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SEEKING

JUSTICE

FREEDOM

PEACE

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COVER: BY CHRISTOPHER G. COLEMAN

COVER PHOTO: UMCOR ARMENIA

Comfort for a young woman in distress often comes in the form of helping hands.



SEEKING JUSTICE, FREEDOM, AND PEACE



Hakamat women sing in an intercommunity event in AL Jura, South Darfur State, on May 23, 2014.
PHOTO: KHATTAB FADELELMULA/AL-MASSAR

- 6 MISSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS**
by Thomas Kemper
- 10 SEEKING A SONG OF PEACE IN SUDAN**
by Linda Unger
- 14 JUSTAPAZ: PEACE, RESTORATIVE JUSTICE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN MOZAMBIQUE**
An Interview with Alfiado Zunguza by Christie R. House
- 18 A HAND THAT HELPS: UMCOR ARMENIA**
by Nicholas Jaeger, with reporting from UMCOR Armenia staff members
- 22 DRONES: TARGETING ETHICS, TARGETED COMMUNITIES**
by David Wildman
- 24 WORLD WEEK FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE ISRAEL**
by John Calhoun
- 26 ERODING INJUSTICE IN PALESTINE**
by Alex Awad
- 30 GREEN SHOOTS, DEEP ROOTS: LIFE AFTER TYPHOON HAIYAN IN THE PHILIPPINES**
by Jack Amick
- 34 A JOURNEY TO PEACE: REFLECTING ON HISTORY AND MISSION IN THE PHILIPPINES**
by Laura K. Wise
- 38 ACTS OF REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS, AND PARTNERSHIP—START SOMEWHERE**
by Christie R. House
- 42 WHAT'S IN A NAME?**
by Tweedy Sombrero

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 "THE PROBLEM"**
by Christie R. House
- 5 LETTERS FROM READERS**
- 33 MISSION MEMO**
- 45 BULLETIN INSERTS ON MISSION**
Bulletin inserts can be clipped out of the magazine, copied back-to-back, folded, and slipped into the Sunday bulletin.
- 47 FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY: TRUE ACTS OF TRUST AND RECONCILIATION**
by Thomas Kemper

From the editor

“THE PROBLEM”

As part of ongoing research, I downloaded a 19th century book called *The Indian Problem*, as I was trying to understand why the colonizers of North America were so adamant about getting rid of the indigenous peoples of this land. What was it about indigenous people that the European settlers found so objectionable? What did they define as “the Indian problem?” So I read the book.

Although various scholars of that time came up with scientific explanations for inferiority, or cultural reasons for inferiority, or sometimes religious arguments, it turns out, the real problem was—there were Indians. That was it. The indigenous people existed, and they were in the way of whatever plans the immigrant population, which grew very large very fast, had for this land. This was a big problem for 19th century Americans.

It was a bigger problem for the Native American peoples, who were subjected to all kinds of genocidal practices—outright killing, forced migration, confinement on reservations, and the loss of the right to determine how their own children would be raised. Yet, God planted a strong and resilient people in North America, and despite all they have been through, a remnant remains—and they have not assimilated. They have held fast to their right to be the people that God created them to be.

I see the same dynamic being played out in “the Palestinian problem.” The problem is that there are Palestinians, and they are in the way of whatever plans Israel has for Palestinian lands and resources. But the Palestinians have lived on and developed their land for centuries. So where does the problem really lie?

The “might makes right” way of dealing with this intrinsic problem doesn’t work. It didn’t work for the United States, which is still dealing with the rights of indigenous peoples. It didn’t work in South Africa or India, where the indigenous peoples maintained their majority and were able to overthrow their minority colonizers. And it won’t work for Israel. The manifest destiny argument, that the Christian god in the Americas, or the Jewish god in Israel, or the Muslim god in North Africa, ordained that a people should take over a land and kick out other people, should by now be a red flag for oppression in any global situation.

World Council of Churches general secretary, the Rev. Dr. Olave Fykse Tveit, said of the current Gaza crisis: “Peace in Israel and Palestine will come only through the restoration of compassion between human beings, through seeking together common paths toward justice and peace, and through a genuine commitment to creating the basis for future generations of Israelis and Palestinians to live side-by-side in peace.”

Rather than seeking a rationale for doing harm, seek justice, freedom, and peace instead. That tactic might just work.

Christie R. House



Dear Editor:

I ran across this article this morning and was so very excited! I am a part of a group of 20 or so people that travel to Bulgaria each year (for the last 6 years) and minister to the Roma. We are almost all United Methodist but we work with a mission organization in Sofia called “Care-for-All.” We have become so connected that we are starting our own non-profit called Pray-Love-Unite in which Bulgaria is our main focus.

Care-for-All is actually headed by Dinko Zlatarov, who is the bishop of the Church of God in Bulgaria. Our beliefs may not line up perfectly but our hearts are one. This particular paragraph touched my heart as reinforcement that our work is right:

“We recognize the necessity to maintain the right balance between works of piety and works of mercy in our ministry with the Roma. We have to overcome every temptation to use different kinds of social aid to manipulate people. The personal dignity and value of each individual must be respected in every church activity....Our main task is to offer people Christ through the loving and caring life of the local congregation and to serve as a true example of



Letters from Readers

transformed lives and relations.”
(*New World Outlook* May-June 2013, “A Congregation-Based Approach to Ministry with the Roma,” by Daniel G. Topalski.)

Our mission is to support the growing Christian congregations and the orphanages throughout the Roma villages in Bulgaria. We pray, we love them, we play, and we provide staple food items for those working hard to grow God’s Kingdom. We would appreciate prayer for this ministry and would love to spread the word about the wonderful side of the Roma—the craziness you see on TV or the view from most Bulgarian people.

Slava Na Boga!
Praise the Lord!

*Peggy Harrison
Discovery UMC
Office Coordinator
Hoover, Alabama*

Dear Editor:

I thoroughly enjoyed your magazine on disabilities.

A few years ago a woman with a Seeing Eye dog came to the Post Office and was refused entry. My how things have changed! I am glad; now I am the disabled one—triple one. I use a walker, am blind in my left eye, and I wear two hearing aids.

My husband and I now live in Francis Asbury Manor (part of The United Methodist Homes of New Jersey). We are assisted living residents. We get along just fine. I can see a little and hear everything. My walker helps me get around.

Incidentally you really have a great magazine. It’s grown over the years.

Thanks! I enjoy every issue.

*Marilyn Foote
Francis Asbury Manor
New Jersey*

Dear Editor:

This issue is Excellent! I am the Disability Ministries coordinator for the West Virginia Conference. I received information for annual conference from you, but I would like the complete set of statistical pages on global disability for my display at conference.

I have read (and highlighted almost the whole book), *Disability and the Church: Awareness, Accessibility, and Advocacy*. I am looking forward to this annual conference.

*Jeanie Malick
West Virginia Conference*

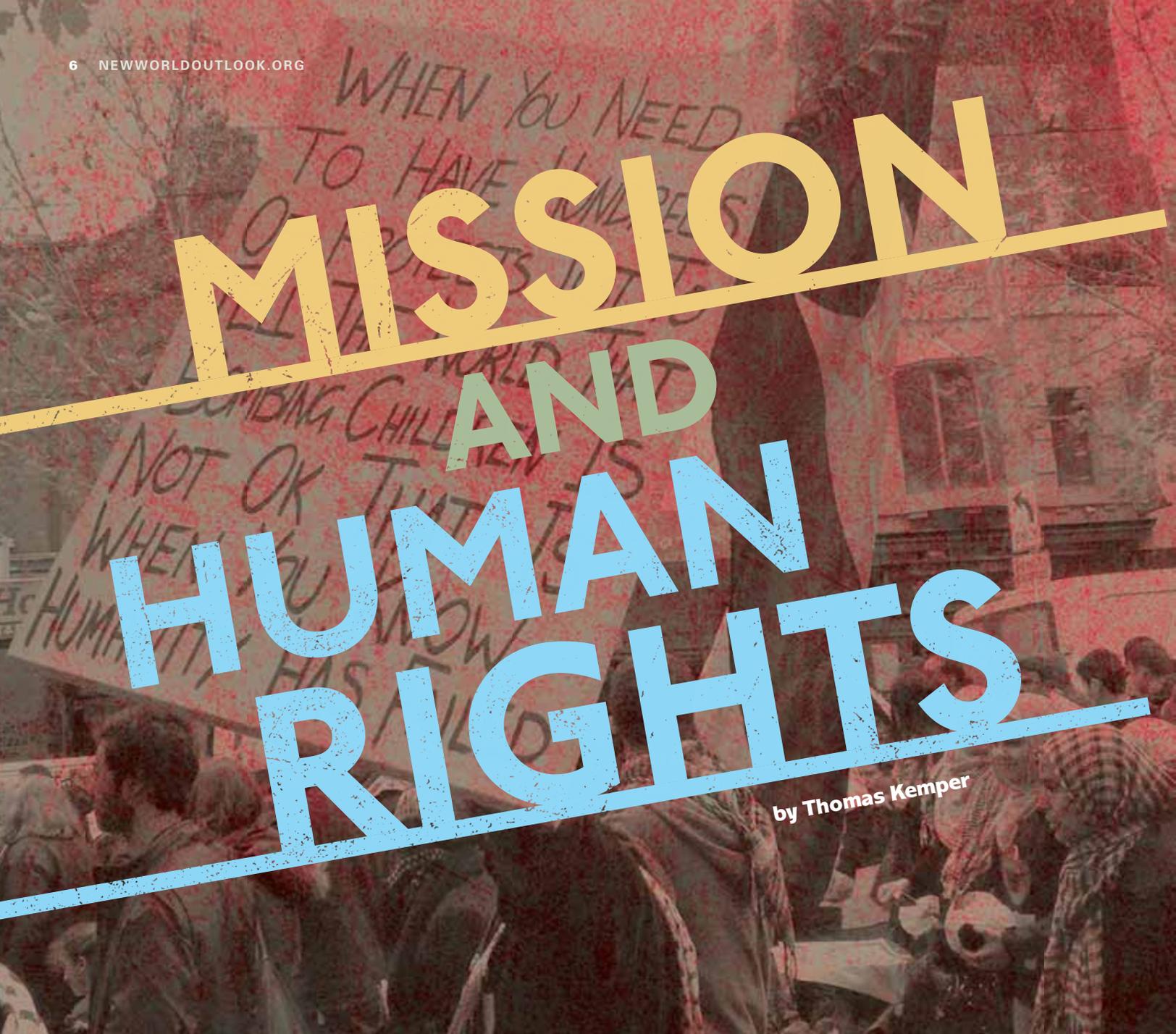
Dear Editor:

While I do appreciate the May-June 2014 issue of *New World Outlook* on disability and accessibility, I think you missed a couple of very important disabilities that are becoming more prevalent in the modern world.

Many people today struggle with both chemical and electrical sensitivities. Our churches should be places that are fragrance free and safe from chemicals that off-gas from carpets, paint, floor stain and sealers, and other strong chemicals that can affect the central nervous system.

Some church agencies, such as the Episcopal Disability Network, have begun to encourage their parishes to use alternative, less toxic methods of pest control, lawn maintenance, ice removal and plant feeding. Choosing safe, simple cleaning products that do not contain poison or other bio-hazards and offering alternative food choices at coffee hour can also help people with sensitivities.

*Lisa Luedtke
Williamsburg, VA
(from a telephone conversation to NWO)*



MISSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

by Thomas Kemper

Seek **justice**,
freedom,
and **peace**

We will participate with people oppressed by unjust economic, political, and social systems in programs that seek to build just, free, and peaceful societies.

One of four goals of the General Board of Global Ministries

A year ago in September, a suicide bomber killed 80 persons and wounded many others at All Saints Church in Peshawar, Pakistan. The blast occurred just as worship had ended and the congregation was gathering outside for a meal. The Church of Pakistan is a united Protestant church that includes former Methodists. Peshawar is in northern Pakistan, which borders Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and China. Out of Peshawar's population of 17 million, some 12 million are of the Muslim Pashtun tribe, the same group that makes up the majority of Afghanistan's population. It takes courage to be a Christian in the Diocese of Peshawar, as in Pakistan as a whole, where 97 percent of the population is Muslim. Islam is protected by the government, and disrespect for the Prophet Mohammed or the Qur'an is a criminal offense.

One couple in this church lost their two children in the blast, along with a grandmother. Other relatives were injured, including a brother, a nephew, and a niece.

Members of this family have been deeply involved in the mission and activities of the Diocese of Peshawar. Even in the aftermath of the bombing, they have continued to serve in reconciliation efforts. The Diocese of Peshawar has also stepped up its attention to the broad theme of human rights. I saw in its newsletter, "The Frontier News," a report about a local seminar on religious liberty involving Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs.

In April, Global Ministries hosted the Pakistani mother and father

who had lost so much. They shared their story with the agency's board of directors. Then they continued their stay in New York another few months in an upstate retreat center to receive counseling, gain a bit of respite and perspective, and process their grief in a safe place. Hearing their story reminded board members and staff that this goal—seeking justice, freedom, and peace—is a central part of mission work.

The church has come to interpret these words as the promotion of fair and equal treatment of per-



Pakistani visitors attending the April 2014 Board Meeting of the General Board of Global Ministries.

PHOTO: CASSANDRA ZAMPINI

sons regardless of race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, or economic status. As Christians, we make the assumption that every human being has the right to justice, freedom, and peace. I believe the church might benefit from a closer look at this assumption—not to challenge or undercut it, but to better express it, interpreting more clearly our awareness and promotion of human rights as a mission responsibility.

Human Rights Task Force

I have been humbled, challenged, and informed by my participation in the Task Force on Human Rights and Investment Ethics. This group of 13 people is convened jointly by Global Ministries and the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Its members consider a range of human rights concerns that relate, generally speaking, to the question of how the church spends and invests its money in relation to its mission.

The purpose of the task force, as formally stated, is to identify resources, principles, and procedures that express our commitment to human rights, taking into account fiduciary responsibility and ministry priorities consistent with the global mission of The United Methodist Church.

Participation in this consideration of human rights and investment ethics is hard work; it stretches the brain and exposes dark places in the mind. It has taken us into a maze of often contradictory historical interpretations, theological perspectives, and practical implications involving Christian promotion of full and equal human rights among all people. We began with a group of eight questions covering issues such as the alignment of our denominational human rights positions with those of international human rights standards, resources that guide our thinking, and reconciliation of our organizational fiduciary obligations with human rights ideals. We surveyed existing practices within our connection,

summarized findings, and developed recommendations.

The United Methodist Church's Principles Committee reviewed the task force's recommendations and the full board of Pension and Health Benefits accepted the recommendations without modification.

Taking part in the task force project and conducting my own individual research as part of that process has helped me explore human rights theologically and historically. It has also helped me to consider how we incorporate human rights advocacy and support in our daily operations.

