



Photo by Susan Rothrock-Deo

Ubuntu team ready for the march against domestic violence.

Ubuntu Journey to Brazil

by Praveena Balasundaram

Ubuntu Journeys are unique, short-term mission service opportunities for United Methodist Women members to interact with the world through mission partners. Together with global sisters, United Methodist Women members share the human experience of worship, prayer and spiritual reflection to engage in mission that will cultivate faith, hope and love into action.

The Ubuntu Journey to Brazil this past September explored different forms of violence against women, especially human trafficking and domestic violence. “We believe we have been called to go to the root of the structure and of the system,” said Susie Johnson, Women’s Division executive and member

of the journey. “We want the team to look at what happens in a developed economy and relate it back to what happens here; we want them to see what happens when women are highly sexualized and relate it with what happens in our country, and we want them to share this information with their church community and the broader community.”

From September 19-29, 2011, 12 women from the United Methodist Church, many of them members of the United Methodist Women, journeyed to São Paulo and Fortaleza in Brazil. Rosângela Oliveira, United Methodist Women regional missionary to Latin America, explained, “It was a time for deepening our knowledge on the issue, connecting with new people and organiza-

tions, reviewing the activities planned to reflect the awareness campaign—actually it was meant to expand the concepts of mission.”

This was an Ubuntu Journey with a theme. “When I first saw the information about the Ubuntu Brazil trip, I was curious because we were not going to build, or paint or clean up a preschool; we were going to become a part of the community that we were visiting by being a student and a teacher at the same time,” said Rosemary Uebel, mission coordinator for social action for the Florida United Methodist Women Conference.

On this journey the U.S. team partnered with the Confederação Metodista de Mulheres (Methodist Women’s Confederation) that has

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Where In the World Does Your Mission Money Go?

by Harriett Jane Olson



In the past few months I have seen so many places where United Methodist Women’s giving is making a difference. While in Tampa, Fla., this past January I visited one of United Methodist Women’s national mission institutions, Cornerstone Family Ministries. Cornerstone has served poor families for more than 100 years. It is one of the few places in the neighborhood where families can get loving and educational child care. I saw the smiles and the relationships the center has with the community firsthand.

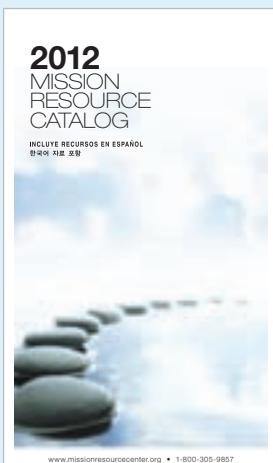
One of the Tampa city officials I met while in town said she was always happy to come to Cornerstone for meetings. When her parents came to Tampa from Italy to work in the cigar factories both of her older brothers received the benefit of Cornerstone’s care. Her family doesn’t live in the neighborhood any longer, but she’s glad to come back and to celebrate the work of Cornerstone, work that United Methodist Women makes possible.

Not long thereafter I got to spend an afternoon with a group of Japanese, Korean and American young adults who were participating in a United Methodist Women seminar program at the United Nations. This is joint work with our Scranton Center in Seoul, Korea, and our Wesley Center in Tokyo, Japan. These young women studied topics like peacemaking, global migration and women’s vulnerability to violence. One participant noted that she had applied for the program hoping to learn about different people in different places yet she came away with a sense of how much we all have in common. Such seminars are part of our work in transformative education and leadership development for women in all walks of life.

February marked the 56th Commission on Status of Women at the United Nations. United Methodist Women brought seven women who are working in rural settings to provide real information about the support that women in rural locations need. We heard that depopulation of rural areas and family farms being pushed

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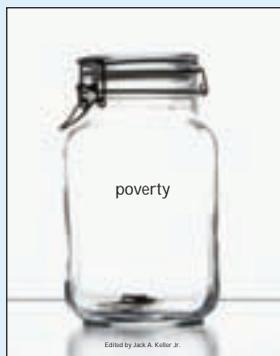


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All Sewn Up: United Methodist Women Members Create Dresses for Haiti Orphans

by Gail Crutchfield

If you were to ask Barbara O'Brien, Sara Ussery, Helen Cooper or about a dozen other women from the United Methodist Women at Sevierville's First United Methodist Church in Sevierville, Tenn., what their Tuesday was like, you may hear their answer as "so-so." But don't think it was a humdrum day for the group of women.

