

FLAME

World Evangelism, World Methodist Council

CONNECTING CONGREGATIONS CELEBRATE TEN YEARS: 1992-2002

In 1992, the World Methodist Evangelism vision of congregations in one part of the world helping to launch and support congregations in other parts of the world began in Czechoslovakia. This ministry, called Connecting Congregations, has started 139 new congregations in 16 countries since its inception. These congregations share faith, hope, love, vision and prayer—as well as resources—with one another in spreading the good news of Christ. The ministry has been so successful that it has become a model for others in the development of new congregations.

In 2002, World Evangelism leaders celebrated ten years of Connecting Congregations by visiting 21 new Methodist Congregations in Bulgaria, Slovakia and The Czech Republic. The leaders and the people in the movement in these countries have a great vision and are seriously committed to the ministry of Offering Christ.

Bulgaria—In 1948, most of the Bulgarian churches were closed, but today the leadership of Superintendent Bedros Altunian is providing a vision for spreading the good news of Christ across the land. As a result, several new Connecting Congregations are being established, buildings are being restored, and lives are being transformed through this committed ministry and vision. In Bulgaria, Methodist congregations worship in



At left, the Connecting Congregation in Hottanza, Bulgaria gathers on the front steps of their church. At right, the new church building in Tartu, Estonia.

four languages: Bulgarian, Armenian, Turkish and Romanian.

A former military building has been converted into a new Methodist Church in Lyaskovets, Bulgaria by a visionary leader and this Connecting Congregation is now the only Protestant church in a city of 14,000 people. Each week a Sunday School, which began with one young girl, teaches more than 30 children.

Even though the Methodist movement has been in Bulgaria for 150 years, a variety of new congregations are now being formed through Connecting Congregations to share

the good news of Jesus Christ for all.

Slovakia—In 1990 there was only one Methodist minister in Slovakia serving 170 members. Now, there are new pastors, more than 400 members, and 1200 worshippers each week. A dozen young students are preparing for ministry in the seminary in Banska Bystrica. One of the original eight Connecting Congregations, Trnava, is now self-supporting and starting new mission churches in the surrounding areas. Other Connecting Congregations are also starting mission outposts in order to evangelize the

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RAISING UP A NEW GENERATION OF YOUNG LEADERS

“FANNING THE FLAME”

The First Order of the Flame Renewal Conference

Epworth by the Sea, St. Simons Island, Georgia

In April, 2003, 125 young leaders in the Wesleyan/Methodist movement in North America worshipped under the Spanish Oaks where the Wesley's walked 265 years ago. These leaders were experiencing the power and presence of the Holy Spirit at the first Renewal Conference of the Order of the FLAME.



Members of the Order of the FLAME in a mentoring group at the April Renewal Conference at Epworth By The Sea, St. Simons Island, Georgia.

Started in 1996 by World Evangelism, the Order of the FLAME (**F**aithful **L**eaders **A**s **M**ission **E**vangeli**S**t**S**) is composed of young pastors and spouses from the churches in the Wesleyan Tradition in North America: African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Free Methodist, Church of the Nazarene, United Methodist and Wesleyan. All these leaders were originally trained in annual FLAME conferences and they have each committed to “do the work of an evangelist and carry out the ministry fully.”

In the first Renewal Conference, the Regional Secretaries of World Evangelism, the faculty of the Order of the FLAME and the members of the Order focused their time together in three areas: The Witness of the Word, The Witness in the World, and

The Witness through our Ministry.

International speakers Dr. Grace Imathiu, Dr. Jeff Spiller, Dr. Lyle Pointer, Dr. Darryl Starnes, Dra. Maimunah Natasha of Indonesia, Bishop Paulo Lockman of Brazil, Dr. David Wilkinson of England, Bishop John Bryant, and Bishop Nathaniel Linsey joined World Evangelism

leaders Dr. George Morris, Dr. Winston Worrell, Dr. James Thurmond, Dr. Maxie Dunnam, Dr. Eddie Fox and members of the Order in “fanning the flames of evangelism” during inspiring worship, mentoring, and teaching sessions.

Many members of the Order of the FLAME testified about the encouragement they experienced in the small “Wesley Groups” held each day of the conference. Others spoke of the renewal and refreshment in the early morning Holy Communion in the Lovely Lane Chapel at beautiful Epworth by the Sea. Members of the Order spoke of their experiences:

- I came discouraged and I am leaving with a renewed faith.
- Thank you for renewal and reminding me as a spouse that we

are valued and are called to ministry as Christians.

