

New World Outlook

THE MISSION MAGAZINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH • SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009

MISSION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY



Stock # 533968

New World Outlook

New Series Vol. LXX, No.1; Whole Series Vol. IC, No. 5
NEW WORLD OUTLOOK SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009

ISSN-0043-8812

Published bimonthly by the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

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Printed in the U.S.A.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes directly to New World Outlook, P.O. Box 395, Congers, New York 10920-0395. Subscriptions in the United States and Possessions: One year \$19.95. Single copies \$5.00. Two years, \$34.95. All foreign countries: one year, \$31.95. Church Subscription Program: 5 or more one-year subscriptions for \$15 each.

Editor—Christie R. House

Art Director—Hal Sadler

Designers—Sean Grandits, Nanako Inoue

Production Manager—Brenda L. Carr

Editorial Assistant—Patricia Y. Bradley

Editorial Office

Christie R. House
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1476
New York, NY 10115
212-870-3765

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

Advertising/Promotion

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New York, NY 10115
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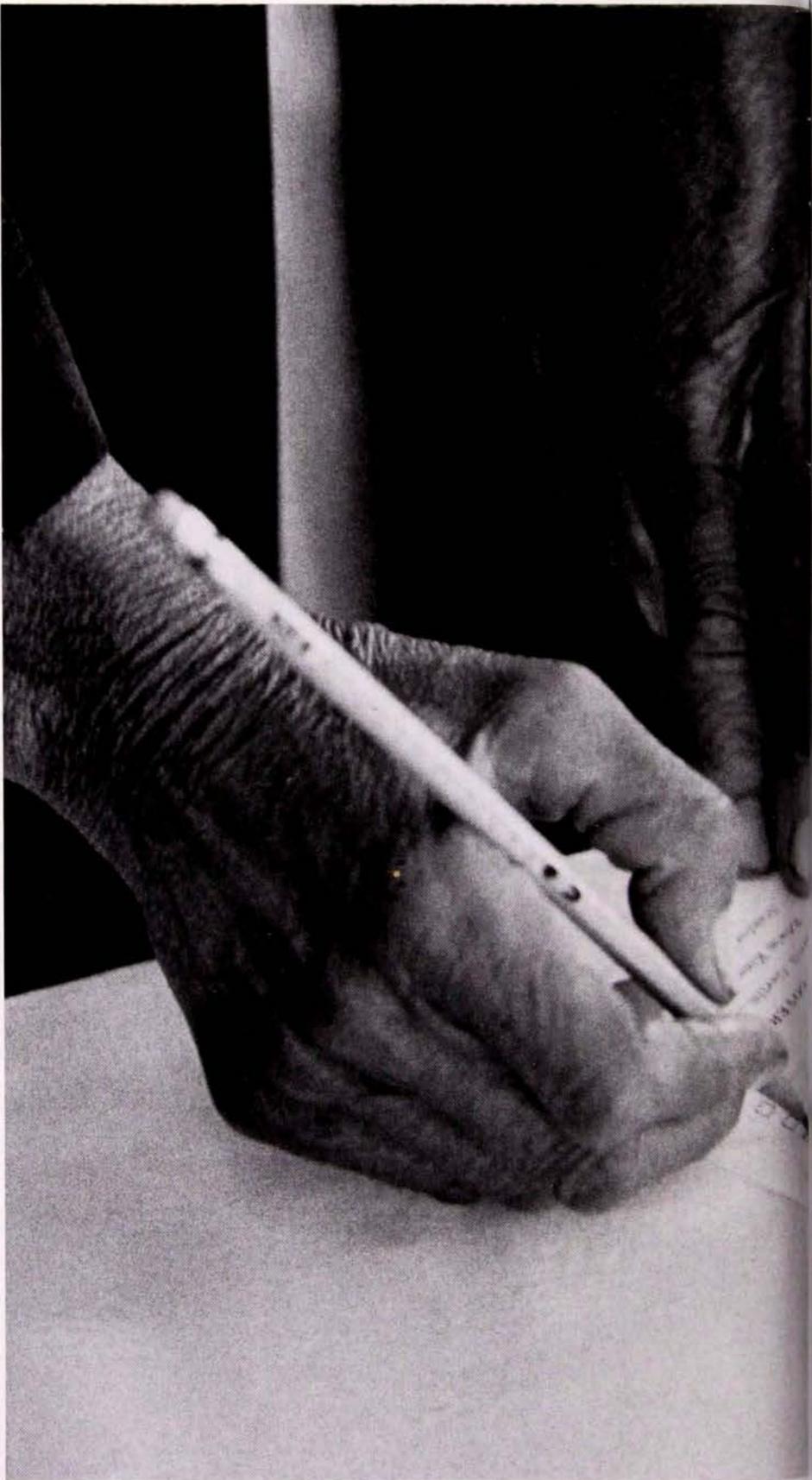
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Direct all subscription inquiries and changes of address to: New World Outlook, P.O. Box 395, Congers, New York 10920-0395. Send old address label if possible. Allow at least 30 days' notice. Or call 1-877-881-2385 (toll-free). Email: NewWorldOutlook@cambeywest.com

Cover Photo: Ghulam Rasool/CWS-ACT International. A young girl finishes her chores outside her family's tent, Mardan camp for Pakistanis displaced by armed conflict between the Pakistani military and militants, May 2009. An image like this can now be sent around the world in a matter of seconds.

Photo: Ken Thompson



MISSION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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Bulletin inserts can be clipped out of the magazine, copied back-to-back, folded, and slipped into the Sunday bulletin.

In 1964, the National Council of Churches trained and sent more than 800 young people to Mississippi to set up Freedom Schools. Their task was to register black voters, raise bail for jailed Civil Rights leaders, and open community centers.

from the editor

THE LANDSCAPE IS CHANGING...AGAIN

Not long ago, a childhood friend found me the old fashioned way—through my mother, Marjorie House. My mother is a great social networker, but she generally prefers the face-to-face method of networking—“presence”—over the rapid response method of “messaging.” Yet, my parents were the first in our family to acquire a personal computer with network hookup and email. They could feel the earth shifting beneath them and they knew when to jump into the new landscape.

My mother’s mother, Evelyn Lamphier, was also a great social networker. She preferred the written word. One of her vocations was to write letters and keep up correspondence with a broad variety of people. At her funeral, the family discovered a pen pal she had been writing to since he served as a soldier during World War II, a correspondence maintained over 60 years.

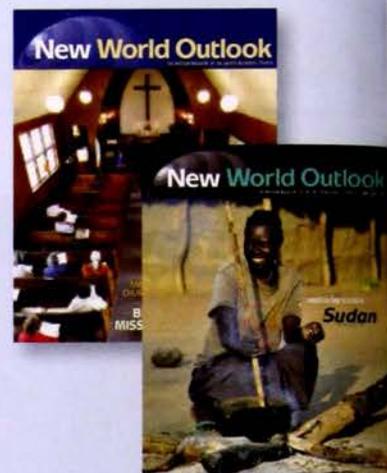
Considering how the landscape of this country has changed over my grandmother’s lifetime, both literally and figuratively, today’s move to electronic media seems far less daunting. The computer screen, after all, looks like the ever-present television screen that I grew up with. A cell phone isn’t all that different from a home telephone, just smaller and portable. If it serves as a mini-computer for some, so be it—I can’t really read much on a screen that small, so I’ll stick to my laptop.

Something I learned from working on this issue is that this type of technological progress is not necessarily linear. Just because the United States arrived at the cell phone after almost every household already had phone service doesn’t mean the developing world has to experience these innovations in the same way. The developing world will just skip all that progression and leap into the new landscape. So the fact that hardly anyone in Cambodia ever had a landline only means they’ll start with the cell phone. They have skipped all the infrastructure of roads and wires and telephone polls and built cell towers. Progress accomplished.

Many members of our US congregations may not have a clue how to Twitter. Even so, the conference communicator from Côte d’Ivoire last week was sending tweets back home to his constituency and to US friends every day so they could follow the highlights of his communications training in Nashville.

The implications that these new forms of communication and social networking hold for mission ministries are explored in this issue. The landscape is definitely changing—not little by little, but all at once. Although it may seem daunting, this kind of progress isn’t all that different from the social networking and fellowship that congregations have always done, whether in person, by phone, or through the mail. Just hop into the new landscape at any point. It isn’t necessary to understand how to program a computer to send out email, even though years of programming went into making email possible. Type a message out on the screen and hit the send button...progress accomplished!

Christie R. House



January-February issue, 2009 Small Churches: Big Mission

Dear Editor:

I just began reading the January/February 2009 issue of *New World Outlook* on July 3. I hope that the magazine continues in print because I do not own a computer or any other technical thing to read it online. You could publish it quarterly.

*Jane E. Morris
Dallas, Texas*

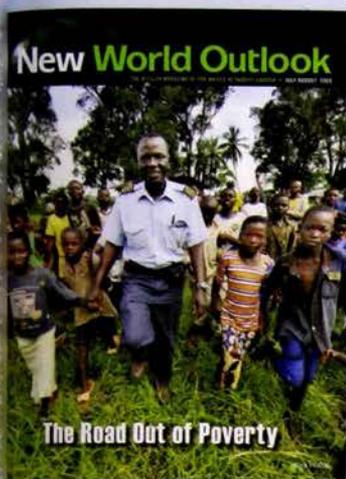
May-June issue, 2009 Mission Study: Sudan

Dear Editor:

Just want to say that I truly enjoyed the featured issue on Sudan. Thank you for putting together such a wonderful and excellent presentation on Sudan. The issue was well written and accurate. I especially like the map, which I currently have on my wall and refer to it often whenever I am talking about Sudan.

Thank you!

*Alberta Prempeh McKnight
Senior Program Officer, Africa &
the Caribbean, UMCOR-NGO
New York, New York*



Letters from readers

July-August issue, 2009
The Road Out of Poverty

Dear Editor:

I just finished reading the poverty issue and passing it around the office. The magazine was terrific, as always, and I especially enjoyed Mary Beth Coudal's piece on breaking the cycle of poverty. I've been hearing back from our regional directors and they say they've already begun to get calls from people asking how they can start CROP Hunger Walks in their neighborhoods! The pastors quoted said they began receiving calls from people who had read the magazine, even before I sent copies. *New World Outlook* clearly has a very extensive readership in the local churches!

Thanks for including news from CWS.

Lesley Crosson
Church World Service

Dear Editor:

I had the opportunity to read entire magazine on plane today. Fabulous focus on helping the poor and bringing the commitment of the denomination to a new level. Thank you for your commitment and skill in communicating such a meaningful and powerful call to action!

Scott Miller
Move the Mountain Leadership Center

Please note the following correction in "Circles to Break the Poverty Cycle" by Mary Beth Coudal, pp. 16-19, July-August 2009 issue:

Scott Miller and a colleague, Gary Stokes, founded the Move the Mountain Leadership Center in 1992. A number of anti-poverty strategies followed. In 2007, the center developed Circles and established a partnership with aha! Process, Inc, the organization of Dr. Rubye Payne, author of *Bridges Out of Poverty*.



Readers Take Note

Please fill out the Reader's Survey on pp. 27-28 and mail it back to *New World Outlook*, or follow the instructions for filling it out online. We'd like as many readers as possible to fill out the survey, even if they share a subscription with other members of a group. Just photocopy it for group members so each has a copy to fill out and send in.

Thanks.

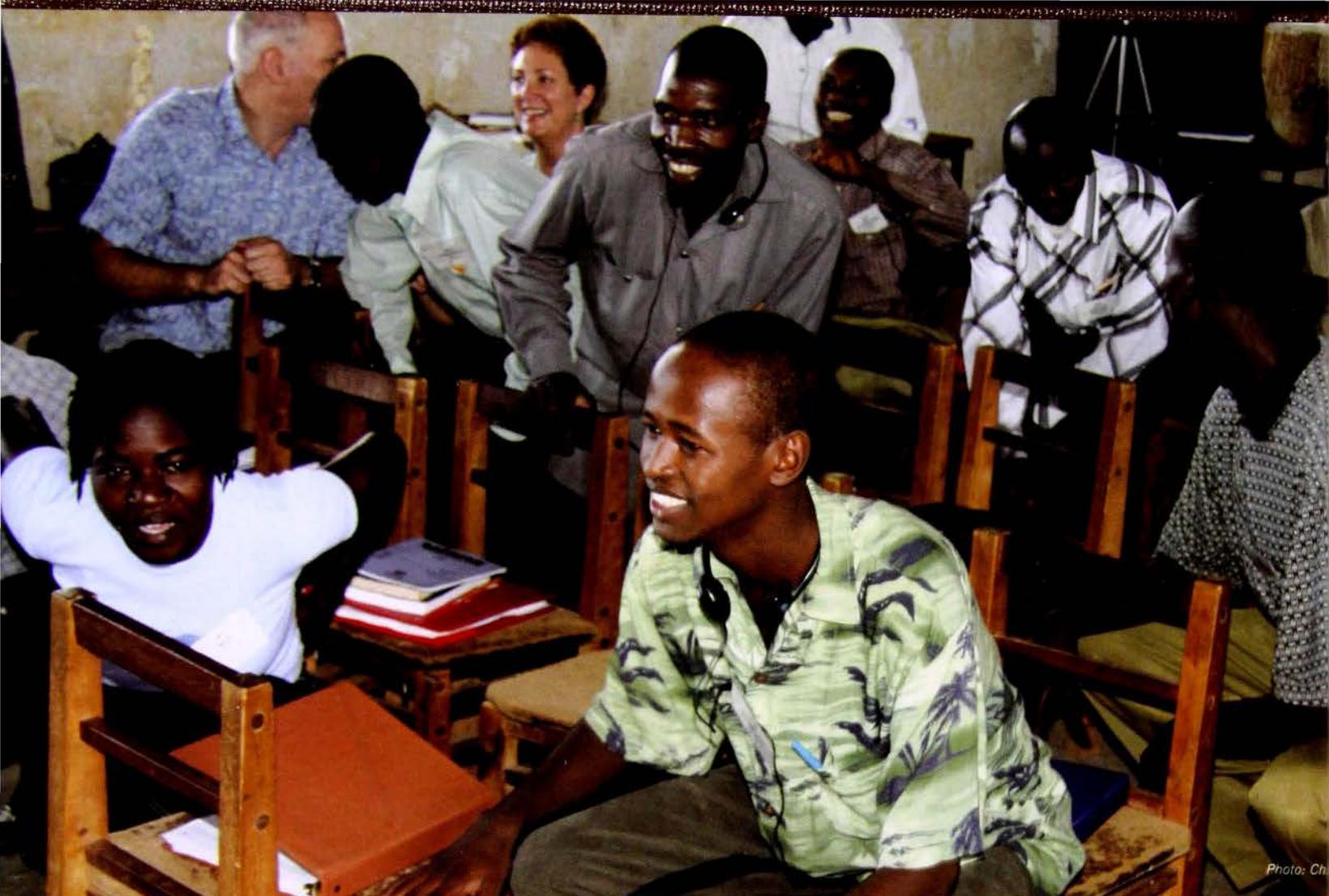


Photo: Chris Heckert

The Changing Landscape of Mission

story and photos by Chris Heckert

Not long ago, I participated in a training event in Uganda. Participants in the training came together from five different countries in East Africa. I have stayed in touch with a few of them; we share pictures, audio recordings of the training sessions, video, and links to news stories via email discussing events in our respective countries. In short, some of the relationships I made during that two-week training session have lasted longer and become more significant than I would have imagined.