That so-so should be sew, sew. The women gathered at the church for a large sewing project, making dresses for orphaned girls in Haiti out of pillowcases and fabric. Tables in an upstairs classroom of the church were piled with multicolored fabrics, with dresses in a variety of stages of completion.

"We're kind of doing an assembly line," said Ms. O'Brien as the group stopped for a lunch of hot chili prepared and served by several of the men from the church.

The idea for the project came from an e-mail about a similar project forwarded by one member to another wondering if this would be something their group could do. Ms. Ussery, who received that e-mail, remembered it and brought up the idea during a district meeting of United Methodist Women last February.

"At that event she mentioned our making pillowcase dresses for Haiti, because Haiti is a mission of United Methodist Women," Ms. O'Brien said.

"These women took it and ran with it," Ms. Ussery said. "We had a wonderful response."

The women started having some sewing dates at Ms. Ussery's house, and other women started sewing at home.

"One of our women lives at Mountain Brook Village; people there brought her pillowcases and she ended up doing 30 herself," Ms. O'Brien said of Mildred Scott.

By August, the women had created 91 dresses to be sent to Haiti.

"Today, you can tell we'll have way over a hundred," Ms. O'Brien said. "We haven't even had time to count. All church members have donated either pillowcases or fabric, binding, elastic, ribbon, all kinds of things."

The dresses are bright, colorful and unique. Rather than creating dresses that look alike, they've mixed prints and patterns and even added appliqués to some of them.

"We thought the girls would rather have individual dresses," Ms. O'Brien said. "If you're in an orphanage, something that belongs just to you and that is special to you [is important]."

The dresses are made in all different sizes, to fit toddlers to teenagers.

Women who aren't adept at sewing gave their time to cut out fabrics, pin cloth, add ribbons or elastic and ironed out wrinkles. Ms. Cooper was one of those not manning a sewing machine, helping in the pinning process of the assembly line the women made for the process. The group will soon send the dresses, but it won't be the last time; more churches will join the cause.

"Because of our doing it, now our whole district is going to have a sew date in June," Ms. O'Brien said. "And besides pillowcase dresses, we're going to try and make shorts for boys. In fact, some of the cloth today we thought would be appropriate for boys, so we put that aside. It's wonderful that this has snowballed. It's really been a blessing and it's been such a wonderful opportunity for fellowship for us women."

The church received photographs of a group of girls in the dresses they made. "It makes you want to do more when you see it," Ms. Cooper said. "It was a joy to see," Ms. O'Brien said.



Photo courtesy of Gail Crutchfield/The Mountain Press

Barbara O'Brien sews a dress that will be sent to orphanages in Haiti.

By the end of the day, the group had completed almost 60 dresses, with 60 more in the works. The Rev. Drew Henry, pastor of the church, is proud of the church's work.

"I think this is a wonderful ministry, and it's going to be so helpful to a number of children who will be blessed by having some beautiful clothes that are handmade," he said. "This is an act of loving service and I'm just grateful for it."

Gail Crutchfield is a reporter for *The Mountain Press* in Sevierville, Tenn.

This article first appeared in *The Mountain Press* as "All Sewn Up: Church Members Work on Project for Haiti Orphans" in January 2012 (http://themountainpress.com/view/full_story/17231243/article--All-Sewn-Up--Church-members-work-on-project-for-Haiti-orphans). Reprinted with permission.

Photos courtesy of Gail Crutchfield/The Mountain Press



(left) The women at First United Methodist make dresses in all types of colors and designs. (center) Girls at an orphanage in Haiti model dresses sent to them by Sevierville's First United Methodist Church. (right) Members of the United Methodist Women group at Sevierville's First United Methodist Church work on sewing dresses for orphaned girls in Haiti.

Ubuntu Journey to India

by Katherine Kim

Ubuntu is an African word meaning “I am human because you are human.” From October 29 to November 22, 2011, 10 women traveled to India to connect and dialogue with our Indian faith sisters on a United Methodist Women Ubuntu Explorer Journey. We also attended the 125th anniversary celebration of Isabella Thoburn College, a school founded by United Methodist Women foremother Isabella Thoburn.

