

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATE

Update

Impacting the Community by Following Christ's Example

by Diane Fonderlin

It all started with a local Habitat for Humanity volunteer and the man who "captained" his fishing boat. The fisherman knew that his boss was involved with a program that built houses, but wanted to know more about the organization called Habitat for Humanity. He listened quietly as the man talked about Habitat's work, and finally said, "I think this program should be in my village!"

The next day the fisherman

went to the village headman and told him about the Christian-based international housing program. The Muslim headman responded by saying, "It sounds like a good work, but I don't think we want any outside organizations coming into our village." The fisherman was persistent and continued to promote Habitat to the headman whenever he saw him.

This went on until one day a young man said he wanted to apply for a Habitat house. The father of two not only fulfilled the

sweat-equity hours on his own house, but also proceeded to work on all the Habitat houses that were later built in his village.

From that beginning, we have been privileged to watch a special relationship develop between Habitat for Humanity and this Muslim village in Malaysia. Each year we get invited to the special celebration that symbolizes the ending of the fasting time of Ramadan. We have participated in badminton competitions between members of the village and Habitat volunteers and staff.

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While Habitat continually grapples with issues of how we communicate our Christian identity in culturally sensitive ways without compromising our values, we have seen firsthand how Habitat has impacted one community by following the model of Jesus Christ.



MIKEL FLAMM

A house under construction in Malaysia will house one more family in need of a simple, decent home.

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COURTESY OF LYNETTE VAN HOVEN

Countless South Africans are forced to live in inadequate shelters—shacks that they piece together from whatever materials they can find.

The Burden of Inadequate Shelter

by Sue Johnson

At a recent church service, my pastor spoke about a calling on one's life. He asked, "How do we know what our calling is?" and went on to explain the burden Jesus had for the poor and the compassion Jesus felt for those in need.

God places his burden on the hearts of individuals, a burden that will not go away but begs us to respond.

I carry that burden. I have a heart for the poor and needy. I have a heart for those least able to help themselves, and because of this, I have to speak out about what I see. I speak for those who cannot.

In South Africa, as in many other parts of the world, wealth and abundance is a normal way of life for many fortunate families. The

houses we own, the cars we drive and the holidays we take speak loudly about the blessings in our lives. A first world so far removed from the one in which I work.

But in South Africa, alongside our first world, is also an enormous third world situation, growing constantly as the gap between the rich and poor widens. Daily I see poverty and a desperate need for decent and affordable housing in a country where we have overcome so much, only to be once again brought to our knees by insufficiency.

Insufficient funds, insufficient ability, insufficient will. The words of Millard

Fuller, founder and president of HFHI, reverberate in my mind: "We have the know-how in the world to house everyone. We have the resources in the world to house everyone. All that's missing is the will to do it."

We, at Habitat for Humanity South Africa have the will. This



COURTESY OF LYNETTE VAN HOVEN

The disparity between the privileged and the needy in South Africa is vast.

Unity in Diversity

by Véronique Vivier

"Working with Habitat for Humanity around the world has been a humbling experience for me, building side by side with people from all walks of life, realizing that we all speak for the voiceless through our actions alone."

—Dr. Kenneth D. Kaunda

Since its inception in 2003, the Kenneth Kuanda Work Project (KKWP) project has brought people together from diverse countries, cultures and religious beliefs to work together to eradicate poverty housing in Africa.

The KKWP 2004 is unique—for the first time corporations in the Gauteng Area have come together to participate in a community project. The major corporations involved are Old Mutual, Edcon, Ernst & Young, Pick 'n Pay, Whirlpool, Media Kaya, Broll Property Group, ER 24 and Safmarine.

Debbie Verploegh, KKWP project manager, hopes that the employees will be so inspired by the build, that they will return to work on future builds and encourage their respective companies to invest in future builds. 🏠

Véronique Vivier is personal assistant to the area vice president and the directors at HFH's Africa and the Middle East office.



KIM MACDONALD

Habitat's "Theology of the Hammer" transcends religious and denominational boundaries. Here a group of volunteers bless the family whose house they built at the 2003 Kenneth Kaunda Work Project in Zambia.



KIM MACDONALD

Dr. Kenneth Kaunda performs masonry work alongside a future homeowner.

year in November, HFH South Africa will launch at the Kenneth Kaunda Work Project, our largest challenge to date. We will launch a R50 million (US\$7.8 million) major national fund-raising campaign to fund the building of 1,000 houses throughout South Africa between 2004 and 2006. The campaign will double the number of houses we currently build annually and will house some 5,000 people who are cur-

rently living in substandard shelter. The campaign, ending in 2006, will also mark the 30th anniversary of Habitat for Humanity International.