Although the scenario of people meeting and staying in touch is nothing new, the nature of our correspondence has changed in significant ways. We are becoming accustomed to “instant messages,” communicating over long distances in a digital instant and expecting a reply just as quickly. Our communication can be enhanced and extended by blogs (“web logs”—frequent-

ly updated internet sites on which people post entries such as their personal journals, commentaries, or trip logs), and social networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, or UMCommunities. Participation in the rapidly changing technological advancements of the world is becoming more difficult to avoid every day. New forms of communication have come to dictate the way we function, literally changing the world around us. Whether or not we choose to own a cell phone, subscribe to a high-speed internet service, or do our banking on-

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line, our lives will still be affected by these services. Changes in technology are altering the way in which we do business, travel, and even make decisions. My wife and I were having dinner at a restaurant when we decided to go to a movie that evening. Using my iPhone™ (digital mobile device, Apple Inc.), we were able to find 10 theatres in our vicinity that were showing the movie. I was also able to order and pay for tickets. When we arrived at the theatre, we discovered the show had been sold out shortly after we booked the tickets.

The cell phone I carry is much more than a device that connects to voices from a distance. It allows me to instantly send and receive messages from around the world, manage my schedule, read newspaper articles, play games, access reviews of local restaurants, and even tune my guitar! This simple device has not only made my life more convenient, it has changed the way I live.

Although I have many fond memories of my father reading the daily newspaper after dinner, I never picked up the practice. While I've avoided subscribing to local or national newspapers, I would venture to say that I am better informed on daily events than my father was. I receive the *New York Times* for free on my phone and read the same articles that others receive in print. I can do so with quicker access and from anywhere I happen to be, whether or not a newsstand is nearby. Of course, advertisers and subscribers who pay for the print edition actually provide this "free" service. They pay for the reporters, photographers, editors, designers, and web technicians that

Opposite: New friends from five different African countries and the United States have kept in touch via email and data-sharing sites.

Right: The author (right) Chris Heckert tries out an African drum with Patrick Matsikenyiri of Zimbabwe.

make the online service possible. As more and more people opt out of paying for print, the problem of how to sustain these communication networks has yet to be resolved.

I remember how I received the news that Michael Jackson had died. I was driving to New Jersey. I knew the moment it was public because I received a text from CNN, a service that alerts me to breaking news. I didn't read the news in a newspaper, hear it on the radio, or watch it on TV first, though many others did. I received it through one of the many portals of communication that work best for me.

A number of influences are coming together in our world today, urgently pushing us to embrace technology in our daily lives. The cost of travel has made video and internet conferencing a must for many businesses. Environmental concerns have prodded us to consider whether cutting down the world's forests is necessary anymore to produce our many print resources.

A BROKEN WORLD

Technological advancements are changing the world, yet many of

the problems society faces have not changed. In fact, new technologies have given rise to new types of crime, while the "old issues" that have plagued us still persist at the core, such as injustice, corruption, the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, and exploitation. Today, the bullying that used to be confined to the schoolyard can now take place over the internet, invading a child's home.

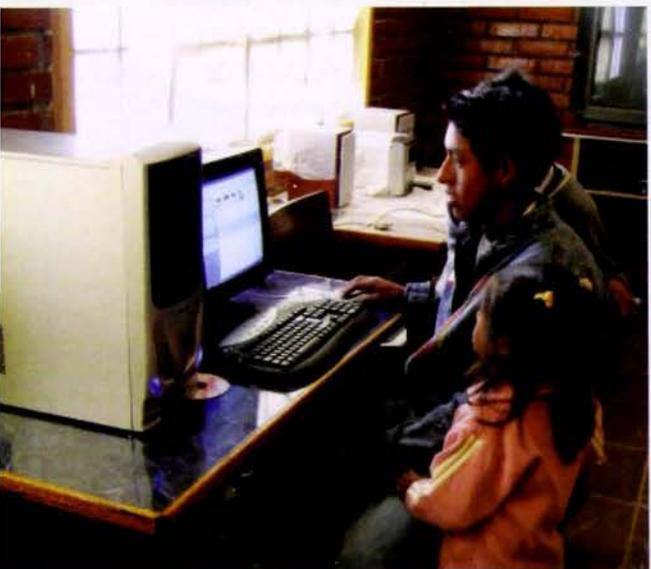
The reality is that while many things in society change, the brokenness of our world does not change. The need for individuals to experience God's love remains constant.

It is important for us to remember that engaging in the use of various forms of technology to communicate is not an endorsement of a way of life or an approval of the more shallow aspects of our culture. We can simply choose to use a new channel to communicate the gospel's consistent message. Utilizing various forms of technology can become the means of fulfilling the church's mission in a changing world. While access to technology is far from equal, out-of-date computers and slow internet



connections do not necessarily keep people around the world from utilizing a service like Twitter to tell their story. (Twitter is a free social messaging utility accessible by text messaging.)

It can be argued that technology has, in many ways, given voice to those who have been marginalized. This has been seen recently in a number of different instances involving political turmoil, particularly in Iran and China. Social networking sites,



such as Facebook, and the ability to get messages out in real time through Twitter have allowed people without access to a free press to share their pictures, tell stories, and garner support—reaching an audience outside their government's control.

In the same way, technology gives voice to growing churches and faith communities. They can share stories of what God is doing within their local settings. This form of grassroots communication can serve as a counter to colonialism—allowing indigenous songs, liturgies, testimonies, and concerns to be shared among many peoples.

Although the problems of our hurting world—hunger, poverty, disease, and injustice—remain, we are called to offer the grace of God to all.

A MISSION UPDATE

While the mission of The United Methodist Church remains unchanged—to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world—there are an infinite number of ways for us to carry out this mission. We are to alleviate human suffering and seek justice for the world, but how we fulfill this calling opens up a wide field of possibilities.

In the 21st century, the church must engage these goals through all means possible. We use Twitter. We set up sites on Myspace—not because the church strives to be relevant by keeping up with the latest fads, but because we need to reach people through whatever avenues work for them. The way the church fulfills its mission can and should be influenced by technological advances that improve communication, make information more readily available, and give wider access to resources, such as books, magazines, articles, the Bible, images, and databases.

In our changing culture and climate, we are called to be good stewards of the resources available in God's world. We have the ability to claim God's goodness, tell our stories, keep in touch, sing each other's songs, and pray each other's prayers. A church that embraces its mission without fear is a church that is willing to claim new forms of technology as channels for communicating God's grace.

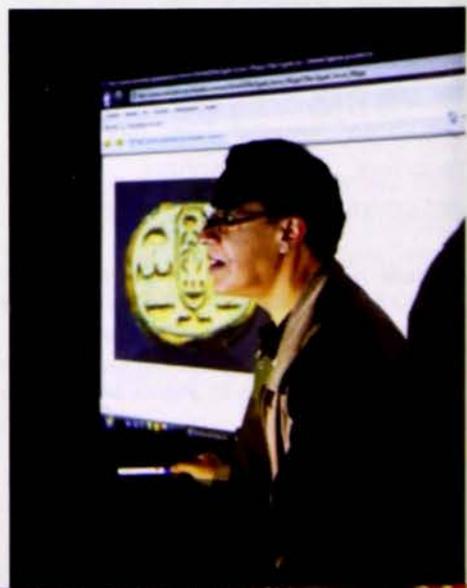
When we participate in God's mission, we are not simply carrying out a service—doing something for someone—we also open ourselves to be transformed by our interactions with others. God uses moments

of service, worship, and sharing to transform groups, individuals, and congregations. This is true for those who are served and those who offer services. Although using the internet may involve hours of sitting alone in front of a screen, the communication it enables defies isolation.

Once we post information onto the internet, it can be searched and accessed, unfettered by the barriers of geography, race, or religious affiliation. While serving a congregation in New Jersey, I set up a group webpage for a team I was leading for a mission volunteer trip to southern India. After posting our trip agenda, a list of items that group members needed to pack, and random thoughts about the tasks our group would attempt to accomplish, I was surprised to receive invitations from a number of churches in India out of the blue. They asked us to visit them and support their ministries. Members of their congregations had found our group's website on the internet. This experience made me realize that anything that is posted publicly online can, and will, be viewed by more people than we think.

The global nature of the internet reminds me of the global nature of the church. Web technology can be an amazing resource to connect with, and learn from, our sisters and brothers around the world.

Our current efforts to utilize technology can surely be expanded across



Top left: Students enjoy computer access provided to them at a Methodist library in Cotani Alto, Bolivia.

Right: A professor teaches his class at the Universidad Biblica Latinamerica in San Jose, Costa Rica, using new communication tools.

the denomination. At Christmas time last year, for instance, the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference invested in billboards in the Pittsburgh area, inviting people to text the word "believe" to a phone number. Those who tried it received an uplifting message and the conference was given an opportunity for further dialog in return. A local newspaper reported that the conference received an average of 100 texts per day. While such a creative campaign may be too costly for individual congregations to employ, it provides a good example of how popular methods of communication can be used for ministry.

Missionaries have also discovered new ways to communicate with one another, families, and even supporting churches. (See article, p. 36) In Virginia, the Bon Air UMC regularly communicates with Claudia, a missionary in Mozambique with whom they have a covenant relationship. They use Skype, an online video-phone service. Through Skype, members of the congregation can see and talk with Claudia, sometimes during their regular worship service, and she can see them. Congregation members express their care and support while hearing about the many ways their church is in ministry through Claudia's work in Mozambique.

GOD WITH US IN NEW WAYS

The challenge for our churches is to utilize technology in its various forms to continue to do what the church should be doing. New forms of technology can change the way congregations communicate with members, distribute messages, hold Bible studies, connect with members of other churches around the world, and communicate the joy of the good news of the risen Christ.

Discussion centered around technology certainly isn't anything new for the church. It is a subject of debate that encompasses how worship is set up, how a church communicates with members, and how congregations reach those outside their church doors. Many congregations have figured out how to fully utilize multiple channels of communication, while other congregations rely on a paper culture to communicate and do ministry.

My own annual conference has mandated that all churches need to provide internet service for their pastors. Even though some congregations may not have permanent heating or cooling systems in their sanctuaries, pastors are guaranteed connectivity via the internet to carry out their ministry. Such a requirement acknowledges the conference's recognition of the rising importance of communication technology for the church.

I am periodically impressed by the way some churches use technology as a viable and effective channel for ministry, but I also encounter resistance in congregations. Perhaps this resistance can be attributed to a lack of training, resources, or access to internet culture. Or there could be an overall hesitation by churches to conduct church business using a medium that has seemingly injected popular culture with moral and ethical ambiguity.

Yet in this constantly changing world, people still need to experience the love of God. The church has the opportunity to make creative use of technology, not to be hip, relevant, or cool, but rather to claim these media as effective new tools for communicating God's grace.



A billboard sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

Many individuals and congregations around the world are acting as good stewards of technology to minister to others. Pastors blog, missionaries network, worship teams develop projects. Yet we still have far to go, and technology is not an end in itself—it merely provides us with many more ways to reach beyond ourselves to others. With each new development in technology, we are presented with profound opportunities to connect, learn from one another, share in each other's witness, and claim who we are as followers of Christ.

The Rev. Chris Heckert is Global Ministries' Associate General Secretary, Mission Communications and Marketing.

PORTALS TO MISSION

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www.facebook.com/UMCOR

www.twitter.com/umwomen

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Photography as a Cultural Mirror for American Methodist Missions

by Morris L. Davis

photos from the United Methodist Archives and History, Madison, New Jersey

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In the summer of 1919, Maynard Owen Williams, a foreign correspondent from the National Geographic Society, told reporters that, to mark the hundredth anniversary of Methodist mission, he planned to "study the way that pictures and exhibits are used to inform stay-at-homes of conditions [around the world]...and to get as many pictures as I can from missionaries and others who are in a position best to know the other races of the world." He held a lofty opinion of missionaries and a strong conviction about the power of visual images, arguing that photographs were more effective with the general public than lectures or printed words alone. Thus he advised "the missionary" to own the best camera available and "to use it as much as his Bible" (*Columbus Evening Dispatch*, July 9, 1919, p. 6).

The planners of 1919's summer-long Methodist Mission Centenary celebration certainly agreed with most of that assessment. Many Methodist leaders in the US mission movement had begun to recognize the power of the new visual media to grab peoples' attention and leave powerfully convincing images in their minds. Thus the massive centenary celebration featured the newest and most dramatic visual technology as an integral part of many exhibits. This included the world's largest lantern slide projector and projection screen. Onto the 105-foot-high screen would

be projected images of missionaries, mission work, mission fields, and the peoples of mission lands.

The use of visual media at the centenary was the culmination of several years of work by the Board of Foreign Missions and the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC). By the time of the centenary celebration, the church had put together a vast collection of photographs and lantern slides made from photographs. Already there were 20 depositories around North America for slides and projectors that could be used by churches to educate their congregations about the mission work of the church.

The MEC's photography project was doubtless at the cutting edge of the increasingly visual culture in North America. Clearly, the Methodist mission boards were convinced that visual images were needed to educate Americans about the wider world and to encourage them to support the mission work of the church.

What remains of the MEC's great investment in photography is a collection at the United Methodist Archives in Madison, New Jersey, including approximately 250,000 photographs from 50 countries on every populated continent except Australia. These photographs were taken from about the late 1860s through the 1930s, with most apparently dating from the early 20th century through the 1920s.

These photographs were lost for several decades before being uncovered in a warehouse on 125th Street in Manhattan, in storage for the Board of Missions. When found, they were housed in albums organized according to geographic region or theme.

Unfortunately, detailed records of the albums' creation are lost. Our best guess, from clues in the albums and the few records uncovered, is that they were created by the staffs of the Foreign and Home Mission boards, both for public display and for storing images to be used in lantern-slide lectures with prepared lecture texts. The images were available for use in such publications as *World Outlook*.

As the larger, multid denominational mission energy waned in the 1930s, the albums fell out of use and were eventually forgotten. It is likely that the condescending message, racist and imperialistic tone, and stereotyped content of the albums quickly became dated. Certainly these characteristics were contrary to the modern church's commitment to human dignity and equality. (See below, "The Church, State, and Commerce.")

Most of these early photographs are in albums identified by nation or continent, such as "China" (17 albums) or "Africa." But there are also albums illustrating the work in the United States, going by such titles as "Cities," "Southern Mountains," or "Negroes." Most of the images are accompanied by handwritten

Opposite page: Bishop John Springer (right) encourages an African villager to investigate his ever-present camera, circa 1917.
Right: "The Church, State, and Commerce." Caption reads: "The Church is represented by Mr. and Mrs. Springer and the senior boys of the Fox Bible Training School. The State is represented by Mr. Billis, British Native Commissioner, and his soldiers. Commerce is shown up by Mr. Fryckberg and his messengers for recruiting native labor for the mines." Africa album, #3827.





Above: The caption from Africa album #2571, says that these two brothers represent the difference that Christian education can make.

Right: Description reads: "Coming out of chapel, Baroda, in Madura [India]" from the Asia album, #1763.



graphs purchased by the mission boards to supplement the lectures and other presentations.

The albums address some of the basic questions of mission: Who are those in need, and who should help meet that need? What exactly is needed? And how are those not in need to recognize the needs of others? How are photographs a better way than words to convey a fairly simple message? What can pictures do that words alone cannot?

