


JOURNEYS THAT OPENED UP THE WORLD

WOMEN, STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS,
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, 1955-1975



**METHODIST
STUDENT
MOVEMENT**

EDITED BY

SARA M. EVANS

Journeys That Opened up the World

To Ken Quest,

My brother in the struggle
and in the Student Christian
Movement journey —

blessings and Love,

Ruth M. Weaver

NYC
11/1/03

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the World*

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	<i>ix</i>
<i>Introduction: Sara M. Evans</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>1 Ruth Harris</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>2 Jeanne Audrey Powers</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>3 Rebecca Owen</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>4 elmira Kendricks Nazombe</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>5 Jill Foreman Hultin</i>	<i>104</i>
<i>6 Charlotte Bunch</i>	<i>122</i>
<i>7 Tamela Hultman</i>	<i>140</i>
<i>8 M. Sheila McCurdy</i>	<i>157</i>
<i>9 Alice Hageman</i>	<i>174</i>
<i>10 Jan Griesinger</i>	<i>191</i>
<i>11 Eleanor Scott Meyers</i>	<i>208</i>
<i>12 Nancy D. Richardson</i>	<i>226</i>
<i>13 Valerie Russell</i>	<i>237</i>

viii Contents

14	<i>Renetia Martin</i>	240
15	<i>Frances E. Kendall</i>	249
16	<i>Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama</i>	262
	Notes on Contributors	271
	Index	275

is Charlotte Bunch, who had honed her organizational skills through leadership in the Duke YWCA, the Methodist Student Movement, the University Christian Movement, and the WSCF. She continued that work as an early theorist of lesbian feminism and through the 1980s and 1990s as a key leader in the international movement for women's human and civic rights. Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers (where she also works with Elmira Nazombe), Charlotte is one of the most important leaders of American feminism today.

Notes

1. See Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). In a close study of the student new left in Texas, Rossinow documents the religious roots of the new left, which, he argues, can best be understood as a generational search for authenticity. My own research traced the religious motivations of southern whites involved in civil rights who subsequently became "founding mothers" of the women's liberation movement. See Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Knopf, 1979).
2. See Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: Free Press, 1997), chaps. 4–6, quotes on pp. 80, 95. On the Grimke sisters, see the powerful biography by Gerda Lerner, *The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Women's Rights and Abolition* (New York: Schocken, 1966).
3. See Stanley Rowland, Jr., "End Racial Bars, Church Is Urged," *New York Times*, December 31, 1955, 6; See Stanley Rowland, Jr., "Apartheid Issue Put to Students," *New York Times*, December 30, 1955, 12; "West Held a Seed of Global Revolt," *New York Times*, December 29, 1955, 4; T.A.G., "Revolution at Athens," *Christian Century* 73:3 (January 18, 1956): 70–72.
4. Doug Rossinow, "'The Break-through to New Life': Christianity and the Emergence of the New Left in Austin, Texas, 1956–1964," *American Quarterly* 46:3 (September 1994): 309–340, esp. 315–318.
5. Finley Eversole, "The Witness of Jonah," *Christian Century*, 77:3 (January 20, 1960): 70–71, quote on 71.
6. Samuel Slie, "A Reflection on Race Relations in the Student Christian Movement," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 32:4 (fall 1995): 527.
7. *Ibid.*, 529.
8. Ida Sloan Snyder, "Convention 1970: A Gentle Revolution," *YWCA Magazine* 64 (June 1970): 5–7, quote on 5; Snyder, "One Imperative for All," *YWCA Magazine* 64 (June 1970), 8–11, quote on 8.
9. Association Press, 1974.

CHAPTER 1

Ruth Harris

On December 27, 1959, more than four thousand college and university students made a pilgrimage to Athens, Ohio, for what was to be one of the most significant ecumenical encounters ever of Christian students in the United States. Busload after busload came from every part of the country, from the eight provinces of Canada, from Puerto Rico, the British West Indies, and Mexico. More than a thousand were international students from all over the world studying in the United States. The Eighteenth Ecumenical Student Conference on Christian World Mission was history engaging and history making. It inspired a generation of students to become active Christians for social change.

I was a member of the international ecumenical team that planned and organized the conference. Our team included Bola Ige, Anglican barrister from Nigeria, and C. I. Itty, a Methodist theological student from India. It was led by Newton Thurber, who had worked as a Presbyterian missionary in Japan for four years. Students from Yale, Princeton, and Union seminaries were also involved in the planning. Our plan was innovative and ambitious. We drew heavily on our experiences with an earlier ground-breaking conference, the 1955 quadrennial of the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), of which I was also a national staff member. Several important worldwide phenomena had helped shape the SVM quadrennial: The first was "the revolt of the disinherited" that was taking place in many parts of the world against colonialism, racial discrimination, hunger, disease, and illiteracy. Another was the concept of "one world," the idea that all nations are intimately bound together and that we must see the problems causing social revolution everywhere as *our* problems. The third phenomenon was the intensified struggle for justice and the urgent need for reconciliation. Yet another was the large number of foreign students coming to the United States to study. Our primary study text for the SVM conference had been *Encounter with Revolution* by Richard

Schaul, a professor of theology and Presbyterian missionary who had spent twelve years in hot spots of the revolution in Latin America. Dick's book had a broad influence on Christian students and campus ministers.

The SVM quadrennial had provided a unique opportunity for American students to learn about social revolution directly from fellow Christian students from other parts of the world. Although half the participants were international students studying in the United States, we realized, in planning the 1959 conference, that the number of African American students and other ethnic or racial minorities had been low by comparison. We were determined to be very intentional in recruiting and setting quotas for African American and other minority students, especially since the social revolution had by now come to the United States. At the same time, we kept the strong recruitment of international participants, the centrality of a conference study book, and a third feature of the earlier conference: each participant was required to be a member of an ecumenical and international study/involvement group on a local campus. This requirement became a significant catalyst for the development of local ecumenical work.

The year 1959 was a critical historical moment for students to come together. The civil rights movement was growing in the southern states. New directions in mission were emerging. The theme of the Eighteenth Ecumenical Student Conference was "Inquiry and Involvement on Strategic Frontiers." Nine strategic frontiers in mission had been identified: racial tensions, new nationalisms, communism, militant non-Christian faiths, modern secularism, technological upheaval, responsibility for statesmanship, universities and students, and displaced, uprooted, and rejected peoples. All were clear departures from the geographical frontiers that had defined mission in years past. The conference plan developed around these frontiers, with subgroups led by people actively involved in each of the strategic areas.

The keynote speaker was Martin Luther King, Jr. He spoke about the frontier of racial tensions, holding forth the hope of a society built on justice and reconciliation and calling Christian students to join him in the struggle to build it. Another conference leader was James Lawson, who had spent three years as a Methodist short-term missionary in India, where he studied Mohandas Gandhi's principles of nonviolence. Dr. King had met Jim at Oberlin College and persuaded him to come south and help build a movement using Gandhian techniques to protest racial discrimination. Jim moved to Nashville, enrolled at Vanderbilt Seminary, and began conducting workshops on nonviolence for African American students in the Nashville area. Throughout the conference I noticed Jim huddled with little clusters of stu-

dents, and only later realized that he had been conducting "workshops" in the hallways.

There were signs throughout the nation of a generation at the ready mark. Many students returned from Athens to their campuses on integrated buses, serious about putting their faith into action. They were seeking to break the barriers between north and south, black and white. There was a new spirit, a sense of urgency, a new strategy that would change America.

One month later, on February 1, the student lunch counter sit-ins began in Greensboro, North Carolina. Over the next few months, there were sit-ins in Tallahassee, Florida; Portsmouth, Virginia; Nashville, Tennessee; Orangeburg, South Carolina; and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. An article in the *New York Times* headlined "Campuses in North Back Southern Students" stated, "The present campus generation has been accused of self-concern and a pallid indifference to social and political questions. This issue appears to have aroused it as have few others."