History and Theology

The Bible has much to say on many matters of justice and freedom, but it is an interpretive step from the Sermon on the Mount to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We can't jump directly from selected Bible verses to the paragraph of our Social Principles on "Basic Freedoms and Human Rights." The Social Principles outline rights ranging from "free and fair elections....freedom of speech, religion, assembly, communications media, and petition for redress of grievances without fear of reprisal, to the right to privacy, and to the guarantee of the rights to adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care." (§164.A) In paragraph 162, the rights to freedom from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and sexual orientation are spelled out. I see this as an evolutionary process that has brought us to our contemporary views on human rights.

Historically, from the late Roman Empire into 17th

century Europe, there was little thought in the church or secular society that persons or communities had rights, inalienable or otherwise. "Rights" were seen as belonging to God and kings alone. While we take the right to religious liberty as axiomatic today, there was no such concept as recently as the 16th century Protestant Reformation in Europe. Kingdoms or other municipalities became Protestant or remained Roman Catholic at the discretion of their rulers, and it was not far different in some of the 17th century colonies in America. Religious liberty was a sparse reality in many colonies, and Baptists and early Methodists were generally considered beyond the pale of acceptability by established churches.

The concept of inherent or inalienable rights for individuals began to appear in the writings of 18th century philosophers, primarily in France and England. These writings were applied

to common life by such politicians as Thomas Jefferson in the young United States. This "enlightenment," as it was called, is usually classified as "secular" in nature, but it did not go unattended in some religious circles. John Wesley, for example, creatively combined enlightenment thinking about human rights with theology focused on human beings created in the image of God. Wesley used this combined emphasis effectively in his vigorous crusade against slavery in the 18th century.

Even today this crusade continues for The United Methodist Church. We cannot assume that the blight of slavery is a thing of the past. It is alive and well around the world, notably in sex trafficking that inflicts inhumane treatment upon children and women. Comprehensive data on sexual slavery is difficult to obtain, but recent UN and International Labor Organization reports indicate that as many as 20.9 million people are held today in commercial sexual servitude, forced labor, or bonded labor.

For Wesley—and this is of central importance—rights were not based solely in a theological perspective on the image of God in the human creature. Wesley went a step farther: dignity and rights are inherent because of the creative and creating love of God.

International Rights

The interaction of theology and secular enlightenment philosophy in the cause of human rights forms a complex and fascinating history, leading me to another important lesson that serving on the task force has taught me.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not as



The drafting committee of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Top row, from left: Dr. Charles Malik (Lebanon), Alexandre Bogomolov (USSR), Dr. Peng-chun Chang (China) Middle row, from left: René Cassin (France), Eleanor Roosevelt (US), Charles Dukes (UK); Bottom row, from left: William Hodgson (Australia), Hernan Santa Cruz (Chile), John P. Humphrey (Canada) PHOTO: UNITED NATIONS PHOTO ARCHIVE

“secular” as it is sometimes assumed—even though it came out of an international political process following World War II and sought to recognize and regularize the inherent rights of all people. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 with the force of international law. It has been supplemented several times with international conventions and covenants on social, economic, political, and civil rights. There is also an International Bill of Human Rights. It has roots much earlier than the 1940s, going back to the thinking that produced the notably unsuccessful League of Nations following World War I. And, quite significantly for our purposes, its postwar development paralleled much of the social thinking that went into the formation of the World Council of Churches, also officially launched in 1948.

A group of mostly Reformed theologians and lay politicians were highly instrumental in the shaping of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A primary drafter was Dr. Charles Malik, a Lebanese Eastern Orthodox layman who was Lebanon’s ambassador to the United States and later a professor at Harvard University. Dr. Malik was also, at one time, president of the World Council on Christian Education and was a frequent participant in World Council of Churches’ events. In fact, the Christian influence on the formation of the declaration was so pervasive that I have found references to the document—not always kindly intended—as being an attempt to spread the canopy of Christendom over the entire world. The only woman on the drafting committee was also the only American: Eleanor Roosevelt.

Members of the UM Human Rights Task Force read some fascinating contemporary efforts to link

human rights and religious conviction. One source was a lecture by Rowan Williams, a former archbishop of Canterbury. Williams developed a divine image concept not as applying to individuals and their rights alone but also to rights involved in the mutual recognition between human beings. To perhaps oversimplify: How do we treat one another when we are aware that we “belong together” as created and loved by God? Are we not, as a people, a human community of respect, mutual concern, and love? This is creative ground for pursuing human rights as a component in mission.

Universal Rights Not Universally Observed

I also learned that human rights may be universal but are not universally observed. In fact, there are no universal agreements on human rights among nations and cultures. This reality has implications for a global church as it strives to be faithful in God’s mission. Religious liberty is a primary right in international law, but many countries do not practice it. Others say they do but build in subtle, even direct, barriers to its free exercise. Culture often dictates what is considered a “right” and what is considered “unacceptable” behavior. We need to understand cultural differences.

For example, it is difficult for us to send a missionary to most countries in the Middle East. While nations might profess respect for human rights, some take grave exception to



In collaboration with the Church of Scotland, All Saints Church and the Diocese of Peshawar in Pakistan offered training courses in various livelihoods for the survivors of the bomb blast at the All Saints Church. PHOTO: COURTESY THE FRONTIER NEWS/DIOCESE OF PESHAWAR/CHURCH OF PAKISTAN

Christian public worship and outlaw religious conversion. In this context, Christianity is considered a “cultural” heresy. The whole matter of cultural influences on attitudes is extremely complex. Last year, Bishop Mano Rumalshah of the Church of Pakistan visited Global Ministries and indicated that at least some hostility toward Christians in the north of his country results from tribal misidentification of Christianity as being in league with Western influences.

Through our involvement with some of the families affected by the bomb blast at All Saints Church in Peshawar, the concept of human rights has taken on a tangible form. I have learned that the denial of rights—the failure to realize that we belong together—kills people, ends the dreams of children, and disrupts families. We, as a church, must be genuinely concerned for the religious liberty of all faith groups. We must also not shy away from including our strong sense of solidarity with Christian brothers and sisters who face barriers—and, sometimes, persecution—for their faith, a faith we share.

Thomas Kemper serves as General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries.



Seeking a Song of Peace in Sudan

by Linda Unger

On a recent May morning, a group of elder Sudanese women formed a semicircle in the marketplace of Al Jura village in South Darfur State and sang into a microphone. Their flowing orange, yellow, and green skirts and veils made a bright contrast to the colorless sand underfoot. They are Hakamat

women, and their songs and poetry can mobilize a community—for good or ill.

For centuries—right through the current conflict in Sudan, which has impacted millions of people in the vast Darfur region since 2003—Hakamat women have often used their gift to spur intertribal violence. A relatively minor infraction by one tribal member against another from a neighboring tribe can easily escalate on the breath of the Hakamats' song and become deadly.

On this day, though, the women were on their way to an event sponsored by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and they sang of peace.



“We have trained 50 of these women in conflict resolution,” said Amin El Fadil, interim head of UMCOR’s mission in Sudan. UMCOR also has incorporated them into peace-building committees and encouraged their participation in intercommunity gatherings meant to foster peace among the different tribes of the region.

This is a good thing, too, because conflict is on the rise once again in Darfur. Today, close to 2 million people remain displaced from their homes across the region—many uprooted since the violence began in 2003 and reached its peak in 2005. Last year, according to the United Nations, some 460,000 people were newly displaced—more than in the previous two years combined. And, in the first five months of 2014, the number had already surpassed 322,000.

Even in the relatively serene East Darfur State—one of five states that compose the Darfur region and the one where most of UMCOR’s work is concentrated—widespread violence broke out in August 2013, causing tens of thousands of people to flee their homes. Land was the initial issue that prompted conflicts between the Rizeigat and Maalia peoples.

Last year signaled a shift in the violence in all of Darfur, as the conflict splintered. No longer was it the product of a single struggle for dominance in the region between the Sudanese Armed Forces and a cohort of armed rebel groups. People were being displaced in large numbers by intertribal violence, conflicts among fragmented rebel groups, disputes between Arab tribes over gold- and oil-rich lands, and confrontations between government-supported militia (the Rapid Support Force) and rebel groups.

A Complex Response

Earlier in 2013, UMCOR launched a peace-building program aimed at addressing some sources of conflict among the three main tribes—the Rizeigat, Habania, and Salamat peoples—in East Darfur State

and just over the border in South Darfur State. The program is supported by the multilateral Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund, which was established in 2007 and is administered by the United Nations Development Programme. The fund exists to “promote peace building and reconciliation in Darfur through community-based recovery and development activities.”

UMCOR’s program seeks four outcomes: to establish effective community-level conflict resolution and prevention platforms; to increase cooperation among communities over disputed livelihood assets and income-generation opportunities; to increase cooperation between competing communities over access to natural resources; and to promote equitable and sustainable growth

of and access to basic services and infrastructure.

While UMCOR designed the criteria for each aspect of the program in order to reach those objectives, it was clear from the start that the communities themselves had to be the driving force for peace. “We never make a decision ourselves without consulting the communities because we insist on community ownership,” El Fadil explained. “If, for example, a school is to be built in the village of Hebil or Funga, it is not our decision. It is up to the community to reach a consensus.”

Conflict Resolution

UMCOR worked with the Rizeigat, Habania, and Salamat tribes to establish peace-building committees in each of three locations: El Ferdous and Abu Senedira in East Darfur and Al Jura in South Darfur. The committees include community leaders such as sheiks or umdas (traditional tribal or village leaders), residential farmers, nomads, semi-nomads, minority tribes in the areas, and people forced to flee their homes because of conflict, often referred to as IDPs (internally displaced persons). “Each peace-building committee should be a kind of mosaic structure, with no one tribe dominating,” said El Fadil.

The committees were intentional about including youth and women, so at least two Hakamats were assigned to each one. They also sought to build on already existing arbitration mechanisms.

“In Sudan, there is a tradition in conflict resolution called *Judiya*,” said El Sanosi Ahi, the UMCOR supervisor for Community Development and Peace Building. When a dispute arises, he explained, members of the community are selected to mediate a solution based on their wisdom and life experience.

“When we worked with the communities to form the peace-building committees,” Ahi continued, “the first thing we did was to build on this experience and equip community members with additional skills for negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation.”

To date, the three committees have resolved nearly 300 disputes. “They are playing an important role,” Ahi affirmed. “They are disseminating the peace culture among members of the community and also working to resolve problems as they occur, whether individual, tribal, or family disputes.”

It was in this same spirit that UMCOR trained 50 Hakamat women in conflict resolution and also undertook a study of the traditional singers to try to understand the factors that often keep Hakamats from promoting peace.

In Abu Senedira, one of the women said, “We are fed up with conflict.” She recited a poem that included these lines: “The women have been widowed and the girls have been orphaned; the boys have missed education. Now the people and the youth of Darfur need to reorganize themselves for peace and reconciliation.”

Cooperating on Resources

Most of the cases resolved by the peace-building committees—250 of them—were resolved by the committee in Abu Senedira. “Abu Senedira is located along the animal migratory route used by nomads to move their livestock,” El Fadil explained, “and that is where most of the conflicts happen.”

Nomads travel this 62-mile route with their goats and cattle, moving north in the rainy season and south in the dry season. On their way, they graze their animals and seek water



A grinding mill in Funga, El Ferdous Locality, is part of the income-generating activities aimed at youth, UMCOR Sudan. PHOTO: LINDA UNGER

sources and pasture—sometimes veering from the route, encroaching upon farmlands, and trampling crops. Conflicts—which easily escalate and become deadly—break out between residential farmers and nomadic tribes along the route, which passes through East Darfur and South Darfur.

To address the source of the conflicts—the need for clear demarcation of the animal migratory route—UMCOR partnered with Al Massar, a Sudanese nongovernmental organization; consulted Animal Route Committees, composed of local government and tribal leaders; and worked directly with the affected communities to create Animal Route Subcommittees, composed of nomads and farmers.

Together, they demarcated the animal migratory route with a series of cement pillars and brightly painted cement balls. To protect the crops growing on either side of the five-mile-wide route, they created fire lines.

In addition, El Fadil said, “We trained the Animal Route

Subcommittees in peace building, conflict resolution, and environmental conservation and in the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Animal Resources. We involved the community right from the beginning, from the planning stage to implementation and monitoring.”

To provide water sources along the animal migratory route, peace-building committees in El Ferdous and Abu Senedira worked together to identify three boreholes for rehabilitation. “We needed the water points to bring people together, to build trust and collaboration,” El Fadil explained, “That way, the different tribes will come together at a single water point.” The committees used that criterion to make their decisions.

Income Generation

UMCOR also partnered with Al Massar and worked with the peace-building committees to promote greater access to income-generation activities for youth and women. This is a means of stemming conflict.

“Youth can take an active role in conflict if they are unemployed and have no income,” El Fadil pointed out. “They can become desperate and feel they have nothing to lose if they take up arms. Income-generating activities enable them to create a kind of stability—an alternative to violence.”

Establishing criteria for the committees’ selection of the youth to participate, UMCOR stated that they should be young men and women who had been displaced by violence and were identified by their communities as being at risk of participating in desperate measures, such as looting livestock.

Thirty youth were selected from different tribes to form six teams of five members each in five different locations: El Ferdous, Abu Senedira, Funga, Hebil, and Al Jura. Each of the groups was supplied with agro-processing machines. The groups in El Ferdous and Abu Senedira received oil-pressing machines. In Al Jura and Funga, they received grinding mills, and in Hebil, a peanut-hull machine.

Another 50 people, all of them women, were identified by the peace-building committees for training in cheese production. They were trained in 10 groups of five women each, and each group was supplied with a start-up kit to use in their collective enterprises.

Part of the income-generating aspect of UMCOR’s peace-building program is the construction of communal market shelters. “We realized that the opportunity for economic interaction is limited because of the lack of infrastructure,” Ahi recalled, “so we came up with the idea of building big shelters and sanitary facilities in two seasonal markets selected by the peace-building committees.” The shelters were built in Abu Senedira and Funga and will each accommodate 36 sellers, both men and women.

“In peace building, we talk about connectors,” El Fadil added. “Markets are connectors because different people from different tribes come together to trade, to buy and sell. If you promote that, you can promote cooperation.”

Services and Infrastructure

Another way to bring people together is through education. The UMCOR peace-building program contemplates the construction of 12 classrooms in two primary schools—one in the village of Funga and the other in Hebil. The schools were selected by the peace-building committees to serve the children of residential farmers, nomads, and semi-nomads, together.

Construction of a block of four classroom plus latrines was completed in Hebil in late May 2014. These classrooms replaced both temporary classrooms made of grass tents and two old permanent classrooms. The old classrooms had no desks or chairs, and the children’s attention was often distracted by the elements: heat, wind, and rain.

“Now, with the new building, I have announced to all the fathers in the mosque that they should register their children,” said Mahmoud Adam Yousif of the Parent-Teacher Committee. “I am proud of the students, now that they are able to concentrate in class, he added. “And I am hopeful for them, too, because now they are more likely to move on to secondary school because of the good education they will receive here.”

