



NEWSCOPE

THE WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR UNITED METHODIST LEADERS

Church Changes World in Many Ways

From cleaning up parks to sharing meals with the homeless, thousands of UMs around the globe worked to make a difference on [Change the World](#) weekend. More than 1,000 congregations from the United States to Zimbabwe went into their communities Apr. 24 and 25 to do ministry and improve lives. Change the World was organized as part of The UMC's Rethink Church initiative. E-mail reports indicated that congregations were energized by the Change the World focus.



The Austin, Texas, launch of the Imagine No Malaria campaign on the afternoon of World Malaria Day, Apr. 25, culminated the weekend. The \$75 million campaign aims to help eradicate malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. Many congregations raised money for the church's work in fighting the disease, which kills a child under age 5 every 30 seconds in Africa. Some groups, particularly youth groups, held sleep-out events Saturday night to focus attention on malaria, which is often transmitted nocturnally by mosquitoes. In partnership with the churches and individuals who purchase resources through Cokesbury, the retail division of The UM Publishing House (UMPH) donated \$50,000 to the Imagine No Malaria campaign following a fundraising event Apr. 7-10. The \$50,000 is a portion of sales through 64 stores, online sales at Cokesbury.com, and Cokesbury's 800-672-1789 telephone sales unit. In addition, food items contributed by customers at Cokesbury stores have been distributed to local food pantries across the U.S. *[UMPH is the publisher of NewsScope.]*

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"Morning worship was cancelled so we could BE THE CHURCH today," wrote the Rev. Kent Jackson, pastor of Walden (N.Y.) UMC, on Sunday. Members cleaned up brush at a local cemetery, visited with residents at a nursing home, and took gift baskets to senior citizens in their homes. In Tipp City, Ohio, where the Rev. Mike Slaughter literally wrote the book on "Change the World" ([Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus](#) [Abingdon Press, 2010]), the weekend got off to a quick pace with the New Path Outreach 5K Run/Walk. The event, sponsored by Ginghamburg UMC, drew 430 participants from across the Dayton area and raised funds for the church's food pantries and its diverse ministries that help people with car needs, furniture, clothing, refurbished medical equipment, pet care and financial assistance, and that serve a local public school.

Outreach took many forms. Nearly 30 volunteers from First UMC, Pulaski Heights UMC and Arkansas Interfaith Power & Light spent Apr. 24 making energy efficiency improvements at the 110-year-old Duncan UMC in Little Rock. Members of First UMC in Muncy, Pa., held a workday at SunnyBrook Meadows Therapeutic Riding Center, which serves more than 100 special-needs children with a variety of diagnoses. Members of First UMC in Eunice, La., focused on seven areas of outreach over the weekend, including visiting shut-ins and people in nursing homes, providing "love buckets" of cleaning supplies to people in need, and writing greeting cards to provide support or comfort to people in the community.

Wesley UMC in Worcester, Mass., in partnership with StandUp for Kids, held a two-day Change the World event. Starting Friday night, volunteers worked to raise awareness about the homeless and at-risk youth in Worcester through the second annual "24 Hours on the Street" event. Activities included a talent show, candlelight vigil, picnic, games and a sleep-out at the church. Funds and food were collected for the homeless.

Anchor Park UMC in Anchorage, Alaska, had a community food drive to benefit three organizations that provide meals for people in need. Union Village UMC in Berkeley Heights, N.J., distributed 400 bags to neighborhood homes and asked people to fill them with canned goods for the local food bank.

Members of First UMC in Waskom, Texas, hit the road at 6:15 a.m. Saturday to serve breakfast at Newgate Mission about 40 miles away in Longview. The mission serves breakfast on the weekend to 110 to 125 people who are homeless, unemployed or under-employed. "When we give of ourselves," said the Rev. Harold Coburn, First Church pastor, "we are Christ to those in need, sharing his love." — *Tim Tanton, UMCOM*

Canals Save Lives in Congo Village

Four years ago, Bishop Nkulu Ntanda Ntambo saw that his hometown of Kamina, Democratic Republic of Congo, was constantly flooding, and homes were washing away. When the floods settled, stagnant water remained, creating breeding conditions for mosquitoes. Mosquitoes mean malaria, a disease that kills a child in Africa every 30 seconds, according to world health officials. "It was like a mortuary; children were dying every day," Ntambo recalls.

When the area was under Belgian rule, the government dug interwoven canals to move the water away from the village. However, 60 years of neglect had left the canal structures buried under several feet of sand and vegetation. Most villagers didn't even know they existed. "So, we decided as a church the only solution was to dig the canals, which would help drain water and take water all around the city," Ntambo explains.

• GLOBAL HEALTH •

Borrowing money from Dr. Guy Kasanka, a UM missionary, Ntambo bought shovels and encouraged residents to start digging. "They thought I was crazy; no one believed me," the bishop says. When the first rains of a 10-month rainy season began to fall, the unusual sight of water flowing away from their homes changed hearts and minds.