By studying these pictures, we gain a fresh understanding of how the need for Methodist mission work was conveyed. We also attain a more nuanced comprehension of the work's complex mix—including not only charity, sincerity, and practical aid to those perceived as suffering but also the racist and colonialist attitudes that plagued much early mission work and that still color negative perceptions of missionaries today. Yet, if we study the multiple modes of communication used by earlier Methodists as they followed their call, we can see more fully how these North Americans imagined the rest of the world and their role in shaping it. Just as importantly, we can also see how the images of that wider world shaped American Methodists' own identity.

EVIDENCE OF NEED

The albums attempted to establish evidence of racial, ethnic, cultural, or national groups in need. Five major forms of need are presented in the photographs: poverty, disease, devastation from war and natural disasters, crime, and—more difficult to convey—spiritual or cultural depravity.

The most common source of need seen in all the albums is poverty. Many other needs either led to or were caused by poverty. Images of children figure prominently in these pictures. Children are shown in unsanitary housing, suffering from malnutrition, inadequately clothed, or on their own as orphans, ref-

captions that betray the biases of the time. Many are arranged sequentially, with a kind of narrative flow. The images are often identified by a lecture number, suggesting their use in standard lectures that once accompanied the photograph albums or collections of lantern slides. From the albums I've seen—closely examining 2/5ths of them and scanning the rest—most images were taken either by missionaries or photographers accompanying them. There are also clear examples of professional photo-

ugees, or victims of neglect. For the most part, these images convey a broken culture and economy, showing that mission to these people needed to bring about broad societal change. There were also particular disasters for which Methodists were raising emergency funds, such as floods in China, war in the Balkans and "western Asia," and the refugee crisis in Europe caused by World War I.

COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The most dramatic and effective way to convey need was to establish differences between the American viewers and the people in the pictures. Thus many photographs of missions outside North America made generous use of the exotic, highlighting differences at the expense of commonalities. To view a picture of another person is not only a process of gathering information about him or her but also an attempt to recognize oneself in the other person.

When Methodist audiences saw images that early missionaries labeled as "typical savages" or "pagan temples," they were forming prejudices about different cultures that they understood to be different from their culture. While the photographs sometimes played to similarities—for example, universal concerns about the vulnerability of children—they more often favored an emphasis on the exotic, consistently reminding viewers of vast differences between the subjects of the photographs and themselves.

The strategy of emphasizing either difference or commonality was employed in all the albums. The album creators seemed to regard both strategies as equally useful. People could be convinced to support mission work either because they saw

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someone with whom they identified and for whom they felt sympathy or because they saw images of people like the "typical savage," depicted as living a deplorable, uncivilized existence. At this point in the history of the MEC, North American Methodists felt compelled to take Christian civilization wherever it seemed to be lacking.

Conveying a need for Christian spirituality was more difficult. One obvious way was to show scenes of exotic, non-Christian practices, often taking place in temples or other religious settings. For example, a photograph might show a so-called witch doctor making an intervention or an Indian ascetic lying on a bed of nails. Other images may have been added to induce shock or horror at cultural or religious practice. In albums with pictures from China, in particular, a consistent theme of death connects the images. Differences in traditions surrounding burial practices and views of the afterlife are highlighted by images of missionaries digging up graveyards in order to build mission buildings on the high ground, where many Chinese traditionally buried their dead.

DEFINING "CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION"

Two subjects dominate the content of the photographs: buildings and people. At the most obvious level, photographs of structures built by Methodists, such as churches, schools, and hospitals, showed viewers where and how their money was spent. Albums also included pictures of missionary residences, foreign cities and towns, and buildings devoted to non-Christian religious practice. In the albums showing missions in North America, images of churches and colleges are the most common.

Beyond providing evidence of money wisely spent, pictures of Methodist churches, hospitals, and schools can

tell a more dramatic story. The overwhelming majority of these buildings followed Western architectural styles. Thus photos of the buildings gave viewers the impression of a sweeping Western cultural presence in a foreign land. In the case of home missions, the pictures provided evidence of social and cultural "progress." There was an unusually explicit American presence in one photo of a college in Kinkiang, China. The main building had a US flag on top.

Often an album juxtaposes a new Methodist building and a native one—for example, placing a picture of a pagan temple next to one of a new Methodist chapel. Another, more dramatic, technique encouraged viewers to visualize the new Christian civilization replacing the old culture. Many examples show either a new Methodist structure built on top of the ruins of a native building or a native building converted to Christian uses. One series of images records the building of a Methodist school in China directly on top of the ruins of an old Confucian examination building. In another

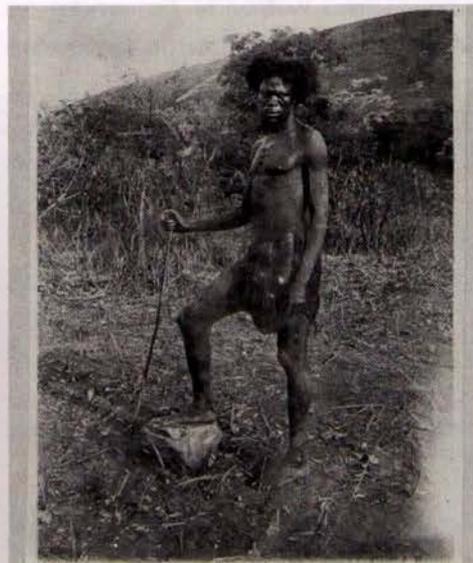
example, a former "Mohammedan" tomb in Lucknow, India, was converted into a residence for the Women's Foreign Missionary Service.

The photographs of people appear in several primary categories: types of people; missionaries; non-Christians, especially when engaged in non-Christian practices; daily lives and home environments; and "after pictures" (as in "before and after"), representing success. Thanks to this last category, we see how Methodists in the early 20th century might have imagined the visual clues of a Christian conversion: the mode of dress, the posture, the facial expressions, the arrangement of people standing in a group. The new Christians, in other words, might begin to look like "us," the North American Methodists of the early 20th century.

ULTIMATE UNDERSTANDINGS

The old mission photo albums give contemporary viewers a treasure trove of information about life around the world a century or more ago. They also show how the organizers of Methodist Episcopal missions understood their own nation and culture through the way they presented the wider world to churches across North America. These early mission leaders saw a world in need, with their own world in a position to help. Unfortunately, they also passed on contemporary notions of racial and cultural superiority. But their photo albums help us understand how global Methodism emerged and remind us that Methodism evolved dramatically through contacts with a variety of cultures and through the power of pictures.

Morris L. Davis is Associate Professor, History of Christianity and Wesleyan/Methodist Studies, Theological School at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey.



2109

Typical Lower
Congo savage.

Africa album, #2109.

truth in images

New World Outlook Photographers

by Christie R. House

In January 1911, the first issue of the *Missionary Voice*—"an official organ of the Board of Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, South," as it proclaimed—rolled off the press. Since then, *New World Outlook* and its predecessor publications have been photojournals of the work of a long line of Methodist boards of mission. Many would say that photos have been the publication's most effective means of communication. As new photo techniques and processes have developed over the last hundred years, the magazine's production has changed and grown to accommodate the latest trends in still images.

From "black box" encased cameras and black-and-white tintype images, through the advent of color film and finally digital photography, the magazine has kept pace with technological advances.

Today, *New World Outlook* is produced entirely in a digital format. Despite its dependence on photographs, the magazine itself has no full-time photographer. The wonderful connective nature of The United Methodist Church has allowed *New World Outlook* to continue its tradition of photojournalism by borrowing photographers!

United Methodist Communica-

tions and its news arm, United Methodist News Service, hired Mike DuBose in 1995 as a staff photographer. Mike was an experienced newspaper photographer for the Nashville *Tennessean* and the Knoxville *News-Sentinel*, among other publications. He has traveled to many mission projects across the denomination and provided *New World Outlook* with a prolific number of excellent images.

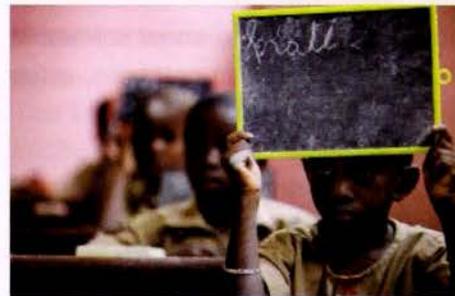
The Rev. Paul Jeffrey has served as a missionary with Global Ministries since 1985. Currently he works as senior correspondent for *Response* magazine, our sister publication for United Methodist Women, and with Action by Churches Together. He and his wife, the Rev. Lyda Pierce, worked as missionaries in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras. Lyda serves as a Mission Interpreter in Residence for the Northeast Jurisdiction. A native of Vancouver, Washington, Paul is an ordained elder in the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference. He has filed stories from more than 60 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. Paul has been trapped in combat, tear-gassed and shot at, taken prisoner by soldiers, and suffered from "every intestinal disorder known to modern science." He's also had what he terms the



Cassandra Zampini



Jayun Jang



Mike DuBose



Paul Jeffrey

"privilege of witnessing the poor become subjects of their own history rather than the objects of someone else's history."

In recent years, *New World Outlook* has endeavored to take on a few interns to help them along in their careers as photographers. Cassandra M. (Heller) Zampini worked with the magazine as an intern during the summer of 2005. Jayun Jang worked with Global Ministries in 2008 and with the magazine on several stories that year. She came from Korea to Chicago to study photography and currently continues her studies at the New York School of Visual Arts. Their photos are featured here as well. Both have continued on their career paths as professional photographers.

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

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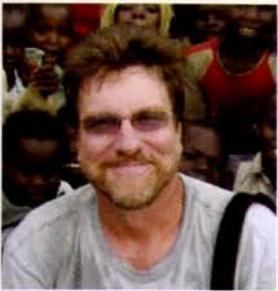
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Girls exer
Refugee

Getting Close

by Paul Jeffrey



The war photographer Robert Capa once said, "If your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough." For a photograph to carry emotional impact, Capa believed, the perception of an intimate relationship between the photo's subject and the viewer was necessary. So taking photos is not something done from a distance. It's a close-contact vocation.

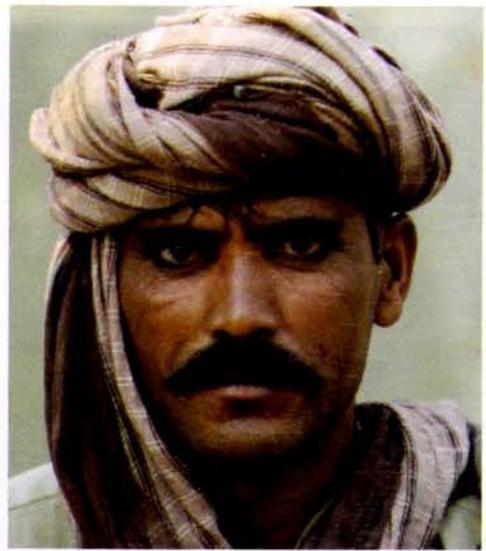
With both words and images, I tell stories of how people struggle for dignity, how they fall in love with God, how they make peace, how they laugh when all I want to do is weep. To be able to tell these stories, I get to travel to some far-off place and wiggle my way into someone's life for a moment or a day. It's a privilege to be given such intimate access to people's lives. Indeed, it's often a painful privilege to get as close as Capa suggested. Over the years I've had close friends tortured and killed, and I've watched hope be dashed over and over again by the powerful forces of death that rule our age.

My ministry as a photographer often involves shooting images of people living through traumatic moments. Whether I'm photographing famine victims or survivors of ethnic cleansing or Pentecostals worshiping, my task is to get close enough to capture some of the emotion and drama that they experience. This doesn't mean that I'm a voyeur; I do this because I strongly believe it's important for people in the Global North to understand the harsh reality lived by people in the Global South.

The poor usually want their story told, so the task isn't as hard as one might fear. In Darfur and eastern Chad, for example, those who have survived brutal attacks by Sudanese government-sponsored militias and have been herded into miserable camps want the world to know what they have lived through.



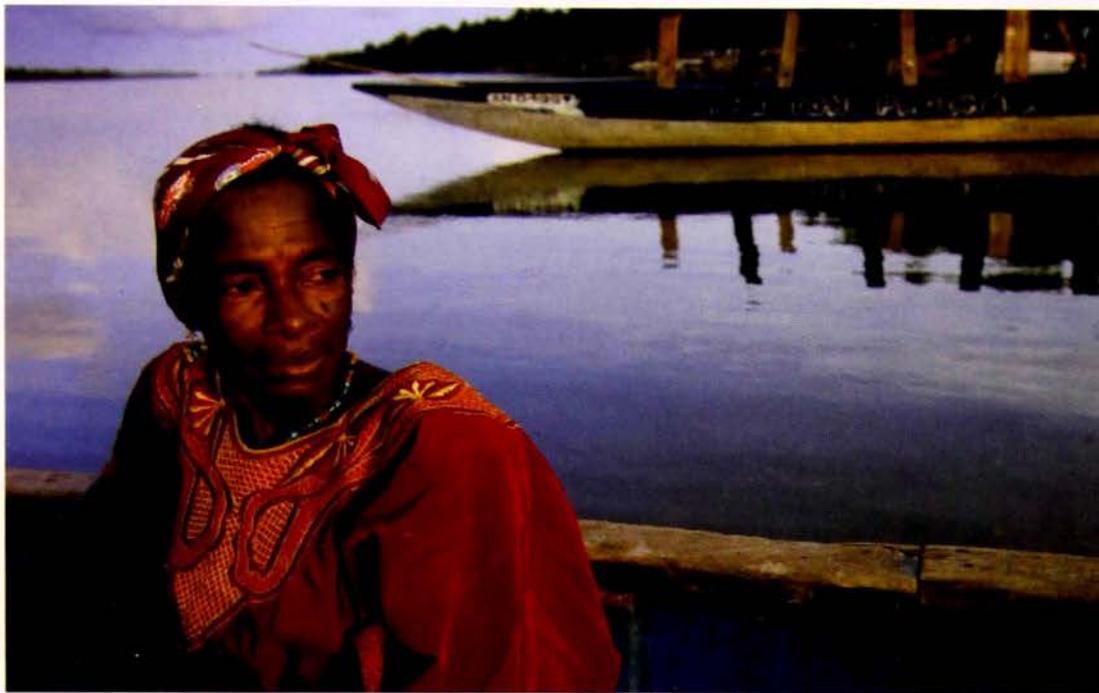
Girls exercise in the physical education class at Al-Zaytoon School, located in the Jabalyia Refugee Camp in the war-torn and isolated Gaza Strip



A man in the Punjab region of Pakistan.

When I wander through the camps, I am warmly welcomed. Moreover, I am repeatedly overwhelmed by the hospitality the poor offer. That's true in many violence-ridden corners of our planet. Those who have literally nothing are quick to offer what little they have—a cup of tea or a meager patch of shade—to a pale and sweaty stranger with a camera. Their dignity is a strong dissuasion from thinking of such people as mere victims, and it's a challenge to me as a photographer to portray them in a way that accurately reflects their dignity.

In the church, with our long legacy of paternalism, we have often been taught that the poor are needy and helpless and that it is our task to resolve their plight. So we sell misery to raise money. But peddling images of people who appear helpless can be a kind of visual colonialism, both unethical and inaccurate. Most human beings bear an enormous reserve of dignity, even when raped, robbed, chased from their homes, and herded into camps where they have to depend on the compassion of others to survive. They are not hopeless objects of our mission but dignified historical subjects, partners with us in making God's compassion and justice real. That's good theology. And good theology deserves good images.



Pauline Nguessan takes her seat on "Noah's Ark," the United Methodist water taxi outside the United Methodist Church in Groguida, Côte d'Ivoire.