Sit-ins were reported at such leading colleges as Yale, Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia, as well as at Skidmore in Saratoga Springs, New York. There were lunch counter demonstrations not only in the South but also in the North, Midwest, and West. Between February 1 and June 1, 1960, more than two thousand students were arrested, mostly African Americans. A study done later revealed that every lunch counter demonstration included at least one student who had attended the 1959 conference in Athens, Ohio.

*M*y personal journey began in Emmet, Nebraska, a tiny town on the edge of the sandhills with a population of eighty-eight. My uncle's hay company advertised Emmet as "The Hay Capital of the World." I was born in 1920, the first year that women in the United States had the right to vote.

Three women were important influences in my early life: my grandmother, my mother, and my good friend Merj. My grandmother, Clara Brion Cole, had pioneered with my grandfather, Rev. George Cole, to the Nebraska plains after the Civil War. They were active, devout Methodists. There were many hardships in the early days on the Nebraska plains, especially for ministers, who got very little pay. It was at my grandmother's apron strings that I learned of her faith. She often sang softly as she worked, and the songs she sang and what they represented in my life were important to me as a small child. In my memory I hear her singing, "God will take care of you, through all the day, o'er the way," and "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms." They were expressions of her complete reliance on God's love through all hardships.

I watched my grandmother tithe every tenth egg when she had nothing

else to give to the work of the church. I grew up with stories of her vigorous participation in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, when she and her friends went into saloons to urge the men to go home and save the money they spent on liquor so that their children and wives would have enough to eat. As my grandmother's friends gathered in her parlor around the quilting frame, I listened to their tales of Frances Willard and the long-fought battles for women's suffrage. Every Sunday in Emmet I attended "Grandma's little church," which she helped build. Throughout my life I carried with me her songs, her assurance that we can rely on God's steadfast love.

My mother, Esther, was Clara's youngest daughter. When I was nine years old, the nationwide financial crash of 1929 destroyed my father's grocery store and my father left, abandoning my mother with five children and almost no means of support. Fortunately, my mother found a job the following year taking the U.S. census in Holt County. She traveled from farm to farm in my uncle's car, and thus became known throughout the area. On the strength of her census taking, her work at the bank, and a sympathy vote, Esther Cole Harris, a Republican, was elected as the Holt County Register of Deeds in 1932, the year of the Democratic landslide that elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt president. Even then I knew that this was a remarkable achievement for a woman. Thus began my lifelong interest in politics.

Every four years we faced the sobering possibility that our mother might not be reelected. She supported her five children on a monthly salary of \$125. Although we had very few resources, for the rest of her life she provided for us, parented us, loved us, and held us together as a family. We all loved to sing and often sang together—in church, Christmas caroling, or just for the enjoyment of it. To our mother, we were her "precious jewels." Week after week, year after year, through thick and thin, by the example of her life, she taught us about faithfulness and the importance of family.

These two women, my grandmother Clara, a tiny, soft-spoken matriarch staunchly undergirded by her Christian faith and her Methodist tradition of moral influence in society and personal life, and my mother Esther, the strong provider and defender of her children, have made me feel proud and given me a sense of dignity and direction and rootedness. At the 1993 Re-Imagining Gathering in Minneapolis, I learned a song that immediately became my own:

From my mother's womb and grandmother's tongue,
I have heard my name, been given my song.
With their blood and their beauty I have grown strong.
With the fire of love and rage I will sing on!

Another important influence in my life was growing up as a Protestant in a predominantly Catholic town with my best friend, Merj, who was a Catholic. At that time there was still a large gulf between Catholics and Protestants. Although Merj attended a Catholic school and I the public school, we became friends during high school. When we went off to college—she to a Catholic women's college in Omaha and I to a Methodist college in Sioux City, Iowa—our friendship deepened through correspondence and during visits home.

During these formative years, our conversations inevitably turned toward the future and how we would spend our lives. Pearl Harbor and President Roosevelt's announcement, in 1941, that our country was at war came just six months after our graduation from college. History, too, was challenging us to make our lives count. I was planning to become a teacher, and she became more and more serious about becoming a nun. She would explain to me the reasons she was about to join the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, an order that would not allow her ever to return home. Although her not coming home shocked me, I came to be deeply impressed by her commitment to her faith. After she became a novice, I went to visit her in the Sacred Heart school in Chicago and later visited her at other Sacred Heart schools. I have since realized that our friendship was my first experience of ecumenism. I had begun to see how God reaches us in many different ways. Later, as my own plans developed, I wondered if my life work was somehow parallel to hers.

World War II made us all much more aware of the suffering of people in many parts of the world. One day in church, a Scripture passage came alive to me in a very intense way. It was Jesus' response to the young lawyer's question, "What shall I do to live?" Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. Do this and you will live." In response to the next question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. Questions were forming in my mind that wouldn't go away: Who is my neighbor? Is there anywhere out there in the world where I can use my skills and training as a teacher to help bind up the wounds of war? The answer came from a wise woman, Rachel Low, who led my young adult Sunday school class during my last year of teaching in Nebraska. "The women of the Methodist Church have schools in Asia and Africa and Latin America that are very much in need of teachers like you," she said to me. So it was that in the summer of 1945 I applied to the Woman's Division of the Methodist Board of Missions for service as a missionary teacher. I was soon on my way to Scarritt College, a graduate school in Nashville founded

by Methodist women to prepare women for Christian service at home and abroad.

My apprehension about what Scarritt would be like was strong, because my stereotypes about missionaries were very vivid. I was considerably relieved to find my experience at the college exciting and sometimes exhilarating. It was my first encounter with courses in Old Testament, New Testament, and anthropology, and my fellow students, my professors, my classes were all very stimulating and important to me. I was grateful to God for what was happening in my life.

That year in Nashville was filled with new experiences and important decisions. Living in Tennessee brought me my first opportunity to live in an interracial society. I regularly worshiped at Fisk University, reveling in the incredible music making of the Fisk Jubilee Singers. I participated in discussions on race relations and was exposed to "southern living." At Scarritt in 1945-46, African Americans were the "servants," cooking, cleaning, and doing yard work. My friend and fellow student Doris Caldwell took me to the nearby Appalachian Mountains to visit in the homes of southern mountain folks. For the first time, I saw Americans living in deplorable conditions of poverty. She called on me to pray with those people, and I had my first experience of praying in public—not an easy one. In the months ahead, I heard about conditions in China and the need for teachers, had consultations with Mission Board personnel, and by the end of my year at Scarritt had made the decision to go to China as a Christian teacher.

During that summer, I attended a weeklong ecumenical conference for a large group of young missionaries who, as World War II came to an end, were preparing to depart for overseas assignments. I was so taken with the quality of ideas, the diversity of perspectives, the depth of dialogue, that I began to sense within myself a profound commitment to the ecumenical movement. This passion has never gone away. That fall I began studying Chinese language and history at the Yale School of Asian Studies in New Haven, Connecticut. It was a relief to find that my ear for music was an important asset in learning a tonal language. Learning to speak Chinese was hard work, but great fun, too. Soon I would be speaking Chinese with Chinese people, though I wondered if I ever could learn to read and write!

By Christmas, the exciting news reached us that the Chinese Language School in Peking was ready to open. Hundreds of us headed for Asia in mid-January, leaving from San Francisco on the *Marine Lynx III*, a converted troop ship that carried us on a three-week journey across the Pacific to Shanghai. On board ship, I had a most jarring experience when I learned that some of

the missionaries were staying up all night "praying for the souls" of the other missionaries on board. This was my initial experience with conservative Christian zealots and their certainty that those who didn't express their faith in quite the same way as they did were doomed.

I will never forget my first two sights of China. When I awoke on that February morning in 1947, I realized that the vibrations of the ship's engines had stopped. We had arrived. I ran up on deck. The ship was anchored. All I could see was mist and fog in total silence. Slowly, in the distance, a Chinese junk appeared. It was an indescribably beautiful moment—a Chinese painting. I learned then that our ship had been quarantined, and we were anchored at the mouth of the Hwangpu River for two days.

Then came my second sight of China, as we docked at the Bund in Shanghai. I will always remember looking down from the ship as dozens of small boats raced from the shore, crowding as close to our ship as possible. They were filled with Chinese people begging with outstretched arms for the rich foreigners to toss overboard food, clothing, money, anything. As we disembarked, a solid mass of humanity pushed toward us, falling over each other as they clamored to handle our baggage, provide us with transportation, or perform any service that would get them a few coins.