Isabella Thoburn College

As the legend goes, on a dark, stormy night in Boston in 1869, a “handful” of women founded the Women’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a predecessor organization of United Methodist Women. The women sent Isabella Thoburn, an American missionary, to India to provide education to Indian girls and women. In 1870, Ms. Thoburn established a school in Lucknow, India. What began with six girls grew to become Lucknow Women’s College, the first Christian college for women in India. After Ms. Thoburn’s death in 1901, the college was named in her honor. Isabella Thoburn College continues to educate and empower Indian women today, with a student body of more than 2,000.

During the 125th anniversary celebration, the Ubuntu team members were treated as VIPs. The college invited many distinguished guests to the festivities, including India’s first female president, Pratibha Patil, who gave a speech encouraging women to “rise against social evils.” Her speech was a great encouragement to all of us. Harriett Jane Olson, Women’s Division deputy general secretary, was an honored guest speaker. The college choir sang

“Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s Messiah and other songs. They sang beautifully.

Indian Society

India has almost 1.2 billion people, the world’s second largest population behind China, and is the largest democracy in the world. The Indian economy is the 10th largest in the world according to gross domestic product, and it is the third largest by purchasing power. While India is considered one of the fastest growing economies in the world, it continues to face challenges of poverty, illiteracy, infrastructure and gender equality. Eighty percent of Indians are Hindus who observe the caste system that classifies people on the basis of their birth. About 14 percent of the people are Muslims and 2.3 percent are Christians and remaining follow Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism.

The caste system traditionally includes Brahmin (scholars, teachers and priests), Kshatriya (public servants, administrators and warriors), Vaishya (businesspeople, cattle herders, agriculturalists) and Shudra (service providers, laborers, craftspeople). Those not included in the caste system are called Dalits, once called “the untouchables.” They are the outcasts of the society, a label that is inherited at birth. There are about 250 million Dalits in India. Dalits were traditionally assigned the most menial tasks (cleaning, removing waste, tanning animal hides and disposing of dead bodies, for example). Those in other castes did not touch them, talk with them, eat with them or have any social connection with them. The condition of Dalits reminds me of the Samaritan Woman in John 4. Jewish attitudes toward the Samaritans reflect Indian attitudes toward the Dalits. Mahatma Gandhi tried to eradicate this but was not fully suc-



Photo by Katherine Kim

Ubuntu team from the United States.

cessful. Although many steps have been taken to address the injustices of the caste system by the government, injustices still remain.

Because of the large population, the traffic in the parts of India we visited was chaotic. I saw only one traffic cop at a corner street. Every driver honks as he is or she is moving into traffic. The streets were noisy and congested. Because Hindus consider cows to be sacred, cows are treated as holy in India and they roam around as they please.

Ubuntu

When we met our counterpart United Methodist Women sisters we talked about many pressing issues: poverty, health care, illiteracy, Dalits, dowry, widow burning, HIV/AIDS and honor killing, among others. We learned how to wear a saree, the traditional Indian dress. The sarees were so beautiful that I almost bought one. We visited our Indian sisters’ homes and ate, shopped and worshipped together.

After the Isabella Thoburn College celebration, we visited Lisieux Shanti Niketan, a hospice center for the terminally ill patients with HIV/AIDS. This is one of the outreach programs of Isabella Thoburn College. We also visited a village where Isabella Thoburn students teach HIV/AIDS prevention education through a puppet show. We met many village people on the way. The village was peaceful and beautiful. We saw that they were drying cow waste to be used for fuel.

An estimated 2.4 million Indians are infected with HIV/AIDS. Women who become infected with the disease are often abandoned by their families. Fa-

cilities like Lisieux Shanti Niketan help take care of them.

Culture

The four days of celebration ended with a rock concert and fireworks. After the celebration, we left for sight-seeing of Varanasi, the Ganges River (mother Ganga), and the Taj Mahal. We visited the stupas where the Buddha first preached and where he is buried. Many monks and their religious leaders were attending a large ceremony there.

We witnessed another large ceremony at the Ganges River, which is the holy river of the Hindus. Though it was night, it was lit like daylight. We went on a sunrise boat tour in the morning and watched many people wash their bodies and faces in the river. From the boat we sent our wishes out with floating candle flowers. We also saw a designated location for cremation where a dead body is burned as soon as possible after the death.

Agra is famous for the Taj Mahal. It is a beautiful mausoleum commissioned by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in the 17th century for empress Mumtaz Mahal, the emperor’s favorite wife, to enshrine her mortal remains.