Sitting shoulder to little shoulder with children of other tribal groups or of nomad or farmer families, they are also more likely to grow up with a greater love and acceptance of their neighbors. Perhaps it will be their slim, young voices that, finally, will raise up the song of peace in Darfur.

Linda Unger is senior writer for the General Board of Global Ministries. She visited Sudan and UMCOR’s peace-building program in East Darfur last spring (2014).



A boy herds goats in a camp for internally displaced people outside Um Labassa in Sudan’s Darfur region. Open grazing of animals often triggers a major dispute between nomads and resident farmers. PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY

JUSTAPAZ

MOZAMBIQUE

Peace, Restorative Justice, and Human Rights in Mozambique

An Interview with Alfiado Zunguza by Christie R. House

In tandem with the ministry of The United Methodist Church in Mozambique, JustaPaz seeks to operationalize the Christian call to justice and peace. From its inception, it has sought to respond to issues in nonviolent conflict transformation through training, research, and direct intervention within the ecumenical church.

The United Methodist Church has been involved in the democratization and peace-building process in Mozambique since 1994. Portuguese colonial rule of Mozambique, which began in the 1600s, continued right up until 1975, when the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), an armed independence force formed in 1964, finally prevailed against the Portuguese government. But the departure of the Portuguese government left the political situation in Mozambique in turmoil, as various parties sought to gain power in the newly independent nation. FRELIMO initially announced that Mozambique

would be a one-party socialist state, but opposition leaders arose who favored a multiparty democratic state, and they received backing from other African countries. The people of Mozambique then endured a 15-year civil war, from 1977 to 1992, waged mainly between the government forces of FRELIMO and the opposition force, the Mozambique Resistance Movement (RENAMO).

As a result of the civil war, about one million people died—from fighting, starvation, and disease. Five million civilians were displaced, both inside the country and as refugees outside its borders. Many were injured and maimed by landmines, a

legacy from the war that continues to plague the country today. After the fighting ended in 1992, the country's first multiparty elections were held in 1994, with RENAMO and FRELIMO forming Mozambique's two main political parties.

The Church Acts for Peace

After October 1992, when the Rome General Peace Accords were signed, Mozambique began a process of reintegration of the millions of displaced people who were returning home. In many localities, friction began to arise between those who stayed through the war and those who returned, expecting their property to



Above: JustaPaz training for police in Nampala, Mozambique, in 2007. **Below:** JustaPaz training for seminary students in Montequez—"the completion of program" certificate.

PHOTOS: COURTESY JUSTAPAZ

be handed back to them and their daily lives to resume.

The leaders of The United Methodist Church decided to become involved in the reconciliation process. United Methodist churches spanned most of the country. The national church set up a Department of Mediation and Conflict Resolution to train its laity and clergy, along with representatives from other denominations, in conflict resolution strategies and effective methods of mediation. Members of the church itself were split between the two parties, RENAMO and FRELIMO. Sometimes even members of the same family had backed different sides during the war. Now they were all expected to live and work and attend church together.

The Mozambique UMC developed a program to address the tension and conflict in the local communities. In time, the work expanded into a broader and more comprehensive peace-building program for civil society. In

1996, the UMC formed JustaPaz ("Peace and Justice"), a center for conflict resolution. Alfiado Zunguza—who currently serves with Global Ministries' Mission Evangelism unit in Justice and Relationships as an executive for Africa—is a former director of JustaPaz. He said the democratization process really required a cultural change—a change not only in political leadership but also in mindset and expectations. The people of Mozambique had frankly never experienced a democracy before, and they needed to develop changes in the most fundamental units of civil society: family, church, and community.

The UMC became even more proactive in encouraging government leaders—both local and national—to promote reconciliation and change in positive ways. JustaPaz developed

training in how to build capacity in civil society and how to raise awareness of the ways in which development plans can either increase or decrease the conflict in regions and local communities, depending on how these plans are implemented. Training encouraged the officials to reflect critically on the implications their development policies would have on the local communities. Were their policies helping to reconstruct the country or just creating more conflict?

Zunguza believes that democracy is based on values that were not yet present in the Mozambican psyche. The principles were there, and the outcomes that democracy generally brings were desired by the population. They aspired to democracy, but they didn't really know how to formulate a mindset that would usher it in. He explained that the society was extremely polarized: people belonged to and supported either the government



party or the opposition party, with no real understanding of the ideology of either. Actually, whatever the party was doing, that's what its adherents supported. "There was a culture of intolerance," Zunguza explained. "In some places, if you didn't support the government party, you were considered only half Mozambican." That kind of "if you are not for us, you are against us" dynamic became very difficult to deal with during national elections, which take place in Mozambique every five years.

Preparing for Elections

JustaPaz first became involved in Mozambique's national elections in 2004. "JustaPaz was invited by the governor of Sofala Province, Felício Zacarias, to conduct training workshops in two districts: Maringue and Caia," Zunguza explained. "There, election-related violence had been very intense during the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 1994 and 1999. At the time, the governor was concerned with the

possibility of more deadly violence during the 2004 general elections, since the political confrontation between FRELIMO and RENAMO members was escalating in those two districts."

Using a problem-solving approach, the five-day-long workshops were organized in partnership with local government. Participants in these workshops included traditional leaders, FRELIMO and RENAMO party representatives serving at district levels, youth leaders, local nongovernmental organizations, and some local government representatives.

"Since the political confrontation was so intense," Zunguza said, "the first two days of the workshop were also intense and confrontational, with a high level of distrust between FRELIMO and RENAMO participants. One interesting story worth mentioning came from the Caia District workshop. There, the FRELIMO and RENAMO representatives lived in the same neighborhood but had never spoken to one another before the

workshop. On the fourth day of the workshop, however, the FRELIMO representative was seen giving a ride home to the RENAMO representative. That was the first sign of hope."

After these trainings, the two most dangerous and violent districts in the 1994 and 1999 general elections became the most peaceful ones during the general elections of 2004 and 2009. "The political parties know how to deal with their differences," Zunguza pointed out, "and the traditional leaders play a critical role in mobilizing the community members for peace and development."

This year, Mozambique's national elections of 2014 are scheduled for October. Currently, JustaPaz has scheduled training for pastors and lay leaders in the center of the country, where political and military confrontations have recently broken out again between RENAMO and FRELIMO party members. Pastors have been reminded to speak from their pulpits, urging church members not to get involved in partisan politics. In that way, the pastors can seed that message of peace into the middle of civil society.

Current tensions concern the opposition's security forces, which, after the 1992 Peace Accords, were supposed to be disbanded over time. The RENAMO opposition asserts that the government has reneged on its agreements, that promised change has not materialized, and that its members are still marginalized in society. RENAMO members say that democracy was supposed to give them a chance. Instead, the government tells them that they must disarm to decrease the military threat.

Although 20 years have passed since the elections of 1994, the workings of democracy are still new and difficult in Mozambique. The government is generally concerned about its accountability to the



Participants in a JustaPaz seminar held at Montepuez seminary in Mozambique.

PHOTO: COURTESY JUSTAPAZ



Students meet together for JustaPaz training for a peace-building institute in Mozambique.
PHOTO: COURTESY JUSTAPAZ

donor organizations that have kept Mozambique up and running—the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations—while failing to see its role as being accountable to its own citizens. This is part of the cultural change needed, as Zunguza points out. “Civil society has the power to change the way governance is conducted,” he said. “Otherwise, government officials will use the divisions in society to maintain their power. Civil society must challenge this assumption of power and hold the government accountable.”

While a number of opposition party members have gained seats in parliament, more work must be done to ensure the democratic process. Further education is needed for the people to appreciate their own power to change the situation.

Contributing to the difficulty is that the victor in a national election plays out a “winner takes all” scenario. Political power means access to national resources that everyone fights to attain—and that, once attained, no

one wants to lose. Losing an election may mean losing access to resources. In this culture, candidates fight to win, and that may translate into literal fighting in the streets.

Teaching Peace

In the midst of this culture, the UMC of Mozambique teaches the ways of peace to its youngest members. “Being different doesn’t mean we are enemies,” Zunguza explains. “We teach children to draw positive energy out of the opposites coming together and uniting,” he said.

According to Zunguza, “The United Methodist Church is in a good position to influence community members in Mozambique to change. Pastors are encouraged to become more active in promoting the values of inclusiveness, fair treatment, and a just peace. In addition, many church members are also in government positions. The church is prominent and well-respected in the country.”

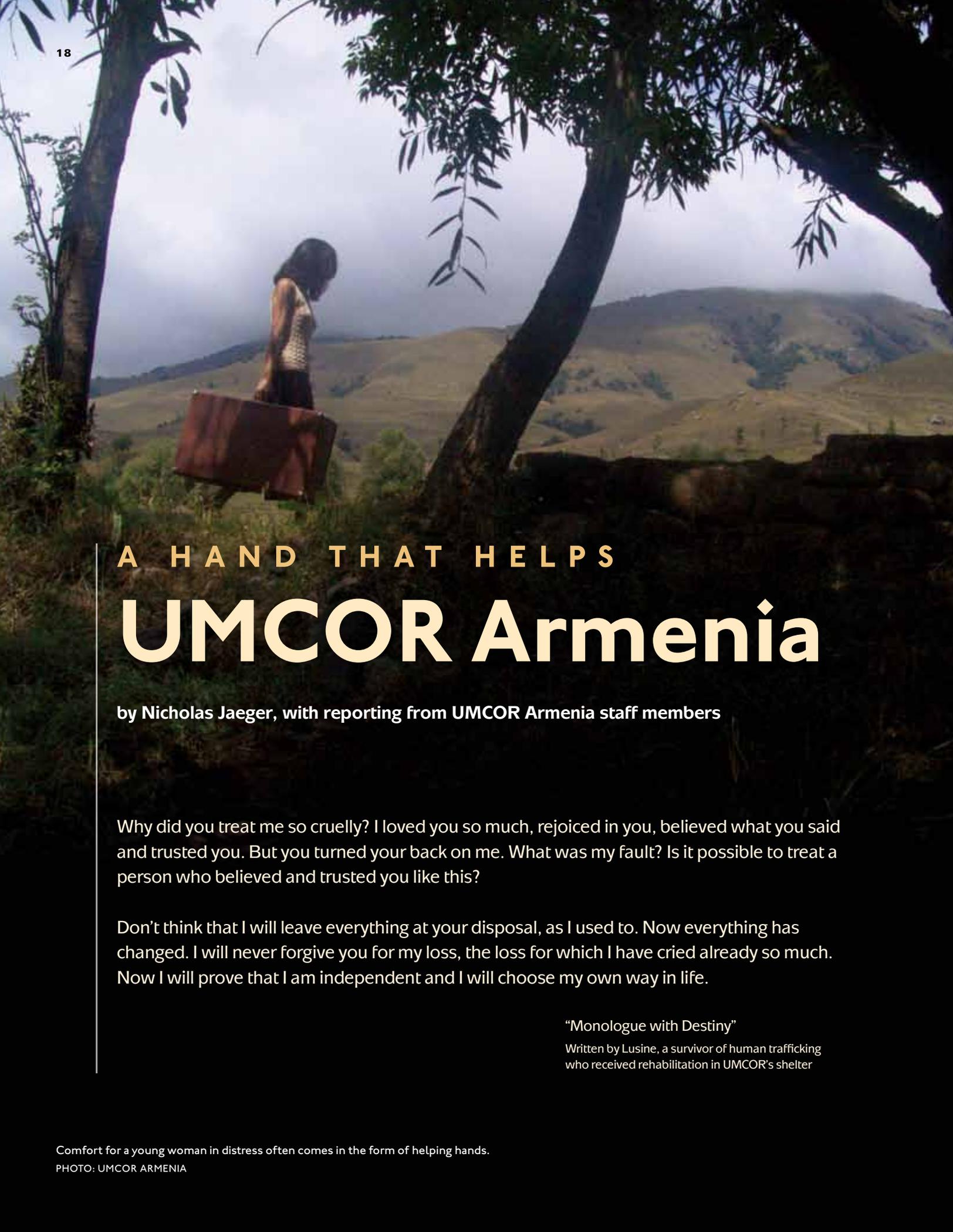
JustaPaz continues to develop training modules for various

populations and situations that arise in Mozambique. Both police officers and judges are trained. One course seeks to build the capacity of the police to mediate community conflicts and promote restorative justice. Another goal is to encourage and train women to become involved in violence prevention and economic development in their communities. JustaPaz trains members of other institutions—churches, nonprofits, and civic organizations—to constructively address internal conflicts. It provides holistic, gender, and conflict-sensitive approaches and strategies to advocate for those with HIV/AIDS. Another course of training addresses domestic violence through life-skills training.

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SUPPORT JUSTAPAZ

JustaPaz can be supported by United Methodists through giving to Advance #3021564. Advance giving can be facilitated online (<http://www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/How-to-Give>) or by making a donation directly to a local church by a check made out to the church with the Advance number clearly indicated to designate the gift. One hundred percent of a gift given through the Advance goes to the project designated by its donor. If you wish to send a gift directly to the Advance office, checks should be made out to Advance GCFA and sent to Advance GCFA, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY 10087-9068.



A HAND THAT HELPS

UMCOR Armenia

by Nicholas Jaeger, with reporting from UMCOR Armenia staff members

Why did you treat me so cruelly? I loved you so much, rejoiced in you, believed what you said and trusted you. But you turned your back on me. What was my fault? Is it possible to treat a person who believed and trusted you like this?

Don't think that I will leave everything at your disposal, as I used to. Now everything has changed. I will never forgive you for my loss, the loss for which I have cried already so much. Now I will prove that I am independent and I will choose my own way in life.

“Monologue with Destiny”

Written by Lusine, a survivor of human trafficking who received rehabilitation in UMCOR's shelter

Human trafficking is a crime that deprives people of their basic rights and freedom, increases global health risks, fuels growing networks of organized crime, and creates an obstacle to development. The impact of human trafficking on an individual, a family, and a whole community is devastating. Victims may suffer physical and emotional abuse, rape, and threats against themselves and their families. Human trafficking undermines the health, safety, and security of nations and has long-term implications for all of society.

Armenia is a source—and, to a lesser extent, a destination—for men, women, and children being subjected to human trafficking—specifically, to forced labor and sex trafficking of both women and men. Sex and labor trafficking of women and children within the country is a growing problem, with Armenian women and girls also being subjected to sex trafficking in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and in Turkey. Armenian men are subjected to forced labor in Russia and, to a lesser extent, Turkey.

Armenian women and children are vulnerable to forced begging domestically. Some children work in agriculture, construction, and service industries within the country. Men in rural areas with little education and children staying in childcare institutions remain highly vulnerable to trafficking. (*Trafficking in Persons Report*, US Department of State, Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons, June 2014.)

UMCOR in Armenia has worked in the area of Victims of Trafficking Protection since 2004 by providing rehabilitation and reintegration services for Armenians and for some foreign nationals. UMCOR works with survivors who have been subjected to sexual and labor exploitation in Armenia and abroad.

