



# Miracles One Household at a Time

**“The compassion of the United Methodist People appears to be unlimited.”**

Paul Dirdak, Deputy General Secretary, UMCOR

## Hurricanes 2005 UMCOR ADVANCE # 982523

### BECAUSE YOU GAVE

The generosity of United Methodists is apparent through their giving. More than \$62 million was contributed in 2005 to UMCOR for hurricane relief and rehabilitation. “The compassion of the United Methodist people for those in crisis appears to be unlimited,” said the Rev Paul Dirdak, UMCOR’s top executive.

UMCOR is working in partnership with five annual conferences to not only bring immediate relief but also to assist the most vulnerable survivors for years to come. United Methodists and others have been very generous with their giving. Because of this, UMCOR has been able to fully fund each request it has received to date from the affected area conferences and anticipates being able to fund a robust United Methodist recovery program into the years ahead.

UMCOR has already helped tens of thousands hurricane survivors by supplying \$6.4 million and seasoned field experts to annual conferences. But this is only the beginning. In the months and years ahead, UMCOR will continue to walk with the annual conferences through the complex and lengthy recovery.

Photo: Volunteers work with homeowners when cleaning out damaged homes. Everyone must wear protective clothing because of the mold that covers everything that was submerged in the floodwaters.

Credit: Dixie Fischer, St. Marks United Methodist Church, Lincoln, Neb.

Mary Schwaner, a member of a United Methodist volunteer team in New Orleans recalls the story of a woman they helped, “The day before we arrived, she was so depressed that she was unable to get out of bed to take her children to school. She lay there crying for a miracle.” The next day she received a call from the United Methodist Storm Center to tell her that a volunteer team from Nebraska was coming to help her. At the end of the work day the woman said to the team, “I asked Jesus for a miracle and you came!”

UMCOR is working with the annual conferences to achieve these miracles one household at a time.

### THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF RECOVERY

UMCOR works with annual conferences and through their community relationships, providing monetary support and guidance, to serve as a base for recovery efforts. Storm centers coordinate immediate and long term responses while case managers build relationships and open venues for assistance.

#### Storm Centers

Operated by the annual conferences, storm centers serve as a hub for organizing recovery efforts.

They coordinate volunteer teams like Ms. Schwaner’s and other relief efforts to remove downed trees, muck out houses, and distribute supplies such as health kits, flood buckets, mops, masks, and other items people need to stay safe and healthy in a disaster zone.

#### Local Case Managers

Develop relationships with survivors and connect them to organizations that can best help them.

They guide families and individuals through the labyrinth of forms, applications, and organizations they must work with to get the help they need. Case managers can also provide direct financial assistance from the generous donations of United Methodists to meet urgent needs. Ultimately, case managers help survivors develop their own plan for recovery.

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UMCOR specifically seeks to help survivors who have the least resources, who are often hiding in the missed spaces of the community and need to be found.

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There are some 112,000 families that UMCOR expects to reach through case management—12,000 of those households will be served through the United Methodist disaster response network and an additional 100,000 will be reached through Katrina Aid Today, an UMCOR-administered case management consortium.

### EVERYONE HAS A ROLE

In the first days after Katrina, Mississippi Bishop Hope Morgan Ward emphasized the cooperative nature of UMCOR's work by saying, "UMCOR is us." UMCOR works through annual conferences: equipping United Methodists in disaster response, coordinating United Methodist efforts and channeling funds according to conference requests. In this way, every United Methodist is part of UMCOR and has a role in disaster response.

Bishop Tom Bickerson of the Pittsburgh Area just returned from a volunteer work trip in New Orleans. After his experience he told the United Methodist News Service that on the grand scale individual contributions do not add up to much, but our personal presence is invaluable. "The real recovery happens when people love people with a presence of caring," Bickerson says encouraging the involvement of all United Methodists. "We are the hands and feet of Jesus in places like this. While our money and our work teams are important, the most important piece is how we provide hope with our presence among them."



United Methodist bishops and members of a New Orleans family take a break while "mucking out" the family's home, which was flooded by Hurricane Katrina. The group includes (second from left) Bishop Tom Bickerton, Pittsburgh Area; (fourth from left) Bishop Jane Middleton, Harrisburg (Pa.) Area; (fifth from left) Marsha Coyner; and (far right) Bishop Michael Coyner, Indiana Area.

A UMNS photo courtesy of the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference.

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