As we partner with our sisters in mission we will continue to fulfill the vision of United Methodist Women in turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

Katherine Kim is a deaconess, Women’s Division director, and General Board of Global Ministries director from the California-Nevada Conference.



Photo by Katherine Kim

Dr. Sunita Charles, president of Isabella Thoburn College, with the Ubuntu team.

Naming and Sharing the Identity of United Methodist Women at Resurrection United Methodist Church

by Praveena Balasundaram

“We are certainly excited to recast our vision for our local organization,” said Sally Retz, Women’s Ministry staff at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan. The church is the largest United Methodist Church in the country, with more than 17,000 members and 6,000 women who participate in ministries for women. “We are looking at how everyone functions in the future and what we can do to make sure that United Methodist Women preserves its heritage and traditions and yet becomes relevant and vital for younger women. Women are key to the growth and vitality of the church,” said Ms. Retz.

Michelle Funk, director of Women’s Ministry, affirmed. She pointed to the example of the relationship between Elizabeth and Mary in the Bible. “We talk about that in all areas of programming because we know how important it is to have somebody to connect with, talk to and ask questions. It is natural to look to the woman who has already been there and learn from a woman who has been through what you’re going through.” This biblical model inspires women’s programming at Resurrection.

A Journey in the Right Direction

When the church was founded in 1990, a United Methodist Women unit was chartered to provide mission opportunities for women. Before long the women from this unit began looking for opportunities to engage the young mothers in the church.

“So they began Building Better Moms—and United Methodist Women gave seed money to get it going,” said Ms. Funk. “But I think it was just a mutual agreement that it might be a little separate from United Methodist Women as its focus is on issues relevant to moms.” The program grew exponentially though separately from United Methodist Women over the next few years.

Likewise, other programs with women such as Bible study groups and interest groups continued to grow

and provide community for women in the church. While the two streams of ministries with women intersected at fundraisers and church events, they essentially remained separate.

Over the years the pastor and the women continued to pray and develop multiple opportunities for the diverse population of the church. “We serve women who are deeply committed Christians, nonreligious women and women who want to become more than Christians in name only. We hope to find ways to reach each and every woman who walks through our doors with the message of faith, hope and love in action,” said Charlotte Morrow, longtime United Methodist Women member and president of Kansas East United Methodist Women Conference.

In 2009, the Rev. Adam Hamilton, senior pastor, was invited to speak at the Kansas East Conference United Methodist Women annual celebration. In preparation for the event he called Harriett Jane Olson, deputy general secretary of the Women’s Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, the policymaking body of United Methodist Women, and talked about the vision and PURPOSE of United Methodist Women in the context of change and growth of the organization. Mr. Hamilton also challenged the ministries aimed for women in the church to make a place for each woman in the church to grow in her faith and serve others. “This was a great step in the right direction for all the women of our church,” said Ms. Morrow.

Strategic Process

As female leaders at Resurrection continued to wrestle with the needs of women and how they were being fulfilled they began thinking of naming the groups together instead of causing any kind of division.

“This process began with a group of assorted women—older, younger, women involved in United Methodist Women, non-United Methodist Women, those involved in Building Better Moms—a wide variety of women met together one Saturday



Photo by Mike DuBase for UMWS

Worshippers fill the sanctuary at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kan.

at the church with Mr. Hamilton providing spiritual encouragement,” said Ms. Funk.

Each woman was asked: “What does United Methodist Women mean to you?” For some women who had been involved in United Methodist Women it was easier to define. Others were able to share what stereotypes existed and why they were not involved. “We had a very open conversation about all the sectors,” Ms. Funk said.

At the end of the day, the group arrived at five objectives and a core group of 12 women who would work together on the following goals every month:

- Attach United Methodist Women name/recognition to all areas of women’s ministry to present a cohesive, united ministry for all women.
- Create less rigid and more flexible opportunities for nonreligious women to become involved in United Methodist Women efforts.
- Change language to be more common and relatable for all women to remove barriers (e.g., group life, circle)
- Develop a marketing strategy that rebrands ministry available to all women at Resurrection.

- Present a new model of ministry for women to other United Methodist churches at Leadership Institute.

Working with the first priority the group attached the name of United Methodist Women to not only Building Better Moms but also to women’s Bible study ministry and small groups. “Part of the process included asking what does it mean for women to attach the name of United Methodist Women?” said Ms. Funk. “Our church attracts many men and women alike who did not grow up as Methodist, and so we have a wide number of participants in all areas of programming that know nothing about United Methodist Women. Attaching the name gives us a better opportunity to educate people about what United Methodist Women is and does,” she added. Ms. Retz agreed. “We are looking at introducing the denominational organization into a lot of existing programming—cross-pollinating them and making everyone aware. It requires some thinking, informing and tweaking.”