Had I not seen it myself, I could never have imagined the human suffering and degradation in Shanghai at the end of interminable years of war. Everywhere, malnourished people picked through muddy garbage for any scrap of leftover food. Men pushed and pulled immense wagonloads that I had seen only animals tow before. Along the sides of the streets lay bundles neatly wrapped in straw mats—dead babies, placed there by their families to be picked up and taken away. In China at that time, three out of four babies died in their first year.

Our pedicab made its way through the crowded streets with miserable beggar children hanging along the sides. It took us to the McTyeire School, where I would eventually teach choral music. I was not prepared for the contrast that awaited me as I went through the gates. The high walls had broken shards of glass cemented on top to keep out thieves. Inside were handsome buildings, delightful gardens with a dragon wall, an arched bridge and willow trees by a pond, and spacious, comfortable rooms at the missionary faculty house.

The McTyeire School for Girls had been founded by the women of the Methodist Church South to provide daughters of Chinese elites the opportunity for an excellent education. Since China placed so little value on girls, there was almost no opportunity for them to go to school. The American

Methodist women sought to fill this void by providing education that would fully prepare young women to go directly to the best women's colleges in the United States. Their goal was to prepare Chinese women leaders to serve the people of their own country. McTyeire was an outstanding school by any measure, yet I was shocked at the great economic difference inside and outside its walls, and I felt very uneasy about it.

After two weeks in Shanghai, I sailed up the coast to Tientsin in a small Chinese ship and then went overland to Peking. Peking in 1947 was out of this world. It was surrounded by great walls, with huge gateways on all four sides of the city. Homes were built around courtyards and behind high walls and connected by very narrow alleyways. In the center of Peking was the Forbidden City, a walled city within the walled city, the home of the former imperial families. Only bicycles, rickshaws, and pedicabs provided transportation. Incredible surprises awaited the foreigner: occasional lines of camels from the Gobi Desert walking slowly and with great dignity down the main thoroughfare, the Chinese opera house outside the South Gate, the endless gourmet delights of Chinese restaurants. I was filled with the anticipation of exploring China, and with two hundred other language students from all over the Western world, I worked hard to learn to speak Chinese.

The conditions of the Chinese people were unbearable. China had to have a revolution! Shanghai had shocked me with its sights of misery, and when I got to Peking, I began to see and feel the signs of the revolution already coming. One of the early clues was music. The Peking Language School had a mix of students from English-speaking countries who had come to China to work in embassies, businesses, churches, schools, hospitals, and YM/YWCAs. I was asked to be in charge of a one-hour weekly introduction to Chinese music. A group of young Chinese language school teachers were assigned to work with me. I soon realized that most of the songs they were providing were "liberation songs," songs increasingly popular throughout China with texts describing the people's suffering and calling all to rise up and bring about change. The songs were set to delightful folk melodies from China's western provinces. Our whole student body sang them with gusto.

My first introduction to the student Christian movement was in Peking. During the summer of 1947, I went on a YMCA-YWCA work camp with a group of Peking National University students. I participated with other work campers in hard physical labor in the villages and in educational performances we put on for the villagers in the evenings. This experience brought me intimate exposure to the revolutionary thinking of Chinese young people. As corruption increased, Chinese students had become the conscience of the nation,

protesting against the fascist tendencies of the Chiang Kai-shek regime. As we sat each morning and each night in a circle of "criticism-self-criticism" meetings, the students spoke one by one of their deepest feelings about the poverty of the villagers and the future of their country. I heard their intense anger against the Western countries that had so oppressed and humiliated the Chinese people. The young people passionately despised imperialism and denounced the United States as imperialist. Hearing them, I was ashamed. I deeply regretted my meager knowledge of the history of my own country's international affairs and my shallow understanding of Chinese history, and I resolved to make up for my ignorance. My college education, which was almost totally tied to music education, had left me completely unprepared for what would happen to my life in China in the next four years. By the end of the summer I was reaching the conviction that the most important place to start my learning in China would be to ground myself in the realities of those suffering oppression.

Just after Christmas, I received word that I had to leave the language school to begin teaching in Shanghai. Leaving my studies more than a year early was very upsetting, because language was so essential to communication. But after eleven months in Peking, as I went to my assignment in Shanghai, important questions were forming within me: What were my convictions about the way God works in history? What is God saying to us in the events of our times? How was I to understand my nation as an imperial power? How did my role as missionary fit into all this?

By early summer 1949, the Communist army had taken the north and was drawing near to Shanghai. Some of us would gather on the flat roof of McTyeire School and watch the "fireworks" on the outskirts of Shanghai, where the Liberation Army, the Communist army, battled the Kuomintang army, which was trying to defend the city. It seemed unreal to me, vaguely reminding me of Fourth of July celebrations at home. I don't know why, but I didn't feel afraid. It must have been because I had never experienced war up close.

Early one morning, weeks after the fighting and shelling began, I was walking across the McTyeire campus to breakfast, whistling as I went, when a student poked her head out of the dorm window and called to me, "Shanghai is liberated!" The Liberation Army had entered Shanghai during the night and come down Yu Yuen Road, just a couple of blocks from the school. And I had slept through it! There had been gunfire, enough that some faculty and students hid in closets behind mattresses, but no one in the school was hurt.

Chiang Kai-shek and his government and military, and almost everyone else who could afford a ticket, had already left for Taiwan.

Overnight, we in Shanghai had become part of a new world, of New China! There were soldiers on every street corner, and their deportment was exemplary: disciplined, helpful, the very opposite of the propaganda that had preceded them. Shanghai was the showcase for the way New China was to be. Still, we could not foresee the incredible changes that would come. As the school began its reorganization process, it became clear that certain students and teachers had long been preparing for this day. Within a few days, everyone in the school community—students, faculty, administration, servants—was organized into study groups that met daily to discuss books prepared for this purpose. The books included Marxist philosophy, Chinese history, and the goals of the program of New China. As a part of each meeting, we carried on criticism and self-criticism to raise our consciousness. It seemed to me that within a week, every person in Shanghai was part of such a group. It was astonishing how soon changes came to our elite student body. Very soon, everyone was wearing plain, blue cotton clothing, no jewelry or makeup, and simple hairdos. Anything that symbolized identification with “the people” was in; everything that suggested separation from the people was out.

Our study books told of foreign imperialism and colonialism. They dealt with the hundred years of unequal treaties in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They described the Opium War in 1839–1842, when the British forced China to continue receiving shipments of opium and China was forced to cede Hong Kong to Great Britain. They detailed the many unequal treaties with other European countries and finally with the United States, too. China had been forced to give foreign powers control over treaty ports and rights to navigate inland waters, until it actually became a colony of many nations.

The books explained the New China program’s commitment to the people to restructure economic distribution by means of land reform, industrialization, and improvement of farming techniques. The program also promised innovations in sanitation, massive campaigns to combat disease, and expanded rights for women and ethnic and tribal minorities. A major emphasis was on literacy, as more than 80 percent of the Chinese people were illiterate and formal education was the privilege of the elite. The books discussed freedom of religion and freedom to oppose religion, with the Communist Party taking the position that religion was superstition.

Every student at McTyeire was now required to take the course on po-

litical thought. Previously a weekly chapel service had been required, but this could no longer be held. In these circumstances, however, a new church was born, made up of those students and teachers and neighborhood people who were Christians. Of the 1,800 students, fewer than 100 attended church. A wholly new situation developed as these students asked one another for prayer, and each phrase of the hymns we sang had real meaning for our lives. The church began to come remarkably alive when it was standing up to *be* the church.

The Youth Fellowship of the new church, influenced by a new awareness of the people and their suffering, began to see the gospel in a new light. Young people became interested in their neighbors and questioned, for the first time, why there were glass shards on the tops of the walls surrounding the school. They went outside the walls to see for themselves the working conditions of women who labored in nearby factories, to get acquainted with shopkeepers, and to teach in the nearby nursery schools.