The campaign will be a huge step in faith for our program but we believe there are individuals, churches and companies who will walk alongside us in this mission. We believe there are partners in the world who will support our appeal. We believe there is the

will to get involved and that we can raise the money and forever change the lives of those the campaign will reach. 🏠

Sue Johnson is the Communications coordinator for HFH South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal region.



Homeowners and volunteers in Uganda come together to build.

Sermons Worth a Lifetime

by Matthew Robertson

“Sermons Worth a Lifetime” was the theme this year for Habitat for Humanity Uganda’s Building on Faith week.

Churches were asked to pray for different aspects of HFH’s ministry—children of homeowners, families in need of decent shelter, the ministry in general and the various teams that would be building during the Building on Faith week. Faith-based organizations were invited to build on two separate days. Five such organizations—Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS) Uganda, Cornerstone Development Uganda, Food for the Hungry, African Children’s Mission and Scripture Union of Uganda—participated. Churches that participated included: Full Gospel Church, Makerere Community Church, Rural Evangelical Church, St. Francis Chapel Makerere, St. Augustine Chapel Makerere, Deliverance Church-Nakasero and Kampala Pentecostal Church (KPC) North.

Most of the faith-based organizations as well as other participants in the builds had either heard of or participated in a Habitat build before. Many of the organizations approached expressed willingness to participate; however some were hindered by work since both builds were on workdays. Both those who came out to build and the ones who could not were open to similar future partnerships.

The participating faith-based organizations were able to help one family construct their house up to ring beam level. “My family will know about this! We’ll keep looking at the photos taken today and know that we have a family out there. You are more than welcome to visit us anytime,” said homeowner Jason Kuyunga. 🏠

Matthew Robertson is the national director of HFH Uganda.

Demonstrating Servant Leadership

by Simone Bodemo

In the Central African culture, the root of the word love is *yé*. When it refers to affection for somebody, it is called *yéngo*. When it is related to practical acts that express love such as helping others, giving to others, working with and for others, it is called *ndoyé*. This type of love involves people coming together to do something loving for the community as a whole.

The first type of love is a personal affair. Culturally, it is unacceptable and a sign of weakness to show affection in public.

On the other hand, people put great emphasis on the second type of love, *ndoyé*, which is taught from childhood. People are valued based on their hard work and achievements in society and also by their love for the community as a whole. This love is demonstrated by participating

in community events like farming, building houses, funerals or marriages.

Christianity, as well as cultural traditions, teach people to love. In fact love is the greatest Christian commandment. The difference between Jesus Christ’s love and the traditional love is that Jesus Christ taught us to love by serving. This means that *leaders* as well as other members of a group or society must be ready to serve others. This was not the case with the traditional *ndoyé*. Leaders do not work for or serve others; they are served. For example, in a traditional celebration, the leader or chief sits in a chair on a platform above the others. Important decisions are discussed by a select group of people and then announced. Leaders make decisions and people obey. Leadership is a position

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Demonstrating the Love of Jesus

by Yousry Makar

Ja’far is a small, very poor village in which Habitat for Humanity Egypt is working. HFH Egypt has built or renovated approximately 500 houses in this village.

One of the homeowners there is a Christian man who is married and has four children.

When the *sheikh* of the mosque applied for a Habitat house, he had to move with his family to another place till his house was ready. The Christian homeowner invited the *sheikh* and his family to stay with them until their house was finished.

When the Christian homeowner was asked why he offered to do that, he said, “All of us benefit from Habitat, which is seeking to express the love of Jesus Christ to people. Therefore, I should have the same attitude as Habitat by letting my behavior show Jesus Christ’s love.”

This had a great impact on spreading the spirit of love among the people in Ja’far. 🏠

Yousry Makar is the national director of HFH Egypt.



Diversity in Action:

HFH Europe and Central Asia's Approach in Non-Christian Communities

by Jelica Vesic

H FH recently reached an important milestone—the organization now works in 100 countries across the globe. Needs are being met in different communities, and Habitat is a Christian organization that works across religious boundaries. But what does this mean in practice?

and Central Asia. As she points out, not all non-Christian countries or communities are the same. Russia, for instance, is predominantly Christian Orthodox, but HFH works in a mostly Buddhist community there. Turkey is another country that HFH E/CA partners with. Though its population is by and large Muslim, it is a nation deeply entrenched in secularism. In Central Asia on

is the issue of finding the right mix of Christian representation on local boards. Christian representation is important since the local board is charged with the responsibility of maintaining Habitat's Christian identity. At the same time, we don't want to send mixed messages: "When we walk into a non-Christian community with the reassuring message that we are Christian, but we do not

board—all the ones we could get. In the entire city of Khujand there are only three Christian families," explains Armen Rostomyan, program development manager for HFH Tajikistan. Diversity is still the name of the game, though. In terms of religion, the board has representatives of different Muslim factions and is very diverse ethnically.

