

One Great Hour of Sharing on March 10:

‘It’s the blood that keeps

UMCOR ALIVE’

IT’S NOT ABOUT BIG BUCKS OR PLEDGES. It’s about a one-time Lenten offering that makes a world of difference, both in Holston and around the world – every single day.

By **Martha Chamberlain**

THE UNITED METHODIST Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is one committee that produces more than paperwork. Our response to Sept. 11 now exceeds \$17.5 million – all donated to UMCOR from people call Methodist. During the floods that hit our Tazewell, Big Stone Gap, Johnson City and Morristown districts, UMCOR provided \$80,000 toward recovery.

That’s just here at home. You hear and see the nightly news, but do you recognize yourself in the images? Your gift on the fourth Sunday of Lent speeds to Zimbabwe where one in four adults over 15 years of age is infected with HIV/AIDS, leaving 500,000 orphans. It flows to Angola that is described as “the worst place on earth for children,” where tens of thousands of children suffer. Our dollars educate, provide seed money for sustainable income, teach farming methods, build wells, destroy the causes of disease, settle refugees, promote health, respond to disasters ... Indeed, the sun never sets on the working dollars given through OGHS.

Vital and powerful, One Great Hour of Sharing is the blood that keeps UMCOR alive and healthy. *The Book of Discipline* describes its purpose: “Lent is the season of repentance, self-examination and awareness of the hurts of the peoples of the world. One Great

Hour of Sharing calls the Church to share the goodness of life with those who hurt.”

These hurting ones, the poor among us for many reasons, experience loss that buries them beneath disastrous rubble, whether from terrorist acts, natural disasters, war, ignorance, malnutrition, disease, inequity and other causes of poverty. One English equivalent to the Hebrew word for “the poor” is “the bent-over one.”

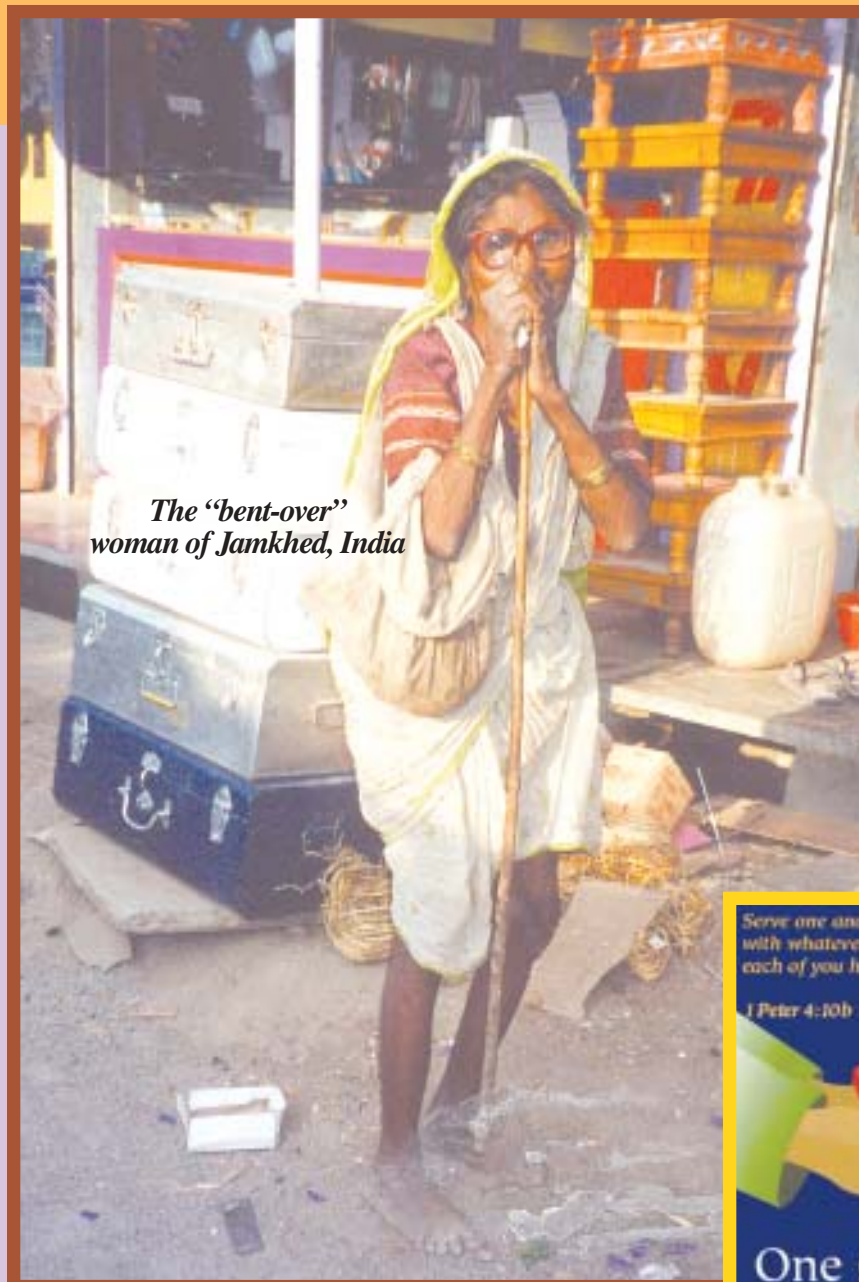
I watched a “bent-over” woman in Jamkhed, India. Barefooted and stooped nearly double, she hobbled with the aid of a stick toward the doorway of each shop, cupping one hand for a donation. Seeing no response, I gave her rupees equivalent to about two dollars. Then this woman, bent over with years of humiliation, fell to the ground to grasp my ankles and kiss my dusty feet. Raising her up and holding her close, I showed her my camera to request a photo.

Suddenly, she stood straight within that healing moment – for both of us. Connected, though strangers, we both stood tall. No longer bent nearly to the ground, she glowed with inner laughter, perhaps because I noticed her, or perhaps because two dollars could feed her for two weeks.

Would you like to feel tall and globally connected? Join United Methodists worldwide during One Great Hour of Sharing on March 10, 2002. If we each give but one dollar, the resulting annual offering would translate into more than \$8 million. Per member gifts to OGHS (in 1999) averaged only 41 cents.

It’s not about one more offering. It’s about lifting the poor, the “bent-over” ones, to full stature as God intends for every person. Let’s make OGHS spectacularly great on March 10. ■

► *Martha Chamberlain is a founding member of the Global Mission Network, a community of bishops’ spouses. Gifts can be made by writing a check to your church with “OGHS” on the memo line. Pastors: For information on obtaining free OGHS offering envelopes, visit www.holston.org.*



The “bent-over” woman of Jamkhed, India