We made plans to organize a summer work camp with women and children in the countryside near Soochow, a smaller city northeast of Shanghai where my friend Doris lived and worked. Our plans were threatened, however, because the government refused to allow travel outside of Shanghai. I vividly remember going to the office of a government official and urging him to give us travel permits. I explained that our goals for the work camp were the same as the goals of New China: to serve the people, to learn about the living conditions of poor rural folk, and to work for their liberation from poverty. To everyone’s amazement, including mine, we were granted travel permits. We had not heard of anyone else being allowed to leave Shanghai at that time.

That summer experience proved to be a highlight of my three years in Shanghai. It was marked by a remarkable depth of sharing and worship among students and advisors. We deepened our knowledge of the Christian faith and our understanding of the lives of people living under the oppression of poverty. We came to care about the rural people we knew. We listened and learned. The bonds among our own community grew strong and lasting. Later, an American friend from Nanking asked me with much concern, “How are you?” I answered with complete conviction, “I’m great! I never realized the church could be like this.” That expressed my amazement and excitement at my first experience of the church alive in that small, faithful community in Shanghai.

And then came the Korean War. When communism is mentioned as the power that changed China, I always add, “and nationalism.” I was astonished at the sight in Shanghai as the call went out for recruits to fight at the

Yalu River. Lines of young men at the recruitment centers stretched for miles. Hundreds, thousands of China's youth—the most outstanding, the best scholastically—stood in line for hours and days to volunteer, hoping that they would be chosen to help defend their country against the invading foreigners, who this time were from my own country. There was no way to anticipate the far-reaching effects of the Korean War on the Christian community in China. Often over the previous two years, I had marveled at the fact that I was still there, an American teaching Chinese young people. I thought of the ways Germans and Japanese had been treated in my country during World War II. How could the Chinese be so accepting and trusting? But now the time had come when no American could make a positive contribution. Now I was a liability to my Chinese friends and colleagues.

Writing some years later in a student Christian movement study book, Katharine Hockin, a Canadian, summed up this final dilemma of alienation: "It was a salutary experience to find oneself something of an outcast, a category about which one could do nothing at all—it was just one's national origin and the color of one's skin that were to blame." It was time to leave China. If I stayed, I could do more harm than good, mostly in bringing suspicion on my friends and students. Signs of friendship to me might be difficult for them, perhaps even dangerous.

The whole incredible situation came home to me during my last Christmas in China, in 1950, at a concert of Handel's "Messiah." I was the only Western person in the chorus of a hundred Chinese singers. The large church was completely packed. I had to leave this country and people whom I had come to love, and my heart was yearning for reconciliation. Handel's powerful music still sings in my heart, "Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Somehow I knew that God was in this. But how were we to live on the real frontiers of reconciliation?

Doris Caldwell and Mary Mitchell, my two friends from Scarritt, had recently "evacuated to Shanghai" from their inland locations. We planned to leave China together. As we went by train to Canton and walked across the border to Hong Kong, my heart felt deep pain. Yet I was grateful for the desperately needed changes that New China's revolution was bringing to the Chinese people and for the church that had come alive in a time of trial. I prayed for God's reconciliation between my people and the Chinese people.

For the next three months, the three of us made our way home. We traveled by ship and plane and overland, from Hong Kong through Asia, stopping at Singapore, Malaysia, Burma, India, and then on to Lebanon, Jordan,

Jerusalem, and finally to Europe. In Geneva, Switzerland, I learned that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights was in session at the UN headquarters. For a week, I sat glued to the UN observers' section. I listened intently to every word of the proceedings as Eleanor Roosevelt, the Lebanese Christian diplomat Charles Malik, and other members of the commission worked on the implementation of the Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration had been born on December 10, 1948, while I was still in China. It was intended to set minimum standards for the treatment of individuals everywhere in the world. Eleanor Roosevelt and Frederick Nolde of the International Affairs Commission of the World Council of Churches are the two people usually credited with conceiving the idea of the Universal Declaration.

That time in Geneva was, for me, a significant time of listening and reflection. It was music to my ears to find this representative international group of men and women working creatively and knowledgeably, with great dedication, on matters pertaining to the rights of all human beings. My soul was hungry for their words. It was the first time I had observed the UN in action. I knew that peace and reconciliation would come only through such an effort as this, and I knew I wanted to be a part of it. Here was common ground, a way for all nations to work together for the good of all people. Here people were laying the groundwork for the covenants yet to come with international codes of political, civil, economic, and social rights that would serve all people. Was this, I wondered, a way for China and America to live and work together?

When I reached the United States, one of my first acts was to go to the United Nations to see if I could work there, but there was no place for me. Hundreds of other people had applied before me. I was disappointed. I had not only hoped to work for the goals of the UN, but I felt that working with an international group on justice and peace issues could help me work through some of the confusion I was feeling after my experience in China. And it would deepen my grasp of what was going on in the world.

Just at that juncture, an extraordinary coincidence occurred. I was invited by Thelma Stevens to work as a missionary associate in the Department of Christian Social Relations of the Methodist Church's Woman's Division, headquartered in New York. My assignment was to strengthen the support of Methodists, especially women and young people, for the United Nations. I was to organize seminars for groups coming from across the United States to the new UN headquarters on the East River. My work was to help them learn what the UN stood for and to assist them in organizing for supportive action.

In 1951 the United States was in the midst of McCarthyism, and the United Nations was a major target. The House of Representatives had created the Committee on Un-American Activities in the 1940s to uncover and fight “subversives.” Richard Nixon was among the most active members of the committee. Patriotic and religious zealots spread fear—fear of communism taking over the world. I was stunned as they pointed fingers at those who had “lost China.” Fear and rumors led to witch hunts. Accusations came not only from official groups but from extremist citizens’ groups such as the White Citizens Council and the John Birch Society. Along with the UN, the main targets were Jews, African Americans, and other racial and ethnic groups.

Our department was doing everything it could to bring an informed, intelligent perspective to American citizens. Two concepts guided our work: first, the importance of action, both individual and group; and second, the importance of preparation and training. Our slogan was “All action is local.” In the two years I worked with Thelma Stevens and the Department of Christian Social Relations, I learned a great deal about working for social change. I learned that change is not built on passion alone, but on organization, training, and education for the long haul. I learned the importance of doing my homework: social change comes from carefully defining principles and then being faithful to them. I learned the essential tasks of making connections between issues and linking the past to the present to create a future of justice and peace. I learned the importance of building strong trust and team relationships, and of working cooperatively and systematically to analyze issues and bring about change. We who worked with Thelma knew her as a leader—forceful, visionary, courageous, a Christian fighter for justice. She was also my friend and my hero.

Another hero was Eleanor Roosevelt. To my great joy and inspiration, I now had the opportunity to see and hear her in action. When I started my new work, she was about to leave her position as a delegate to the UN. With the change of administration from Truman to Eisenhower, she moved across First Avenue to lead the American Association for the United Nations. One of the most rewarding aspects of my work was that I could call on her to speak to the seminars that I organized. Eleanor Roosevelt was a great human being—intelligent, compassionate, courageous. What struck me especially, as my seminar group sat around the table in those small UN briefing rooms, was how humble she was. She was completely at ease, graciously responding to each of our queries, no matter how uninformed or unsophisticated. In my mind’s eye, I could see her talking with miners, Appalachian

folk, wounded soldiers, women factory workers. It was one of the high privileges of my life to experience for myself her deep caring and total dedication to human rights for all people.

After two years in the Department of Christian Social Relations, I became field program director of the Student Volunteer Movement. From 1954 to 1959, I was the coordinator of campus visitation, small conferences, and seminars. Experienced and ready, I jumped into a vast ocean of organizing responsibilities. The Student Volunteer Movement for Christian Mission had long been one of the most dynamic student Christian movements in the country. It boldly called on college and university students to volunteer for missionary service in order “to evangelize the world in this generation.” Throughout its long history, the SVM held a quadrennial conference for each generation of students. It continued to have the confidence and financial support of the powerful mission boards of U.S. Protestant churches. Now, at a dramatic moment in student history, it was this aging organization that planned and carried out the groundbreaking Ecumenical Student Conferences on Christian World Mission in Athens, Ohio, in 1955, 1959, and 1963.

