Understanding immigration in the United States

Misplaced blame distorts the discussion on immigration reform and leads to laws that hurt more than help.

by Carol Barton

Migration is fundamentally about the distribution of wealth, resources and jobs in the world. Our Social Principles state, “In order to provide basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health care and other necessities, ways must be found to share more equitably the resources of the world” (The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church ¶163E). When this is not the case, people always have, and will, move to survive.

As I have traveled the country meeting with United Methodist Women members to talk together about immigration, many people ask, “Why do people come?” While there are hundreds of answers, a fundamental reality is that U.S. economic and trade policies with Mexico in the 1990s directly contributed to mass migration from Mexico to the United States. Yet U.S. immigration policy, including new legislation being proposed, blames migrants and seeks to penalize them rather than the policymakers and businesses that have benefitted from trade with Mexico and cheap migrant labor in the United States. This is misplaced blame.

The 1993 North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, opened borders to the flow of investments and goods—but not of people. It enabled U.S. grain companies to dump federally subsidized corn on the Mexican market. Poor Mexican farmers could not compete, and several millions abandoned their farms in search of other work. When Mexican cities could not absorb these workers they headed north. Now, a Central American Free Trade Agreement, or CAFTA, is driving thousands of Central Americans across Mexico to the United States as well.

While trade agreements do not explain all of migration by any means, a 2006 Social Science Research Council report stated that “in Georgia, for example, the Latin-origin population went from 1.7 percent in 1990 to 5.3 percent in 2000, a 312 percent increase due to an inflow of 300,000 persons, overwhelmingly from Mexico.” Sixty-three percent of the undocumented immigrant population (approximately 6.8 million) entered the United States before 2000, according to the Department of Homeland Security. And according to the Pew Hispanic Center, over half of the 11 million undocumented immigrants are from Mexico.

Rather than address the causes of unauthorized migration to the United States, particularly from Mexico and Central America, the primary focus of current federal legislation is about keeping new flows of migrants out—except through temporary work programs or for highly skilled workers. While trade agreements do not explain all of migration by any means, a 2006 Social Science Research Council report stated that “in Georgia, for example, the Latin-origin population went from 1.7 percent in 1990 to 5.3 percent in 2000, a 312 percent increase due to an inflow of 300,000 persons, overwhelmingly from Mexico.” Sixty-three percent of the undocumented immigrant population (approximately 6.8 million) entered the United States before 2000, according to the Department of Homeland Security. And according to the Pew Hispanic Center, over half of the 11 million undocumented immigrants are from Mexico.

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From the General Secretary

Providing the resources for mission

by Harriett Jane Olson

United Methodist members are great learners. Being a part of our organization means learning about the experiences of women, children and youth and the systems in place that make them the most marginalized.

In order to help encourage such learning, United Methodist Women provides resources through United Methodist Women Mission Resources: www.umwmissionresources.org. It’s where you can find Reading Program books, mission studies, promotional materials and various tools for education and action.

Your Mission Giving supports the creation of the resources—the selecting, writing, editing, designing, translating, illustrating—and thus supports mission education. The price you pay for the resources covers their production and dissemination. We try to offer meaningful material as inexpensively as possible, with sales prices covering printing and distribution so that Mission Giving is not spent on that part of our work.

For example, we buy Reading Program books wholesale and sell them at retail price, the price difference covering stocking costs and costs to ship them to and from United Methodist Women events. Other books we provide are our mission studies, which are books we commission to be written on topics approved by our board, produced with input of a representative editorial committee, and edited, designed and published by United Methodist Women. Sales prices cover printing and sales cost.

Our new online center, in partnership with product fulfillment providers PBD International, helps us streamline our printing and distribution costs and manage our materials so that we can provide resources less expensively. We are also poised to provide material in new formats as technology expands and becomes more accessible. (We want to reach as many people as possible in as many ways as possible.)

Together we are learning and educating for transformation—a personal transformation that leads us to be involved in God’s work of transformation in the world. Thanks for being reading learners and for being partners in God’s work.

Harriett Jane Olson is the General Secretary and CEO of United Methodist Women.
Sharing Christ’s love through art
An unlikely artist shares his faith through his drawings at Christ United Methodist Church in Virginia

By Norma Sumner

At Christ United Methodist Church in Staunton, Va., a group from the Arc of Augusta meets every Thursday and Friday. The Arc of Augusta provides services for children and adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities in the Staunton area, and they meet at the church to craft, participate in programs and play games.