Cooperation and Partnership

In 2008, UMCOR Armenia was asked by the Armenian government to develop a joint model for a national shelter for victims of trafficking. The government requested UMCOR's help because UMCOR was the only organization in Armenia that had successfully sheltered and reintegrated survivors of trafficking back into society.

UMCOR worked closely with the Armenian ministries of Labor and Social Affairs. Their joint efforts have resulted in the Armenian government's co-funding of UMCOR's shelter since 2010. The advantage of this model is that, while the government is making a contribution to combat human trafficking, the staff of a nongovernmental organization (NGO) is actually working directly with the victims. This model allays some of the fears of the survivors—fears that often arise from their interaction with law enforcement or other administrative units of the government. This way of working ensures the protection of survivors' human rights and confidentiality.

Armenian social and health workers, other NGOs working with vulnerable populations, an UMCOR-run hotline, and law enforcement agencies all refer potential beneficiaries to UMCOR's shelter program.

UMCOR is a member of the Anti-Trafficking Working Group in Armenia. As such, it works in close collaboration with Armenian law enforcement,

the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and other entities working in the area of anti-trafficking activities. UMCOR has the ability to constantly raise questions related to the protection of victims' rights, all the way up to government administrators on the decision-making level. Through joint efforts, practical solutions in the best interests of trafficked survivors are found.

Working With Survivors

Protecting and restoring the rights of survivors, along with rehabilitation and return to a decent life, are the goals of UMCOR's work. It should be noted that each case is considered individually, for each survivor develops a personal plan of rehabilitation and reintegration, taking into account the project's possibilities and the person's needs and wishes.

All beneficiaries are provided with confidential, safe housing in a shelter operating under the framework of the UMCOR project. Survivors' children can stay in the shelter with them. The duration of a stay depends on the beneficiary's needs, the process of medical and psychological rehabilitation, preparations

“The (Armenian) government requested UMCOR's help because UMCOR was the only organization in Armenia that had successfully sheltered and reintegrated survivors of trafficking back into society.”

for returning home, risk evaluation, the duration of investigation and court hearings, and other considerations. Often the shelter is the only safe place for survivors participating in court hearings.

All survivors who need medical assistance receive it. In addition to

gynecological diseases, beneficiaries often have health problems resulting from such causes as psychological and physical trauma, intolerable working conditions, poor nutrition, poor sanitation, and other inhumane circumstances. These are often the direct results of being trafficked. Initial examination and care is provided by the shelter's physician. Based on examination results, beneficiaries may be referred for further examination and medical consultations in specialized medical institutions. All at-risk beneficiaries undergo voluntary counseling and testing for HIV.

Psychological rehabilitation is the core of the assistance package provided to survivors. Individual and group psychotherapy sessions are conducted at the shelter. The work of the psychologist continues after a beneficiary leaves the shelter. Returning home creates strong psychological stress, not only for a survivor but also for the survivor's family.

Within the project framework, all beneficiaries are provided with legal assistance—from individual consultations to legal representation in court during criminal proceedings. The need for the shelter is even greater for survivors who collaborate with law enforcement and participate in court hearings, since they are at risk of being intimidated and threatened by the trafficker's counterparts in Armenia. UMCOR also assists in restoring identification documents. Many survivors need their rights restored in order to receive Social Security, disability insurance, and services for their children.

One important condition for successful reintegration is elimination (as far as possible) of the main cause that increases the risk of being trafficked: unemployment. UMCOR arranges for all kinds of vocational training so that its beneficiaries master a

profession in demand in their regions. UMCOR also helps beneficiaries register for local employment services.

Foreign citizens (mostly from Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan) receive the same assistance, in addition to translation and interpretation services. If possible, UMCOR organizes a safe repatriation process back to the country of origin.

Returning Home

An important factor in successful reintegration is where survivors end up after they leave the UMCOR

re-victimization during the reintegration process.

Armine lived in a village where she was the eldest daughter in a family with many children. Two of her brothers had disabilities that required treatment. Her parents had trouble caring for and feeding the whole family, so they arranged for Armine to marry a man whom she didn't know at all. She gave birth to three children and tried to establish a normal family, but her husband didn't want to work. He only wanted to drink and beat her.

So Armine returned to her parents



An UMCOR advertisement in Armenia reads: "Be Aware! What is forced labor? If you work or decided to leave your country for work—if you or any of your relatives became a victim of exploitation and need assistance—call this number for assistance." PHOTO: UMCOR ARMENIA

shelter. Often their families, especially those in rural areas or small communities, are ashamed of them and will not accept them back. In that case, UMCOR's psychologists and social workers conduct a separate process with the families of survivors, even working with community leaders to create an environment of understanding and support. This part of UMCOR's work is a very important link in preventing

with her children. She looked for work but couldn't find any. She worked with her parents on their small piece of land, collecting mushrooms and berries in the forest, but that wasn't enough to meet the family's needs. Then a woman visiting her neighbor offered her a good-paying job as a babysitter for an Armenian family in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Excited by the amount of money, Armine left her children with her

mother, unaware that she was falling into a trap.

She was transported to the UAE, but once there, she was told that she would be working as a prostitute in a nightclub. In shock, she refused and was punished. She was told that she had to cover her debts for her airplane ticket, clothes, food, and lodging. She would not be allowed to contact her family and so should expect no help from them.

For several months, Armine was forced to work as a prostitute in the nightclub. But then the UAE police raided the club, checking the immigration status of its workers. All those who didn't have documents were taken to the migration prison. In prison, Armine soon realized that she was pregnant. Her son was born in the prison's hospital. He was registered with an Arabic name and Armine's surname.

Back in Armenia, Armine's family hadn't heard from her and began to worry. Her mother asked the Armenian police to find her. At that time, rumors spread in the village that Armine was working as a prostitute in UAE, so her family, especially her children, became social outcasts. Her children refused to go to school because their peers bullied them.

The police and Armine's mother's inquiries succeeded, and Armine was given a temporary identification document. She was able to return home with her newborn child, but her arduous trials didn't end there. Armine's parents refused to accept her with the baby. They insisted that she leave the child at an orphanage. Armine decided that she could not abandon her child, so the police referred her to the UMCOR shelter. At



A resident of the UMCOR Armenia shelter works on crafts as therapy and as a way to learn a new trade.

PHOTO: UMCOR ARMENIA

the shelter, within the framework of the Assistance to the Victims of Trafficking Project, Armine received the necessary psychological, medical, and legal assistance.

Armine remained in contact with her mother and children by phone. Her children missed her very much, so an UMCOR program psychologist decided to organize their meeting on neutral territory in one of the city's cafes. After seeing their new brother, Armine's older children convinced their grandparents to accept the baby, enabling Armine to move back home.

Later, with support from UMCOR, the child received an Armenian birth certificate with his Armenian name. UMCOR staff made frequent visits to Armine's village to check on her progress and talk with community members. Because of the UMCOR Program, people in the village began to change their attitudes toward Armine. Now the family lives a full life. Armine's older children graduated

from school. Her daughter got married. At the wedding party, nobody seemed to remember that the girl's mother had once been forced to work as a prostitute in the UAE.

A Safe Place to Heal

There is no other more comprehensive assistance being provided for survivors of human trafficking—either by the Armenian government or by any other NGO in Armenia—than UMCOR Armenia's long-term program. Moreover, UMCOR runs the only shelter in which survivors can access necessary assistance while residing in a safe and comfortable environment during their rehabilitation. For many of UMCOR's beneficiaries, the shelter is their only

home. It gives them the time they need and a secure place to overcome feelings of shame and humiliation, which they must do before they are ready to reunite with their families and start a new life. In addition, beneficiaries residing at the shelter live together with other survivors. They share stories, experiences, and future plans—providing additional positive benefits in the survivors' lives.

Without the complete rehabilitation and reintegration services that survivors receive through UMCOR's program, they would be especially vulnerable to the trap of trafficking once again. As one of our beneficiaries said, "I wished for someone to hold me up, and suddenly UMCOR was there to help me understand my true situation. UMCOR is a hand that helps."

Nicholas Jaeger serves as program manager in New York for the UMCOR country offices in Armenia and Georgia in Eastern Europe.

DRONE

Targeting Ethics, Targeted Communities



The MQ-1 Predator unmanned aircraft flies over Afghanistan.
PHOTO: LT. COL. LESLIE PRATT/US AIR FORCE

**“They fly like a vulture,
swooping to devour;
they all come bent
on violence....Then
they sweep past like
the wind and go on—
guilty men, whose own
strength is their god.”**

Habakkuk 1:8b-9a, 11 (NIV)

by David Wildman

I was sitting with a friend in the garden of a walled compound in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, talking about urgent healthcare needs in the country, when he interrupted me by pointing up. High above was a small, slowly moving aircraft. It was an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)—better known as a drone.

Over the past 10 years, the United States has dramatically expanded its use of drones: for reconnaissance and surveillance; for combat missions; and for targeted killings in noncombat zones far from battlefields. The United States has conducted 371 drone strikes in Pakistan and 94 strikes in Yemen—almost all during the Obama administration. While there are many questions about the first two uses of drones, by far the most troubling moral aspect of drone warfare involves remote killings in noncombat areas.

In 2012, the United Methodist General Conference overwhelmingly adopted a resolution, “Seeking Peace in Afghanistan.” It includes a call for an immediate end to lethal drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Part of the resolution reads: “Very little effort is made to account for civilian casualties from these strikes, and some bombings are based on faulty intelligence. Such remote bombings—especially in noncombat zones—create widespread resentment among the families and communities hit, making them a recruiting tool for armed groups. These attacks in noncombat zones are similar to targeted assassinations or extrajudicial killings that are strongly prohibited

S



under international law and sharply criticized by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extra-Judicial Killings and [by] numerous human rights advocates. It sets a disturbing precedent for governments to take the law into their own hands....

"We call for an immediate end to drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which have escalated exponentially since 2008. We support full and independent investigations into all such bombings to account for civilian casualties." *The Book of Resolutions 2012*, Resolution 6128, "Seeking Peace in Afghanistan."

The US and Israeli governments account for almost all targeted killings by drones. They claim that these hi-tech weapons reduce risks to their soldiers and citizens, allow quicker targeting of enemies in remote areas, and result in few civilian casualties because of their precision guidance. Indeed, many US officials celebrate drones as a game changer in the war on terror.

Viewing Drones From Below

As I looked up that day in Afghanistan at the high circling drone, I began to sense a very different view: that of communities hit by lethal drone strikes. Almost all of the communities targeted by drone strikes are remote Muslim tribal areas in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, Libya, and Mali. The one exception to the targeting of remote areas is Israel's massive use of le-

thal drones in Gaza—a densely populated place with nowhere for civilians to flee for safety. According to the Palestine Center for Human Rights, in just three days during the heavy bombardment in July, Israel fired 93 drone missiles into Gaza.

Akbar Ahmed, a Pakistani anthropologist, is author of an excellent book, *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror became a Global War on Tribal Islam*. In it, he states: "For a Muslim tribesman, this manner of combat not only was dishonorable but also smacked of sacrilege. By appropriating the powers of God through the drone, in its capacity to see and not be seen and [to] deliver death without warning, trial, or judgment, Americans were by definition blasphemous."

Drones, then, are not simply hi-tech weapons but have come to symbolize a conflict among very different ethics: an ethic of empire; an ethic of international law and human rights; and an ethic rooted in oral traditions of marginalized, impoverished, clan-based societies. These oral cultures of small farmers and herders are organized around values of honor, shame, and face-to-face relations; they have repeatedly withstood and outlasted invading empires. As Christians, we too draw wisdom from deep oral traditions found in the Bible.

Challenging the Use of Drones

There is a great temptation to embrace the latest military technology, such as the drone, as a savior of civilization and "our way of life." In biblical times, the war horse and chariot were the hi-tech weapons that leaders felt would save

their empires from external threats. Yet the Psalmist warns, "The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save." (Psalm 33:17, NRSV) Empires, then and now, advocate an ethic that considers the lives of their citizens to be more valuable than those of villag-

"Us versus them."

ers far away. To empires, their own violence is just, while the violence of others is terror. In calling for an end to drone strikes, we are also seeking to challenge an ethic that divides God's children into "us versus them."

Each new killing technology—from war horses to artillery to drones—creates more distance between the killer and those being killed. With drones, pilots at computer screens in the United States fire missiles that kill people half a world away in villages these pilots will never visit. The use of unmanned vehicles, unlike weapons of mass destruction, has made it easier for political leaders to order one-sided deadly force with few apparent consequences. However, for remote villages struck by drones, the dead are often not terrorist groups, but families having dinner or celebrating a wedding.

People at the center and people at the margins have much to share and learn from one another, yet drones deepen the gulf that keeps us divided. We must instead affirm our common humanity and the God of life who unites us.

David Wildman is the Executive Secretary for Human Rights and Racial Justice for Global Ministries and carries responsibilities for ministries and personnel in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

World Week for Peace

IN PALESTINE ISRAEL

The World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel is an initiative of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the World Council of Churches. It is intended to promote acts of worship, education, and advocacy in support of an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

The International Day of Peace (<http://www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/>) is observed around the world each year on September 21. The United Nations General Assembly has declared this to be a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the General Assembly's Declaration on the Rights of Peoples to Peace, which recognizes that the promotion of peace is essential to the full enjoyment of human rights. So this year, the theme of the International Day of Peace is "The Right of Peoples to Peace."

The Week of Peace

Following the International Day of Peace, the World Council of Churches (WCC) asks church organizations, congregations, and individuals to observe the World Week for Peace in

Palestine Israel (September 21 to 27, 2014).

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF), a subcommittee of the WCC, invites member churches, faith-based communities, and civil-society organizations around the world to join together in 2014 for a week of advocacy and action in support of an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine and a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. Congregations and individuals around the globe who believe in justice are encouraged to take peaceful actions together to create a common public witness.

This annual observance of a week of prayer, education, and advocacy calls participants to work for an outcome that will enable Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace. It has been 66 years since the State of Israel was created, but there has been no similar creation of an independent Palestinian

state. This has only deepened the tragedy of the Palestinian people. It is now 47 years since the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza made the peaceful vision of one land, two peoples, impossible.

The theme for the World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel is "Let my people go!"

Churches Get Involved

By participating in the World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, churches around the world can send a clear signal to policymakers, community groups, and their own parishes about the urgent need for a peace settlement that ends the illegal occupation and secures the legitimate rights and future of both peoples in the Holy Land, Palestinians and Israelis.

Participants are encouraged to organize and to join in the following three actions:

1. Pray with churches living under occupation, using a special prayer from Jerusalem, along with other worship resources prepared for the week.
2. Educate congregations about actions that make for peace and situations that prevent peace, especially issues related to prisoners.
3. Advocate with political leaders using ecumenical policies that promote peace with justice.

Prayer from the Leaders of Churches in Jerusalem

Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.