During the course of the year women will be educated on ways in which they can be involved. These include considering a monetary pledge or

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participation by small groups in the annual rummage sale, which is the main fundraiser for United Methodist Women; visiting the United Methodist Women website to become informed; reading books off the Reading Program list; or taking part in social action and advocacy issues.

“I love it that there is freedom and flexibility for women to make their choices as to what United Methodist Women looks like for them,” said Ms. Funk. And so, the women’s ministry Web pages have been redesigned, and women are also seeing more United Methodist Women details in print instead of a general description of the organization.

Ms. Retz explained, “It makes sense to introduce the organization to the women who are already functioning in the ways of United Methodist Women: learning, doing, growing, putting their faith into action—they are all doing that but they don’t necessarily know it as the organization of United Methodist Women.”

Building Better Moms is already doing the same things United Methodist Women members are—groups gather in Christian fellowship twice a month to learn about motherhood, parenting, and to grow in faith. Groups also serve together to support local elementary aged children and their teachers. Mothers also give toward United Methodist Women’s Mission Giving that supports women and children nationally and globally through their registration. Likewise, Bible study groups are encouraged to take “Blessing Boxes” for special offerings for United Methodist Women’s mission. Another group of women who gather in a Scrapbooking Circle also live into the PURPOSE of United Methodist Women by enjoying Christian fellowship, preserving memories, donating handmade greeting cards, and sharing devotions. Building Better Moms as well as Scrapbooking are considered part



Photos courtesy of Sally Retz

(left) Building Better Mom leadership team enjoys an evening of fellowship during the holidays. (right) Longtime United Methodist Women Member Marty Mather teaches some of the Building Better Moms how to make her famous homemade bread.

of United Methodist Women.

United Methodist Women’s focus on social justice for transformation is evident in advocacy events organized at the church for all groups. Ms. Funk explained, “We invite women to attend the annual Legislative Event for Advocacy in Faith (LEAF) to promote advocacy for issues that threaten human dignity.” Recently, a speaker shared a message about human trafficking. Women from the congregation also participated in the day of advocacy organized on Martin Luther King Jr. day.

“We don’t want to layer more things onto a woman’s calendar or make her feel she has more of an obligation to attend. If she is already in a small group—why is it that her small group is not aware of United Methodist Women as a worldwide organization and how the group can play a role in that? We are at the crossroads and need to recognize what is really relevant to women without creating competing ministries,” said Ms. Retz.

Another goal is to look at flexible ways to begin groups. Ms. Funk explained, “If a woman is part of our congregation and she is interested in one of our small groups or in some kind of a group that meets regularly, then what might be some ideas to form a group? We are learning that it seems to be important to have something in common when you

form a group or circle or some common ground for women to gather together.”

Over the next few months this group will continue to meet and work on the stated goals.

Value of Women’s Work

“Women are returning, I think, to the church and wanting to serve in meaningful ways. What better place to do that than in women’s ministries? Now with this new way of looking we have the opportunity to really bring in the younger women who are starting but also women who have many years of wisdom, service and experience to serve alongside,” said Nancy Brown, longtime United Methodist Women member, church leader, former Kansas state legislator and missionary.

“What excites me is the opportunity to learn from one another. It is not a matter of ‘we’ and ‘they’—like I am United Methodist Women and you are Women’s Ministry. I care more about the ways we can connect with one another in ministry as women. The other part I really appreciate is that it provides opportunities for women of all ages,” Ms. Brown noted.

There is great value in women being able to connect in new relationships, but there are also new ways to connect. “We have new opportunities to connect with women, to encourage and to learn more about women

worldwide ... to share and to be in ministry together,” said Ms. Brown. “United Methodist Women does a great job of this through their mission studies,” she added.

However, United Methodist Women members are finding more ways to not only study about issues and places but also get involved and connected. Technology is providing opportunities for connection. “Now you have United Methodist Women Malawi website and United Methodist Women from Malawi Conference on Facebook ... United Methodist Women members can look at that and say they are really in ministry together,” Ms. Brown said.