In Easter 2012 a young man from the group, Charles Banzhoff, approached me and asked, “Can I show you my Jesus?” He held out five cards created from Mr. Banzhoff’s drawing. We printed 150 cards and handed them out during worship, complete with envelope, so that worshippers could share both their faith and Mr. Banzhoff’s by mailing the card. The project was very well received!

This Easter the Julia Gordon Hayes Mission Group circle of United Methodist Women at Christ Church, with the help of the church’s administrative assistant, had greeting cards created from Mr. Banzhoff’s drawing. We printed 150 cards and handed them out during worship, complete with envelope, so that worshippers could share both their faith and Mr. Banzhoff’s by mailing the card. The project was very well received!

When the cards were completed we invited Mr. Banzhoff to our meeting to show him. We told him how happy his art made us and how we hoped the cards would share this happiness with others. “We hope we make you happy sharing this card with others,” we said to Mr. Banzhoff. His ever-present smile left his face for a moment. “I don’t have to be made happy,” he said through tears. “When I work for Jesus, I am happy!” His smile returned, and we all had tears in our eyes.

Norma Sumner is chair of the United Methodist Women Julia Gordon Hayes Mission Group at Christ United Methodist Church in Staunton, Va.

United Methodist Women sells baked potatoes
Members in Stephenville, Texas, host luncheon to raise money for school supplies

By Donnie Bryant

First United Methodist Church Stephenville was a bustle of activity as the United Methodist Women continued their quarter century tradition of hosting a baked potato luncheon. The midday feast is a fundraiser aimed at gathering money to purchase school supplies for area children.

Fifteen-year lunch veteran LaVena Prichard is a retired educator. The goal of the fundraiser means something to her personally. “We use the money to help children and families that need school supplies,” she said. “Since I was once a schoolteacher, this all has a special place in my heart.”

Charlene Boucher has been involved since the very first event was held. She believes the need for providing school supplies to students whose family might be financially strapped at the beginning of the school year is a great one. And she wants the community to realize the need doesn’t necessarily end after the whirl of a new school year settles.

“Your should see our food pantry and clothes closet,” she said. “There is very much a need for help.”

Ms. Cummings explained the process for sharing what they were to earn, adding in the past there has been additional help supplied by other area organizations.

“This all helps us to get school supplies, backpacks and shoes for kids in need in Stephenville,” she said. “Project HOPE works with a shoe store to get vouchers for a free pair of shoes. So the whole community will come together in July to make distribution when those folks in need come to us.”

Nine hundred potatoes were donated and baked by Hard Eight Barbecue, and Ms. Cummings anticipated the money made should come to some $4,000. The expected student count they hope to serve in the summer is estimated at 200.

Margaret White has also donated her time to the cause since its beginning and is proud of the venture and the lives they have touched through the years.

“It’s just a great thing to do,” she said. “It’s a very rewarding thing.”

Donnie Bryant is staff writer for the Stephenville Empire-Tribune in Stephenville, Texas.

Mission Giving changing lives in Pakistan

The Women’s Desk of the Lahore Diocese works to make lives better for women in Pakistan

By Ayra Inderyas

Adult Literacy Training

A five-day training workshop on adult literacy teaching skills was held at St. Hilda Cathedral in Lahore, Pakistan, in February 2013. Twelve women and six men attended, representing church parishes of Sahiwal, Potoki, Narowal, Dharianwala, Ciarkabad, Youhanabad, Lahore and Islamabad.

The purpose of the training was to improve the literacy rate among women of the church communities of Lahore Diocese. As of 2012, Pakistan ranked 113 among 120 nations for literacy. Reports put the overall literacy rate of Pakistan at 55 percent.

The Women’s Desk of Lahore Diocese, which includes 80 church parishes of Punjab Province, embarked on this training initiative to spread literacy with the collaboration of Adult Basic Education Society.

One outcome of the training is that trainees will run a literacy center for 20 persons for six months in their respective church parishes.

Adult Basic Education Society trainers Mehmona Irshad and Khalid Emanuel provided kits and resources and led participants in group activities and presentations and practical demonstrations. The majority of the participants were in Lahore for the very first time, so visits to Lahore Museum, Lahore Fort and Badshahi Mosque were arranged.