- We see the wide door that is open to us for effective ministry and we are going through the wide door in the name of Jesus.
- I will always preach for response.
- We will teach our people “Faith-Sharing.”
- Praise the Lord! We are part of a worldwide family.
- The Order of the FLAME is making a change in the world. I am sticking with Jesus!
- We will serve our world parish as long as life endures. We have seen the wide door and we are going through it.
- We will keep the covenant to do the work of an evangelist and carry out the ministry fully.
- Awesome!

The conference recalled Wesley's desire, “Give me 100 preachers, who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergy or lay, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven upon earth.”

On the last evening of the renewal conference, following a challenging message, “Stick with Jesus” by Bishop John Bryant, World Evangelism leaders and members of the Order of the FLAME renewed their covenant to be faithful evangelists.

ORDER OF THE FLAME SPREADS TO AFRICA

The first conference of the Order of the FLAME in West Africa will bring together 200 young leaders from the five denominations in the Wesleyan tradition in Nigeria, July 14-17, 2003.

The first conference of the Order of the FLAME in Kenya will bring together young leaders in the East Africa nation, January 26-29, 2004.

NG LEADERS IN WORLD EVANGELISM IN THE

“CHRIST JESUS - GOD’S WAY”

The 7th International Christian Youth Conference

Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland

Young people came from 37 countries and every continent to participate in World Methodist Evangelism’s 7th International Christian Youth Conference. Delegates from Japan participated in ICYC for the first time.

The delegates experienced the reality that the world may be a village, but there remain many fences that divide the people of the world. Because of the international focus on terrorism and war, some young people who had been named by their church as delegates found the travel very difficult and some were even denied visas to enter the United Kingdom.

With the reality of the world’s divisions so close at hand, Rev. Grace Imathiu, a Kenyan-born pastor and international speaker, challenged the young leaders to “cross the seas” that divide people from one another. She described Jesus as “the one who crossed the sea for me and for you. We are called to be the sea-crossers, the bold ones. Our world needs it so badly. We are called to get to that other side. Get out of the boat and take the risk.”

Around the room, young people wearing traditional dress from cultures as diverse as Japan, Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America and Indonesia responded to the challenge to be “sea crossers in the name of Jesus.”

Conference planners and participants knew they were meeting in a place where religion is often seen as divisive and destructive. Dr. H. Eddie Fox said, “Christ is the reconciler, not the divider. Christ is the great healer.”

Fox said the decision to bring the conference to Newtownabbey was done in consultation with and at the invitation of the Irish Methodist Church. The leaders of the Methodist Church in Ireland, especially Rev. David Rock, General Superintendent

of the Youth Department, were part of the planning team that organized the conference at the University of Ulster.

Rev. Winston Graham, president of the Irish Methodist Conference, described the significance of the conference being held in Northern Ireland. He told the young people, “Your presence here this week is Good News for us in Northern Ireland.”

During the week, every participant attended sessions on “Faith-Sharing” in which they learned to follow the “graceful pattern” for sharing Christian faith. Each of the delegates participated in a variety of topics in the

made a trip to the famous Giants Causeway, a spectacular natural stone formation along Ireland’s northern coast and spent a night celebrating Irish culture, courtesy of the Irish Methodist Church. They did all these things and still had time to talk and listen to music in the ICYC Coffee Shops in the evenings.

The delegates were challenged to make sure that their vision of Jesus is big enough by astro-physicist and English preacher, Dr. David Wilkinson. The Rev. Taavi Hollman, a young leader from Estonia, gave encouragement to the young people that God is with us. Sharing his own faith-story



Young people praying for the world at the 7th International Christian Youth Conference on Evangelism at Newtownabbey, Northern Ireland.

areas of Christian Mission, Christian World View and the Christian Spiritual Life.

They shared in worship led by Bishop Sunday Mbang of Nigeria, president of the World Methodist Council. They were involved in mission projects, went to churches and had lunch with local families. They

from the days of Soviet occupation, Hollman challenged the young people to witness courageously in today’s world.

The famous St. Patrick prayer, “Christ Be With Me,” came to life in a song specifically written for the conference by the outstanding musician Dirk Damonte of California. The song

METHODIST MOVEMENT...

continued to build throughout the week as the youth sang with great joy and enthusiasm, "Christ Be with Me."

Each morning a different area of the world led the entire conference in Bible Study and worship that focused on different aspects of the St. Patrick Prayer. The final morning the conference experienced fervent praying of the Lord's Prayer in many languages.