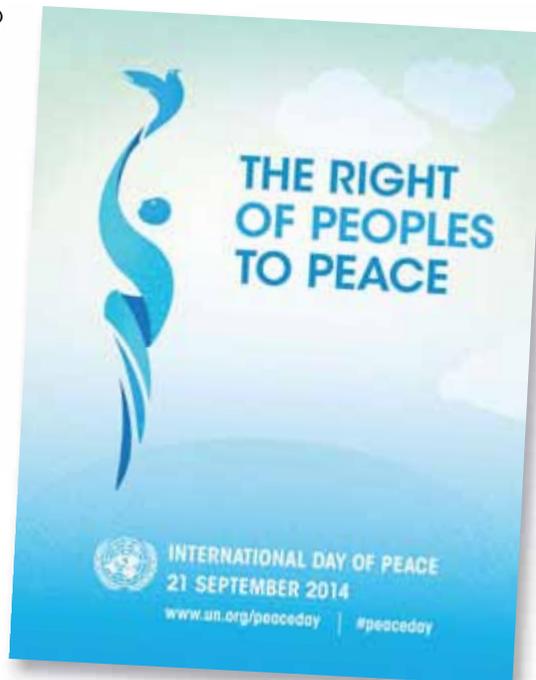
Hebrews 13:3 (New American Standard Bible, "The Open Bible" edition)

Palestinian Christian church leaders in Jerusalem have created the following prayer for use during the World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, 2014.

"With these words we pray together for those who are in prison all over the world, those easily forgotten. We pray especially for the political prisoners of Palestine and Israel. We pray for the sick among them and those who cannot handle the hardship of a prison cell, for the children and women who are mistreated behind bars. We also remember those left behind, the families who are bereaved as their beloved ones are sent to prison. We pray for inner transformation for those who committed crimes and are in need of repentance.

We pray for hearts and minds that are haunted by hatred and fear, that we will soon find peace and reconciliation in souls and in the societies.

"This region aches with so much, troubles of the body and soul, both presently and in history. In Palestine and Israel today, many lack freedom



The poster for the International Day of Peace, 2014.

POSTER DESIGN: UNITED NATIONS

Left: Olives in a Palestinian olive grove in the West Bank village of Aboud.

PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY

and too many are behind bars. For too long injustice, violence, and fear have shaped this region. We pray and ask for human treatment and justice for all, as we are all children of God.

"At last we pray for a just peace settlement and reconciliation, a peace in which there will be no more political prisoners behind bars and where harmony will prevail in the hearts of all the peoples of this region. We pray for God's mercy, for

freedom for those in shackles and for peace in our time.

As we observe this week with our brothers and sisters from churches all over the world we pray:

Do not hold against us the sins of past generations; may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need.

Help us, God our Savior, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake.

Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"

Before our eyes, make known among the nations that you avenge the outpoured blood of your servants.

May the groans of the prisoners come before you; with your strong arm preserve those condemned to die."

Psalm 79: 8-11 (New International Version, NIV)

John Calhoun, a United Methodist missionary serving in Kiev, Ukraine, is the convenor for the World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel.

RESOURCES FOR THE WORLD WEEK FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE ISRAEL

Website: <http://pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace>

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A "separation fence" constructed by the Israeli government near the West Bank town of Jayyous cuts through the middle of olive groves belonging to Palestinian farmers. PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY

Eroding Injustice

IN PALESTINE

by Alex Awad
Introduction by David Wildman

In US media and among US government officials, we often hear the question, "when will Palestinians renounce violence?" While the question seems reasonable, there are two significant problems with it. First, should we not ask, "when will all parties renounce violence?" For years the US government has provided over \$3 billion in weapons annually to Israel, while, since 1968, the United Methodist General Conference has called for an end to all arms shipments to the Middle East from all sources.

Second, in years of working with Palestinians and Israelis, I have found that 100 percent of Palestinians practice nonviolence each day just to survive the discrimination and restrictions of nearly 50 years of military occupation. Each day, tens of thousands of Palestinians engage in nonviolent negotiations with Israeli soldiers at checkpoints—to get to work, farm their fields, worship, go to medical appointments, and

visit family. At times, some Palestinians have responded to the violence of military occupation, expanding illegal settlements, and discrimination through violent means.

Nonviolence as survival constitutes only part of Palestinian nonviolent resistance to injustice. In July 2005, on the anniversary of the International

Court of Justice's decision declaring Israel's separation wall as a violation of international law, over a thousand Palestinian civil society organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, inside Israel (where 20 percent of Israeli citizens are Palestinian) and in refugee and diaspora communities around the world, joined together in a call for freedom, justice, and equality. The call urges nonviolent economic actions of boycott, divestment and sanctions (or BDS) to end the systemic violence of Israel's military occupation, dispossession, and discrimination. Like the Montgomery bus boycott, BDS actions seek to end unjust, discriminatory use of products so that all may have life

In the Kairos Palestine document that the Rev. Alex Awad lifts up in the

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

1 John 3:18 (NRSV)

letter below, *Palestinian Christians invite us all to join in nonviolent actions of BDS as an act of love: love of one's community, one's neighbor, and even one's enemy! The Kairos document states: "seeing the face of God in everyone does not mean accepting evil or aggression on their part. Rather, this love seeks to correct the evil and stop the aggression...But it is resistance with love as its logic."* In the witness of Palestinian Christians, we hear again Jesus' commandment to "love one another" through nonviolent, economic actions.

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My name is Alex Awad. I am a United Methodist missionary, Dean of Students at Bethlehem Bible College, and pastor of an international church in East Jerusalem. I am also a native Palestinian.

Two years ago I was invited by the United Methodist Kairos Response (www.kairosresponse.org)—a group within The United Methodist Church that supports divestment—to be a witness at the General Conference held in Tampa, Florida. At the conference, since I was not a delegate, I gave several short speeches in support of divestment to different groups outside the conference hall.

Here are my thoughts on this matter, which I offer in a spirit of love and truthfulness.

Injustice in Palestine

First, there is real injustice going on in Israel/Palestine today. Palestinian lands in the West Bank are being confiscated at a fast pace. On these confiscated lands, totally segregated Jewish settlements are being built. In Bethlehem, for example, over 70 percent of the farmland that belonged to Palestinian Christians has been confiscated in order to build segregated Jewish settlements.

Israel is also building a wall that not only separates Palestinians from Israelis but also separates them from other Palestinians. This is creating great suffering for the Palestinian people and negatively affecting every aspect of their lives. Over 85 percent of the dividing wall is built on Palestinian lands, not on the internationally acknowledged borders between Israel and the West Bank. (All of this activity—the land seizures, the tearing down of homes, the destruction of farms—has taken place regardless of the status of peace negotiations.)

The US government, the United Nations, and most international human rights organizations have declared that building Jewish settlements in the West Bank is illegal. The International Court of Justice at The Hague also judged, by a vote of 14 to one (an in absentia vote by the US representative), that the wall is illegal and must come down. Palestinian farmers and homeowners who have suffered because of the wall should be compensated for their losses. I recently joined a nonviolent demonstration on the outskirts of Bethlehem against the expropriation of lands belonging to Christian families.

A Failure to Intervene

In spite of many promising declarations, nothing has happened on the ground to stop the theft of Palestinian lands, the construction of Israeli settlements, or the building of the segregation wall. The pressure that the US administration gets from Israeli and Jewish lobbies deters the United States from stopping Israelis from harming Palestinians. The recent murder of hundreds of Palestinian children in Gaza is disgraceful. The United Nations cannot act because of the threat of a US veto at the UN Security Council. The United States consistently uses this veto privilege to shield Israel from international condemnation and to spare Israel from adhering to international law.

A Plea From the Churches

Through the *Kairos Palestine Document*, Christian churches in the Holy Land decided to appeal to the worldwide church to take steps to halt injustice in Israel/Palestine. Palestinian Christian churches are calling for churches all over the world to take nonviolent measures such as boycotts, sanctions, and divestment in pursuit of justice for both Israelis and Palestinians. The Christian church in the Holy Land is the first casualty of the ongoing Israeli policy.



A protest for Palestinians in Melbourne, Australia, July 19, 2014.
PHOTO: US CAMPAIGN TO END THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION TUMBLR SITE

As a result, the church in the Holy Land is calling Christian denominations to stop investing their pension funds in companies that do harm to peace, to Palestinians, and to peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. Instead, the Palestinian Christians call on churches to invest in companies that do no harm. This may be a small step by the various Christian denominations, but it is a great symbolic act. It tells Israelis, Palestinians, and the whole world that Christians follow their conscience and the teachings of Christ rather than compromise their moral calling.

Some may argue that divestment is not the way to go, preferring to support direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. But Palestine has been negotiating with Israel for more than 45 years and continues to negotiate today. However, the imbalance of power is a basic challenge to negotiations. The Israelis are rich and powerful and have the veto power of the United States on their side. The Palestinians are under occupation, with a struggling economy, and have no army to protect them or defend their lands. At negotiations, the Israelis dictate and the Palestinians must either make concessions or reject the Israeli demands. Meanwhile, Israeli bulldozers continue to plough through Palestinian lands. Consequently, 45 years of negotiations and scores of peace conferences have failed to stop Israel's theft of Palestine.

Some may argue that divestment may disrupt Jewish-Christian dialogue. On the contrary, injustice in Palestine should become the main topic of Jewish-Christian dialogue. To dialogue with Jewish neighbors or friends without addressing the issues of injustice in Palestine is a serious form of hypocrisy. Christians must send a clear message to the

Jewish people that, while Christians support Israel and its security and desire to have a healthy conversation with the Jewish people, they will not abandon their calling to be prophetic peacemakers.

Divestment to please the Palestinians, others argue, will play into the hands of Islamists and terrorists who are committed to the destruction of the State of Israel. In reality, the opposite is true. Keeping the poor under political and economic oppression is the first cause of violence, wars, and terrorism. Divestment offers a nonviolent alternative.

General Conference Actions

Many at the 2012 United Methodist General Conference promoted investment in Palestine as an alternative to divestment. To some degree, investment is good in a threatened economy when the people suffer under occupation. But to invest for the good of Palestinians while, at the same time, investing in companies that are hurting Palestinians sends mixed messages to both Israelis and Palestinians.

For Israelis, the message is this: As long as Christians benefit financially from their investments, they will not care how these companies use their products and technologies. For Palestinians, the message is this: Christians sin against us through investing in companies that cause us suffering, and then they come back to atone for their sins by providing some investments in Palestine. Investing in Palestine may do a little good for a few Palestinians but will not end the occupation and certainly will not encourage the Israelis to commit to peace and justice. I have been following these negotiations all my life. Positive investment is raised time and time again as the more palatable alternative to more assertive actions. It hasn't worked in the past and, in my view, it will not work in the future.

As I watched the 2012 General Conference proceedings, delegates agonized over three resolutions that dealt with the Israel/Palestine question. The first two resolutions passed in favor of justice for the Palestinians concerning the occupation and



Father Firas Aridah, the priest in the village of Aboud, uses a map to tell visitors about how the construction of Israel's separation barrier is stealing olive groves and livelihood from his parishioners. PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY

settlements. But these resolutions have scant practical power to change realities on the ground. The third resolution called for divesting United Methodist pension funds from three companies that support and sustain the occupation through their machines and technologies. That resolution was defeated, with the final tally showing 39 percent in favor of divestment and 61 percent opposed.

It is my belief that The United Methodist Church should divest from companies currently helping to sustain the occupation of the West Bank—the place many of us call “Palestine.” For me, one of the great ironies of the 2012 General Conference was the fact that, two evenings before the vote, the entire conference engaged in “An Act of Repentance for Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples.” The main message of the service was how Christians have historically failed to listen to the voices of people of other races, especially when native peoples are talking about their own land and way of life. After the service, the main speaker, the Rev. George “Tink” Tinker, a Native American, gave a strong endorsement to our divestment effort, directly equating it to what had happened to his own people. Even after solemn acts of repentance, his voice was not heeded.

I now realize that not only Rev. Tinker’s voice, but the voices of five Palestinian Christians who had made



Abdalah Sharqawi and his olive grove in the West Bank village of Aboud. Sharqawi and his wife, Sara FawadLeh, are losing hundreds of trees to the construction of the Israeli separation barrier.

PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY

the long journey to Tampa, the voices of courageous Jewish rabbis who stood with us, and, most tragically for me, the testimony of all of my United Methodist missionary colleagues in the Holy Land were overcome by voices of error and ignorance. Testimony by eyewitnesses who have seen the injustice and walked a mile with Palestinians in their daily suffering in the land we call “Holy” were drowned by fear and misinformation. In essence, once again the voices of the powerful prevailed over the voices of those who advocate for the poor.

With General Conference over, I would ask that other bodies within the United Methodist connection, including annual conferences, consider taking concrete action to support a peaceful resolution. I ask you to trust me, your representative in the Holy Land. Trust that I am in earnest and have my facts in order when I request that you seriously consider divestment. I am not in the

sway of anti-Semites or of some fringe group. As I told the audiences I spoke with at General Conference, I call myself a Conservative Evangelical. I organize conferences for Evangelicals in Bethlehem, and I personally invite you to come visit me.

Finally, as a Palestinian, I am indeed concerned about the occupation of my homeland, the settlements, the separation wall, and all other forms of injustice. But, as a Christian, I am more concerned over the health of the church. A church that is not ready

or willing to hear the voice of the oppressed and stand with justice is out of sync with the will of its Head and Maker. I ask you who make up the body of Christ to make the better choice.

The Rev. Alex Awad and his wife Brenda have served in the Holy Land as Global Ministries missionaries for 25 years. This piece was adapted from a letter written for the United Methodist Kairos Response, May 2013.

SUPPORT BETHLEHEM BIBLE COLLEGE

Support for Bethlehem Bible College can be designated using Advance #12017A — Bethlehem Bible College, Vision 20-20. This program trains Arab Christian leaders to serve and strengthen the church and communities in the Holy Land.

GREEN SHOOTS, DEEP ROOTS

Life After Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines

by Jack Amick

Six months after Typhoon Haiyan (locally called Typhoon Yolanda) made landfall in Leyte, Philippines, I couldn't help but notice how green things had become. It was green when I visited last January, but not this green. This green was quite a contrast to the landscape that met me in November 2013, 10 days after the typhoon. Then, everything was brown and dark: brown, because most of the vegetation had been killed by the salt-water assault of

the storm surge and by the strong winds that flung a deadly brew of mud, salt, flotsam, and jetsam far up in the hills; dark, from the pervasive lack of electricity.

Yet, six months later, green was the dominant color. Gone were many of the truncated coconut palm trees, cut down and milled using chainsaws. This fresh "coco" lumber, though not well suited for construction, is, nonetheless, often used to build temporary structures. Live coconut trees remain—not as many as

before, certainly, but now topped with healthy, if not completely full, crowns of palm fronds. In one area, the grass had come back so tenaciously that a young man was wielding a gas-powered weed whip to cut it back from three feet tall to three inches. In other fields, rice plants—green but clearly topped with abundant heads of grain—danced in the gentle breeze. Teams of people were harvesting rice and spreading their bounty on the road to dry in the hot sun.