*I*n mid-1959 I received an invitation to become the secretary of student work of the Woman’s Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Board of Missions. For me, the timing couldn’t have been better. I would begin the new work as soon as the Athens conference ended, on January 1, 1960. My assignment was twofold: to work with Methodist students and to be an advocate for students with the Woman’s Division and the Board of Missions. I had seen what remarkable work my colleague Margaret Flory was doing in the United Presbyterian Church. In some ways I was “coming home,” as I would be working again with Thelma Stevens and her department, this time as a staff colleague.

It was an important historical moment. John F. Kennedy was running for president. Martin Luther King, Jr., was giving outstanding leadership to end racial discrimination. Students were beginning to respond to the call for social change. I was challenged and thrilled with this new opportunity to help students become involved, and I felt that my experience had prepared me for the tasks ahead.

History moved very fast. On March 3, 1960, just two months after the Athens conference and scarcely a month after the Greensboro sit-in, Jim Lawson was expelled from Vanderbilt Divinity School for his role in non-violent sit-in demonstrations in Nashville. The grounds were that there must be respect for the law. The day after his expulsion, he was arrested in church

by the Nashville police, handcuffed, and taken to jail. I knew that in order to do advocacy work on behalf of students involved in controversial actions, we faced a major task of education and interpretation among Methodist women. We had to move immediately. Under the leadership of Nettie Alice Green, an African American from Kentucky, the Standing Committee on Student Work drew up a resolution on "The Student Sit-In Movement." The purpose was not only to support Jim Lawson but to provide the legal basis for the racial justice work that lay ahead. Working in consultation with Thelma and the Department of Christian Social Relations, we brought the resolution to the Woman's Division for consideration.

Our resolution was strong. It described the sit-in demonstrations, already in twenty-seven different colleges and eleven states, involving both African American and white students. It stated that these nonviolent demonstrations were part of the worldwide revolution and went on to say that people sensitive to the earth-shaking disturbances of our social order would sympathize with these students and understand why they were doing what they were doing. It gave solid endorsement to the methods of nonviolence and expressed profound regret that law enforcement authorities had in some cases permitted violence against demonstrators and made unfair arrests.

The resolution objected strongly to Jim Lawson's expulsion for following his Christian conscience and called on the Vanderbilt Seminary administration to reinstate him. The resolution also called on Methodist women to study the facts and participate in each local church "in the context of the Gospel to clarify its position on the race issue." Furthermore, they were urged to cooperate with like-minded community groups to contact local law enforcement authorities and urge that the rights of students be protected, to communicate with public eating places, and to support students who were involved in the civil rights struggle. Fortunately, Jim Lawson was well known to many of the division and staff members, as he had been a short-term missionary in India. The Woman's Division adopted the resolution on March 23, 1960, less than three months after I began as secretary of student work. I was profoundly grateful for this action.

The fervor of student involvement in the lunch counter sit-ins grew. The Woman's Division was ready to move ahead with our support for students working for racial justice. Sometimes this took the form of bail money for students who had been arrested, such as Rebecca Owen, an honors student at Randolph Macon Women's College, a Methodist college in Lynchburg, Virginia (see chapter 3). A few months before the lunch counter demonstration, Rebecca had checked with me to see if bail money would be available,

and I had assured her that it would. Rebecca, a national leader in the Methodist Student Movement (MSM), was, however, one of the first white students to choose "jail, not bail." Later, in a time of crisis when Rebecca was not supported by her college and was forced out of her state because of her involvement in the civil rights movement, her support came from fellow students in the MSM and from her church—not her local church, but her church at the national level. Many other Christian students who followed their consciences in acting for racial justice, inspired by their faith, found themselves rejected by their local churches.

Our program also supported organized antiracism projects of the MSM. Campus ministry was in its heyday, highly organized on campuses around the country. The MSM was strong, organized in forty states. The state MSM presidents met together each summer with national staff as the National Council (NCMSM) to elect national officers and make plans for the coming year. As student work secretary, I was automatically on the national staff of the Methodist Student Movement. The National Council adopted a project to form a biracial team which would be available to state MSMS to visit campuses and help promote interracial understanding through interracial study groups. George McClain, a white graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and Howard Spencer, an African American sophomore at Rust College in Mississippi, were invited by NCMSM to be the biracial team. My office joined the Methodist Board of Education in providing financial support to the project. By 1964 tensions were running very high, especially in the southern states. It was critical that students who took courageous stands had support from a national church agency. Sheila McCurdy, president of the Alabama MSM, was a case in point (see chapter 8).

For Methodist women to stand by the students in this tense time, it was essential to close the growing gap between students and their churches. Every local Woman's Society had an officer elected to be the secretary of student work. Her responsibility was to be a contact and an advocate for students in the local church. The Standing Committee on Student Work and I were responsible for the training and preparation for action of these thirty thousand secretaries. This became one of the primary challenges of my job. Besides special training events and days on campus, we tried to share information in a number of ways. When possible, we arranged for students to speak for themselves, often by inviting international and interracial teams to visit board meetings, schools of mission, and campuses. But I also often spoke and taught about what was happening with students, and I wrote interpretive articles, including a monthly page in *Response* magazine.

One of our most successful ventures in helping students learn through involvement had been our participation in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, led by Martin Luther King, Jr., on August 28, 1963. During that same week, six MSM Regional Leadership Training Conferences were taking place across the United States on the theme "Reconciliation and Revolution." I was the educational director of the Northeast Regional Conference in central New York State, the nearest to Washington, D.C. Along with Mae Gautier, a friend and campus minister who was working with me at the time, I knew that this was an excellent opportunity for students to be exposed to the growing civil rights movement and to experience the reality of the conference theme in their own country. We arranged for two buses to take students from the Northeast Region to the march.

Because the march would fit so naturally with the conference theme, we went ahead and arranged transportation without consulting the campus minister who served as dean of the Northeast Regional Conference. The buses were to leave very early in the morning on the day of the march and return late that night. The next day, we would report back to the rest of the conference. I was unprepared for the dean's anxiety and fear. He seemed to feel that studying the Bible and "Revolution and Reconciliation" was one thing, but participating in a demonstration for racial justice led by Dr. King was quite another. We talked for a long time and finally negotiated that the students who wanted to go should phone their parents and get permission. I stood by the students during the calls, ready to speak with anxious parents.

Mae and I began to realize that the march provided an excellent opportunity to network with the other five MSM regional conferences and multiply firsthand exposure for students. Phone calls were made inviting each of the regions to send a student and a state director to march with us and then return and report to their conferences. It worked. Each conference raised its own money to pay for their representatives' transportation.

Early in the morning of August 28, a large group of students and campus ministers from the Northeast Regional Conference was ready to go. With large Methodist Student Movement banners that they had made, they joined additional MSM members and three hundred thousand others in a huge outpouring of people concerned for racial justice. It turned out to be, as we all know now, a great historic event, an unforgettable experience. It was a beautiful day in every way. In that early time in the civil rights struggle, blacks and whites still marched arm in arm. Everyone seemed excited and happy to be there together. In the end, representatives of every MSM Regional returned with firsthand reports of that historic moment: the other marchers, the glori-

ous weather, the friendly multitudes filling the lawn from the Lincoln Memorial to the Washington Monument, sharing their sandwiches in a Sunday school picnic atmosphere. Most memorable of all, of course, was the dramatic delivery of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

Memories of that march have never left my mind. Through all the hardship that was to follow—Dr. King's assassination, so much hatred, so much suffering and death—the warm camaraderie of "blacks and whites together" and Dr. King's ringing declaration of his dream remain an indelible experience of the early ideals of the civil rights movement. And I felt a deep sense of satisfaction that our planning had made it possible for a number of students to have that experience, too.

