

“Most of us were taught that God would love us if and when we change. In fact, God loves you so that you can change. What empowers change, what makes you desirous of change is the experience of love. It is that inherent experience of love that becomes the engine of change.” –  
*Richard Rohr*



## Covenant Letter from Nan and Miguel, September 2014

Thank you for generously supporting Missionaries: Miguel Mairena # 12877Z and Nan McCurdy #10801Z.

In this mission letter you will find a story about the United Methodist Committee on Relief and another story about Women and Community's work to prevent HIV/AIDS. So please read on. We are just beginning our work as Mission Interpreters for the Western Jurisdiction. We are living about an hour south of Los Angeles; you can email us at: nanmigl@yahoo.com. Much of the work is telling stories about the missionaries and Mission supported by you through the General Board of Global Ministries. Part of your tithing goes to Global Ministries and it is how we unite to be a connectional church doing mission in the world.

UMCOR, for example, is part of Global Ministries and is dedicated to relieving human suffering around the globe. You support UMCOR through **One Great Hour of Sharing** and also when you give to help with specific disasters around the world. UMCOR spends 100% of designated donations on the projects donors specify! All ADVANCE giving is like that – an example being your support for missionaries.

UMCOR and Ebola: Through August 28, UMCOR had sent \$383,000 to Sierra Leone and Liberia. Funds are supporting healthcare supplies, tents and construction of isolation units, personal protective equipment, training for health staff, public messaging about Ebola, and safe handling of deceased bodies. The ADVANCE is #982450.

### UMCOR and Women and Community after Hurricane Mitch

Hurricane Mitch dumped a week of heavy rain on Central America and Mexico in October, 1998 leaving more than 12,000 dead. It was a tragic and costly disaster caused more by man-made deforestation and erosion than by the rains and winds.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) provided millions of dollars in relief and development through partner Methodist churches and partner ecumenical organizations. This is money you donated!

In Nicaragua the large rural municipality of San Francisco Libre was hit hard and more than 700 families (4,000 people) lost their homes, crops and more than 8000 cows, pigs and horses.

A Global Ministries partner ecumenical organization, the Women and Community Association, was the primary NGO there and contacted UMCOR immediately through missionaries Nan and Miguel. The first \$11,000 came to buy a boat to take gas and oil from Managua across Lake Managua to San Francisco Libre for the rescue effort. The lake rose about eighteen feet and totally flooded 14 villages of SFL. The women from this organization worked tirelessly with the mayor and the fishermen to coordinate the rescue over ten days of more than fifteen hundred people who were holding on for dear life up in the trees, on top of roofs or in little boats tied to big trees in remote villages bordering Lake Managua. People had lost everything and were severely traumatized.

Women and Community joined with the Mayor's office to coordinate six months of support for refugees including food, health care and basics to begin setting up plastic tents.

Then a huge development program brought more than 400 homes, water, electricity, latrines, and five parks. UMCOR provided about a million dollars for this life-giving work through Women and Community. Nan says that she thinks it is amazing that so much was done with a million dollars and gives credit to the women “who worked sixty hours a week or more for three years, and were excellent administrators of the money”. The money also purchased two pieces of land, each about 60 acres, for new communities that would be safe from flooding in different areas of the municipality. The home built with UMCOR money was the largest anti-seismic home built in all of Central America after Hurricane Mitch (and designed by Miguel Mairena) – 517 square feet.

Women and Community made the decision to title the homes only in the name of the women. Nan says “it took a year of meetings with the mayor, the priest, the pastors, and other community leaders to get them all on board; but in the end, I remember the priest saying “the truth is that the only way to protect the children is for the homes to be only in the woman’s name”. He had gotten money for some homes which he also titled in the names of the women.

Today the people in San Francisco Libre continue to be very thankful to the United Methodist Church and to Women and Community for the support provided them to build a new life.



### UMCOR and Prevention of HIV/AIDS

UMCOR provided a small grant to the Youth Network Against Violence for peer education and “Prevention of HIV/AIDS” in San Francisco Libre. Through doing peer education the members of the Network become better teachers and increase their self-esteem as leaders.

They have multiplied themes with 270 youth in 25 villages like *What is HIV/AIDS, Prevention of HIV/AIDS and What does Jesus say about how we should treat people with HIV/AIDS*. This is to reduce discrimination which is so prevalent in Nicaragua – like how people with Leprosy were treated in Jesus’ time.

The Network also had a three day interchange with the youth from Ometepe Island where they educated peers there about prevention of HIV/AIDS. Their Youth Festival this year raised awareness among 300 youth on this topic and coincided with the International Youth Day. At a Forum with 88 youth a theatre group presented a moving and educational play about young people with HIV/AIDS.

You can also support Women and Community, ADVANCE #13285A.