An area in Tanauan, Philippines, after Typhoon Haiyan.
PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE/UMNS



Tanauan, 6 months later.
PHOTO: JACK AMICK

A New Leaf

Another type of greening was also happening, in American parlance. Just about everywhere, in the towns and villages and along many roads, people were selling things. My colleague, Francesco Paganini, UMCOR's manager of international disaster response activities, noted that "the human being is a deeply capitalist creature. People outside a refugee camp will cut bars of soap into four pieces and sell the piec-

barangay leadership to account for issues of equity, durability, economics, and community resilience.

There is an old Easter hymn that begins: "Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain...." There are certainly "green shoots" of hope rising as UMCOR works in the wake of the Typhoon Yolanda disaster. Six months later, those closest to the work in this area—Francesco Paganini and I providing managerial oversight from New York; Malaya

This green shoot was preceded by months of listening to the needs of both the community residents and the local leaders alike.

Using a model plan of a core house designed to withstand both wind and water, Tanauan City engineers have begun tailoring that design to the individual property of 10 Yolanda survivors who lost their homes. More designs will follow soon on the heels of these 10. These houses are intended to be basic homes, to which homeowners can easily make improvements when they are able to do so and have the necessary resources.

An UMCOR project office (a tent, actually, like those in the old TV series "MASH") was established right in the barangay of Calogcog, affording the program officer easy access to the 200-plus families living in this community, and vice-versa. The citizens of Calogcog have had lots of questions, and our staff is readily available to answer them. The program officer makes regular visits to people in their temporary homes (tents, tarps, and the like) to gather project-related information while also building relationships with the beneficiaries. Several meetings have been held with community members to share concerns, discuss next steps, and keep moving forward together.

UMCOR has identified an international partner, GlobalMedic, as a logistics coordinator for the project. UMCOR has partnered with GlobalMedic before, in different locations around the world, and has found its staff to be highly skilled at expediting shipments of disaster response materials. GlobalMedic has established production of cement blocks in a nearby village to supply the Calogcog project with high-quality press blocks. At the same time, this activity will result in some income generation for local residents.



The UMCOR "office" in Tanauan is a tent—with 101 different uses.

PHOTO: FRANCESCO PAGANINI/UMCOR

es at the edge of the camp within a week of the camp's having been established." But the enterprise that we saw in and around Tacloban and Tanauan was much more far-reaching than slicing up soap. Goods from gasoline to comic books, mangoes, and plastic housewares were available at the roadside.

Pel Tecson, the mayor of Tanauan, is a former regional executive of a multinational corporation. It is therefore not surprising that the entrepreneurial spirit thrives in this area. UMCOR has engaged in a new partnership with this municipality to bring durable housing to the barangay (community) of Calogcog. We have taken the time to work with the municipal and

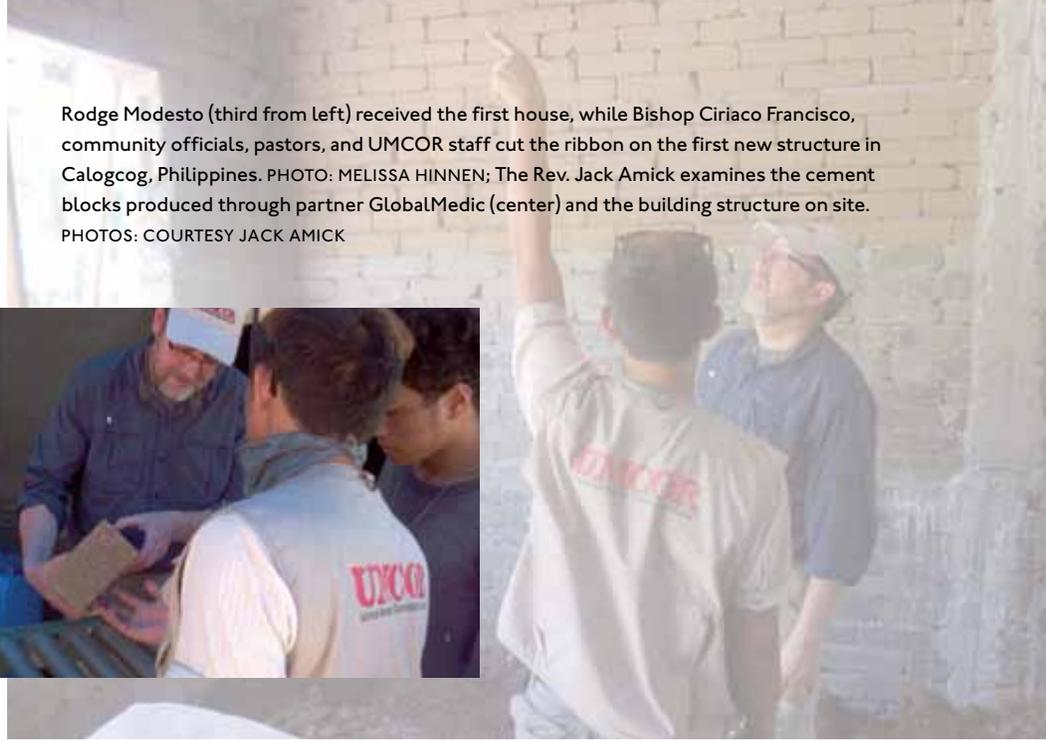
Conejas, our on-the-ground program officer in Calogcog; Toots Modesto, the barangay captain; Mayor Tecson and the city engineers—have seen many examples of "green shoots."

New Life Gains Strength

After important discussions between the Tanauan Municipal Council and UMCOR staff, Mayor Tecson of Tanauan and the Calogcog barangay captain signed a Memorandum of Agreement with UMCOR on April 29, 2014. This historic partnership between UMCOR and the local municipality allows UMCOR to proceed with the construction of the first of more than 200 houses that we expect to build in this community.



Rodge Modesto (third from left) received the first house, while Bishop Ciriaco Francisco, community officials, pastors, and UMCOR staff cut the ribbon on the first new structure in Calogcog, Philippines. PHOTO: MELISSA HINNEN; The Rev. Jack Amick examines the cement blocks produced through partner GlobalMedic (center) and the building structure on site. PHOTOS: COURTESY JACK AMICK



Also, in partnership with GlobalMedic, UMCOR has distributed Rainfresh water purifiers and provided training on their safe operation and maintenance to the community of Calogcog. Together, we will be providing water purifiers to other communities in the region.

UMCOR has completed intake interviews with approximately a third of the families in Calogcog. It is our goal that everyone in the community whose home was destroyed will receive a house. Those who have more income will pay for skilled labor for their house and the house of another beneficiary. If the household income of the beneficiaries was above the poverty level before the disaster—with an adjustment factored in for storm-related loss—then that household's members hire a skilled laborer for their house and for work on the house of a neighbor who was at or below poverty level before the disaster. No money passes through UMCOR in these transactions.

In addition, every family with a member who is able-bodied contributes unskilled labor to the construction of the family's house. Improvements are being made to a nearby warehouse so that it will be ready to receive building supplies in the near future.

Deep Roots

When Francesco and I visited with the Rev. Lelito "Lito" Luana, the pastor of Grace United Methodist Church in nearby Tacloban, I noted how green everything looked to me and observed that there were now "green shoots" with our shelter project, too. Francesco reminded me that those "green shoots" were the result of "deep roots"—of listening, planning, and hard work by many, many people. These green shoots are signs of the resurrection in the community of Calogcog. They came by our taking the time to plant deep roots of partnership in the last several months. We know that our presence will not be permanent—our office is a tent, and our staff is light—but we want the project to be nonetheless rooted in relationships of trust.

In addition to food aid, UMCOR has responded to the disaster with strategies that would result in permanent healing, not just Band-Aids™; we provide sustainable solutions, not temporary fixes. UMCOR's strategy in Calogcog might be called "durable disaster response." Where water was

needed, UMCOR provided purifiers that, with proper maintenance, will last at least one year. Where shelter was required, UMCOR skipped the temporary strategy employed by so many humanitarian agencies—tarps and tents and "kits" of building supplies—and opted to take the time to "build back better." We chose to work with everyone who lost a home, not just the ones worst off.

We realize that this strategy can't be applied everywhere, not even to every community affected by Yolanda. We know we can't fix everything. There is much work to be done and many local and international partners ready to do the work. But we believe that we can fix one community and, in that community, we can work together with disaster survivors and local officials to "build back better"—not just houses, but lives.

It is my hope that, in the next few months, we will clearly see the fruits of these labors. But, for now, the green shoots of hope are rising in Calogcog.

The Rev. Jack Amick is UMCOR's assistant general secretary for International Disaster Response.

missionmemo



The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the World Council of Churches invites member churches, faith-based communities, and civil society organizations around the world for a World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel. The event will be observed September 21-27, with the theme of "Let my people go!"

This annual observance of a week of prayer, education, and advocacy calls participants to work for an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine, so that Palestinians and Israelis can finally live in peace.

Ebola Response Plan

In June 2014, The United Methodist Church launched an Ebola Emergency Response Plan in the face of a deadly outbreak in the West African countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. About 599 cases were reported in June, indicating the largest Ebola surge in history.

The Ebola Response Plan is a joint effort by West African United Methodist Church leaders and regional health boards, denominational health facilities, missionaries, and the United Methodist Committee on Relief, which is a part of the church's mission agency, the General Board of Global Ministries. The Ebola response, which involves treatment, prevention, and public education, is also being coordinated with government and other private agency responses.

Learning to Sign

In a video produced by Susquehanna Annual Conference, Brittany Spriggle Howell interviews Michelle Campbell of Fishburn United Methodist Church in Hershey, Pennsylvania, about the church's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministries.

Through its signing ministry, Fishburn UMC is empowering all of its church members and local communities, including daycare centers and local school districts, to be in the know when it comes to communicating with those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The church offers sign interpretation classes that help create community with all people, both young and old. Visit <http://bit.ly/VG0i1v> to learn more.

UMCOR Responds to Immigration Crisis

In June, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) provided assistance to the Southwest Texas Conference/Rio Grande Conference to respond to the increasing numbers of refugees crossing into the United States from Mexico.

According to news reports, some 39,000 adults with children have crossed the border since last October. Another 52,000 refugee minors have made the crossing on their own, without adult accompaniment. About three-quarters of unaccompanied children come from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, fleeing violence and extortion by gangs.

An UMCOR news release stated that large numbers of women and children who have crossed the U.S./Mexico border have subsequently appeared on the steps of United Methodist border facilities and churches. They are receiving shelter, food, and other basic supplies.

DEATHS—Marie Nicholson Rogers, retired Home Missionary with 37 years of service in Louisville, KY, and Nashville, TN, died March 20, 2014...**Roberta Geraldine Rice**, retired missionary doctor with 19 years of service in South Korea with United Methodist Women, died April 1, 2014...**Margery Jane Miller**, retired missionary with United Methodist Women, with nearly 40 years of service in Argentina and Chile, died May 18, 2014...**Mary Jane Harper**, retired missionary with more than 7 years of service in Zimbabwe, died June 8, 2014...**Dorothy E. Crisologo**, retired missionary with nearly 21 years of service in Fiji, died June 12, 2014...**Charles H. Germany**, retired missionary with more than 18 years of service in Japan and more than 20 years of service as staff of the World Division, General Board of Global Ministries, died July 13, 2014...**William W. Jones**, retired missionary with 43 years of service in India, died June 15, 2014...**Mona B. McNutt**, retired deaconess with nearly 40 years of service in South Carolina and Tennessee, died June 18, 2014.

A J O U R N E Y T O P E A C E

Reflecting on History *and* Mission in the Philippines

by Laura K. Wise



“InPeace,” which stands for Initiatives for Peace Mindanao, was conceived on February 20, 2003, during a 48-hour ultimatum given by the United States to Iraq. The US war with Iraq over Iraq’s supposed “weapons of mass destruction” was imminent. Similarly, the island of Mindanao—the southernmost main island in the Philippines—was in a state of unrest. After 35 years of fighting, the civil war between Philippine government troops and opposing rebel forces was escalating.

Over the few months leading up to the creation of InPeace, more than 30 bombings rocked Mindanao, sending the people of the island into panic. Peace advocates looked on with concern, knowing that something had to be done.

Then, shortly after the inception of InPeace, Mindanao’s Davao International Airport and Davao Seaport were bombed—the most deadly acts of terrorism yet to occur. More than 50 people were killed. All of these events validated the creation of InPeace. One of the organization’s first official acts was the publishing of a Manifesto for Peace—a public document condemning the rebel attacks in Mindanao and the US war on Iraq.

As a young adult missionary, I started work with InPeace in September 2012, seeing firsthand the urgent need for conflict resolution work in the Philippines. My first assignment with InPeace was an intense study of the history of Mindanao, which familiarized me with the context in which I would be working.

Sister Stella Matutina, OSB, accepts her nomination as spokesperson for The Sisters Association in Mindanao (SAMIN), an organization active in promoting peace. PHOTO: LAURA WISE

A Home to Three Peoples

Mindanao, which translates literally as “land of lakes,” is rich in natural and mineral resources. Historically, it is also a place plagued by conflict, which is rooted in claims of ancestral land rights. The conflict in Mindanao dates back much farther and deeper than any modern history book reveals.

Mindanao is also home to three peoples. Its population is composed of three main ethnic groups: Moro, or Muslim people; Lumad tribes (indigenous people of the southern Philippines); and Christians, who make up the majority of the Philippine population today.

The Muslim, or Moro, presence in Mindanao predates Spanish colonial rule. The Islamic faith was introduced through trade with merchants who came to Mindanao in the 13th century from what is now called the Middle East. When the Spanish, who were Roman Catholic, arrived in 1521, they brought Christianity with them, forever changing the fabric of the country.

It has been well documented that, when the Spanish came to the Philippines, Mindanao was the last island to come under colonial rule. The people of Mindanao fought back fiercely, resisting occupation with all their might.

This legacy of rebellion has never left the island of Mindanao. Many are quick to paint the island as troublesome, ignoring the reality that the key to peace in the Philippines lies in confronting the country’s historical issues.

Over the years, the conflict has intensified. There are currently four active rebel groups in the Philippines, along with minority extremists fighting for Moro liberation and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The Philippine Islands have been in a state of civil unrest for 46 years. At different times throughout the country’s history, peace talks between the government and the rebel groups have been on the table, but currently no peace negotiations are taking place.

Longing for Peace

In September 2013, when I went to Zamboanga City to participate in a humanitarian relief mission, I was able to see firsthand the destruction caused by this ongoing war. The city had been torn apart by a two-week standoff between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

I will never forget our first day of relief efforts. Word had gotten out that InPeace would be bringing food and relief packs for civilians affected by the fighting, so hundreds of people were waiting for us when we arrived.

In my broken Filipino Bisaya dialect, I talked with a group of women who told me of the horror of seeing their homes burned to the ground. Helplessly, they had to watch their male relatives being beaten and hauled away by

government forces, who accused the men of being rebel fighters. The women also told me of the anguish they felt at not being able to feed their children because of the food shortage that occurred after the fighting began.