I approached the task of building international awareness and solidarity with gusto. Grateful for what had happened to me in China, I wanted American students to have the opportunity to understand what was happening in two-thirds of the world, much of it caught in a life and death struggle to liberate itself from colonialism and imperialism. I inherited from my predecessor, Dorothy Nyland, an excellent vehicle for the task ahead: a national, week-long program called the Christian Citizenship Seminar. It was already accepted as an important part of the MSM's annual calendar. Sixty students and several campus ministers representing each state's MSM came to the United Nations headquarters for three or four days and then went on to the Capitol in Washington, D.C., for the other half of the week. The seminar became a valuable annual training event for building international awareness in the MSM, a focal point of some of the most important work I did.

My convictions about learning by involvement led me to turn over most of the responsibility for planning the seminar to the National Council of MSM. Each year they appointed a student chairperson and a committee to work with me on this. The 1961 chairperson was Wayne Proudfoot, a student at Harvard Divinity School and national president of MSM. What a joy it was to work with these students! As we became more and more deeply involved in our venture together and their excitement grew, I knew we were on the right track. Our first task was to determine the focus of the seminar, usually a particular hot spot somewhere in the world.

The focus for 1961 was the Portuguese colonies in Southern Africa—Mozambique and Angola—which were in deep crisis in their revolt against Portuguese oppression. The student committee developed study papers, a reading list, and eventually a National MSM solidarity campaign outlining a course of action. They worked hard to inform themselves, using their access

to university libraries to research relevant information and sharing it with their fellow students. A sample from the April 1969 *MSM Bulletin*: "40,000 Africans and 1,500 whites were massacred in Angola in the first three months of 1961. 99.6% of the Angolan population is illiterate. There are only 25,000 students in secondary schools, and no universities exist in any of the Portuguese colonies."

An essential ingredient of solidarity work is direct contact with people involved in the struggles you are supporting. As a staff member of the Board of Missions, I had access to worldwide contacts and networks. There was a continual flow of firsthand information from African leaders and missionaries. Emilio DeCarvalho, a dynamic young leader of the Angolan Methodist Church, had been imprisoned. Fred Brancel and three other missionaries had been arrested and held without charge in Portugal. Rose Thomas, a young African American missionary in Angola, returned to the United States and became a vital link between American students and Angolans. She enabled a number of networking opportunities with those imprisoned. My office arranged campus visitations across the country for her, and she helped the MSM launch a countrywide solidarity campaign for the liberation of the Portuguese colonies. When Fred Brancel was released from prison, he worked tirelessly with MSM leaders.

From Mozambique came Eduardo Mondlane, a leader of the liberation forces, who had a profound influence on American students. Eduardo was in the United States as a Methodist scholarship student. He was a great leader of his people, the son of a Mozambican chief, highly intelligent and articulate and deeply committed to the liberation of Mozambique. He was tall and charming, brilliant and eloquent. During the long period when he could not return to his own country, he taught anthropology at Syracuse University and worked on the staff of the United Nations.

Eduardo spoke on campuses and student Christian movement events across the country. He was a charismatic leader, but when he worked with the MSM student committee on the seminar, he worked side by side with them, relaxing over coffee, talking far into the night, explaining fine points of political or economic analysis, telling stories of his people, their suffering, their victories. When at last Eduardo Mondlane was able to return to Africa, it was at the invitation of Tanzania, where he directed the Mozambique Institute, a training center for FRELIMO, the Mozambican liberation movement. I visited the institute in Dar es Salaam after Eduardo became its director.

It was a terrible shock to me and to all who knew him when word of Eduardo's assassination reached us in February 1969. Eduardo had eagerly

opened a package, thinking it contained a new book. It was a time bomb. Mozambique, Africa, and the world had lost a great and irreplaceable leader. And American students had lost a friend they greatly admired and respected who gave his life in the liberation of his people.

With the courageous witness of African leaders and the flow of firsthand information, MSM became caught up in the desperate situation of the people of Southern Africa. Students began to recognize important common themes in the U.S. civil rights struggle and the revolt against colonialism in Africa. They saw links in white racism, economic gain by the oppressors, and the arrogance of rulers confident that superior military or police force would eventually prevail. They witnessed the fact that neither Africans nor African Americans intended any longer to bear the yoke of suffering.

The change that took place in young people in the course of one week in the citizenship seminars was amazing. In New York, they mostly listened and learned—through lectures by Africans, briefings with UN staff, observing UN units in session, and visiting with various delegations related to Angola, Mozambique, Portugal, and the United States. Theological reflection and worship were integrated into the daily schedule of the seminar. The discussions grew heated as issues began to emerge. By the time they reached the capital, students were loaded with new insights and many disturbing questions. They met strategic congressmen on key committees related to Southern Africa, as well as State Department and Pentagon officials. They explored American connections to colonialism and sought ways of influencing and changing policy. After the seminar, the student campaign went into action. Some actions were national, but many were local campus initiatives: demonstrations, fund-raising for Angolan students who had escaped, telegrams of protest, a strong statement by the Board of Missions.

A significant change was taking place among U.S. Christian students. Their concerns were shifting from service to justice. In the 1950s, they had largely focused on service and building relationships through programs such as student exchanges, study abroad programs, and international work camps. Now, through their participation in the civil rights movement, they began to cross racial barriers and work in programs of literacy and voter registration. Through organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), they began to organize urban poor people. The student Christian movements, including the MSM, also organized such programs. Internationally, they grew more and more concerned about the systemic causes of injustice.

As the students' analysis went deeper, their desire to know more and to see for themselves also deepened. They wanted to travel and to see

conditions in Latin America firsthand. They wanted to understand the context for the revolutions breaking out all over. They wanted to understand the role of the United States. Therefore the 1963 seminar on Latin America was followed in 1964 by a Latin American Study/Travel Seminar. The Methodist Student Movement, in cooperation with the National Student Christian Federation (NSCF), sponsored the seminar in several Latin American countries, including Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. Our group of U.S. students, campus ministers, and staff began with an excellent week of orientation in Mexico and then traveled south. In each country we visited, we met with a variety of persons to help answer our questions: What is happening in your country? What are the causes of injustice here? What is the role of the United States in your country? What is the role of U.S. churches?

Some of our most valuable contacts were members of the student Christian movements. We were excited to be in direct contact with them. Although these movements were small, most of them were vitally involved in social and political issues. Our conversations ran far into the night as we pursued our questions and they pressed us for explanation of U.S. policies and what we were doing about them. Sometimes the depth of their theological understanding amazed us, and their willingness to take risks on behalf of their people challenged us to look at our own commitments.

Lane McGaughy, MSM president, Elmira Kendrick Nazombe, and I left the seminar after Guatemala. For three weeks we attended the General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation. It had been scheduled for Brazil, but a coup d'état necessitated a last-minute shift of venue to Embalse Rio de Tercera in western Argentina. The WSCF brought together delegates from student Christian movements in more than eighty countries. It was difficult, as well as inspiring, to be among students of such diverse backgrounds and rapidly changing conditions. On everyone's mind was the coup in Brazil, symbolic of these times of upheaval everywhere.

The WSCF delegates strove to find a way to express their calling as Christian students and their desire to make their unity concrete. The French word *présence* captured their imagination. By the end of the meeting, their statement on "Christian Presence" had been signed by students from all eighty countries. The statement said, "We use the word 'presence' to describe a way of life. It does not mean that we are simply there; it tries to describe the adventure of being there in the name of Christ. When we say 'presence' we say that we have to get into the midst of things even when they frighten us. It means for us engagement, involvement in the concrete structures of our society. . . . For us presence spells death to the status quo both in society and

in the Christian community; we will not tire of pleading and working for the restoration of normal humanity as we see it in Jesus."

The U.S. students and I were impressed by the total commitment and vital involvement in social and political issues, the serious theological probing, and the daily risks taken by the Brazilians, the Cubans, and other students. We felt a sharp judgment on our "easy Christianity," and these encounters added urgency to our lives back home.