"The biggest problem is communicating Habitat's identity to the general public," comments Besim Nebiu, program development manager for HFH Kyrgyzstan. This is a country in which many Christian organizations use the pretext of some other kind of work to try to convert people. "Some of them are fair and transparent about their goals; others use the cover of civil society or developmental projects for missionary work," Nebiu explains.

In this part of the world, local HFH organizations have to go the extra mile to persuade the general public that this Christian organization is going to do something for the non-Christians, without a hidden agenda. "We are very clear about our Christian identity and truthful to ourselves so that the community does not feel that something is creeping in through the back door. So far it has worked as long as we were able to demonstrate that we are true about what we do," says Popovska. 🏠

Jelica Vesic is the Communications coordinator for HFH's programs in Europe and Central Asia.

"We are very clear about our Christian identity and truthful to ourselves...it has worked as long as we were able to demonstrate that we are true about what we do."



VLADIMIR MATVIEVSKY

At a house dedication in Ulan Ude, Russia, Buddhists and Christians celebrate together.

What are the challenges to our work in non-Christian countries and how do we meet these challenges?

"We deal with it on a case-by-case basis, since the organization as a whole still hasn't developed a strategy," says Lucija Popovska, program director for HFH Europe

and Central Asia. As she points out, not all non-Christian countries or communities are the same. Russia, for instance, is predominantly Christian Orthodox, but HFH works in a mostly Buddhist community there. Turkey is another country that HFH E/CA partners with. Though its population is by and large Muslim, it is a nation deeply entrenched in secularism. In Central Asia on

the other hand, there are large Christian communities, but the religion itself is associated with the previously dominant Russian ethnic group; thus, there is some cultural resistance to it. Popovska stresses that the challenges we face are not ideological but practical. One example

is the issue of finding the right mix of Christian representation on local boards. Christian representation is important since the local board is charged with the responsibility of maintaining Habitat's Christian identity. At the same time, we don't want to send mixed messages: "When we walk into a non-Christian community with the reassuring message that we are Christian, but we do not

discriminate, how can we then say: 'Are you Christian, so that you can be part of our board?'" In a community like that of Khujand, in north Tajikistan, finding Christians to serve on the board of a local HFH affiliate can be quite a task. "There are three Christians serving on the

Crossing the Sectarian Divide

by Claire Moss

We believe the poverty that we face in Northern Ireland is not just physical, but spiritual—it is the need for reconciliation. It's about more than building houses: It is about building community and hope.

Critical to the organization's success is Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland's ability to bring people together from all socio-economic backgrounds and across the sectarian divide, in a spirit of community to help people in need. HFH Northern Ireland seeks to be a catalyst for reconciliation by breaking down the walls of separation, restoring and revitalizing communities most at risk. It does this through partnerships with community groups, businesses and churches of all denominations. As a result, a foundation is being laid for future cross-community development.

For the first time in the organization's history, we have been active in two neighboring Catholic and Protestant communities simultaneously. Ballysillan (Protestant) and Ligoniel (Catholic) are typical of communities in North Belfast fractured along sectarian lines.

Both share high measures of deprivation; a significant indicator of the depth of division is that they have suffered the highest level of conflict-related violence in the region since 1969.

By building in Ligoniel and Ballysillan simultaneously, volunteers and families may cross over and work on both projects at the same time. This is the first step in developing relationships of trust and mutual respect and building communities without fear. Homeowners from both communities are undertaking their training and fulfilling their sweat-equity requirements together, establishing respect and trust, and forging friendships. The 10-week training program has the dual impact of both preparing partner families for the practicalities of homeownership and their partnership with HFH Northern

Ireland, as well as building up of good relations between partner families from different traditions. As they work alongside one another, the families have realized that the things they have in common are greater than their differences.

Church involvement has been vitally important in enabling us to make progress across our projects. In the past year, 34 churches of all denominations have partnered with us. Locally we have had students from all the denominational chaplaincies at local universities come together on site to build houses and relationships.

Our international program also offers a very practical way to bring people from different religious backgrounds together in a safe and neutral environment. We have had cross-community teams since the program's inception in

1998. We are now in the second year of our partnership with the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund (NIMF), which sent one team last year, two this year and have three planned for 2005. This fund offers practical and meaningful help to those whose lives have been affected by the troubles. By taking cross-community teams overseas, the fund continues its work of promoting reconciliation.

