; impaired mental and physical development; and anemia from lack of essential minerals. If food aid does not continue, the percentage of Palestinians suffering from hunger and its related illnesses—and death rates—will increase.

There are no graphic images for the media to record and shock the world into action. Instead, Palestinians face hidden hunger and the quiet horror of a generation that will be physically and mentally stunted for the rest of their lives.



Seven Friends Seven Faiths

A sixth grade soccer team discovers that many of its players have different faiths. They are "Seven Friends with Seven Faiths." Read their story. Put together nine photo cubes showing children around the world with different faiths. The teacher's guide offers a wealth of material for church school, Vacation Bible School, and many other settings.



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Storybook with Photo Cubes; \$4.00, 5 for \$15.00, 10 for \$25.00, Stock #03287.
Teacher's Guide, \$6.00, Stock #03288.

Coming in the September-October issue of **New World Outlook**

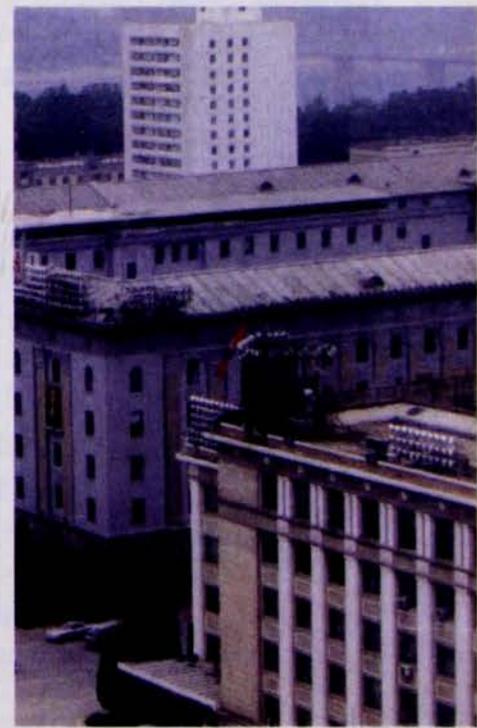
SHARING IN THE MISSION: CONGREGATIONS THAT GET INVOLVED

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Covenant Missionaries

The Sea Islands of the Rural Mission
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The Laughable Ministry
Native Americans Connect through Prayer

The Task of Reconciliation for the Koreans
Part II of an Ongoing Series on North Korea



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“Steps Toward Wholeness: Learning and Repentance” study guide helps United Methodists confront racism

Leaders of the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and Union—which joins representatives of United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion and Christian Methodist Episcopal churches—have talked for years about the possibility of reuniting the four Methodist denominations.

Prompted by that ongoing dialogue, United Methodist leaders decided to make a public statement through an act of repentance. During the May 2000 General Conference, delegates donned strips of sackcloth and were marked with ashes as symbols of repentance. This event was the springboard for study and acts of repentance on the annual conference level.

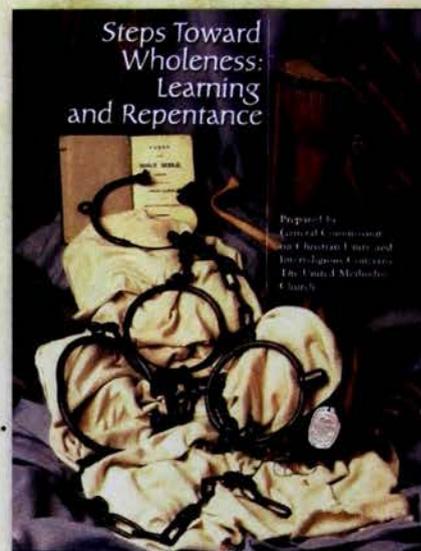


Photo: Mike DuBose/UMIN



Now available to guide United Methodists through the process is “Steps Toward Wholeness: Learning and Repentance.” The North Carolina Annual Conference recently sponsored a workshop and used the study guide. Here are some comments:



“Keep an open mind, open heart and open soul; look at the history of where we have come; and remain open to receive new data, new insight.”

—Bishop Marion M. Edwards, Raleigh Area



“Repentance helps us to deal with our guilt and pain and allows us to be free to embrace the one we hurt, and the hurt one can now seriously consider the option of forgiveness.”

—Dr. Jesse Brunson, South Carolina Conference director of multicultural and social ministries and workshop coordinator



“We are all in the same boat. If there is a leak in the boat, we must repair it together. Either we sink together or we sail together.”

—The Rev. Jerry Lowry, First United Methodist Church, Laurinburg, S.C.

“Repentance assures something will follow—a new life. Take the resource book and find a way for a serious study of our historical struggle together.”

—Dr. Carolyn Henninger Oehler, study guide author

To order the guide, call the General Board of Global Ministries Service Center, (800) 305-9857. Ask for Resource #2995. The cost is \$2 plus shipping and handling.

Photo: Mike DuBoise/UMIN



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Food for thought:



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who are

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long term by providing **resources,**

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change the root **causes of**

hunger and **poverty.**



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