Lane, Elmira, and I rejoined the rest of the seminar in Brazil, the final country our group would visit. For me, the visit in Brazil was the most memorable of all. We were fortunate that the Brazilian student Christian movement planned and hosted our visit, putting us in touch with valuable contacts. We traveled to three major cities, São Paulo in the south, Rio de Janeiro on the central coast, and Recife in the far north. We were impressed by the vast area of Brazil, so much larger than the other countries visited, and our travel from one end of the country to the other gave us greater opportunity for exposure to the Brazilian situation. Everywhere we went we were confronted with destitute people, suffering because of poverty. Because the coup d'état had just occurred, it inevitably formed the backdrop for our visit and discussions. As we explored the role of the United States in Brazil, we learned information that was new and shocking to us. For instance, we were told that our country had assisted those who carried out the coup by taking aerial photographs of every square mile of Brazil, with the proviso that the United States would keep its own copy of the photographs.

Margaret Rigg, an artist and the art editor of *motive* magazine, made a unique and valuable contribution to the seminar. In each country, she arranged for our group to meet outstanding local artists, see their work, and talk with them. Our visit with an artist in Rio stands out for me. As we met in his studio, the agony of the Brazilian poor surrounded us, pounded in on our sensibilities from every painting on the walls. We spent hours with him, and I came home with some of his art pieces as lifetime reminders of the poor people in Brazil.

Another unforgettable encounter was in Recife, where many of Brazil's poorest lived. Recife was the home of Dom Helder Camara, noted Roman Catholic bishop of Northeast Brazil. We went to his "palace" for our appointment and waited in the large audience room with its elevated "throne." I was reflecting on church hierarchy when he came into the room. His entrance is etched in my memory. I didn't realize at first that he was the bishop. He was very small of stature and humble in appearance, dressed in a simple, unadorned cotton cassock. He came into the room before we were even aware that he was there. Dom Helder, as he was fondly called, quietly suggested

that we move our chairs in a circle, and then he joined the circle. With appealing intimacy, he had us make the circle as small as possible so that he "could hear." He began by asking each one of us to introduce ourselves. He asked us questions about ourselves, the purpose of our seminar, what we had seen and learned. Then he began to talk about his flock in Recife.

He was so gentle, so strong, so beguiling, so committed to justice for the poor of the earth. He spent a long time with us, telling us about conditions in Recife and what he and others were trying to do. He discussed the issues and questions we raised. Sitting beside him, I was deeply moved by this quietly impassioned champion of justice. The visit with Dom Helder was an unexpected blessing of great worth. His words filled us with encouragement. He welcomed us as allies in the work for justice for the world's poor. As we walked through the streets of Recife among the "wretched of the earth," we saw them now through Dom Helder's eyes.

Back in the United States, we seminar participants reflected on our learnings. We had heard bitterness toward the United States expressed again and again in many Latin American countries, by students, artists, clergy, journalists, and theologians. We were often shocked by the intensity of their hostility. We had experienced powerful feelings of national pride among the Latin American people. We had seen devastating and pervasive conditions of poverty and oppression, conditions that demanded change and would lead to revolution. In each country, we had met Christians who were compelled by their faith to take great risks to work to alleviate the suffering of their people. We had deepened our understanding of the meaning of solidarity. It seemed clear that U.S. students must more carefully examine their assumptions about United States military, financial, and cultural involvements, including the church's involvements. To dig more deeply into the causes of injustice in Latin America, they decided that the next year's UN/Washington seminar would again focus on Latin America.

As students' desire for direct contact and involvement across national boundaries increased, some of us were working on a plan to provide deeper and more extensive opportunities through the Frontier Internship in Mission program. Margaret Flory, Student World Relations staff of the United Presbyterian Ecumenical Commission, envisioned the Frontier Intern program and was its first director. The idea grew out of the 1959 Athens conference, with its emphasis on frontiers. Interns would serve for two years on one of the strategic frontiers, such as sites of racial tensions, new nationalisms, uprooted people, and university/world. Each intern engaged in study and service on subsistence support. From its conception, the program was ecumenical. It be-

gan in 1960 as a pilot project of the Presbyterian Ecumenical Commission, with the Methodist Church and United Church of Christ soon joining in as active co-sponsors. I worked closely with the program for a number of years.

Here was the opportunity young people were seeking to cross international boundaries and join others already at work on mission frontiers. The carefully selected assignments were opportunities for young adults to explore and experiment with new possibilities of service. The program's distinctive features—flexibility, economic discipline, and freedom—attracted outstanding candidates. As a member of the team responsible for intern selection, orientation, and assignment to projects, I was deeply impressed by the candidates' excellence. It was thrilling to participate in interviews with these young people and anticipate their development and future contribution. Even more impressive was their continuing commitment when they returned to the United States. They made linkages across boundaries and eventually built strong networks with students and others dedicated to justice around the world. Among those who worked as Frontier Interns were Tami Hultman in South Africa (see chapter 7), and Elmira Kendrick Nazombe in Kenya (see chapter 4), and Alice Hageman in Paris at UNESCO headquarters and at the international headquarters of the World Student Christian Federation in Geneva (see chapter 9).

Ruth?" It was my friend and colleague Peggy Billings on the phone. "What should we do about Dr. King's call to come to Selma?" There really was no question. We had to be there. That week in early March 1965, the movement had attempted to march north from Selma to the capitol in Montgomery to demonstrate for the right of African Americans to vote. They were brutally stopped. Before many days they would make the attempt again. This was the time of preparation. In the next few minutes we made our plan. Peggy was calling from Florida, where she was on a field visit. I would fly from New York to Atlanta. We would meet at the airport, rent a car, and drive to Selma. First, Peggy would consult with Thelma Stevens, and I would consult with Ann Porter Brown, the new executive of the Board of Missions. They immediately gave their blessings. It seemed entirely appropriate to them that Peggy, the secretary for race relations, and I, secretary for student work, should represent the Woman's Division and the Board of Missions in Selma in response to the call. Peggy had grown up in Mississippi and had been a missionary social worker in Korea. Both experiences proved invaluable in the coming weeks.

As our rented car approached Selma, we were reminded that it was the county seat of Dallas County, one of nineteen Alabama counties described

as the Black Belt because of their heavy African American population. A majority, 57 percent, of county residents were African Americans, but only 0.9 percent of those eligible were registered to vote. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had begun organizing in 1962 in Selma, the birthplace and stronghold of the White Citizens Council.

We crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, by now familiar to the whole world through gripping television coverage of the first attempted march from Selma to Montgomery. There the marchers had met the force of hundreds of baton-wielding Alabama state police, who unleashed dogs on the marchers. Many demonstrators were injured. The world watched in disbelief and dismay as fellow human beings were beaten while demonstrating for their rights as American citizens. The march had to be canceled, and it was then that Dr. King sent out the call for supporters to come and participate in the second attempt.

We drove to the Brown's Chapel area of Selma. It was hard to believe that this was my country. We saw massive barricades, a multitude of state troopers cordoning off the area and holding their weapons high. Everyone going in or out of the area had to pass through a police checkpoint. This was incomprehensible to me. How could I understand the fear and hostility this represented? The show of force made what was happening inside the barricades all the more dramatic.

The heart of all activity was Brown's Chapel, with subsidiary activities in other nearby churches. Peggy and I spent the next two weeks of our lives inside this surrounded African American neighborhood. Families opened their homes, welcoming us with beds and heartwarming hospitality. Brown's Chapel provided food for body and soul. The women of the neighborhood ran an amazing kitchen and served up a seemingly never-ending supply of the most delicious southern cooking. Inside Brown's Chapel was a nonstop combination of rally, prayer meeting, and old-fashioned hymn sing. We had inspired preaching, glorious singing, laughing and weeping, eating, and sometimes sleeping—and through it all, courage, deep joy, and the power of the Spirit. For the first time, the reality that I had experienced in China in the little church at McTyeire was apparent to me in my own country. I was part of the church ALIVE!

Tensions in the white community ran high. A couple of times we were asked to give a movement person a ride to Montgomery. Somehow we got through the checkpoint, picked up our passenger at an appointed spot, and started our trip. Sometimes our passenger hid on the floor in the back seat. I didn't know just how high tensions were until I heard later about the murder

of Viola Liuzzo, who was shot as she chauffeured African Americans on that same road the day after the march.