The training workshop concluded with a session on future planning. Certificates were distributed among the trainees. The Bishop of Lahore, the Rt. Rev. Irfan Jamil, acknowledged the efforts of the trainees. The Bishop of Lahore, the Rt. Rev. Irfan Jamil, acknowledged the efforts of the trainees.

World Day of Prayer at St. Thomas Church, Islamabad, March 1, 2013.

Community-Based Health Care

Christ Church Okara in Okara, Pakistan, hosted a training workshop on community-based health care and first aid in November 2012. Amjad Khan of the Women’s Desk served as a resource person and instructor for 30 participants. Training content included emergency response to burn, shock, angina pain, fracture, fainting, road accidents, wound, bleeding, electrocution and muscle injury.

Income Generation for Women

Two skills training centers in stitching and sewing were opened and are in progress. The majority of the students are young girls who are benefiting from learning this technique.

World Day of Prayer

A local women’s fellowship group of Cathedral Church of the Resurrection in Lahore and the Women’s Desk organized a World Day of Prayer event, March 1, 2013. The prayer was conducted at Cathedral Church under the theme of “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Mrs. Henry Qaiser of Full Gospel Assembly was the main speaker.

Participants included 185 women of different church parishes of Lahore and Rawalpindi. Representatives from Salvation Army and the Catholic Church also attended.

Relief and Recovery After Arson Attack

March 9, 2013, a violent mob attacked the settlement Joseph Colony Badami Bagh, setting 178 homes on fire. Alexander John Malik of the Women’s Desk conducted a survey to assess the needs of Badami Bagh. The survey helped those affected find compensation for lost items such as cycle, refrigerator, washing machines, televisions, stoves and electric fans, and it also helped reveal the poor socioeconomic conditions of the inhabitants.

One hundred and fifty families were surveyed.

With the support of Mr. Malik, owner of Muslim Commercial Bank and Nishat Group, packages including a refrigerator, television, two ceiling fans, one pedestal fan, two-burner stove, bicycle, sewing machine and an iron were distributed to 150 affected families in April 2013.

Your Missing Giving helps make this work possible.

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Your Missing Giving helps make this work possible.
300 coats for children

United Methodist Women collect coats for children in Millbrook, Ala.

by Henrietta H. Thomas

The Doris Cobb Circle of the Millbrook First United Methodist Church’s United Methodist Women in Millbrook, Ala., spearheaded a project to donate 100 coats to 100 children in the West Elmore Ala. area. This was the third year for the project. In 2010 approximately 16 coats were given away, and in 2011 50 coats were distributed. Our goal for 2012 was 100 coats for 100 children. We thought this would be a challenge, however through the efforts of the entire unit and members of the community, more than 300 coats were donated. Most of the coats were new.

The unit is excited about this project. We have started collecting coats to be given away in November 2013.

Henrietta H. Thomas is a member of United Methodist Women at Millbrook First United Methodist Church in Millbrook, Ala.

Making neighbors in Haiti

Epworth United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women reach out to neighbors in Delatte and Fond Doux, Haiti.

By Linda Mitchell

The Haiti mission team of Epworth United Church in Durham, N.C., visits Haiti at least three times a year, generously supported by the United Methodist Women and our congregation. Over the past 10 years we have provided extensive funding for food, clothing, shelter, medical supplies and goats for the villagers in the impoverished mountain village of Fond Doux and Delatte. Receiving so much support has enabled us to grow spiritually, share our experiences and learn about brothers and sisters in Haiti as we partner together in mission.

Linda Mitchell is United Methodist Women education and interpretation coordinator, Epworth United Methodist Church, Durham, N.C.

Leadership Development Days

United Methodist Women Leadership Development Days 2013-2014 offer women the chance to learn new skills, build confidence and become effective leaders.

Leadership development experiences are important for your growth as an individual member of United Methodist Women and for the organization as a whole. Leadership Development Days are weekends of orientation and skill development for United Methodist Women leaders. Held three times a year in various locations, Leadership Development Days offer training sessions and plenaries for anyone in or thinking of taking on a leadership role.

Leadership Development Days 2013-2014

- November 15-17, 2013, St. Louis, Mo., Renaissance Airport Hotel
- November 22-24, 2013, Tempe, Ariz., Fiesta Resort Conference Center
- January 10-12, 2014, Lake Junaluska, N.C., Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center

Attendance

Leadership Development Days are open to all. Costs are covered for up to seven attendees, and any woman can attend at her own expense as space allows. Registration opens early July.