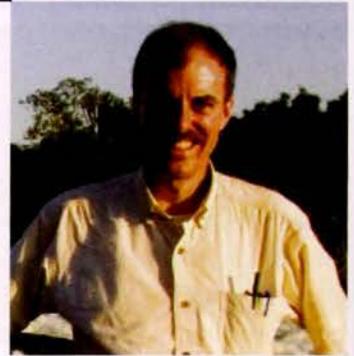
Communicating Across the Barriers

by Mike DuBose

I have always admired the ability of a photograph to communicate quickly and clearly across barriers of language, culture, and even literacy.

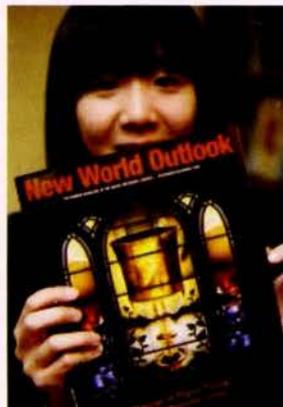
As a daily newspaper photographer, I learned firsthand of the power of photojournalism to change the lives of others.

Harnessing that power in the service of the church allows me to show how connected we all are as God's children. It is both a privilege and an awesome responsibility. I always try to be mindful of the trust placed in me by the people whom I photograph and to share their stories with truth and integrity.



Attaching Significance

by Jayun Jang



When I was 15, I saw a world that I had never seen before through some documentary photos. In the photos I saw people who were poor and hungry. Even though I had never met the people in the photos and they were on the other side of the earth, I could feel what was in their hearts—their suffering and feelings. The photographer indicated that people didn't care about the poor and hungry, yet the

photographer's caring gave significant meaning to the photos. One photo had more meaning than thousands of words could have expressed.

I enjoy capturing "insignificant" subject matter. I believe that photography, in its purest essence, has the power of attaching significant meaning to an object. No matter how insignificant an object might seem in the real world, when its reflected light

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Photographer's Corner

by *Cassandra M. Zampini*



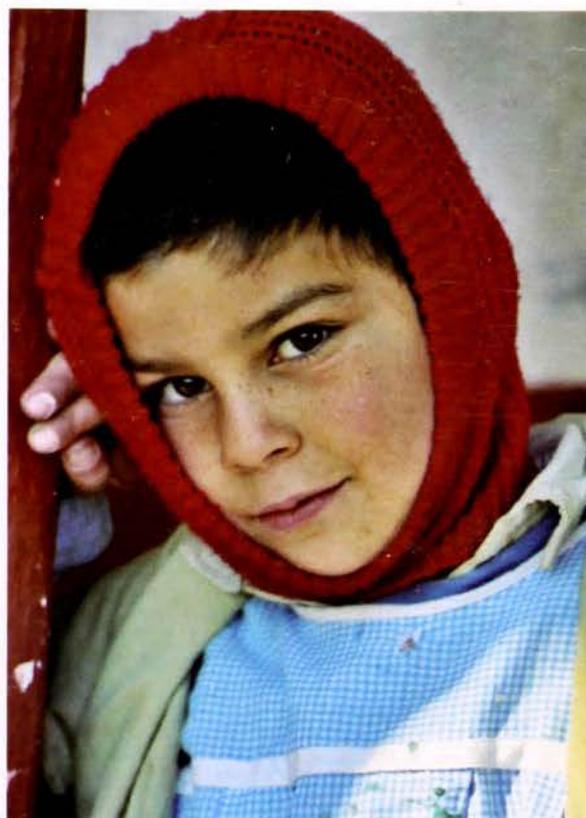
I became interested in photography at a very young age. Capturing the intricacies and beauty of daily life was my main goal.

As I grew older, I began to take interest in photographing people. I wanted to record what people did in their daily lives—hoping to uncover something new, something that others might learn from by seeing another

person's life captured by the camera.

While working as an intern reporter and photojournalist for *New World Outlook* magazine, I was sent to South America to cover the impact of globalization in the small towns of northern Uruguay. The assignment exposed me to the impact of poverty on people's lives. I took hundreds of images, hoping to capture all I could to help people learn about the situation in Uruguay and therefore be inclined to offer assistance. The trip was essential to my decision to become a professional photographer, as I had learned that photography could have a purpose beyond just art. It could be used as a medium to increase awareness and could change a person's perspective.

Ever since the assignment in Uruguay, I have been working professionally as a photographer and have since launched my own business, CMZ Photographics (www.cmzphoto.com), giving me the opportunity to work full time on my passion for photography. Today, I continue striving to tell a story and relay a message in all of my work, whether through complicated studio set-ups or by shooting a record of the lives of others.



A child in Uruguay.

passes through the camera's lens, it becomes a significant record, with a deeper meaning.

I came to the United States not only to study photography but also to be used by God in the big world. I want to take pictures of subjects dear to God's heart. I'm trying to take photos of the subjects through God's eyes, even if the subjects are small things. I believe in the strength of photography that I've experienced.



Children in Peru.

Ken Thompson Rediscovered

by Chris Heckert and Klay S. Williams

In 1960, a 17-year-old high school senior won a photo contest in his hometown and was recommended by his art teacher to an editor working on a magazine for the United Church of Christ (UCC). Ken Thompson shot photos for North Penn High School's yearbook in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, where the UCC had offices. Herman Ahrens, Jr., editor of *Youth* magazine, decided to give the kid a shot. He assigned Thompson to work on a story about a French exchange student attending North Penn, and the young photographer followed her around school for a week, documenting her activities. Ahrens said he could see even then that the kid had talent.



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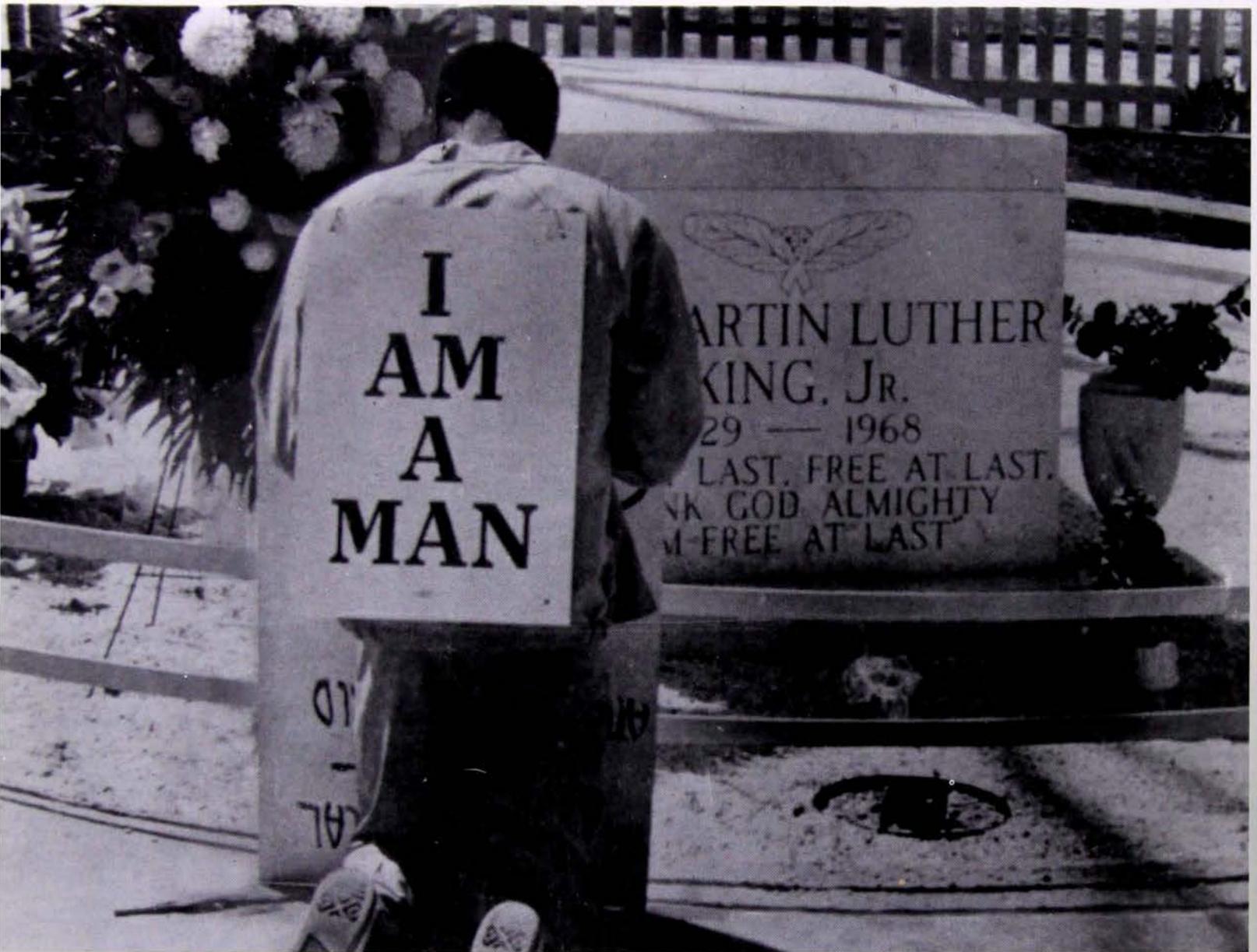
For 10 years, Ken Thompson documented the Civil Rights Movement, capturing images of leaders such as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in their daily activities.

"You could see he knew how to take a good photo," said Ahrens. By the 1960s, *Youth* magazine was becoming an ecumenical publication, which won support and youth representation from 12 different denominations. Ahrens continued to send Thompson out to gather photos of high school students for the magazine. "He gave our magazine a photographic lift," said Ahrens. "Although *Youth* magazine had a number of photographers, Ken's work started the

ball rolling toward excellent photography. The magazine won many ecumenical awards for photography."

Ahrens also began to take Thompson along with him to UCC General Synod meetings and ecumenical youth gatherings. It was at one of these gatherings that Thompson was introduced to the Rev. Bob Spike, hired by the National Council of Churches (NCC) to head its newly formed Commission on Religion and Race in 1963.

Upon assuming his role, Spike immediately reached out to the organizers of the Civil Rights Movement in many direct ways. The NCC trained more than 800 mostly white volunteers to travel to Mississippi and open up "Freedom Schools." This corps of volunteers worked through the summer of 1964 to register black voters, raise bail for jailed civil rights workers, and organize community centers. Ken Thompson was hired by the NCC to document the development of the



Tribute at the grave of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Freedom Schools, follow civil rights leaders, and cover the broader work of the National Council of Churches.

Since the camera's invention, the role of photography in telling stories has been crucial to major movements in history, including wars, social and grassroots movements, political affairs, and cultural formation. A photograph can reveal humanity's triumphs, joys, and optimism, but also its atrocities, injustices, and failings.

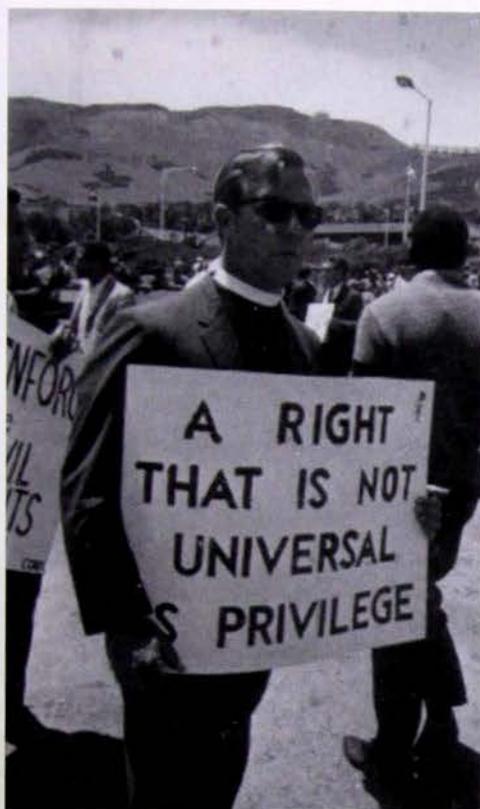
Ken Thompson, hired by the NCC at age 20, was sent to document the Civil Rights Movement at a time when

incredible forces from the religious and secular worlds were coming together to force a change in US society. Many gave their lives to this cause. Words alone of justice, perseverance, witness, hope, and despair—of forgiving love and oppressive hate—can do only so much to communicate the realities that people were experiencing around the country during the 1960s. The power of photography, then and now, brings those deep-rooted emotions to life.

Ken Thompson spent 10 years traveling around the United States, documenting the Civil Rights Movement. He was also hired as a freelance photographer by the Methodist Church's mission board, which became the General Board of Global Ministries after union with the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1968. After three brief years with the board, Thompson died tragically as the result of an accident. Upon his death, the mission agency acquired Thompson's photographs from his family.

This collection of more than 35,000 photographs has remained virtually untouched for the past 35 years. The black-and-white images of struggle and

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Thompson captured many facets of the Civil Rights Movement. Since Thompson was covering events for the National Council of Churches, his volume of work includes worship services and church-related events as well as many historic civil events of the 1960s and early 1970s.



triumph, the voices of witness and resistance, are as relevant today as they were four decades ago. The many individuals represented in the photographs of this collection and the untold story of Ken Thompson's witness behind the lens are finally being rediscovered.

Global Ministries will present a partial exhibition of Thompson's works at The Interchurch Center in New York City during the months of January and February 2010. The exhibit, a tiny portion of the Thompson collection, will be featured as a special kickoff for the 50th Anniversary of The Interchurch Center, home to both the National Council of Churches and the General Board of Global Ministries since the 1950s. A special emphasis on religious leaders and organizers associated with The Interchurch Center during this movement will be a focus of this exhibit.

The Ken Thompson collection captures religious organizers and activists at historic moments throughout the Civil Rights Movement. Examples

of subjects captured in this photographic record are the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Fannie Lou Hamer, Ralph Abernathy, Coretta Scott King, Malcolm X, and the Rev. Bob Spike. As a white photographer, Thompson was also able to shoot events such as Ku Klux Klan rallies to capture another side of the story.

Visitors are welcome to view the collection in the lobby gallery of the Interchurch Center on the upper west side of Manhattan. The exhibit will be open to the general public. For more information, please contact the Rev. Chris Heckert, Associate General Secretary of Mission Communications and Marketing, via email, checkert@gbgm-umc.org, or mail (475 Riverside

Dr., Rm. 1473, New York, NY 10115).

In addition to the exhibit at The Interchurch Center, Ken Thompson's work will also be featured at the United Methodist Women's Assembly, April 29 through March 2, 2010, at the America Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

The Rev. Chris Heckert is Associate General Secretary of Mission Communications and Marketing and Klay S. Williams is Project Manager of Communications and Marketing for the General Board of Global Ministries.

missionmemo



ASIA

UMCOR Philippines celebrated its grand opening on July 24, 2009. Nearly 200 members of the Philippines community, which included bishops, Global Ministries' directors, disaster-response coordinators, and district superintendents, gathered at the Salakot Chapel of the Union Theological Seminary in Cavite, about 50 miles south of Manila. They presented gifts, including the traditional salakot hat, as a reminder that God's workers in the field are protected. This new UMCOR office will serve as a field presence in Asia. Support this new disaster-response effort by contributing to **Philippines Emergency, UMCOR Advance #240235**.

Church Development in the Russian Conference

The development of indigenous leadership as a priority for Eurasia was demonstrated in the East Russia and Central Asia conferences, where the first three indigenous probationary members for Central Asia were commissioned. Also, in Ukraine, the Rev. Sergei Bogomozyuk has taken the position of district superintendent.