Now, with the help of the bishop and the North Katanga Annual Conference, villagers maintain more than eight miles of hand-dug canals. Coupled with the bishop's organized distribution of mosquito nets, they attest to fewer malaria deaths. On Apr. 15, the bishop returned to Kamina. Residents flowed from mud-brick homes to greet him. "Because of the bishop, our houses are not destroyed," explains a man simply identified as Kikalu. "We had a lot of mosquitoes. But now we do not have a lot of stagnant water and mosquitoes anymore."

Kamina has no paved roads, only occasional electricity and limited clean water. When Ntambo is asked how many people live here, he gestures toward the crowd, smiles and proclaims, "All these people and many more." It's estimated to be about 70,000, and many are UMs.

The canal solution was so successful in Kamina that Ntambo took the idea to rural residents in the Maseke village, 250 miles away. With shovel in hand, he helped clear massive tree trunks and decades of vegetation from giant colonial-era canals. He hopes the Congolese government will replicate the idea in other communities. But for now, the bishop understands that this is just one empowering action that his neighbors can take to fight malaria. While villagers hail him as a hero, he bows to others. "Praise the Lord," he says. "Praise The UMC and to the great work they are doing to save lives." — *Jan Snider, UMCOM*

Women, Men's Groups Confront Violence

UM Men (UMM) and UM Women (UMW) have agreed to a first-of-its kind joint effort to stand with women against domestic violence. The organizations agreed to collaborate on domestic violence programs, training and resources that can be used in churches across the country.

Last fall, directors of UMW encouraged local units to partner with UMM groups to sponsor domestic violence awareness events in their churches and communities. During its Apr. 12 meeting, the Women's Division board learned that the Commission on UM Men had agreed to "combine our efforts against domestic violence."

Harriett Jane Olson, top staff executive of the Women's Division, commented on the importance of the historic partnership. "From the silence on this topic in our congregations, it appears as if churches assume that this epidemic of violence does not affect their members. However, experts warn pastors and congregational leaders that they should be prepared to respond to an outpouring of stories and needs if they begin open discussion of domestic abuse in a way that makes victims and families feel supported," she said. "Though national mission institutions, women's shelters and community centers have worked to address those affected by domestic violence for many years, UM Women decided last year that a more proactive approach was needed. We felt that it was important for us to find ways to help churches address this matter for the benefit of the members of congregations and in the communities they serve."

Gilbert C. Hanke, top staff executive of the Commission on UM Men, said domestic violence is "a subject that we either ignore, or convince ourselves it only happens outside the church. . . . I hope we can address the

overt abuse that takes place in all our communities, as well as create a safe, welcoming environment within men's and women's ministry for everyone damaged by domestic violence."

Women's Division's initial recommendation cited the "National Declaration by Religious and Spiritual Leaders to Address Violence Against Women," signed in 2006 by the Council of Bishops of The UMC, which states: "We proclaim that violence against women exists in all communities, including our own, and is morally, spiritually and universally intolerable. We commit ourselves to working toward the day when all women will be safe and abuse will be no more." — *Yvette Moore, editor of United Methodist Women News*

Amity Team Reaches China Earthquake Zone

In response to the Apr. 14 earthquake in China, a rescue team from the Amity Foundation, a partner with The UMC, arrived in Gyegu Township early on Apr. 16. The team went to a horseracing stadium where He Wen, an Amity executive, reported that several thousand earthquake survivors have found shelter. Tents, blankets and food are in short supply. An Amity team in Xining has loaded 480 quilts, 850 boxes of instant noodles and 350 cartons of mineral water, which are bound for Gyegu. Donations to support UMCOR's response can be made to International Disaster Response, China Earthquake, UMCOR Advance #982450. Donations can be placed in church offering plates, sent by mail or made online. For details, go to www.umcor.org. — *UMNS*

Pilot Project to Begin for Haiti Volunteers

UM mission volunteer service in post-quake Haiti will focus on housing, health, education and pastoral services through a six-month pilot project expected to get under way soon. The pilot program is the outcome of consultations among the representatives of the Methodist Church in Haiti, the UM Committee on Relief (UMCOR), UM Volunteers in Mission and the volunteers office of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM).

• MINISTRY WITH THE POOR •

The program is open to qualified volunteers from the United States and from Methodist churches in the Caribbean, Latin America and other parts of the world. A \$565,000 grant from UMCOR for the project was approved Apr. 13 by UMCOR directors and affirmed by GBGM, of which UMCOR is a part. Teams could possibly be in the field by early May. Since the Jan. 12 earthquake devastated Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas, more than 3,000 people have registered their interest in going to Haiti as mission volunteers on a website maintained by GBGM.

In the pilot stage, volunteer teams will work on projects selected as priorities by the Methodist Church in Haiti. Each team, comprised of eight to 12 members with skills appropriate to particular projects, will provide \$3,000 to \$5,000 per qualifying project, amounts that will be matched by funds from the UMCOR grant. Team contributions will go through The Advance, the designated mission-giving channel of the church. All priority sites are expected to be identified by mid-June.