During the final Commitment Service, Fox reminded the conference that the gathering is a "defining moment" for us. He shared that he and leaders were meeting at the University planning the conference on September 11, 2001.

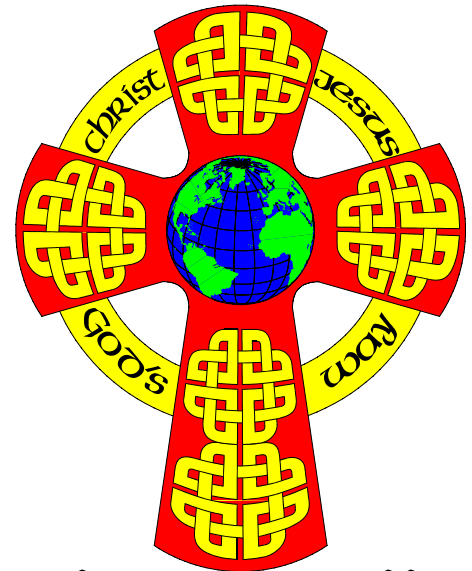
"The defining moment of all of history is the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. For the whole world, 'Christ Jesus is God's way,'" Fox declared to the delegates. In a time of prayer the young people experienced "defining moments" in response to Christ and in commitment to ministry and mission in the world.

Since the conference, the delegates, through an ICYC internet chat room, have continued to testify about the life-changing experiences in ICYC. Many have shared the story of their

experience of faith and their willingness to step forward to witness and serve Christ. Some have testified to the "defining moment of change" in their life during the global event. One young woman from Latvia shared with her conference that she had come to a genuine conversion and experience of faith. Leaders of the Methodist Church in Latvia told of the impact of the witness of this young delegate from Latvia to the Annual Conference, "Our entire conference was inspired and encouraged to be faithful witnesses of Christ through her testimony."

THE FACE OF THE MOVEMENT IS BEING CHANGED

The face and direction of World Methodism is being shaped by the faith, zeal and commitment of these young disciples of Jesus. This movement is not dying. God is raising up a new generation of world ambassadors of the Christian faith. During the Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council meeting in Oslo in



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September, 2002, three persons shared their witness that they had key experiences in previous ICYC events. Hundreds of persons around the world, lay leaders, pastors, evangelism conference leaders point to "defining moments" in the ICYC World Evangelism Conferences in England, (1980), Bahamas (1983), Australia (1987), Mexico (1990), Germany (1994), USA (1998) and Northern Ireland (2002).

As the young people embraced one another on the final evening, it was as if they were experiencing the hug of God around them and around the whole world. Young Christians and leaders left Newtownabbey to follow Christ Jesus—God's way.

ANNOUNCING World Methodist Evangelism's 8TH INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN YOUTH CONFERENCE ON EVANGELISM July 19-26, 2005, RIO, BRAZIL

Young people, ages 17–30, are invited to this conference to be hosted by the youth and evangelism leaders of the first Region Conference, the Methodist Church in Rio, Brazil. Join young people from around the world at the 8th International Christian Youth Conference on Evangelism—the first time for ICYCE in South America!

Visit www.WorldMethodist.org



Three Brazilian youth leaders join hands with Fox and Bishop Paulo Lockmann at the site where the 8th International Christian Youth Conference on Evangelism will be held in Rio, Brazil.

WORLD METHODIST EVANGELISM INSTITUTE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS!

Since Brighton, England, July 2001, the World Methodist Evangelism Institute, the primary arm of training key leaders in the Methodist Movement for the ministry of evangelism, has conducted the following seminars:

- **Lome, Togo Africa, French-Speaking Methodist Regional Seminar**, August 15-22, 2001 with 127 delegates from 18 countries
- **Panama City, Panama, Central America and Caribbean Seminar**, January 7-14, 2002 with 109 delegates from 16 Countries
- **Atlanta, GA, USA, African-American Consultation on Evangelism**, March 18-22, 2002 with 96 delegates from 7 denominations
- **Santiago, Chile, South America Regional Seminar**, August 1-10,

2002 with 135 delegates from 13 countries

- **Varna, Bulgaria, Central and Southern Europe Regional Seminar**, January 7-14, 2003 with 100 delegates from 11 countries.



Prayers for 30 missionaries serving in the Missionary Conferences for the Methodist Church in Brazil at the WMEI National Seminar in Brazil.

- **Teresopolis, Brazil, National Seminar for all Regions of Brazil**, March 25 - April 1, 2003 with 150 delegates, including thirty missionaries in Brazil.