Sri Lanka

Over the past several months, nearly 300,000 people have been displaced from their homes in the north of Sri Lanka, creating an urgent need for emergency relief for those in Menik Farm, a camp for the displaced in Vavuniya District. UMCOR, along with partner Muslim Aid, is working to provide clean water for about 4,000 displaced people.

UMCOR recently purchased a tractor and water bowser (portable tank) to help alleviate the growing water and sanitation problems in the camp. United Methodists can support this work by giving to **Sri Lanka Relief and Development, UMCOR Advance #3020630**.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

UMCOR is providing Samuteb Memorial Hospital with new medical equipment, fresh medicine, staff training, community education, and building reconstruction. The hospital, which was significantly damaged

during prolonged civil war, will be available to effectively serve the people living in the surrounding areas. **Hospital Revitalization, UMCOR Advance #982168 or Samuteb Memorial Hospital, UMCOR Advance #00596A**.

DEATHS Anna Spores, retired missionary with 4 years of service in Nigeria, died January 25, 2009... **Phyllis Silvernail**, retired missionary with 9 years of service in Brazil, died February 3, 2009... **Harold Maltery**, retired missionary with 5 months of service in Nigeria, died March 30, 2009... **Morse Saito**, retired missionary with nearly 45 years of service in Japan, died April 27, 2009... **Linnie Jernigan**, retired missionary with nearly 7 years of service in Malaysia and China, died May 6, 2009... **Marie Garst**, retired missionary with 26 years of service in Bangladesh, died May 25, 2009... **Ulysses S. Gray**, retired missionary with 27 years of service in Liberia, died May 29, 2009... **Judith Flach**, retired missionary with 13 years of service in Japan, died June 1, 2009... **Patricia Terry**, retired missionary with 37 years of service in India and Afghanistan, died June 4, 2009... **Hildegard M. Hein**, retired missionary with 7 years of service in Sierra Leone, died June 9, 2009... **John W. Johannaber**, retired missionary with 6 years of service in Russia, died June 9, 2009... **Bette Lea Shafer**, retired missionary with 8 years of service in Cuba and Uruguay, died June 15, 2009... **Paul Temple**, retired missionary with 5 years of service in Sierra Leone, died June 17, 2009... **Donald M. Hill**, retired missionary with 3 years of service in Southern Congo, died June 10, 2009... **Ellen Miller**, retired missionary with 37 years of service in Zimbabwe, died June 19, 2009... **Robert Harland**, retired missionary with nearly 7 years of service in Kenya and United States, died June 25, 2009... **Philip E. Beal**, retired missionary with nearly 10 years of service in Singapore and Korea, died June 30, 2009... **Eugene O. McGraw**, retired missionary with 34 years of service in Malaysia, died July 6, 2009... **Mary J. Nussbaum**, retired missionary with nearly 7 years of service in Southern Congo, died July 7, 2009.

Hurricane Katrina caused the total destruction of Gulfside Assembly in Waveland, Mississippi. Photo: Mike DuBose/UMNS.



RESPONDING TO DISASTER

When disaster strikes, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) uses all its available technological and human resources to answer God's call to respond to those in need.

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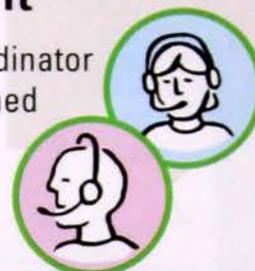
UMCOR DISASTER

1 Disaster strikes



2 UMCOR begins assessment

—disaster coordinator may be dispatched



Assessments include the nature, scope, and severity of the disaster and the need for personnel or supplies that have not been met by other agencies.

5 UMCOR initiates response at invitation of partner and/or affected community.

Response planned to meet need through contact, inquiry, and discussion with affected community. Response may be:

- Funding—affected community or allies apply for an UMCOR Grant 
- Relief supplies—UMCOR kits 
- Technical support or personnel

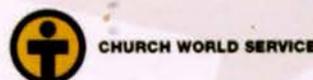


trained staff



mission volunteers

Ongoing coordination



to ensure that relief is most appropriate, not duplicated, and used effectively and efficiently.

- Coordination by monitoring what others are doing via:

- online press releases
- email updates
- conference calls
- attending local coordination meetings



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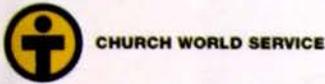
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SAFER RESPONSE

3 Information arrives

UMCOR's partner networks



secular news

Communication from those affected



phone call from bishop or affected church conference



UM Missionaries

4 UMCOR sends communication updates about the disaster



broadcasts



bulletins

Raises funds for response through  **The Advance**
Advancing hope in Christ's name

Provides information to public, church, and donors



phone calls



email and internet alerts



information to church and public



local church offerings

6 UMCOR communicates public



7 UMCOR provides ongoing updates on response

—sometimes for years—throughout recovery phase

Information gathered from folks who are responding on the ground—including local churches, conference partners, NGOs, missionaries, and staff—through reports, pictures, and updates



email



phone



fax



blogs



newsletters

Appeal for additional support as necessary

Management and response to requests for alternate contributions

- Communication with the public about the most appropriate contributions as opposed to unneeded supplies. In most cases, monetary contributions are best because funds can be sent directly to those in need to purchase goods from local suppliers—which also helps to support recovering local economies.

Response

Requests—new or existing Emergency Response Teams directing donors to online giving through church channels

Recovery work in Sri Lanka after the 2004 "Christmas" tsunami. Photo: Paul Jeffrey/ACT International.



BEING THERE IN TIMES OF NEED

UMCOR's response when disaster strikes depends on United Methodist churches and congregations the world over.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Special Offering—given through local congregations annually

International Disaster Response

Advance # 982450

Domestic Disaster Response

Advance #901670



New World Outlook's Reader's Survey

Dear Reader:

Thank you for the interest in United Methodist mission work that has led you to read and, we hope, subscribe to *New World Outlook*. To help us at the General Board of Global Ministries better understand your needs and preferences, please take time to fill out the reader's survey below. Then tear it out of the magazine at the perforations and mail it back to us (our address is at the end). Or, you can respond to the survey online at <http://gbgm-umc.org/nwo> and send it to us electronically. We'll greatly appreciate it, either way, for it will enable us to serve you better.

Multiple Choice Questions (check all that apply):

1. I first found out about *New World Outlook*

- A. At my church.
 B. On the web at the Global Ministries' site.
 C. As a member of United Methodist Women (UMW).
 D. In an advertisement that sparked my interest.
 E. In another way: _____

2. I subscribe to and/or read *New World Outlook* because:

- A. I need it for my church's mission work.
 B. It's part of the UMW reading program.
 C. My UMW group recommends it.
 D. My pastor or church staff recommends it.
 E. It supplements my studies at Schools of Christian Mission.
 F. I enjoy it and learn a lot from it.

3. The features I like best or use most often are:

- A. The articles.
 B. The photos.
 C. Readers' Response.
 D. Mission Memo.
 E. Centerfold Features.
 F. Bulletin Inserts.
 G. The website.

4. I'm especially interested in articles about:

- A. Missionaries.
 B. UMCOR disaster response.
 C. Church growth at home or worldwide.
 D. Volunteer ministries.
 E. Regional community work.
 F. Global Ministries' board meetings.
 G. Advance projects for second-mile giving.
 H. New Global Ministries programs and initiatives.
 I. Current events in mission.
 J. Other _____

5. The articles are:

- Too long Too short Just right in length

6. Use of photos:

- Too many Not enough Just the right amount

Short Yes or No Questions:

1. I want to keep getting the printed magazine by mail. Yes No
 2. I'd like larger magazine photos that I could use in church. Yes No
 3. I'd be willing to pay for enlarged 8" by 10" photos. Yes No
 4. I'd be willing to pay for poster-sized copies of photos and features. Yes No

New World Outlook's Reader's Survey

5. I'd like to see a complete version of the magazine online. Yes No
6. I'd like to see an online version with extra features. Yes No
7. I'd appreciate online links to authors and photographers. Yes No
8. I'd like to download website features, such as slide shows Yes No
- or videos, for use in worship, Sunday school, or workshops. Yes No

I Want You to Know:

1. I think the magazine is doing these things especially well: _____

2. My thoughts on the magazine's appearance, design, readability, and relevance are: _____

3. I think the magazine could be improved in the following ways: _____

4. I have had a problem with mail delivery of the magazine. (If so, what, when, and how often?)

5. Here is how I use or want to use *New World Outlook*: _____

6. Another magazine I like a lot is: _____

7. What I like about this other publication is: _____

8. A website I like to visit is: (name and web address)

9. What I like about this other website is: _____

10. Here is how I use or want to use the *New World Outlook* website: _____

Reader Information

My copy of *New World Outlook* comes to this address:

Street address or PO box: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

My age is (check one):

- Under 20 20 to 35 36 to 55
 56 to 65 66 +

My level of education is (check the latest degree received):

- High School diploma
 College—associate's degree
 College—bachelor's degree
 Graduate School

I am:

- Clergy—Pastor of a local church
 Clergy—Other
 Laity—UMW member
 Laity—UMM member
 Laity—Not a member of UMW or UMM

Thank you for taking this survey!

Please return it by November 30, 2009, to:

Christie R. House
Editor, *New World Outlook*
475 Riverside Drive, Room 1476
New York, NY 10115

VERA'S NOTEBOOK

by Vera Moore



At age 60, I met and fell in love with the internet. One of my first discoveries was that United Methodist churches could apply for free web space on the General Board of Global Ministries' website. I decided that our church should have a webpage. After I submitted a sample design to my church's administrators, I received the reply, "You have our permission to proceed as volunteer webmaster."

OUR CHURCH ON THE INTERNET

I soon discovered that I could access a support group for beginning webpage designers through UMConnect, a webpage on Global Ministries' website. Through that email discussion site, with its warm, friendly atmosphere, I found experienced web designers and publishers who enjoyed sharing critiques and helpful advice with beginners. Oh, the joys of web publishing! It is like putting jigsaw puzzles together and then sharing the results of your efforts with the world. However, unlike jigsaw puzzling, in web publishing we find that the site is never really finished. In fact it is ever-changing and requires regular updating and routine maintenance.

The simple design I came up with soon created enough interest and garnered enough support that the church assigned its site management to a paid member of the church staff. From the simple beginning of "here we are; here is our mission," Christ United Methodist Church of Mobile, Alabama, (<http://www.christumcmobile.com/>) can now not only offer a variety of features but even provide a streaming real-time webcast of its worship services for those who are unable to come to church. My husband, for example, is not a computer person and has limited vision, but he can still enjoy our worship services on DVD, viewing them on his special-needs television set.

The church saves postage by publishing its 20-page monthly newsletter on the website, providing the opportunity for United Methodist Women and other groups and committees in the church to share their news in living color. Promotional announcements are designed on volunteers' computers and sent to a church staff member who formats each one to fit its allotted space. Not only does this keep church groups informed of their

mission responsibilities, it allows the entire church community to know what its members are doing. The newsletter is printed and mailed to those with no internet access.

Christ UMC has a significant outreach program that includes a recreational ministry which reaches out to church members and nonmembers alike. The recreation minister sends out an email announcement every Monday morning, usually including a personal memo and an inspirational message for those who have volunteered to be prayer partners for young people involved in seasonal sports teams. "The children and youth are informed that you will be praying for each of them by name every day throughout the season," the recreation minister writes. "Pray for their safety and for the Holy Spirit to be alive and evident in each life." Our congregation is connected by technology in so many ways today that we tend to take all of this communication for granted.

BEYOND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Just as our church reaches out to many through the web, people in the United Methodist connection beyond our local church reach out to me. I received New Year's greetings from the lay leader of the Alabama-West Florida Conference via an email message that invited me and other laity to join her in reading through the entire Bible





Author Vera Moore at her laptop notebook.

in 2009. My free membership with Bibleinayear.org brings me reminders of each day's readings. But since I prefer to listen rather than read, I find the voice of Alexander Scourby, narrating the King James Version as provided by Audio Bible, a wonderfully worshipful experience.

The Mobile District office emails daily notices of district happenings and prayer concerns to those church members in the district on its email list. Ongoing discussion about what content is appropriate for web transmission is shared within our district family by emails.

Today, any local church member can connect to the church's national and international agencies in ways that were never possible before the creation of the internet. For instance, as newspapers and newscasts cover a disaster, Global Ministries gives United Methodists the opportunity to search through Advance projects by location or type of ministry. This means that I can immediately channel my online giving to the exact area for which we are called to offer prayer and provide support. If a special Advance number has been designated as a channel through which to send funds for emergency relief, information can be found on the website of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) or in the weekly

UMCOR Hotline message sent out by email. You can sign up to receive the UMCOR Hotline on the UMCOR.org website.

Frequently the UMCOR Hotline message makes me aware of a need before I hear or see news of it in the mass media. In fact, Global Ministries' webpages contain such a great quantity of information that it is sometimes a challenge to find what you are looking for. A trick I've learned is to send an email to info@gbgm-umc.org, which generally brings a prompt response and a link to the correct site. We don't even need to try to remember this email address because it appears at the bottom of every Global Ministries webpage. Simply click the button and ask your question.

For those interested in volunteering to work at United Methodist or other mission projects, Volunteer-in-Mission opportunities are posted on Global Ministries' mission volunteers website. For

those who are homebound and cannot travel to places where mission volunteers are at work, a visit to a project's website can be the next best thing. For instance, Bethlehem Bible College, a long-time Methodist mission partner, gives internet visitors an opportunity to view its craft shop online—and also to learn about the work of two United Methodist missionaries assigned there, Alex and Brenda Awad.

MyGBGM, a Global Ministries email subscription service, sends off notices of items added to Global Ministries' webpages as soon as they are uploaded. On MyGBGM, I am able to choose which topics I want to receive notices about—such as evangelization or human rights—or I can choose to receive web stories that concern particular countries.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

While email provides a constant communication with fellow church members and denominational friends, Facebook provides immediate viewing of what friends around the world are doing at any given moment. A student friend I know, who is studying in Spain, reports: "Having a great time in Madrid but also missing everyone back home!" and later notes: "Rough week of school coming up!" Social networking also provides the chance for great-grandmothers to brag a bit: "It's going to be a girl—11th ggchild (great-grandchild) and 2nd ggdaughter (great-granddaughter). A post like that is most certainly followed by congratulations from family, friends, coworkers, and even acquaintances near and far. No time or money need be spent telephoning—and everyone can receive the good news at the same time.

I was delighted when one of my former Sunday school students found me on Facebook. After searching through keepsakes, I was able to post a picture of the pupil and her Sunday school classmates on my Facebook page.

For those who are on Twitter, a free subscription messaging service, United Methodist Women posts missionary birthdays and prayer concerns daily. When I want to know more about a person in mission for whom I am praying, I visit the Mission Personnel website at Global Ministries. It provides a searchable database of United Methodist missionaries, with biographies and photographs for most of them.

Does social networking produce passive participants? No way! Facebook, for instance, has all kinds of online games that members can play. Farm Town and African Safari are two of my favorites. If you play the African Safari game,

the site will contribute something toward Nothing But Nets if you click on the site and tell it to do so. Nothing But Nets provides bed nets to protect people in tropical climates from mosquito-borne disease, especially malaria. Of course, you can always contribute directly to Nothing But Nets (Advance # 982015)—and to many other Advance projects—by visiting the Advance website and making a donation with a credit card.