Connection provides for seeing through God’s eyes and reaching out with God’s love. “No matter where we are in our life’s journey we do have the connectional aspect of our faith journey,” Ms. Brown affirmed.

The women at Resurrection continue to strengthen their work in mission and explore ways to connect. Ms. Brown pointed out, “It is a wonderful time to be a woman, to serve the Lord and think globally.” Ms. Funk affirmed, “This strategic process has brought a renewed sense of connection and encouragement for the women of Resurrection. We are all on a faith journey that includes knowing, loving, and serving God, and all opportunities for women at Resurrection offer a bit of each of these elements of spiritual development. Working together, we are committed to inviting the women of the congregation into a real, authentic relationship with Christ. The pathway may begin with a group like Building Better Moms or a traditional United Methodist Women circle—either way, women are growing in faith, love, and service as United Methodist Women members.”

Praveena Balasundaram is executive secretary for program resources and serves as co-editor for *United Methodist Women News*.



Photos by Michelle Funk

(left) Participants enjoying the Count On It Women’s Conference, seeing old friends and making new ones. (right) Participants enjoying the Count On It Women’s Conference.

FROM PAGE 1

Ubuntu Journey to Brazil

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on many occasions raised awareness of violence against women and promoted laws and policies to prevent crime against women. “The itinerary of the Ubuntu was intended to give a broad understanding of violence against women, including the root causes in the global economy and gender relations,” said Ms. Oliveira.

“This was my first mission trip, and I connected with 11 United Methodists from across the country and with Brazilian Methodists,” said Rosa P. Bernard, member of the United Methodist Women Human Trafficking Team. Ms. Bernard and Rita Gaither-Gant have worked together in Indianapolis giving presentations on human trafficking. “I thought having a worldview would assist us as we share with groups regarding the scope and magnitude of human trafficking,” said Ms. Gaither-Gant.



Photo by Susan Reinrock Deo

Ubuntu team dancing with children at an after-school program in Palmeira, part of the Shade and Fresh Water Project supported by The United Methodist Church.

São Paulo

A visit to the Migrant Support Center, a project of the Roman Catholic Church, provided a view of labor trafficking, the biggest form of human trafficking in the world. Brazil's economy is a huge draw for immigrants from Bolivia, who come seeking work in factories. Unfortunately, many of those factories operate more like sweatshops. Upon arrival the immigrants' documents are taken and they are subjected to inhumane working conditions. The center helps these workers with legal and human services.

In São Bernardo do Campo the team learned about the work of Centro de Referência e Apoio a Mulher (Referral and Support Center for Women). There they were joined by Neusa Souto, president of the region's Methodist Women's Federation.

Dulce Xavier, public officer and executive secretary of the center, received the team and educated them on the situation of violence against women in the municipality: “Government statistics indicate that from 1998-2008 about 49,000 women in Brazil were killed as a result of domestic violence.” She told the story of Maria da Penha, who became a paraplegic in 1983 when she was shot by her husband. When she returned from the hospital her husband attempted to electrocute her. Ms. da Penha took her case to the Inter-American Court

of Human Rights. As a result, in 2006, the government of Brazil enacted the Maria da Penha Law on domestic violence to honor her fight and empower women living in situations of violence to claim their rights.

The group also visited Projeto Meninos e Meninas de Rua, a street children's project supported by United Methodist Women's Mission Giving. Many of the staff members, including the general coordinator Marcos Silva, have grown up in the program. Mr. Silva explained that one of the reasons children are forced to live in the streets is because of domestic violence. One of the goals of the project is to bring the children back to their families. Thus, the project is now reaching out to families, most of them headed by single parents. The project advocates for the rights of children and women to live without domestic violence. They also educate the families on the new policies in place to eradicate poverty and to have access to education.

In addition, the Otilia Chaves Center, an extension program of the theology school of Methodist University, is helping the church respect and minister to women and empower women to find their strengths and roles in the church and society. The center holds community dialogues for its 1,200 students.

Responding to these visits, Ms. Gaither-Gant said, “The way women

assisted their sisters who were victims of human trafficking and domestic violence impacted me greatly.” Ms. Oliveira emphasized, “We don't see everything in a single visit, but each interaction will help to draw a larger picture of the reality and mission responses.”