NEW REGIONAL SECRETARIES

Rev. Graham Horsley has been named Regional Secretary of Evangelism for the United Kingdom and Ireland. Horsley, who lives in London, England, is the Evangelism and Church Planting Secretary for the Methodist Church in Britain.

Dra. Maimunah Natasha has been named Regional Secretary of Evangelism for Southeast Asia. Natasha, who lives in Jakarta, Indonesia, is a member of the World Presidium of the World Methodist



Rev. Graham Horsley Dra. Maimunah Natasha

Council and a leader in her local congregation and annual conference.

Horsley succeeds the Rev. Brian Hoare and Natasha succeeds Bishop Denis Dutton. Dr. Maxie Dunnam, Chair of the World Evangelism Division, and World Director H. Eddie Fox said, "We are thankful for the ministry of Rev. Hoare and Bishop Dutton, and we are grateful for the outstanding leadership and vision which Rev. Horsley and Dra. Natasha bring to the growing ministry of World Methodist Evangelism."

For more information about World Evangelism, visit www.WorldMethodist.org

Mail or fax this coupon to World Evangelism, Scarritt-Bennitt Center, 1008 19th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212 USA

Fax: 615-340-7549, E-mail: WorldEvangelism@WorldMethodist.org

Please send more information about the following:

- The Evangelism Outreach Ministries of EvangeMed, EvangeSport, EvangeLit, EvangeBread, EvangeNet, and EvangeBicy
- Becoming a Connecting Congregation
- Being a Covenanting Congregation in World Evangelism
- The World Methodist Evangelism Trust Endowment
- Hosting a Faith-Sharing Seminar
- Information about ICYCE VIII in Brazil

Name: _____

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CONNECTING CONGREGATIONS CELEBRATE TEN YEARS

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gospel. Pavel Prochaska, Superintendent, said, "We celebrate the ten years of Connecting Congregations. The vision is right and is unique, and we are grateful for all of those who stand with us through World Evangelism."

Czech Republic—The vision for Connecting Congregations began in the heart of Superintendent Josef



World Director Eddie Fox and Associate Director James Thurmond greet Pastor Ivan Morunov at the Connecting Congregation in Lyaskovets, Bulgaria.

Cervenak. Ten years later, World Evangelism celebrated the decade with one of the "original eight Connecting Congregations" in Kladno and Slany. The Pastor said, "I am strong in my heart and in my knees. When I am told that we are small, I say no we are big, for I know we belong to a world family."

Members testified how they had become believers and disciples through the ministry of the congregation. Superintendent Cervenak reflected on the ten years of Connecting Congregations, "We are blessed because of our connecting together. The Holy Spirit has blessed and anointed our work and gifts to bring honor and glory to the name of Christ Jesus."

Estonia—Sixteen congregations in Estonia survived "above ground" during the Soviet occupation of Estonia and they persevered in difficult and challenging situations for fifty years. During these days of trial the lights were never extinguished, and they are

now called "Tuletorn Congregations" which means "fire tower" or "lighthouse congregations." They are Tuletorn churches because their lights continued burning brightly even in the darkest hours. Today, through nineteen Connecting Congregations, Methodist churches around the world are helping congregations in Estonia keep their lamps burning for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A special and exciting Connecting Congregation in Tartu, Estonia has built its own building after 60 years as a nomadic congregation with no place to call home! With the support of World Methodist Evangelism friends and donors, Connecting Congregation Dunwoody United Methodist, and other North Georgia UMC congregations, the new church has been raised on beautiful property returned to the church which is located

across the cobblestone street from the 300-year old Tartu University in Estonia's second largest city. The new building, dedicated on May 25, 2003, is strategically placed to provide hope to longtime members and reach out with the gospel to new and future leaders in the country.

Latvia—Connecting Congregations began in Latvia in 1992, and there have been continuing connections with specific congregations for more than a decade! Immediately after change came to this country, World Evangelism stepped forward to stand alongside the people in order to reopen the Methodist movement in Latvia. Today, nine of the twelve United Methodist congregations in Latvia are Connecting Congregations that are sharing hope, vision, faith and prayer with one another.

There are also Connecting Congregations in Russia, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Croatia, Kenya, Nigeria, Costa Rica, Brazil and Indonesia. A

decade of Connecting Congregations is making a difference. New Connecting Congregations are needed in many places around the world. Contact World Methodist Evangelism today for information about how you can become involved.

WORLD METHODIST EVANGELISM FLAME

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