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The first critical step for volunteers is to register online at <http://secure.gb-gm-umc.org/HaitiVolunteer/>. In the United States, these names will go to the jurisdictional and annual conference coordinators, who will assist in assembling teams and coordinating with the U.S.-based calendar office. Teams from Latin America and the Caribbean will be organized with the assistance of Global Ministries, the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas, and the Council of Evangelical UMCs in Latin America. An office in Haiti will coordinate logistics and materials on the ground. Haitians will be involved in each undertaking. The proposal states that "substantial numbers of Haitians can be hired to work with teams at a suggested 2-to-1 ratio of Haitians to Americans."

The UMC has been sending volunteer-in-mission teams to Haiti for more than 30 years, and has strong links to congregations and institutions there. Prior to the January earthquake, the network was placing approximately 100 teams per year in Haiti.—*Elliott Wright, GBGM*

UMs Need to Go "Deep Green"

Jesus expanded the idea of neighbor to include the world, said John Hodges, 26, on staff with the UM Young People's Ministries. "Our smallest actions—from what we eat, to what we buy—can affect the planet and the quality of life of people across the world." For many young people, caring for the Earth is second nature. Their voices were important as church officials worked on "God's Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action," the first official statement on environmental issues adopted by the church since 1986. Hodges represented the "young adult voice" on the writing team.

The Council of Bishops endorsed the document and wrote a pastoral letter urging all congregations to read it and to renew their commitment to God's creation. The bishops added teeth to their endorsement by making nine pledges to commit themselves as faithful leaders in the denomination and in their own communities. "As bishops we know that critical issues of the day have left people feeling fearful, cynical, hopeless and overwhelmed," said

Bishop Gregory Palmer, president, Council of Bishops. "The document contains our pledges to work in hopeful and robust ways for transforming change as God's stewards of creation. We invite the church and our partners around the world to join us."

"The key point I would like young people to know is that this document comes out of listening and seeing the witness of young people," Hodges said. "The bishops have seen the zeal for which young people approach these issues and have committed themselves to taking the same steps toward protecting God's creation as young people across the world."

Bishop Patrick Streiff, Central and Southern Europe, a member of the task force, said the document was a message of hope. "The document really takes seriously the suffering caused by the harm we do to God's creation," Streiff said. "It speaks out of our faith rather than a reaction to fear."

Facing up to the crisis caused by neglecting the Earth will take more work than just recycling and banning plastic foam cups, said the Rev. Rebekah Simon-Peter, author of *Green Church*. "Those things are what I call 'light green.' It's time to step up and go 'deep green.'" Going deep green means getting at the root causes of pandemic poverty and disease, environmental degradation and a world full of weapons and violence. Both *God's Renewed Creation* and *Green Church* resources are available from Cokesbury.com, Cokesbury stores, or by calling 1-800-672-1789.—*Kathy L. Gilbert, UMNS*

Forthcoming Events

Professor, author, ordained minister and womanist ethicist, the Rev. Dr. Emilie M. Townes will deliver the keynote address at Garrett-Evangelical's commencement service on May 15 at First UMC in Evanston, Ill. Townes is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of African American Religion and Theology at Yale University Divinity School, where she is the first African American and first woman to serve as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

Personalia

Dorothy Height, "queen mother of the Civil Rights Movement," according to Bishop Violet Fisher, died at Howard University Hospital in Washington, D. C. at the age of 98. **John Procter**, 91, president and publisher of the UM Publishing House from 1970 to 1982, died Apr. 15 in Nashville.The Rev. **Henriette Tabita Hutabarat-Lebang** of Indonesia has become the first woman elected as general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia.The Rev. **Jerry Russell**, 61, pastor of Fairview UMC in Maryville, Tenn., will serve as interim president for UM-affiliated Hiwassee College. Russell succeeds the Rev. James Noseworthy, who led the Madisonville school for seven years before resigning in February.**John F. Kutsko**, currently Abingdon Press Director of Acquisitions and Editor of *Newscope*, has been named the new Executive Director of the Society of Biblical Literature, effective July 1.

Positions Available

The California-Pacific Annual Conference seeks a director of new ministries. Full job description is available at <http://www.cal-pac.org/classifieds/detail/318>. To request application materials, please contact: Human Resources, California-Pacific Annual Conference of The UMC, 110 S. Euclid Ave., P. O. Box 6006, Pasadena CA 91101; 626-568-7341; hr@cal-pac.org.The General Board of Church & Society has an opening for an immigration and criminal justice reform intern. This is a paid position for a 10-month period starting in August. To apply, send a resume with three recommendations, cover letter and writing sample via e-mail to Bill Mefford, (bmefford@umc-gbcs.org). Complete job description is available at [Immigration & Criminal Justice Reform Grassroots Intern](#), or go to www.umc-gbcs.org and click on Job Openings at the bottom of the home page.The Detroit Annual Conference is seeking a conference director for new faith communities and congregational development. Job description and application form are available at <http://www.detroitconference.org/classifieds/detail/138>.

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