Fortaleza

Fortaleza in the northeast is the fourth largest city in Brazil, with a booming tourism industry that sometimes borders on sexual trafficking. “The social and economic vulnerability of women and youth place them at a greater risk of being victims of human trafficking in their community or globally,” noted Ms. Oliveira. “We saw the impact of the tourism economic boom in the northeast coast (Fortaleza) and the disparities in the financial heart of the seventh largest city (São Paulo) in the world.”

The group participated in a Methodist Women's district meeting at the Central Methodist Church. There was representation of 15 local churches at this meeting—pastors of the district, lay leaders, youth, children and Bishop Marisa Freitas, who traveled to Fortaleza to participate in the Ubuntu Journey. Ms. Oliveira explained, “This meeting was planned especially for the Ubuntu Journey to raise awareness on the forms of violence against women, mainly the trafficking in humans. So the panel had a

Where In the World Does Your Mission Money Go?

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out by agribusiness are problems all over the world. Another problem is women's ability to own and keep title to property. United Methodist Women prepared a statement as part of the formal proceedings. Read it at our website at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/media/pdf/56thcsw2012.pdf.

Caring for vulnerable children and families, providing challenging experiences for young people, and bringing real experts to a meeting where they can address their governments about the real needs of women are just some of the ways United Methodist Women members' mission giving is active every day. Thanks for keeping your arms around the world.

Harriett Jane Olson is the deputy general secretary of the Women's Division of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries.

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broad representation: state government officer, Methodist bishop, United Methodist Women staff and global campaign representative.”

Panelist Andreia Costa, coordinator of the state of Ceará office for fighting human trafficking, explained the role of Brazil's public police and national plan to combat human trafficking, based on the Palermo Protocol for the prevention and repression of human trafficking, and assist victims.

Not only did the team hear, share and gather information but they also participated in action with the youth networks and community members of Conjunto São Cristóvão. This community on the outskirts of Fortaleza has the highest incidence of violence against youth. The visit was organized by Diaconia, a non-

governmental ecumenical organization with 11 church members. Ms. Oliveira said, “The Ubuntu group took part in a march against domestic violence against women, children and youth and human trafficking in the streets of Conjunto. We carried banners, we sang and handed fliers to the people in the streets and at the stoplight. It was another of our joined directed action with our Brazilian sisters and friends to educate the community on the rights of women and girls and to bring hope for the most vulnerable of all.”

The group heard about the work of the Methodist Women Confederation in Brazil. Sonia do Nascimento Palmeira, president, shared a map about the work Methodist women are doing through resources and service projects to help women realize the difference they can

make in the lives around them and the world. “There is a movement in Brazil to help change the lives of women and children,” said Ms. Bernard. Honored to take the Ubuntu Journey with Brazilian sisters, Ms. Johnson commented, “Together, we will walk with Methodist women in Brazil to end trafficking and violence against women and children.”

The journey was an eye-opener. Ms. Gaither-Gant affirmed, “I want to become a true advocate for victims of human trafficking.”

The work has not ended: “As a follow-up the team will inform their networks on the issues of trafficking and violence against women and children. They will share information on the impact of trafficking families, who benefits and who is working on the issue. Some may work on how to recognize persons being traf-

ficked, where and how to report concerns. They will continue to stay informed, inform others on issues of violence, its impact, how to respond and where to seek help,” said Andris Salter, Women's Division assistant general secretary for mission opportunities. Ms. Johnson reiterated, “Our anticipated aim is to build awareness and increase our action to eliminate modern day slavery.”

Praveena Balasundaram is executive secretary for program resources and co-editor of *United Methodist Women News*.

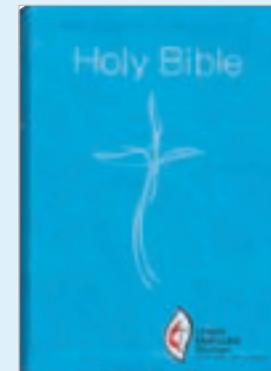
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Photo by Susan Rothrock Deo

Ubuntu team with those who guided and helped them in Fortaleza.