Before long we began to hear that the second attempt to march to Montgomery would be starting. Then we heard that the march was peaking too soon and that preparations in Montgomery were not completed. Some Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) organizers approached Peggy and me and others in Selma and asked us to contact networks of people who would recruit volunteers to come to Montgomery and help prepare for the arrival of the marchers and the thousands of supporters expected there on the day the march arrived. Peggy and I found phones to contact our networks. Peggy contacted Methodist women, and I, the Methodist Student Movement. On March 15 I reached Bill Corzine, staff advisor to the National Council of the MSM. The recent decisions and actions of NCMSM, as well as two major conferences, the NSCF Athens conference in 1963 and the MSM national conference in 1964, had focused on the critical importance of the civil rights movement in our history. Bill called MSM president Charles Rinker and the chairperson of the Civil Rights Committee, Jill Hultin. The four of us devoted ourselves to an emerging strategy for Methodist student participation in this decisive phase of the civil rights struggle.

The day the march began, Sunday, March 21, all of us in the Brown's Chapel community made our way early in the morning to the Edmund Pettus Bridge with considerable trepidation and determination, trying to be ready for whatever might come. But this time, national and world attention was focused on the march. This time there was protection for the marchers. This day the march began without a hitch. Leading the march was Dr. King, linking arms with Rabbi Abraham Heschel, the great Jewish human rights advocate, and Eugene Carson Blake, president of the National Council of Churches. They were followed by the entire Brown's Chapel community. Some of the MSM leaders were there: Elmira Kendricks Nazombe, Jill Hultin, Charlotte Bunch, Charles Rinker, Bill Corzine.

As we looked up, a great flock of huge birds seemed to be hovering over us—the sky was full of helicopters. At first I didn't know why they were there, and it was scary. They were television and military helicopters, a protection for the marchers, in fact, and they followed us for quite a distance. Peggy and I marched that first day from morning till evening. When we reached an encampment that had been set up to provide a place for marchers to sleep that first night, we caught a ride back to Selma, got our rented car, and drove to Montgomery. It was time to begin the work that the movement had assigned to us.

Our MSM strategy had begun to work. Bill Corzine and a few other leaders had come ahead to Selma to plan with SCLC leadership. In the next few days nearly one hundred Methodist students and campus ministers from all over the country arrived in Montgomery. MSM volunteers were directed by staff of the Montgomery Improvement Association, working with the MSM National Council. They were asked to help with housing, transportation, and community mobilization. At first the students were thinking about housing a hundred or so people coming from outside, but it soon became clear that they had assumed no such small responsibility. The marchers would arrive in Montgomery on Thursday. By Wednesday, the MSM still had to find housing in African American homes for several thousand people for the following night.

A number of the SCLC leaders were organizing evening rallies in black churches in Montgomery before the march arrived. One evening I attended a rally in a church packed with mostly young, black activists. Young people were hanging out the windows, standing on each other's shoulders. They were singing and dancing in the aisles. Andy Young was in charge of the evening. At one point he asked all of the older church members, many of them quite elderly, to stand up. "I want you to look at these people," he said to the gathered crowd. "These are the faithful members of this church. They're the ones who have been preparing for us all their lives. Because of their faithfulness for many years, we have this place ready for us to come together at this moment in history." I thought, Perhaps that's what I've been doing since I returned from China, where my life's real commitment to justice began. I've been working with students to prepare for a time such as this.

The next day, March 25, 1965, the marchers arrived. President Lyndon Johnson had federalized the National Guard and soon troops began to appear. Thousands of people arrived from every part of the country. It was a great ecumenical outpouring of Americans—Catholic nuns, Jewish rabbis, Protestant clergy, black and white, marching row after row, singing freedom songs. An estimated six thousand clergypersons came.

As the massive march made its way slowly up the great broad approach to the capitol building, I was fortunate to find a place to sit on the steps in front of Dr. King's church. Here is where the Montgomery bus boycott had begun in 1956 when Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus because "it was a matter of dignity." In this city, forty-two thousand African Americans had refused to ride the buses, some of them walking as many as fourteen miles a day until change had come.

For me, the experience in Selma and Montgomery symbolized a kind of closure, a coming fully around. In a profound way this was in continuity

with my time in China. During those weeks in Alabama, I personally experienced, for the first time in my own land, a situation of intense fear and oppression. Out of this experience and the leadership of Dr. King and other African Americans, I received some important and life-changing lessons. Some of them reinforced what I had learned in the Chinese Revolution; others were completely new. In China I had come to know about the power of the Spirit that comes to people as they take up the struggle for their own liberation. In Selma, too, I saw the power of the Spirit. But in Selma we experienced power in a melding together of political action and religious faith and morality. This was Dr. King's way. He refused to let politics and religion be separated. For him, it was not *whether* they mix, but rather how to establish as great a degree of congruence as possible between the nature of the God we worship and the nature of the human action that we undertake in God's name.

Sitting there on the steps of Dr. King's church and seeing the marchers approach the nearby Alabama capitol building, I could begin to realize some of what might lie ahead. This victory over Governor Wallace and Sheriff Clark and the forces they represented had unmasked even deeper layers of white fear and violence. At the same time, SNCC and SCLC were growing apart, as SNCC became disillusioned with a nonviolent approach. The U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War was on the increase. But by late spring Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, which would become the law of the land.

Within the student Christian movement, MSM was phasing out of existence in order to become part of the ecumenical University Christian Movement. Beyond that, before the decade ended, in the midst of assassinations and social turmoil, the U.S. student movement as we had known it would change greatly with the dissolution of UCM. Meanwhile the Woman's Division, as part of a merger of much of its mission work with the World Division of the Methodist Board of Missions, was deciding to eliminate its "lines of work" with children, youth, and students. I was moving to a position with the World Division to organize a new office of University World, focusing on students and faculty overseas. In the future I would work closely with denominational and ecumenical youth networks and the World Student Christian Federation. I would travel widely to be present with and support students who were organizing, studying, and struggling in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

Especially important to me in the years ahead would be work with the WSCF Women's Commission, for which I was the first advisor. For years I had worked with wonderfully able young women and excellent older female

colleagues. But with WSCF women and urban and rural poor women I began to analyze sexism in a serious way and to see the profound structural implications of the exclusion and oppression of women in the United States and globally.

The Selma to Montgomery March in the spring of 1965 was a critical historical event. For me personally, Selma was a watershed. It brought me into full re-membering, a coming together of my experiences in China and the United States. It was in China that I had first seen the absolute necessity of radical social change. I had seen the depth of suffering caused by injustice that gives rise to revolution. I had come to know that people working together can change history. I had for the first time experienced the Living Church. In Selma it was all there again, here in my own country. It came together for me in Selma—full circle.

Jeanne Audrey Powers

The Church is the only institution I know that pays its employees to subvert it!" This statement, by a conscientious objector seeking alternative service through the US-2 Program of the Board of Missions of the United Methodist Church, has haunted me, motivated me, and sustained me ever since I heard him say it in 1970. Now, as I write this, when my disappointment with the United Methodist Church has become excruciatingly difficult to bear, his statement reminds me that "committed subversion" is, in fact, an invitation the Church continues to offer. When the Body of Christ refuses to be part of the continuing incarnation of Christ in the world, this statement is a powerful witness to the vision that this young man had caught from the Church. As I reflect on my own experiences of Christian nurture and development, my calling to ordained ministry, my service as a campus minister and as a national staff person in missionary personnel and ecumenical offices for the denomination, I see that subversion is an identifying characteristic of my own life and ministry.

When I began my ministry in the fall of 1959, I had never had a woman seminary professor, had never read a book written by a feminist theologian, had no women models for ordained ministry, looked to ordained men exclusively for professional company, had almost no experience related to segregation or the "black experience," had no friends or colleagues of another race, and knew no one, other than myself, who was gay or lesbian. This description says far less about me as a white, upper midwestern, mainline Protestant "girl minister" (as a Minneapolis newspaper photo caption identified me) than it does about the culture of the time. I was alone, charting new territory at every point in my life. What was it that shaped me, that pushed me forward, that planted the seeds of whom I would become and what my ministry would look like? What enabled me ultimately to claim "subversion" as a primary form of ministry?