It has become clear to me that conflict resolution, peace advocacy,



Sister Noemi Degala, SMSM, and Bishop Antonio Ablon (of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, IFI, church) are interviewed by ABS-CBN news in Zamboanga City about ongoing relief efforts. PHOTO: LAURA WISE

and the quest for human rights are more necessary than ever before. By promoting genuine peace through education and dialogue, we have the best chance at healing the wounds that have festered over time. InPeace is serving as the catalyst for this reconciliation, leading the movement for peace in the southern Philippines.

Explaining InPeace

InPeace is an interfaith movement. The organization is composed of Christian clergy and laity and has ties with the local and international United Methodist Church, Moro leaders,



Health professional Grace Celis of Community-Based Health Services Association (CBHSA) gives a free medical exam to a woman displaced and injured in the Zamboanga standoff.

PHOTO: LAURA WISE

and Lumads (indigenous peoples). The network of people who support InPeace believe it is vitally important for all parties to be represented in peace negotiations. InPeace provides a space at the table for dialogue among all committed to the peace movement.

The highlight of my time in Zamboanga during the relief mission was the interfaith dialogue that took place. At this meeting, we brought together key Muslim and Christian leaders to talk about the conflict and the circumstances that motivated the aggression on both sides. The conflict had been mislabeled by the media as a religious war rather than the political war it actually was. Both sides seemed a bit apprehensive at the outset, but as the conversation began to take shape, I could see that both sides were amicable. For me, this was a powerful witness to the importance of peacemaking. It showed me how critical communication and healthy dialogue are in the peace movement.

The beauty of InPeace lies in its members' inclusive nature. All people and sectors of the society are welcome. InPeace is made up of lawyers, farmers, academics, the urban poor, women leaders, unions, health professionals, teachers, artists, youth, local government officials, small entrepreneurs, and other leaders and organizations in Mindanao.

InPeace also openly and adamantly supports peace negotiations between the government and any opposing forces contributing to the ongoing armed conflict. InPeace members continue to work with the hope that these talks will lead to meaningful reforms that will benefit the people of Mindanao.

The UMC Connection

InPeace has a longstanding relationship with The United Methodist Church. As a mission partner, the InPeace network is a shining example of on-the-ground peace work as an extension of the work of the church in the world. Working with Global

Ministries on an international level, and with the Mindanao Philippines Annual Conference on the local level, the networks of InPeace are thankful for the presence of The United Methodist Church.

InPeace works regularly with the Davao Episcopal Area on local mission. Under the leadership of Bishop Ciriaco Francisco and District Superintendent Israel (Ace) Painit, the Mindanao Philippines Annual Conference has become a key player in the care of all Filipinos—especially those who are marginalized.

I worked closely with Pastor Ace to help raise funds throughout the district for the relief mission to Zamboanga. He, along with a few other United Methodist pastors, planned a benefit concert to raise money for the survivors of the war. An amazingly talented choir came to our area from Manila and serenaded the audience with beautiful songs. As a result, more than 13,000 pesos were raised for the survivors!



A young boy participates in activities designed to engage children affected by the conflict.

PHOTO: LAURA WISE

A significant partnership has developed between InPeace and the UMC through the placement of United Methodist missionaries. InPeace has a rich history of hosting young adult missionaries from both the Global Mission Fellows (GMF) program and

an example of someone with a true mission spirit.

The legacy of mission continues with InPeace. Currently, young adult missionary Jay Knudsen is in Mindanao serving with the organization until March 2015.

for peace and human rights in the Philippines is strong, with many US-based affiliates. Panaghiusa, part of the US Task Force on the Philippines and based in the California-Pacific Conference, is one of the leaders in the US movement.

As the members of the InPeace network continue to strive toward a just and lasting peace and the abundant life for all that Jesus describes in the Bible, we can all join in the movement. We are reminded in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-13 that we are one body, and we are all on this journey together. “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.” (New International Version, NIV)

The movement for peace and justice in our world is bigger than Mindanao, bigger than the Philippines, and bigger than the United States. It is this concept of oneness spoken of in Scripture that should give us our example of working together in solidarity. What affects one group of people in a remote corner of the world affects us all. Let’s get to work!

Laura K. Wise is a Mission Intern serving as a mission communicator with The General Board of Global Ministries in New York City.



Mission Interns Adam Shaw (back row, 2nd) and Laura Wise (far right) participate in the International Day for Human Rights rally in Manila, Philippines.

PHOTO: COURTESY LAURA WISE

the Global Justice Volunteer (GJV) program. I was fortunate enough to be placed with InPeace for 18 months as a GMF after I was commissioned as a missionary in August 2012. I followed young adult missionaries Adam Shaw and Lindsey Kerr, both of whom had served in Mindanao for 18 months and are still active young adult leaders in the church.

I was also preceded by Jessica Tulloch, who served as a Global Justice Volunteer (a 10-week program) in 1999. She fell in love with the work and the people, moved to the Philippines when her GJV program service was over, and has served as a full-time staff member at InPeace for 11 years. Jessica is

A Broader Network

InPeace Mindanao taught me what it means to be part of a “peoples’ organization.” For InPeace staff members, the work isn’t simply a job; it’s a way of life. They work tirelessly to create a brighter future for all Filipinos, and I’m thankful to have been a part of that work. The international network

INPEACE CONNECTIONS

To learn more about the movement for peace, justice, and human rights in the Philippines: visit InPeace: [facebook.com/inpeace.mindanao](https://www.facebook.com/inpeace.mindanao) or, Panaghiusa: <https://www.facebook.com/panaghiusa.minda>

Descendants of survivors of the massacre, Northern and Southern Arapahos, Northern and Southern Cheyenne, attend the April 28, 2007, memorial dedication of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site near Chivington, Colorado. PHOTO: REV. CAROL LAKOTA EASTIN

Acts of Repentance, Forgiveness, and Partnership— Start Somewhere

by Christie R. House

It was once a tradition for members of a United Methodist Church in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, to gather up toys around Christmastime, travel south to Arizona's border with Mexico and California, and deliver the toys to the Fort Yuma United Methodist Church. Lake Havasu is a prime vacation spot in Arizona and its United Methodist congregation was relatively well-off. Fort Yuma UMC is on the Native American Reservation of the Quechan (Kwuh-tsan) tribe. That reservation spills over the borders of Yuma, Arizona, and crosses the Colorado River into Winterhaven, California. Fort Yuma UMC's members were not as well-off in material things.

"Families in the Fort Yuma church started fighting over the toys," explained the Rev. Tweedy Sombrero.

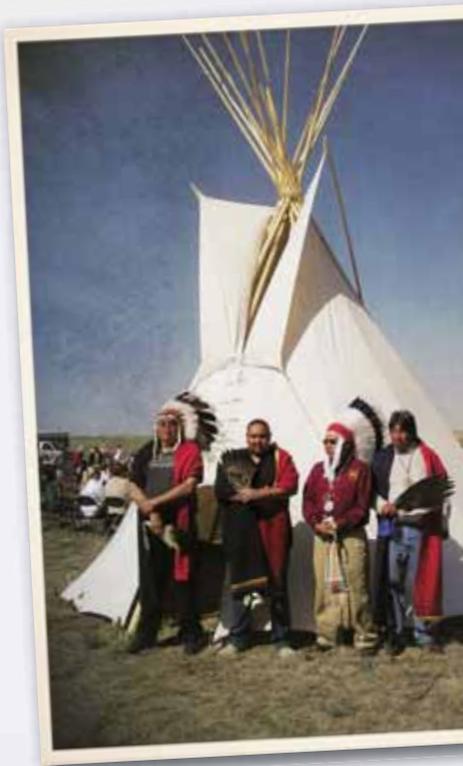
Now the senior pastor at Trinity UMC in Yuma, Evelene "Tweedy" Navarette Sombrero was the first Native American woman and the first Navajo (Dine') to be ordained in The United Methodist Church. "The toys were a problem for the Quechan tribe," she said. "It was a well-established tradition in the UMC for middle-class churches to give out of their abundance to 'poorer' churches, and the Indian churches got used to the handouts."

The Fort Yuma congregation asked its conference for a Native American pastor but none were available. The bishop and the cabinet assigned a layperson to the church and Rev. Sombrero introduced the new lay pastor to the congregation. Some members asked who would pay the pastor's salary. Rev. Sombrero said,

"You will," adding, "I told the church members that Ft. Yuma is their church, not the pastor's church. So they are responsible for what goes on in their church."

Rev. Sombrero, who serves as chair of the Desert Southwest Conference's Native American Committee, said the committee has been working with the Native churches to help them understand that the church belongs to them. "And we put an end to those toys," she said.

"If United Methodist churches want to partner with Native American churches," she continued, "charity donations may not be the way to do it. Instead, partner around what it means to be a church. What do you do well in your church that we can learn from you—and what do we do well that you can learn from us?"



Left: Photograph of a group of about 55 Yuma Indian boys and their teachers marching in front of the Indian School at Yuma, ca. 1900.

PHOTOGRAPHER: PIERCE, CHARLES C., 1861-1946—CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION, 1860-1960: USC LIBRARIES SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Below: Yuma Indian Mission, Methodist Episcopal Church, Yuma, Arizona, 1930s.

G.E.E. LINDQUIST PAPERS: THE BURKE LIBRARY ARCHIVES (COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES) AT UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK.



Barriers to Relationship

The current relationship between Native American United Methodist churches and majority-culture United Methodist churches—which tend to be made up of middle-class Caucasian Americans—still looks like the charity model of a century ago. Native Americans have been, and in many cases still are, routinely and institutionally marginalized by American society. Robert Lucas, a blogger in Arizona, explained the situation this way on the occasion of Arizona's 100th anniversary in 2012.

"Federal policy toward American Indians changed over the years as political leadership in Washington, DC, changed. At first, a policy of Indian removal forcibly relocated Native residents farther west to provide free land for white settlers. When

genocide proved impractical, tribes were confined to reservations with as little acreage as possible, even if that meant providing welfare commodities for Indian families. Finally, in order to take back even these reserves, the government adopted a policy of assimilation and termination. Indians would be converted into economically self-reliant Christians who complied with societal norms and reservation segregation would be abolished."

At Fort Yuma from the late 1800s through the 1920s—as in many other places across the United States during the policy of "assimilation"—Indian children were removed from their families and sent to boarding schools, where they were taught only in English. They were discouraged—sometimes forcefully and

violently—from speaking their native tongues and practicing their native cultures. Rev. Sombrero says boys were taught farming so they could be field hands, and girls were taught home economics so they could work as domestic servants. At Fort Yuma, the school was directed by Catholic sisters.

I have also seen the results of this policy among the Mohawk of the Akwesasne Reservation along the St. Lawrence River across the New York border with Canada. The older generation, the elders, can speak only English. That generation is the one which was sent to boarding schools. The generation before that, brought up in the indigenous culture, has passed away. But among the Mohawk, the Civil Rights movement had a great impact. The

younger generation, which came of age after the boarding school policy was abandoned, worked diligently to recover the Mohawk language, religion, and culture. Now the Mohawk language is being taught in the reservation schools. Most children can now speak it, but their grandparents generally cannot.

The tension between the older and younger generations is evident. So too is the absence of the younger generations at the Hogansburg United Methodist Church of Akwesasne. Out of respect for their elders, the young people will come to church for special occasions if their grandparents ask them to. This church was a major focal point in the community for many years, having done great outreach, community building, and peacemaking. It served its congregation in good Wesleyan tradition. But today, it is haunted only by the elders. When I visited this congregation in 2008, I wondered what a young Mohawk pastor could do if appointed to the church, to draw in the younger generation. But there was no such leader, and the church—like any other parish in the upper New York region—had a non-native pastor that it shared with two other non-native churches.

What middle-class Caucasian congregations must understand is that we are part of what created this tension—this disconnect within the Native American communities. The official policies that literally ripped these families apart were put in place by our great-grandparents, who either voted for the politicians that enacted the policies or who carried out the orders in their local communities. In some cases, Methodists ran some of the boarding schools.

I talked with Rev. Sombbrero at the 2014 United Methodist Women's Assembly, where she was leading

a workshop about violence against Native American women. She gave witness and evidence that domestic violence experienced in Native American families is often behavior learned by the elders, who were subjected to violence in the daily lessons of their boarding schools. Because this generation doesn't talk about its experiences, members of the younger generations are bewildered—never understanding what caused the anger and sadness in their families. Violence begets violence.

Acknowledging Injustice

Healing is difficult—for Native Americans, for descendants of European settlers and colonizers, for churches—without study and acknowledgement of what causes our broken relationships. Descendants of the Caucasian settlers gained the most from the policies that marginalized the indigenous populations of what is now the United States of America. We cannot deny this. The July-August 2014 issue of *New World Outlook* published a center-section map with information from *National Geographic* that showed the extreme loss of life and territory endured by indigenous people in just the first 150 years of contact with European settlers on North America's East Coast.

Further, a look at nuclear weaponry development and testing in the United States reveals unjust policies that have affected Native populations more than any other ethnic group. Rev. Sombbrero said in her Assembly workshop that over 50 percent of all uranium deposits are under reservation land. On the Nevada test site, which is part of the Western Shoshone reservation, 928 explosions were set off by the US military from 1951 to 1992, both above and below the

ground. In 1993, the Childhood Cancer Research Institute—now the Community-Based Hazard Management Program at Clark University (Worcester, MA)—was contacted by the Shoshone National Council for research assistance. The resulting Nuclear Risk Management for Native Communities (NRMNC) project has had ongoing support and funding from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—all in partnership and collaboration with the Ely Shoshone Tribe. Technical researchers from Clark University and community-based researchers from the Western Shoshone and Southern Paiute communities have collected interviews, medical and life-style data, and tribal records as part of the project.

The NRMNC studies discovered that Native community residents exposed to nuclear fallout as young children experienced roughly twice the thyroid cancer risk of non-Native people. This was traced back to their traditional consumption of wild rabbit and other small game animals that were routinely eaten at different times of year.

In addition, the Western Shoshone, joined by most Nevada citizens, have been proactive in their protest of the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site proposed by the government as a repository for high-level nuclear waste. Yucca Mountain is also on Western Shoshone land. Funding for the project that began in 1987 ran out in 2010, yet the right of the government to use the site for nuclear waste storage has not been resolved. The United Nations Committee to End Racial Discrimination has repeatedly cited the United States' treatment of the Western Shoshone and Southern

Paiute peoples as a grave human rights issue of international concern. The deep connection of many indigenous cultures to the land means violence done to the land is also violence suffered by the people.

If a local church is in the proximity of a Native American United Methodist Church, it makes sense to start there. Invite contact and conversation. Be honest—"We want to look at ways to participate in the Acts of

about the tribes that used to be in the area before they were forcibly moved or otherwise eliminated from the region. Perhaps some Americans have done this kind of research, but I suspect most of us have not. It may

take some work, but this research could be done on a conference level. It is important to find out what Native American members are within the bounds of the conference. A number of conferences already have a Committee on Native American Ministry (CONAM). That's a great place to start. But even in conferences with no Native American churches, there are likely to be Native Americans of various tribes who

are members of multicultural UM congregations. Start there. They should be invited to participate in planning sessions for any Acts of Repentance services or commemorations on a conference level. This is not to say that the Acts of Repentance are their responsibility, but they should be invited to give recommendations.