United Methodist Women National Office will pay for lodging, meals, reasonable transportation costs and program expenses for up to seven leaders from each conference for the November 2013 and the January 2014 events.

Included among those attending should be:

- New conference treasurers
- District treasurers planning to use the online accounting system
- New chairs of committees on nominations
- New conference secretaries

Other leaders are to be selected by the conference mission team and might include:

- Emerging leaders
- District leaders
- New conference leaders

In addition to these leaders, a conference may send additional women at the conference’s expense.

Other attendees

- Music leaders: Workshops will be offered to train persons in global music for worship and music leadership in the variety United Methodist Women’s programs.
- Deaconess and home missioner discernment sessions:
  Contact the Office of Deaconess and Home Missioner at 212-870-3850 or deaconess@unitedmethodistwomen.org or visit www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/programs/deaconesses.

Epworth United Methodist Church helps families acquire rice and beans in Fond Doux, Haiti.
A special mission opportunity ends December 31, 2013

by Sandy Wilder

The Charitable IRA Rollover provision of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 enables individuals to make a tax-free distribution of up to $100,000 from traditional or Roth IRA accounts for charitable purposes.

But this opportunity ends December 31, 2013. Don’t miss this chance to make a significant gift to United Methodist Women and other charities of your choice, tax-free.

How it works:

• You must be 70 years old or older.
• You may transfer up to $100,000. If you are married you can each use your own accounts, doubling your family’s possible gift up to $200,000.
• Your gift will count toward your required minimum distribution for 2013, if you haven’t yet taken it.
• Your gift will not be taxed for federal income tax purposes, as a regular distribution would. (Note: Some states will tax your withdrawal, so check with your plan administrator in advance.)
• You cannot claim an income tax charitable deduction.

Your IRA custodian should send your gift directly to:
United Methodist Women
475 Riverside Drive
Room 1503
New York, NY 10115

Be sure to let United Methodist Women’s finance office (212-870-3741) know about your gift, as some companies do not include the donor’s name when distributing funds.

Sandy Wilder (swilder@unitedmethodistwomen.org) is United Methodist Women consultant for Major and Planned Giving.

A special mission opportunity ends December 31, 2013

United Methodist Women News is for United Methodist Women members, by United Methodist Women members.

Your actions and your giving make every story featured in this issue possible.

Thank you for your work and generosity.

Correction: In United Methodist Women News 6(1), “eCircle: United Methodist Women Meet Online” by Brenda Potts (p. 7), the location of Asbury United Methodist Church was incorrectly published as Asbury, Md. The correct location of Asbury United Methodist Church is Salisbury, Md.

United Methodist Women News regrets the error.

Do you enjoy stories of women in mission?

Subscribe to response magazine, the official magazine of United Methodist Women, and receive photos and stories of women in mission locally and around the world, all supported by your Mission Giving. response tells the story of United Methodist Women—your story. Share our story by subscribing to response today, and know you are supporting work that is both good and Good.

www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/response
skilled workers such as engineers. The bill would vastly expand border and internal enforcement mechanisms, authorizing use of drones, the National Guard, biometric employment verification and other measures at the cost of an additional $4.5 billion. The past decade has made clear that massive government spending on border walls and enforcement has not stemmed migration—only the economic crisis did. Those who benefit from current legislation include private prisons and military contractors, not U.S. taxpayers.

People seeking to support their families will continue to take the risks to find livelihoods in the United States, often at the cost of their lives. The real fix needs to be about developing robust, equitable and sustainable economies in poor nations so that people have the choice to remain at home with their loved ones as well as to migrate. As a nation the United States could invest in that development rather than in trade deals that benefit “us” at the expense of “them.”

When we as a nation build walls to protect “our” jobs and “our” wealth by excluding the most vulnerable, or invite people in only when we need their labor and then discard them, we undermine the Gospel’s central message of Love. The current legislation takes us further down that path. United Methodist Women will work tirelessly for a bill based on justice and human rights for all.

Carol Barton is United Methodist Women executive for community action and coordinator of the Immigrant and Civil Rights Initiative

This article also appears on our blog: umwomen.wordpress.com.
On forced migration and refugees in the Middle East

World Day of Prayer’s Laila Carmi reflects on Jesus as a migrant and the migrants of the same holy land today.