As a Farm Town player, I can plan a farm, grow and harvest crops, and help tend neighboring farms. A number of my friends play this game. We knew that Facebook was already contributing to Nothing But Nets through African Safari. So we decided to use our organizational skills and combine our efforts to encourage the owner of Farm Town to do likewise, allowing us to contribute to a worthy cause, such as ending world hunger. While I have no success to report at the time of this writing, I hope the suggestion will be adopted soon.

I am a polio survivor. As attendance at meetings becomes more and more difficult for me, online support groups are there to fill my needs. I have found a website for polio survivors on which

we can share our knowledge of new devices, news on medications, and new procedures in polio treatment. This kind of networking keeps polio survivors current even when there is no local physician who specializes in the aftereffects of polio.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE WORLD

Technology provides immediate gratification for those seeking a book to read. A Facebook post revealed a friend was enjoying Colin Tudge's book, *The Link*. It's about "Ida" the 47 million-year-old complete primate fossil recovered from a shale pit outside Messel, Germany. A couple of clicks began the download of the preferred audio version (other versions are also available) and, within minutes, I joined my friend in reading the same book.

Social networking enables participation in activities beyond our physical limitations. For example, I enjoy bird-watching with Nancy Carter as she posts photos of her latest spotting. I can collect virtual gems that never need dusting, and catch butterflies without damaging the species. I also relish theater reviews sent from New York City friends as soon as the performances are over. Such commu-

nication connects me to the world of those who are able to go places and do things that my physical limitations deny me.

CONNECTED WITH THE WORLD

After eleven years of answering the General Board of Global Ministries' Mission Information Line, I enter the world of retirement knowing that I will remain fully connected with my church, my coworkers, and my friends. Perhaps I'll have time to develop a Sunday school game. I'm envisioning a virtual church with classrooms where students progress not by age level but by finding scriptures, becoming involved in virtual mission projects, and sharing the stories of Jesus with people all around the world.

Lonely? Isolated? Bored? Never, when I am united with the world within my notebook!

Vera Moore, of Mobile, Alabama, is a retired staff member of the General Board of Global Ministries, a polio survivor, an internet aficionado, and an expert in web communications.



WEBSITES REFERENCED

Free Web Hosting <http://gbgm-umc.org/churches/>

UMConnect <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/connections/lists/umconnect/>

Christ United Methodist Church – Mobile, Alabama <http://www.christumcmobile.com/>

Audio Bible <http://www.audio-bible.com>

Advance Project Search Form <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/advance/projects/search/>

Bible in a Year <http://www.Bibleinayear.org>

Volunteer-in-Mission Opportunities <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/about/us/mv/programs/>

Bethlehem Bible College Gift Shop <http://www.bethlehembiblecollege.edu/gift-shop.htm>

Mission Personnel <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/work/missionaries/biographies/>

MyGBGM <http://gbgm-umc.org/mygbgm/register.cfm>



Photo: G. Pirozzi/UMNS.

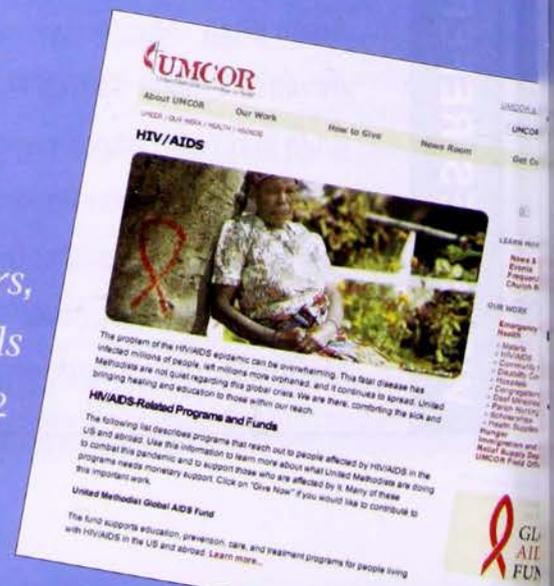
Globally, 17 million women and 18.8 million men between ages 15 and 49 live with HIV/AIDS. Global Ministries' first web-based networking site was launched to help people affected by HIV/AIDS connect with each other to counter their social isolation.

Photo: G. Pirozzi/UMNS.

Christian Hospitality Is Never Out-of-Date Online Ministry in Changing Technological Times

by Nancy A. Carter

*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,
for by doing that some have entertained angels
without knowing it. —Hebrews 13: 1b-2*



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When my father urged me to go online in 1991, I said no. Somehow, I knew that "logging in" would change my life. Actually, the internet has dramatically altered all our lives, whether we use it or not. Having worked with online communications for the General Board of Global Ministries for more than 16 years, I am sometimes overwhelmed by the number and pace of changes.

In the early 1990s, while I was still refusing to get involved, Cathie Lyons and Charles Carnahan, executives of the agency's Health and Welfare Ministries, decided to launch a dial-up electronic bulletin board system (BBS) for HIV/AIDS ministries. They hired consultant Tom Madron to help them choose equipment and software that fit their needs and criteria.

When I finally did go online, I did so for relational reasons. After my mother died in 1992, I ordered dial-up service in order to communicate regularly with my father. My first email to him was on his birthday, January 2, 1993.

Soon I discovered "message boards." Tying up my phone line for hours, I participated in electronic discussions about the Bible, theology, and the church. I had expected civil debate, not personal attacks, but I was "flamed" by some Christians who disagreed with me. So when Cathie Lyons invited me to oversee Computerized AIDS Ministries (CAM), I definitely knew what CAM should not be.

EARLY ONLINE SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

We are simply trying to embody the spirit and belief that people living with HIV disease are of infinite worth in the Creator's eyes, and as people of faith we are called to respond to people who are hurting.

(Charles Carnahan, in "Unique AIDS Programs," AIDS Alert, American Health Consultants, Inc., Atlanta, GA, 1993.)

The CAM bulletin board system (CAM BBS) was launched in June 1993. Consistent with criteria that staff established for the free service, CAM offered two 212 (Manhattan) phone lines and two 800 dial-up lines for people who could not afford long distance charges. CAM was also accessible to visually impaired individuals who could use screen readers (computer voice software) to read and write messages.

CAM was run on the principle of Christian hospitality. Our community guidelines included an affirmation from Health and Welfare's "Covenant to Care" program: "If you have HIV/AIDS or are the loved one of a person who has HIV/AIDS, you are welcome here...."

Soon we came to realize that CAM's members were connecting with one another not only through the discussion forums but also through the post office ("snail mail"), telephone, and face-to-face meetings. No wonder a West Coast reporter dubbed CAM the "Electronic Church on the Information Superhighway." As CAM became more like a church community, some of its participants looked on me as their pastor. For example, after a beloved participant died in a car accident, another member of CAM asked me to officiate at the memorial service for her.

Our "CAM-munity," as we called it, became a lifeline for people who were homebound or isolated for various reasons, not only from AIDS. One bed-bound young woman with a rare degenerative disease volunteered to write on CAM daily. Near the end of her short life, she could not even talk on the telephone because a tube was in her throat, but she could dial up and type



Richard and Catherine Cory pose with their son Alex in this undated family photograph. Catherine Cory died Nov. 19 after contracting AIDS from a blood transfusion during Alex's birth. Alex is also infected with the virus. The family found support from the Computerized AIDS Ministries network of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. A UMNS photo courtesy of the Cory family.

on a laptop computer that friends had given her.

A number of people with a variety of disabilities joined CAM. I learned later that people who were deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing were early users of electronic communication tools such as email and the World Wide Web. Health and Welfare Ministries launched the Disability Concerns (DISC) forum in late November 1995. Then, as now, Charlotte Shepard managed DISC, which today is an egroup that can be accessed via email and the web. (CAM's egroup closed on December 31, 2008, after 15 ½ years of service.)

The success of CAM and DISC required a considerable commitment of time by staff members, consultants, and members of the communities themselves.

"[Nancy Carter] told us about a new place that would welcome us... Many of us were suspicious because of negative experiences with the church. We were afraid of judgment and condemnation. We found peace and hope and love."

(Belle Bacall, quoted in "AIDS Widow Uses Computer Bulletin Board to Ease Grief," United Methodist News Service, May 17, 1994.)

ACCESSIBILITY AND THE WEB

The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect.

(Tim Berners-Lee, W3C director and inventor of the World Wide Web [Web Accessibility Initiative, or WAI]).

Global Ministries' first webpage debuted in May 1995, on the eve of the "browser wars." These rivalries began in July 1995 when Microsoft launched Internet Explorer 1.0. As Microsoft targeted the popular Netscape Communicator and competed to grab more and more market share, proprietary and non-standard enhancements were added to both Netscape and Internet Explorer.

These corporate battles for browser dominance caused collateral damage. People who used screen readers to listen to the webpages encountered barriers that had not existed previously. Some sites became totally inaccessible. Web designers had to figure out for themselves how to handle the incompatibilities among browsers. The Web Standards project states the problem bluntly: "By releasing browsers that failed to uniformly support standards, manufacturers needlessly fragmented the Web, injuring designers, developers, users, and businesses alike." ("WaSP: Fighting for Standards" <http://www.webstandards.org/about/mission/>)

Some developers decided to design their sites for Internet Explorer only or for Netscape only. Global Ministries' approach in the second half of the 1990s was to incorporate enhancements from both browsers as long as the code markup did not interfere with the use of screen readers or of Lynx, a plain-text web browser. Eventually, the agency stopped trying to design for all browsers and used web standards instead. (The World Wide Web Consortium—[W3C] at

A child pitches in Buen Samaritano ("The Good Samaritan"), a village of 272 families displaced by Hurricane Mitch, near Nueva Frontera, Honduras. In 1998, disaster coverage of Hurricane Mitch included email updates for the first time.



<http://www.w3.org>—issued the first Web Content Accessibility Standards on May 5, 1999; version 2.0 was released in December 2008.)

Global Ministries' website developed as a direct result of the earlier work of Health and Welfare Ministries. The agency's first webpage was for CAM. From the beginning, internet accessibility was a major concern. Today Global Ministries' website is still more accessible than many others—though it's not as accessible as it once was.

CONNECTING THE CHURCH IN MISSION

We see UMCCommunities helping to connect the church in mission in this era of electronic communications. We hope that people of all ages and cultures will find it of value. We especially welcome teenagers and young adults.

(Christopher Heckert, associate general secretary for Mission Communications, in "UMCommunities: Connecting Around Faith and Mission," Global Ministries press release, May 8, 2009.)

Another example of Global Ministries' electronic Christian hospitality is its free web-hosting service, launched publicly in February 1996. The free web-space program is a means to literally "connect the church in mission."

Today, although most annual conferences and large-membership churches have moved to other web servers, Global Ministries still hosts more than 7,000 groups. Many small churches especially appreciate the gift of 20 megabytes of free web space, with no ads, on a broader United Methodist website. By mid-2010, Global Ministries hopes to install new web-hosting software, significantly upgrading the basic features currently available to electronic guests.

Global Ministries also runs a free electronic discussion group called "UM-

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE YOU BEGIN AN ONLINE MINISTRY

- What are your motivations, plans, and goals for your electronic ministry? Are these consistent with your Christian values and ethics? How will you offer hospitality?
- Who has access to the method of communication that you plan to use? Are there any barriers that should be removed so that you can reach your targeted audiences?
- Is your web design, including navigation and web forms, accessible?
- Do you have the capacity and the commitment to maintain the electronic services that you begin? (This is especially important for support groups.)

Photo: Paul Johnson

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Connect." There, more than 500 United Methodists discuss their electronic ministries and can receive help in creating and running their websites, regardless of their internet service provider. This email list was founded by the Rev. David Mullens. In January 1995, he began an unofficial website called "The United Methodist Church ONLINE!" This site predated the launch of the official site at umc.org, and the unofficial site is online no longer. Later, Global Ministries hosted the Mullens list on its Lyris server and then became the list owner. One of the reasons why Lyris was chosen in the mid-1990s was that it met Global Ministries' criteria for accessibility.

In May 2009, in partnership with Brick River, Global Ministries launched a new online message board called UMCommunities.org. The agency plans to encourage and equip United Methodist missionaries, conference secretaries of Global Ministries, and other mission-minded Methodists to become active participants on this website, along with other users of the free service.

well. For example, on September 11, 2001, within hours of the attack on the World Trade Center, the agency had posted a prayer and some basic information about the United Methodist response. This work was done even as some employees at 475 Riverside Drive could look south and see the smoke rising in lower Manhattan. Soon, Global Ministries was receiving compassionate emails from all over the world.

Those of us at Global Ministries have, to the best of our abilities, operated on the web from a stance of Christian hospitality, particularly in regard to accessibility for people with disabilities and those with slower computer connections. Sometimes that has meant avoiding complex technologies and adopting free web hosting and a free 800 phone line so that those who might not otherwise



Above: Residents of Buen Samaritano ("The Good Samaritan"), rebuild homes after Hurricane Mitch. **Right:** The Rev. Constance Smith (right) lights a candle with Lonny LeFever during the 2006 "Lighten the Burden" Conference on HIV/AIDS in Washington.

CHANGES AND TRANSITIONS

This year I retire as Global Ministries' web manager. In mid-July 1976, while still in my 20s, I began my sojourn in New York City shortly after the tall ships had sailed up the Hudson River to celebrate the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence. At the General Board of Global Ministries, I began as the book editor for United Methodist Women.

Never could I have imagined the world of church publications as it is today. Then, the agency's highest-tech editorial tool was an electronic typewriter, so church communications moved much more slowly. People putting out publications sent big, fat envelopes of typed text and photographs to the printer using the US standard mail service. Today, a file can be emailed or put on a server for retrieval within seconds of its posting!

The increasing popularity of the internet changed people's expectations concerning how quickly they could receive information about a current event or an emergency. By the time Hurricane Mitch hit in October 1998, United Methodists wanted to know how their church was responding as soon as the disaster made the network news. Global Ministries learned this lesson



be able to afford the service can have access to it.

Technology, like society and life, is constantly changing, but Christian hospitality and other core Christian values never go out of style.

The Rev. Nancy A. Carter is general manager of Global Ministries' website.

MISSIONARY COMMUNICATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by Janet W. May, Suzanne Funk, and Katherine T. Parker



Katherine Parker teaches health outreach to pastors at the Methodist Bible School, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Photo: Richard Lord.

We asked a few of our missionaries to reflect on two themes: their use of the new communication technologies as part of their work, and the contrast between what is available to them and what is available to people in the communities they serve. Janet and Roy May have served as missionaries since 1973. They have seen many changes in the methods they use to stay connected to their colleagues, students, friends, family, and supporting churches. Suzanne and John Funk began serving in Bolivia in 2006. They had to be both creative and determined in order to reach their US constituency from rural Bolivia. Katherine T. Parker has served as a missionary since 2000. Currently, she posts two blog sites to keep her constituency back home connected to the work of the church in Cambodia.

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TECHNOLOGY AND MISSION SERVICE

by Janet W. May

Mind-boggling changes have taken place over the last three decades in the ways that we communicate with our family, friends, and supporting churches. At our first mission placement in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in 1973, a phone call to the United States was impossible. We would write letters, make an appointment, and go over to another mission organization to use its ham radio. There, a phone-patch conversation would proceed from us at one radio, through a ham operator in the United States, to the telephone we wanted to call.