Start somewhere—but start by seeking a Native American partner. This is important work of reconciliation that God and our Native American sisters and brothers are calling us to begin. So start with prayer and an open door.

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



The Rev. Carol Lakota Eastin (right) of the Illinois Great Rivers Annual (regional) Conference holds a rock she chose from the "River of Life" during an April 27 "Act of Repentance toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples." She joins other Native American women during the closing of the service in Tampa, Florida.

PHOTO: KATHLEEN BARRY/UMNS

Start Somewhere

How can we, as United Methodists, begin a process of healing the nations? United Methodists are indigenous peoples who trace their roots in North America back thousands of years, along with immigrant descendants whose families have called this nation home for two or three centuries and people who have come here from many other nations. Surely, here in the church is where we can begin. Acts of Repentance are not about gathering up toys, or tools, or clothes, or even books. Restoration is not about paying pastors' salaries or building new churches. Acts of Repentance begin with listening and discovery.

Repentance with Native Americans, but we don't know what to do or how to begin. Can you help us?" This may be an awkward conversation starter, but give it a try. Acts of Repentance don't make much sense without a Native American partner.

If there are no United Methodist Native American churches in the area, but there are Native American tribes in your state—start there. Make contact and invite conversation. Invite the tribal elders to teach members of the congregation about the customs, culture, and history of their people. Again, be upfront about the Acts of Repentance. Make it an open forum.

If no tribes are close enough to the church to make contact, try learning

What's in a Name?

by Tweedy Sombrero

My daughter and I took the opportunity to visit a cemetery at an old boarding school that had operated in the 1800s for the purpose of assimilating Native American children. Looking at the grave markers made me very sad, for the markers only said “An Apache Boy” or “A Sioux Girl”—no names, just the tribe of the child who had died while attending that school. It seems their remains were not even sent back to their tribes or their parents.

As my daughter stood with me staring at these grave markers, I said to her: “Surely someone knew their names. The Bureau of Indian Affairs officials took these kids from their families and changed their names. Yet when they died, no name was memorialized. Why?”

It didn't make sense to me at all.

Our name is very important for it identifies who we are. When people remember our names, we are not only impressed but we feel special because they remembered us.

One of the things that I've always wanted to do was to claim my original last name. You see, a long time ago, when census takers first visited the reservation, they could not pronounce the names of the Dine' (Navajos). So, without any real understanding, the census takers changed some of the Dine' names. The Dine' had no recourse. Our names became what they wrote down, as far as the US government was concerned.

My family name was one that was changed. Our original name was Nakai Bi'chai, which means “Wide Hat.” The census taker could not pronounce it, let alone spell it, so he asked for a translation. They told him “wide hat.” He then said, “Oh, like a sombrero!” Thus our last name became Sombrero.

It's funny how we are about our names. We guard them and work hard to live up to a good solid name. When someone hears our name, we want them to know we can be trusted. We pray that our name means integrity every time someone says it. However, here is the good news about all of this—God knows our name!

This mighty God that forms the universe is the same God that knows the vast cathedrals of our hearts. So it really doesn't matter if we are addressed “hey you” or “current occupant,” or only identified by our culture or tribe. Even if someone has changed our name, our real name is known by God. We need not fear that someone does not know our name, for what matters most is the God that gives us Jesus. We celebrate the name of Jesus and what Jesus has done for us, because in the end, we strive to be with Jesus for all eternity.

The Rev. Evelene “Tweedy” Navarette Sombrero (“Nakai Bi'chai”) is the pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Yuma, Arizona. She also serves as chair of the Desert Southwest Conference Native American Committee.



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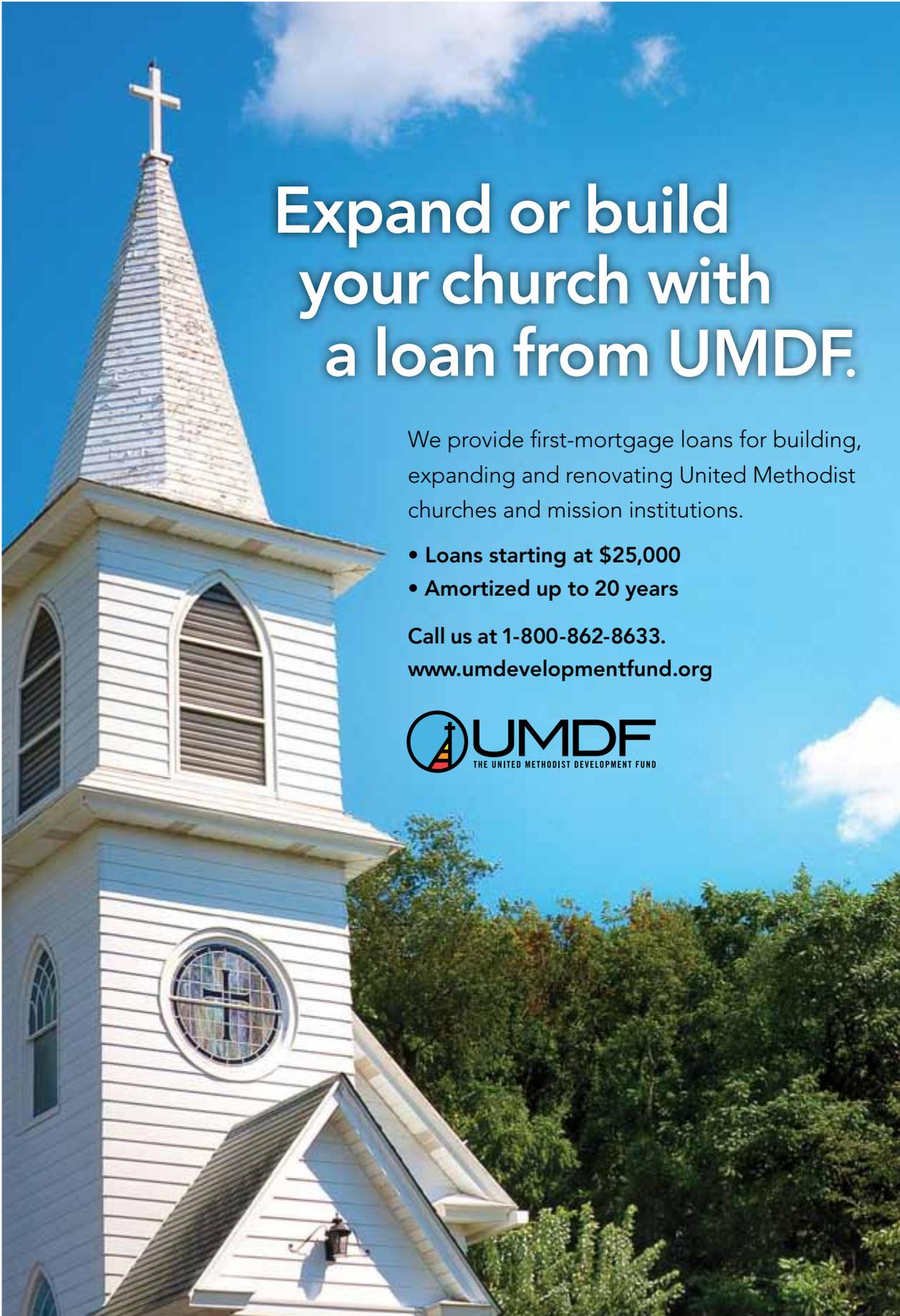
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Speaking Truth with Love

Hillary Taylor is a Mission Intern with Global Ministries serving with Branches, a social justice and economic empowerment ministry of the South East District of the Florida Annual Conference. What follows is a blog post from her first term of service in South Africa.

I recently visited an agency that ministered to disfigured children. The agency's owner (let's call him "Allen") has done wonders for these children, but his work is drawn from anger rather than love. He's angry about cultural practices that disfigure the children, as well as South African society's ignorance to such abuse.



Hillary Taylor (left) with Mazwenkosi Nomxego, a seminarian at Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.
PHOTO: PHILIPPA COLE

As a missionary, I think often of ministry's dangers. When one works with the poor and marginalized, it's easy to become disheartened with the sinful state of humanity. Anger can lead to hatred. When we begin to hate, suffering is inevitable.

Because "Allen" cannot let go of his hatred, he alienates people from his ministry rather than attracting them, thus affecting support for the children. He's lost sight of how Jesus drew all types of followers to ministry—by speaking truth with love.

Speaking truth with love doesn't mean we can't get angry; it means we don't allow our anger to control us. It means guiding newcomers to ministry with a reassuring hand, while being honest about reality. Truth without love is brutality, while love without truth is sentimentality.

Jesus engaged others by revealing personal stumbling blocks (Matthew 19: 21-23), but he did not condemn their choice to turn away from discipleship. It is the same for us when our hearts are hardened. Being engaged with truth and love leaves us open to change our minds about ministry. It also helps us testify to the power of love.



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Civil Disobedience Along the Path Toward Justice

Emilie Bowman is a missionary through the US-2 young adult program of the General Board of Global Ministries. She serves the Workers Interfaith Network in Memphis, Tennessee. The article that follows can be found in her blog <http://walkingwithmemphis.wordpress.com>.

One of the most exciting events that I have been a part of recently was a local action of an International Fast-Food Strike, which took place in more than 130 cities in the United States and 30 cities across the world—the largest such action in history. I have posted about my participation in this campaign, but never have I been involved in an action with so much momentum.

"Memph 15" is our local group of fast-food workers who are campaigning for a \$15 per hour wage increase and a union. We ramped-up the energy in order to gain recognition for



Emilie Bowman (second from left) with members of Memph 15, a local group of fast-food workers, campaigning for a \$15 per hour wage increase.
PHOTO: COURTESY EMILIE BOWMAN

the movement on the streets of Memphis. The 30 striking workers were supported by a coalition of labor groups and passionate community members.

This rally gave me an opportunity to get rowdy for a good cause and do my job well. I was in charge of social media for the Memphis rally. I was entrusted with sharing the stories of workers and updating the public on the action throughout the day. I really enjoyed having such an important role for such a huge moment in the history of this campaign.

As a new advocate for worker justice, being a part of the planning and execution of this action was incredible. To me, the passion of the workers is inspiring, and the success of this event is a sign that we are moving forward and will one day see justice for workers in the fast-food industry.

Victory Day?

Andy Millman (Advance # 3021844) is a Mission Intern with the General Board of Global Ministries working with the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy in Russia. The article that follows is an edited version from his Never Stop Speaking blog.

As the “Victory Day” celebrations in Russia come to a close, I have been reminded once again to ask myself, “What am I doing in Moscow?”

For those of you who have never been to Russia—or for that matter any ex-Soviet country—“Victory Day” is the celebration of the Soviets defeating the Germans and winning the “Great Patriotic War.” Obviously this constructed narrative doesn’t exactly line up with the historical record of World War II, but it is a narrative that has taken on a life of its own.

Every year on May 9, the streets of Moscow shut down and hundreds of thousands of Russian citizens march through the streets with Russian flags and ribbons in their hair. Aircraft buzz over Red Square, military vehicles parade through the streets, drinks are had among friends and family, and everyone breathes a collective sigh of relief as they revel in being Russian.

At least that’s what you see on the surface...

But what about the 1.5 to 3 million migrants in the city who don’t necessarily fit into the Russian nationalist narrative? As I spend my days working with victims of this nationalist narrative—victims of racially motivated violence, housing discrimination, labor exploitation, and extortion—the task starts to seem impossible and it becomes hard to keep going. It feels like I am nothing



Andrew Millman skating on Red Square, with the Cathedral of Vasily the Blessed, more commonly known as St. Basil’s Cathedral, in the background.

PHOTO: COURTESY ANDREW MILLMAN



A favorite view of the lake from an old Orthodox cathedral.
PHOTO: ANDREW MILLMAN

more than a drip of water trying to extinguish a forest fire.

And then I remember that pain, brokenness, and death don’t get to have the last say. I remember that I am here because of a belief in a crucified God who suffers alongside the marginalized and shows us a very different way of living with one another—a way of love.

And when the power of love and reconciliation overcomes the powers of pain, destruction, and exclusions, my friends, this is a “Victory Day” that I am more than happy to continue working toward.



Andrew Millman (left-back) poses with volunteers and clients from Russia, France, DR Congo, Cameroon, Nigeria, and the United States at a Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy Social Services-sponsored refugee event in Russia.

PHOTO: COURTESY ANDREW MILLMAN

From the General Secretary

by Thomas Kemper



Thomas Kemper with survivors of the Peshawar bomb blast.

PHOTO: CASSANDRA ZAMPINI

True Acts of Trust and Reconciliation

My report to the Global Ministries directors last April focused in part on the topic of mission and human rights. On the eve of giving that report, I met a Pakistani couple who had lost two children and a grandmother. In addition, a brother, a nephew, and a niece were injured. More than 80 people were killed in an explosion detonated by a jihadist suicide bomber as Sunday worship ended at All Saints Church in Peshawar. We welcomed the couple to our meeting and heard their heart-wrenching story. I cannot think of a more dramatic illustration of the importance of advancing human rights—and religious rights in this case—as a component of Christian mission. (See p. 6.)

One thing that gripped me in this tragedy was the couple's insistence that they continue to participate in the interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians held at their church. The dialogue's objective is a just and peaceful society. It is surely God's grace in action that inspired this couple to hold out their hands to those who could be seen as the oppressor, the enemy. That's a true act of trust and reconciliation.

Their example reminded me that the exercise of human rights is an inclusive goal. We are very right as Christians to pray for and take peaceful actions to assure the religious and civil rights of Christians where violated: currently in Pakistan, parts of Nigeria, and several countries of the Middle East, to name a few. I believe it is our responsibility to learn about the cultural and political systems that cause these violations and how they affect families and communities. Recently, I have become aware of how little I know about the plight of the ancient Coptic

Christians in Egypt, a country where we, as Methodists, have few historic mission partners. At the same time, advancing and/or protecting "our" rights as Christians must be complemented by a commitment to the broader human rights of people of other faiths, many cultures, and all nations. That is seldom easy. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church reflect—and in some cases predate—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights hammered out at the level of the United Nations more than 60 years ago. Our deep commitment to human dignity, equality, and fair treatment is exemplified in the founding of what is today the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)—launched in 1940 with the pledge to alleviate human suffering "without distinction of race, color, or creed."

How easy is it for any of us to advocate for the rights of people we dislike, fear, or envy? Not very, but the grace of God in Jesus Christ propels us to try to "do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31) This precept is found in variant forms in virtually every religious tradition on earth.

The couple from Pakistan, who lost so many loved ones in the Peshawar church bombing, is putting the gospel into practice, engaging in dialogue with Muslims and others who long for justice, freedom, and peace.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TK' followed by a stylized flourish.

Thomas Kemper
General Secretary
General Board of Global Ministries



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