By Laila Carmi

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

—Matthew 2:13-15

In the Christian era, the baby Jesus was one of the first migrants to flee for his life from King Herod, who wanted to kill him. The flight of Jesus to Egypt with Mary and Joseph represents a recurrent story for whole populations across the Middle East region, as generations have fled their countries and homes because of usurpation, invasion, wars and oppression.

No story better epitomizes the escape from danger and the search for a safer life than that of the baby Jesus. Chapter 2 of the Gospel of Matthew tells the story of Jesus following the visit of the Magi and the wish of King Herod, who thought Jesus represented a threat to his throne, to kill him: “Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod.”

Today, millions of refugees also leave everything behind, living under tents, persisting in stormy weather and floods that destroy their makeshift dwellings, leaving women and children subject to disease and hunger despite humanitarian aid. For millions of Iraqis, Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese, Libyans, children, women and men, terrible military aggressions have devastated their countries under false pretexts of “democracy” or promises to overthrow dictatorships, or the desire to control natural resources or strategic geopolitical positions.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has been monitoring refugees worldwide. They report that for the past 65 years in Palestine, millions of Palestinians have been living as refugees in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip and in surrounding host countries. UNHCR has described their plight as “by far the most protracted and largest of all refugee problems in the world today.” According to the U.N., the total number of displaced Palestinians worldwide is 7.1 million.

For Iraq, UNHCR reports that in January 2013 there were over 1.6 million registered refugees. As for the Syrians who have fled their conflict-ravaged country for the past two years, there are more than 1.5 million refugees, according to UNHCR.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country and to return to his or her country.

But Palestinian refugees have been denied the right to return to their country, because of illegal Israeli settlements. All Palestinian refugees have the longing and will to return to their homeland, as Jesus was able to return from Egypt to his home in Nazareth after the death of Herod.

Prayer

Let us unite in prayer that all displaced persons can also return to their homes as soon as possible. All refugees should have the right to return to their home countries, notwithstanding the generosity of a host country. We invoke our Lord Jesus Christ, in his mercy, to give us the courage and fortitude to stand up for justice and peace and to inspire those in authority to show compassion to the migrants and refugees and to work toward their safe return to their homelands. In our Lord Jesus Christ we trust.

See:

- Resolution 6137, “Interfaith Advocacy in Support of Israeli/Palestine Peace”
- Resolution 6111, “Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land”

Laila Carmi has been a World Day of Prayer committee member since 1990 and a World Day of Prayer International Committee (IDPIC) representative for the Middle East region from 2003 to 2012.

Read this reflection and other reflections on global migration on the United Methodist Women website: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/resources/articles
Mission Resources

United Methodist Women
Program Book 2013-2014

$10 M3173

The Program Book invites you to explore the callings of women from the Bible and present you with many opportunities to engage in mission with women, children and youth. Features such as titles and objectives; prayers, scripture readings and meditations; activities and discussions; opportunities for advocacy and service in your communities and globally will grow your understanding of mission. Discover God’s calling for the community of United Methodist Women today!

Preorder your Program Book today!

The Call:
Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly—
Spanish and Korean

by George McClain, Tilda Norberg and Nancy Kruh (Editor)

$7.00

Spanish M3124 | Korean M3125

This study offers tools to deepen spiritual identity, engagement in community and involvement in mission, looking at the sacramental understandings of baptism and communion and lifting up models of response to God’s call. Stories of call and response are shared from a wide array of persons from different walks of life. Includes study guide.

The Roma—
Spanish and Korean

by Larry Beman

$10.00

Spanish M3163 | Korean M3164

The Roma people have been an integral part of European history and today are the largest minority ethnic group in Europe. This study helps readers understand the Roma people—often referred to as travelers and gypsies—and the struggles they have faced and face and The United Methodist Church’s ministry with this group on the margins of society.

Handbook 2013-2016

United Methodist Women

$12.50 | M3157 (English)

The Handbook 2013-2016 provides you with guidelines and policies and equips each group to organize in a way that makes the most sense to them. Learn about the work of United Methodist Women and how you can gain in mission, connect with one another and find practical tips and suggestions for organization and resources to help you assume responsibility. Three-hole punch, shrink-wrapped.

Available now!