Today, in our present missionary assignment as professors at the Latin American Biblical University (UBL) in San Jose, Costa Rica, we have three choices for making phone calls—land-line, cell phone, or Skype.*

Sending out mission letters was another challenge in 1973. For years, First United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas, maintained our address list. We would send a mission letter by regular mail to New York for printing; then the copies were sent to the church in Texas, where the envelopes were prepared and the letters mailed. The returned, undeliverable mail was set aside and sent to us in a packet so that we could provide the church with updates for the address list. All of this database maintenance had to be done by hand. Because of the

expense involved, we could use only black-and-white photos on one side of a single sheet that was printed on both sides. In 1973, the extent of our contact with our supporters was four mailings for the year.

Now, we type a letter by computer, add color pictures, format it in pdf, and send it out electronically. There is no cost for printing, postage, or mailing labels. The number of mailings and pages are unrestricted, as is the length of the mailing list. And the



Violetta Rocha, president of UBL.

communication is instant. We post the letter on our web page (<http://www.momotidae.net>), and churches add a link so that our supporters can keep up with us. We add additional photos at the Picasa* website, check in now and then on Facebook, and keep up individual contacts with email or Skype. Our supporting churches love these frequent contacts, and so do we. I also maintain the English-language portion of the university's web page (<http://ubila.net>).

As a university professor, I can teach classes and guide students working on theses in any country. I've taught two courses by making the materials available online and using email for sending and receiving assignments. About 15 students from nine different countries were able to advance in their studies without



UBL training event: Photos courtesy Janet and Roy May.

having to come to Costa Rica. Now, I'm exploring Moodle, a widely used electronic educational software program, and I hope to set up at least one course before I retire.

There are other things we could do, such as post videos on YouTube. We haven't explored all the options. Over all, communications have changed drastically for the better. I can't imagine what the next 20 years will bring.

*Skype, currently owned by e-bay, is free software that enables phone conversations and video transfers to other Skype users over the internet.

*Picasa is a software download from Google that allows users to organize, receive, and send photos.

The Rev. Janet May teaches pastoral theology courses on gender issues and ministry, feminist theology, sexuality, and qualitative research and ministry at the Latin American Biblical University (UBL) in San Jose, Costa Rica. Rev. May serves with her husband, the Rev. Roy May, who teaches ethics and theology at UBL.

Check Out Our Websites

For the Revs. Janet and Roy May:
<http://www.momotidae.net>

UBL website:
<http://ubila.net>



Graduation ceremony at UBL in Costa Rica.

ISOLATED, YET STILL CONNECTED

by Suzanne Funk

In 2006, John and I decided to answer a call to missionary service, participated in interviews, took part in two mission trips, and went through training in New York. We sold our house and our belongings and headed to Bolivia. Things were changing so rapidly, we decided to set up a website to let people know what was happening.

Arriving in Bolivia in the midst of some unrest, we found that the website was an excellent way to communicate with our family, friends, and supporting churches. We could let them know we were okay and help them understand the reality of what we faced as Americans living in Bolivia.

We were assigned to Rio Colorado Technical High School, an agricultural school established in the jungles of Bolivia almost 25 years before. There, we had electricity for three hours each day, thanks to a generator at the school. We had no internet or email and a cell phone that worked only occasionally. Yet we realized, rather quickly, how blessed we were. The students at our school have no electricity or running water in their homes. Many live in a one-room house with a thatched roof and very little else.

Because we have no easy way to communicate with our supporters in the outside world, our website has proved to be an invaluable tool. We go to the nearest pueblo (village) with an internet connection to update our website with news and sometimes photos. We look forward to these 2½ hour trips on dirt roads and try to make them once every four to six weeks—or eight weeks if we've had rain.

People in the United States enjoy our website updates, but many enjoy the photographs we post there the most. Pictures show us that we have much more in common with those in other cultures than we have differences.

Unlike Rio Colorado, the larger cities in Bolivia, such as Cochabamba, La Paz, and Santa Cruz, have television, internet connections, and other communication outlets. In fact, internet cafés are a popular place for young people to hang out. Our young people know about these things but would have to travel a long way to utilize them. After high school graduation, many choose to live and study in the city.

An enormous obstacle for the older people in the communities we serve

is that many do not speak Bolivia's official language, Spanish. More than 30 tribal languages are still spoken in Bolivia. Older



Above: The freshmen class of Rio Colorado Technical Agricultural High School opens the Science/Math Fair with a little music.

Right: Gary explains the answer that he came up with to other students. Photos: Courtesy the Funk family.



Newly renovated classrooms.

people tend to get their news by radio or word of mouth. Often, the children translate information that their elders need to know.

Correspondence from the school to parents is either written or sent by word of mouth. Families may not have telephones in their homes, but some communities have a public phone and a loudspeaker. To speak to a parent, we can place a call to a community phone. The operator announces the person's name over the loudspeaker, someone in the community notifies the parent, and eventually the parent comes to the phone to talk.

Through God's word, and through other people placed in our paths, God communicates with us. We were made in God's image and were designed to be in communication. In our three years of service here, we have learned to communicate in ways very different from those we'd use if we were still in the United States.

Suzanne Funk is the Coordinator of Community Development at Rio Colorado Technical Agricultural High School in Rio Colorado, Bolivia. She serves with her husband, John Funk, the school's director.

Check Out Our Websites

For Suzanne and John Funk:
<http://www.funk4.com>

Photo: Courtesy the Funk family

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A JOYFUL EXPRESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

by Katherine T. Parker

When I first worked as a Mission Intern in Japan and Iowa 2000 to 2003, I communicated with friends and family through mass emails. I quickly learned that people have difficulties staying engaged with long, wordy email communications.

Since coming to Cambodia, I have updated people through short emails on a more regular basis, with links to my blog for viewing pictures and reading more if interested. I update two blogs: one with personal reflections; the other, a blog about our Community Health and Agricultural Development (CHAD) program.

Given the fast pace and distractions of modern life, I find it difficult to sustain interest in building a global partnership across vast distances.

I also use Twitter to update Facebook and check my email on my phone when traveling in the province. For my recent visit back to the United States, I sent out a tweet and a pastor in one of my supporting churches responded almost instantly via Facebook. She was in the middle of a



Photo: Richard Lord

In Takeo, Cambodia, missionary Marilyn Chan talks with a member of the weaving micro-enterprise project.

mission committee meeting and we scheduled a visit.

About two-thirds of the pastors in the Cambodian church have a cell phone. Text messaging is a critical way for us to stay connected. We arrange district gatherings or schedule a visit for a sick person in the province to come to Phnom Penh for specialized medical care. While landlines and grid electricity are still rarely found outside the larger cities, the leap-frog technology of cell phones is opening new opportunities for communication. Cell phones can be charged on car batteries. The more technologically savvy pastors can even access the internet on their phones and teaching these kinds of skills is a major outreach activity of our churches to the booming youth population.

My writing style and stories have evolved through feedback from my readers. Since many who follow the blog are "unchurched," a side effect of my becoming more forthright about my mission is how I've become more vulnerable in sharing the spirituality

and theology involved. I hope to introduce these readers to the difference between individual humanitarian action and the collective work of building the Kingdom of God. By allowing my readers and supporters to understand the intentionality in our effort to effect development, I hope to reinforce the idea that, although we may seem to be working independently on various different actions in our respective locations around the world, we are all working for the same goals. The work here in Cambodia is connected to work elsewhere, and it is all a joyful expression of our Christian faith.

Katherine T. Parker is a missionary serving the Community Health and Agricultural Development Initiative of the Methodist Mission in Cambodia.

Check Out the Blogs

Katherine T. Parker:
<http://bokashi.blogspot.com>

CHAD:
<http://chad-cambodia.blogspot.com>



In Takeo, Cambodia, Katherine Parker trains a women's group member to monitor a rain water collection receptacle for waterborne pathogens.



Photo: Paul Jeffrey/ACT

COMMUNICATION AS MISSION

by Glory E. Dharmaraj

In her book, *Outside the Ark*, artist Ellen O'Grady recaptures the story of Noah as she heard it as a child from her Sunday school teacher. Describing the slow receding of the floodwaters and the ark's coming to rest on the ground, the teacher showed her young students a picture of the shining ark under the rainbow in the sky. All but one of the children were enthralled by the picture. Joel, however, kept looking at it and finally yelled, "Where are all the bodies?" Annoyed, the teacher asked, "What bodies, Joel?" Staring at the picture and then turning around to look at his classmates, he cried: "The bodies! Where are the bodies of the people and animals that died in the flood?"

There was absolute silence in the class—broken when the teacher rebuked Joel for being "a very rude boy." But in Ellen O'Grady's book, she says

that, when the teacher held up the picture of the ark with the rainbow above it, thanks to her classmate, Joel, she, Ellen, could imagine the bodies that should have been in the picture.

COMMUNICATING TO MAKE COMMUNITY

The receivers of communication are not mere objects. They themselves make meaning as they process the message being sent. They look at the story from their own different social locations, cultural perspectives, and communal angles. Thus, the receivers draw out the meaning of the message from the context of their own lives and experience. The storyteller's task is often to open up spaces in the story and the visuals, allowing various voices to respond. Without excluding any of the possible perspectives, the storyteller allows the story to take

shape in each receiver's own mind.

Such is the beauty of the gospel story, too, that it takes shape in a variety of contexts. No single institutionalized approach can do justice to the story. Instead, the gospel story takes on flesh in the individual lives and multiple contexts of the receivers. The fact that we acknowledge four Gospels affirms the narration of the good news in multiple ways. Therefore, communication is more than the simple transference of information—a message from the giver to the receiver. The ultimate aim of communication is to make *community*, ensuring that no one is left behind wondering, "Who stole my voice?"

Above: Media coverage of natural disasters rarely shows women as leaders and organizers of recovery efforts in their communities. In Sri Lanka, many women were involved in the hard work of recovery after the tsunami destroyed their villages.

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MISSING VOICES IN THE MEDIA

Commenting on the current coverage of economic recession in the US mainstream media, Barbara Ehrenreich, the author of *Nickel and Dimed*, says in her article, "Too Poor to Make the News," (*New York Times*, June 14, 2009) that most of the media stories focus on the *new poor*—those who have had a cutback from their super-rich or middle-class status. Ehrenreich points out that the *already poor*—such as sweatshop workers, janitors, maids, and security guards—had "all but 'disappeared' from both the news media and public-policy discussions." This neglect revealed an information gap in the media coverage of poverty, emphasizing the new poor at the expense of the already poor. Christian communication, on the other hand, should be a space where the silenced and the "disappeared" come to find their voices.

A similar *invisibility* was noticed in monitoring the coverage of Hurricane Katrina in the mainstream media, with a focus on class and race. On September 6, 2005, Mediachannel.org's article, "By the Numbers: In Katrina's Wake, Race and Class Largely Ignored," lifted up some startling findings. The number of segments in which race or class issues were of primary focus over a period of four days—from August 28 to August 31, 2005—amounted to zero. In a full seven-day period, among roughly 1,300 segments of TV news coverage, only 22 segments focused on either race or class. Of these 22 segments, MSNBC featured 12; CNN, 8; and Fox News Channel, 2.

There was also a lack of gender perspectives in the media coverage of the Asian tsunami in 2004. Women appeared in the news primarily as victims—weeping, wailing, and awaiting or receiving relief—as Ammu Joseph, a journalist in India, points out. Joseph also identified gender limitation in the news coverage. While the media relied on "authorities," "leaders," and "experts" from different groups, the perspectives on the tsunami and post-tsunami recovery by women who were decision makers in their communities were largely left out. From the perspective of Christian communication, the focus and impact of the media need to be understood and assessed from the viewpoints of those on the margins. Communication is a human right—hence the need to monitor media. The World Association of Christian Communication (WACC) is planning to have a worldwide gender monitoring of media in November 2009. (See the WACC web page: <http://www.waccglobal.org/en/resources/media-and-gender-monitor.html>)

CHRISTIANITY'S FEMALE FACE

The worldwide face of poverty today is female. The face of a human trafficking victim is female. And the face of migration is female. Along the same lines,



Photo: Paul Jeffrey



Photo: Chris Heckert

Glory Dharmaraj presents findings of the gender and media monitoring at the World Association of Christian Communicators in South Africa.

Dana Robert, a leading scholar in mission, states that world Christianity today is a "woman's movement." Robert notes that this fact is not merely a sociological observation but holds implications for gender-based approaches to mission.

If the emerging face of Christianity is female, Christian communicators need to be sensitive to the emerging reality of women. They are struggling to be agents of change while simply surviving their everyday existence. They are fighting for the survival of their communities, witnessing to the love of Christ in the midst of their struggle, and shaping mission histories as they go.

MUTUALITY IN MISSION

How contexts determine the meaning of messages is a key shift in our understanding of mission as well as of communication. We, as receivers and consumers of stories from the Global South, might want to ask ourselves some questions regarding the mission stories we hear, read, or tell to others.

While her child looks on, a woman in Shankarpur uses a traditional Indian spinning wheel to make thread that she will then weave into cloth. The spinning wheel was a symbol for Gandhi of national resistance to colonialism, and remains a common sight throughout the subcontinent.

- Are these stories made with our partners in the Global South for the use of churches in the Global North?
- How are the stories collected, packaged, and delivered?
- How much pain can the media exploit in the portrayal of the Global South in order to raise money?
- Do we in the Global North have to develop our spirituality "on the back of the sufferings" of those in the Global South, as a key mission leader puts it?
- Do the stories circulated among the churches in the Global North lift up the South-to-South partnership?
- How are the people in the Global South represented?
- Do mission photo galleries perpetuate stereotypical portrayals of communities in the Global South as poor and destitute, in need of our handouts?
- Do the stories lift up the work that is going on among the communities themselves to address issues in systemic ways as they look at the root causes? Or, do the stories merely lift up one-directional stories of charity from Global North to Global South?
- Do our stories lift up the Global South's gifts to the Global North? In other words, do our church media promote mutuality in mission?

TRUTH IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION

Nurturing truth is a community effort. Members of the faith community create meaning when they strive hard to seek the truth, allow truth to "spring up from the ground," and live by that truth. It does not take long to realize that the suppression of truth is interconnected with various forms of oppression. Allowing the truth to spring from the ground means looking at issues from the perspectives of those at the margins—the poor, the oppressed, and the dispossessed. It



Photo: Mike DuBose/UMMS

New Orleans homeowner Rita Taylor praises the efforts of a volunteer team of Virginia Tech students who helped her gut her home six months after Hurricane Katrina flooded it. Coverage of women and people of color who coordinate their own recovery plans is rarely shown in the media.

also involves seeing the interplay of power, influence, and dominance in perpetuating systems of oppression.

Tending to the truth involves looking for and working on transformative clues to the truth. Thus Christian communication involves more than merely transmitting messages from a sender to a receiver. To engage in Christian communication is to reclaim the prophetic role of the worshiping community. It is to bear witness to truth telling and to look for the Word of God as it takes shape in God's community. It is to be an enabler in the quest of all those seeking community and asking, "Is there a word from the Lord for times such as these?" Above all, it is to help one another experience the Incarnate Word of God—the ultimate in God's communication.

Christian communication is a process that retools us for God's shalom, already here and not yet realized. This reign of God is lived as it is told.

WE LEARN FROM THOSE WE SERVE

In November 2000, I took part in a pilot training event held at the Saba Theological Seminary in Kota Kinabalu in East Malaysia. Forty-five indigenous women from eight language groups came from the two provinces, Saba and Sarawak, on the Island of Borneo.

The method of teaching for the Bible Women is based on the Pro-Literacy (Laubach) model. It elicits answers from participants through a method of adult education called FAMA (Fact, Association, Meaning, and Action). On that November day, the participants did not communicate much, even though we tried hard.