United Methodist Women and Anti-trafficking Work

- In 1998, Laura Lederer initiated America's first systematic examination of global commercial sexual trafficking and labor bondage when she began the Protection Project at Harvard University. From the outset, United Methodist Women has been closely involved with the project, seeding its formation with a grant. In 2000, the project moved to Washington, D.C., and worked closely with the United Methodist Women Washington Office of Public Policy to heighten attention and national advocacy on the issue.
- In 2008, the Women's Division Board of Directors affirmed an anti-trafficking resolution of the National Council of Churches and directed staff to develop program responses that result in justice for those violated by trafficking.
- In 2009, 25 conference social action coordinators and a national mission institution representative gathered in Atlanta, Ga., at the Candler School of Theology for two and a half days of intensive education and the launch of the United Methodist Women Human Trafficking Team.
- To date, about 10,000 people have participated in workshops led by various members of this team.
- United Methodist Women works with politicians, Congress, the White House and law enforcement to change trafficking situations.
- United Methodist Women members continue to march in streets to demand more services.
- United Methodist Women believes in prevention, apprehension of criminals responsible, and assistance to victims as the three steps in restoring victims of human trafficking.
- To learn more about how you can be involved, check out our website: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/act/trafficking/ (excerpted and adapted from www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/media/pdf/humantrafficking-packethr.pdf)

Sewing Machines for Haiti

by Marilyn Allison

At the fall meeting of the Illinois Great Rivers District United Methodist Women, the president of United Methodist Women at Arthur United Methodist Church in Arthur, Ill., heard of the need for sewing machines in Haiti. God placed this need on her heart, and she came back to our unit explaining that sewing machines could allow Haitian women to make clothes for their family, thereby freeing up money for necessities. Sewing machines could also



Photo by Marilyn Allison

United Methodist Women at Arthur United Methodist Church in Arthur, Ill., begin collecting sewing machines to send to women in Haiti. They received more than 60 machines.

offer the ability to make products to sell for income to acquire permanent housing, better food and medical attention. She explained that our Midwest Mission Distribution Center was collecting used or new sewing machines, and we decided to put out a plea. We felt that if we collected three or four machines we would be successful.

With the help of our church newsletter, church bulletins and the local newspaper, we sent out the request for sewing machines. The response was greater than we imagined it would be. We collected more than 60 sewing machines! Our church was overflowing with sewing machines and love for the women of Haiti. A big thank you to the church, United Methodist Women members, the Arthur community, *Arthur Graphic Clarion* newspaper and all the wonderful people who donated the machines and trucked them to the distribution center in Chatham, Ill. We are so excited to be a part of this mission.

Marilyn Allison is a United Methodist Women member at Arthur United Methodist Church in Arthur, Ill.

Did You Know?

That The United Methodist Church's Charter for Racial Justice was created by United Methodist Women? The Charter for Racial Justice was created and adopted by the Women's Division in 1978 and successfully adopted by the whole denomination in 1980. The church's General Conference has consecutively re-adopted it, every eight years since, most recently in 2008. The charter is one example of how United Methodist Women guides the church in justice work and continues our urgent call for study and action on the principles and goals of racial justice. You can read the Charter for Racial Justice by visiting www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/resources/racialjustice/charter.

response magazine:
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response's dynamic articles and photographs tell the mission story of United Methodist Women and stir readers to solidarity and action with women, youth and children of the world.

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Church Members Receive Special Recognition Pins From United Methodist Women in Mountain Home, Arkansas

by Kay Owens

The United Methodist Women of First United Methodist Church in Mountain Home, Ark., hosted United Methodist Women Sunday on January 22, 2012. The Rev. Lu Harding of the Mount Eagle Retreat Center spoke on "Living God's Way," with a scriptural focus on Isaiah 55.

Two Special Mission Recognition pins were awarded, one to United Methodist Women member Jill Chandler and the second to United Methodist Men member Jim Colby. Ms. Chandler, a longtime member of the church and of United Methodist Women, serves on various church committees, sings with the church choir (among others), and volunteers at community dinners and at the local hospital. Mr. Colby has quietly and consistently helped our United Methodist Women and church for many



Photo by Kay Owens

(Left to right) Kay Owens, Jill Chandler, Jim Colby and Lu Harding.

years, serving as an usher, organizing the church's recycling, assembling and delivering meals and Thanksgiving Baskets, and serving on the board for the church's Weekend Meals program. It was an honor to recognize these wonderful people at our service.

United Methodist Women Sunday was an inspirational day for all involved.

Kay Owens is president of United Methodist Women at First United Methodist Church in Mountain Home, Ark.

Prayer Calendar 2012



Each year United Methodist Women shares information and inspiration through its Prayer Calendar. The 2012 calendar includes a full-year calendar with lectionary readings, holidays and special days; prayer focuses; images and stories to inspire; and a directory of mission personnel. \$11.00 (M3117-2012-01)

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