Finally, it dawned on me that I should try a different method. I turned to the colorful banner that an artist from the local area had made for the event. I asked, "What do you see in the banner?" The women responded with overwhelming enthusiasm.

As the women opened themselves up to the process, I noticed a single raised hand. "The artist missed the river that flows through Sarawak," that woman said. I had not noticed the missing symbol for River Rejang, the longest river in Malaysia.

We learn from those whom we serve! They see and hear what we do not.

Glory E. Dharmaraj, Ph.D., is director of Spiritual Formation and Mission Theology for the Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries. In 2000 and 2005, she served as coordinator of media monitoring for gender in the United States for WACC and will return as coordinator in 2009.

Hope in the Midst of Poverty

Gene Hill, a volunteer in mission, helps improve the lives of marginalized Haitians by helping to build solar ovens. With solar ovens, poor families can pasteurize drinking water and cook healthy meals in a safe environment. The story originally appeared in the Solar Oven Project's May 2009 newsletter, Patnè Fou Solèy.

I live with the thought that although I have seen poverty before, I have never seen anything like the poverty of Haiti.

I remember the painstaking way in which sinew and fat were removed from goat parts and laid out in the solar ovens in preparation for cooking.

I smile recollecting Raymonde's patient, specific cake-batter-mixing instructions.

I visualize Martin meticulously cutting peppers while his hands were covered with grated coconut.

I recall 23-year-old Philippe, an able-bodied and -minded 23-year-old, unable to get a job.

I feel shame as I remember the woman in the green dress who stepped into the road asking for food because she was hungry. My companions and I bypassed her as we hurried to see if there was a "safe" soft drink at the roadside stand.

Then, I see the smiling faces of children, women, and men we met while making solar ovens. I wonder how they could not be in the deepest depression and feeling that God had abandoned them. Yet, they have hope! I wonder if I could maintain hope if I were in their place.

There remains an extreme shortage of increasingly expensive wood and charcoal for cooking fuel. People cannot afford it and neither can the environment. Through Haitian-directed solar cooking seminars, the Haiti Solar Oven Project has provided more than 3,000 solar ovens and training for their use.



A young woman in Haiti carries a solar oven.

Photo: Courtesy Solar Oven Project



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connecting the church in mission

You Don't Have to Be Old to Do Mission

Adapted from a Global Ministries' "The Missionary Voice: Podcasts of United Methodist Missionaries" interview. Dan Licardo, the interviewer, is the web content administrator for Global Ministries. Esther Karimi Gitobu and Nicholas Gitobu Kithinji from Kenya are serving as United Methodist missionaries in Cambodia.

Jeanette and Nicole, two of the daughters of Global Ministries' missionaries in Cambodia, Esther Karimi Gitobu and Nicholas Gitobu Kithinji, spoke about being missionary children during a recent podcast interview. The girls love to socialize, so the transition from Kenya to living in Cambodia was not difficult. Jeanette, 14 years old, said; "Maybe it's the way people are so friendly in Cambodia. They often wave to you or give you a smile."

The girls advise that missionary children can start their own small projects. They collect cans and bottles at home and put them in a sack. A man comes to their house every Wednesday through Friday. After they offer him food and drink, the sisters give him the bottles and cans to sell to provide for his family.

Nicole and Jeanette also volunteer at the Jeannie's Children Association orphanage. They collect shampoo, noodles, and water bottles. At the end of every month, they send a student from each class in their school to take collected items to children at the orphanage. In addition to giving the orphans these gifts, they teach them English and join them in their play time.

Jeanette's and Nicole's other projects include fundraising for people with cleft palettes and visiting hospitalized children.

Nicole says, "As a missionary kid, you don't have to be old to do adult work."



Nicholas Gitobu Kithinji and Esther Gitobu with their daughters, Jeanette, Nicole, and Michelle.

Photo: Global Ministries

Christian Hospitality: Chicken and Biscuits and More

Excerpted from a UMCCommunities.org blog by Nancy Carter, Web Manager in the General Board of Global Ministries' Mission Communications and Marketing unit.

"Hospitality" means a variety of things to different people.

When I was growing up, I associated "hospitality" with "comfort foods" such as chicken and biscuits, mashed potatoes, gravy, and homemade bread, jam, and apple pie. I thought that my paternal grandmother made the best mashed potatoes and gravy. I loved the uniquely soggy bottom crust of my maternal grandmother's apple pies. My great-grandmother gave us fat slices of hot baked bread with real farm butter and homemade strawberry jam.

Henri Nouwen, Christian educator and author, described one of the major spiritual movements in a Christian's life is to go from hostility to hospitality. The way we become more hospitable is to practice hospitality toward the people God sends us, not just toward the labeled categories into which they are classified.



Photo: Dan Licardo

Nancy Carter (far right) practices hospitality with other members of Global Ministries' web team (left to right), Mark Lee, Sushil Bhujbal, and Robin Bideau.

(When I went to seminary in 1971, I was dismayed that folks labeled me—some as a conservative, others as a liberal. I simply considered myself a person, a Christian, a United Methodist.)

While Christian hospitality might include serving chicken, biscuits, and other "comfort food," it also includes righteous, or just, and grace-filled actions.

No one can be hospitable in isolation; we must be in relationship with others.

I am drawn to the scripture about the road to Emmaus when the couple invited the risen Christ to their home and then recognized him in the breaking of bread.

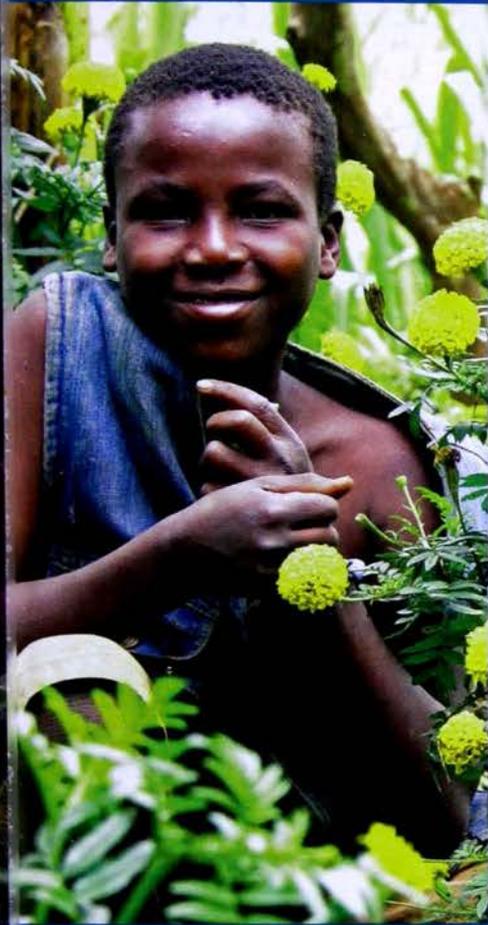
Can we, as a UMCCommunity, achieve an atmosphere of hospitality? I believe we can.

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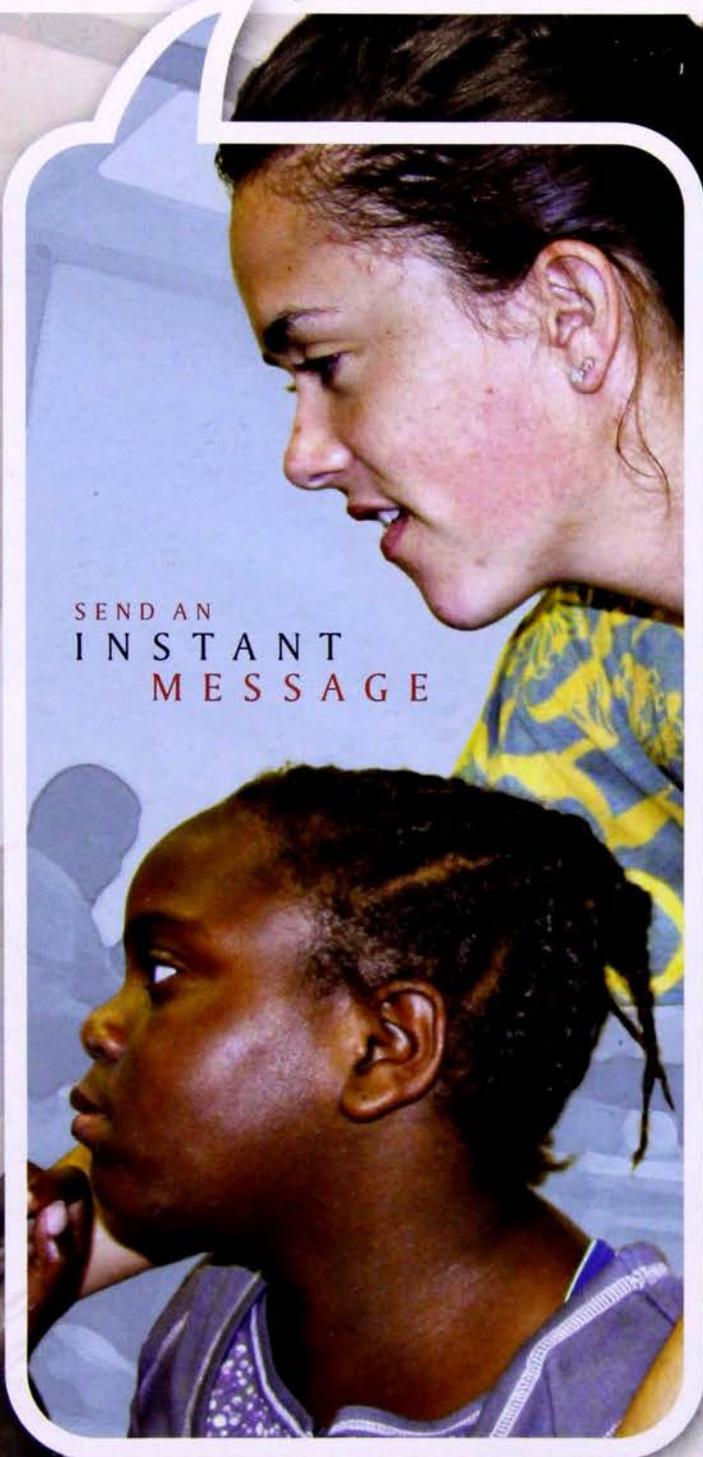


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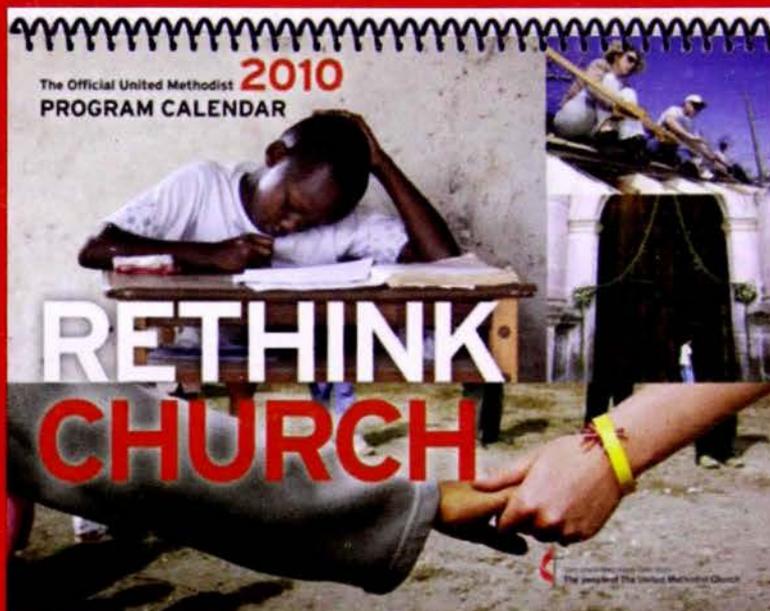
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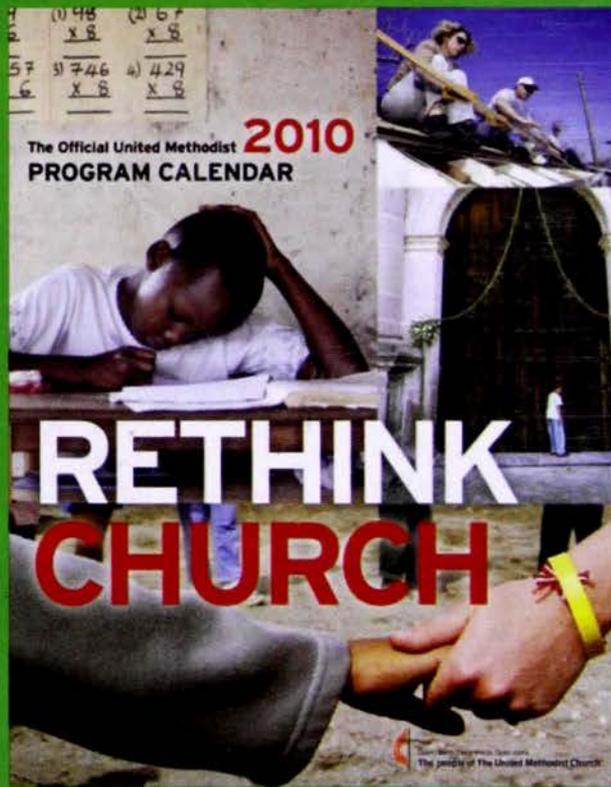
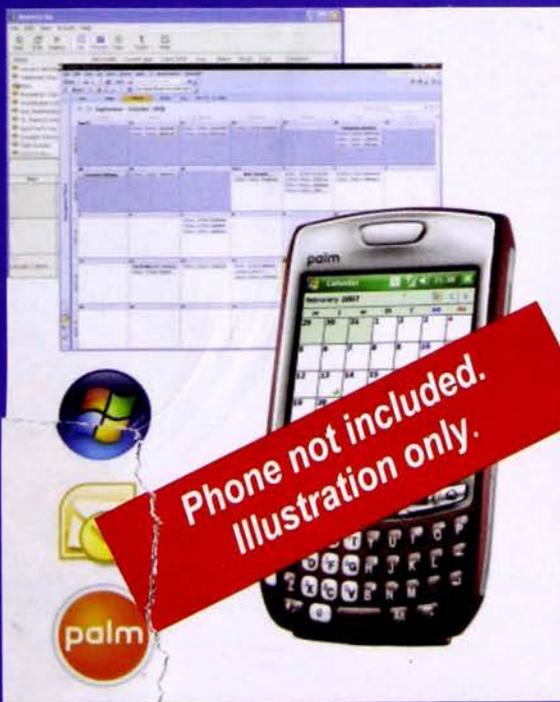
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photo: Melissa Crutchfield/UMCOR

PACKAGES OF HOPE

Cheers erupted among the children when they saw the six pencils they would each receive as part of a school kit distributed by UMCOR. With Zimbabwe struggling to recover from one of the world's harshest economic crises, food and clean water are scarce resources. Luxuries like basic school supplies are cause for celebration.

Relief supplies provide vital support for UMCOR's work. Every year, thousands of health kits, sewing kits, school kits, layette kits, bedding kits, birthing kits, and cleaning buckets are

assembled or verified at either UMCOR Sager Brown in Baldwin, LA, or UMCOR West in Salt Lake City, UT. Kits are packed in boxes ready to ship to people that need them around the world.

You can volunteer for kit ministry at one of the UMCOR Depots or in your own church by gathering and assembling supply kit materials.

Send completed kits, bulk materials or a contribution to purchase supplies to an UMCOR Depot today. Gifts can be made to **UMCOR Material Resources Advance # 901440**.

Please visit www.UMCORdepots.org
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