Last year the NIMF team went to Beius, Romania, where they worked on the renovation of an apartment building. One of the teams this year will return to Beius while the other team has recently returned from Csürgo, Hungary. Both of the teams have had extremely positive experiences. John Judge, who went to Romania in 2003, commented, "Our trip allowed us the opportunity to discover that when all the prejudice and politics are taken away, Catholics and Protestants have a great deal in common to share." 🏠

Claire Moss is the Communications coordinator for HFH Northern Ireland.



A Global Village team composed of both Catholics and Protestants from Northern Ireland work together to build Habitat houses in El Salvador.

COURTESY OF HFH EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Inspired by Faith

By Haykuhi Khachatryan

Christianity is an ancient faith that teaches us to love our fellow beings. It is open to all people, regardless of age, nationality and status. More than 1,700 years ago Armenia, as a nation, decided to become Christian.

Everyone can choose his or her own way to live out their Christian faith in order to bless others. Twenty-eight years ago, Millard and Linda Fuller chose the way of building houses with those in need, giving people a chance to care about their neighbors. Since then the Habitat movement has grown. In 2000, with the registration of its first local affiliate, Armenia joined the Habitat family.

Although Armenia was under a communist regime, it has always managed to protect its faith. For Armenians, Christianity equals national identity. A typical example of this is what elders say after baptizing a child: "Now you have become a real Armenian!"

Armenians believe that a strong family can make the country stronger, and the foundation of family health in Armenia is a home. Habitat for Humanity, by providing affordable housing, offers this foundation for those who might otherwise never have a decent house. "Without a house I could not feel safe and make my children's dreams come true. After becoming a Habitat homeowner I became lucky. At last I have my own job, I see my kids' happy smiles and know that neither a storm nor sickness can hurt any member of my family. I



ARDON ALGER

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." —1 John 4:7

am sure that it is all by the grace of God," commented a Habitat homeowner from Armenia.

We, who work with Habitat, have found a way to live out our faith and to demonstrate the love and teachings of Jesus. On our faith journey, we make new friends from all walks of life, backgrounds and nationalities. They are always ready to help each other build simple and healthy houses with families in need—as no one created in the image of God deserves

to live in shacks. The volunteers from around the world come and join our families and help them realize that they are not alone, and there is always someone who cares. Indeed, we build more than houses—we build communities, friendships, links, hope and confidence in God. 🏠

Haykuhi Khachatryan is Communications coordinator for HFH Armenia.

Impacting the Community by Following Christ's Example
continued from page 1

If we happen to be in the village to see one family, we cannot leave until we have stopped by several neighboring homes for a snack and something cold to drink.

The local affiliate continues to receive applications from potential homeowners and was even asked to host an informational meeting for 30 Muslim village leaders from the same district. The leader of the village where Habitat has been building stood up and said to the other leaders, "I would like to see Habitat build houses with all of the people in my village that need a decent house."

Additionally, this same leader has approached the pastor of one of the local churches that is very much involved in Habitat to see if members of his church would help to tutor the children in his village in English. This is simply an amazing request in this predominantly Islamic nation.

While Habitat continually grapples with issues of how we communicate our Christian identity in culturally sensitive ways without compromising our values, we have seen firsthand how Habitat has impacted one community by following the model of Jesus Christ.

The community has seen a Christian-based organization that is committed to selecting families in a non-discriminatory manner. The community has also learned that Habitat has no political ambitions and that it genuinely seeks to help those in need. The people are often-times surprised to learn that nearly all of the Habitat supporters are volunteers and that they find reward in seeing people living transformed lives. In effect, they have seen the light of Christ in the work of this affiliate, which is consistent, open and filled with integrity. 🏠

Diane Fonderlin is program adviser for Church Relations in Asia and the Pacific.



Communicating HFH's Christian Identity in Diversity: Possible or Impossible?

By Belkis Santiesteban García

Communicating our principles and values is a daily task at Habitat for Humanity Nicaragua. People of different beliefs and religious practices constantly approach us to learn more about who we are and what we do.

We explain that Habitat for Humanity is a Christian ministry that works to eliminate inadequate housing from our country. It exemplifies the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we work together with people from all walks of life.

Nonetheless, within the context and experiences of the Nicaraguan people, the word "Christian" is associated with denominations of the evangelical church, which has flourished and grown in the last two decades, after centuries of mostly Roman

Catholic religious practices.

We try to expand our explanations, specifying that when we refer to a Christian ministry we mean an inclusive one, without discrimination and with ample participation and diversity in thought and practices, but although we are inclusive in our program, there are still misperceptions of certain terms or phrases that identify us.

Not long ago in our work as communicators, one of the daily newspapers received written and oral information about Habitat for Humanity and its mission. Our best spokesperson put forward their ideas and provided information. But when the article was published, it said, "The representatives of Project Habitat in their vast majority belong to the Evangelical Council..."

It's not that what this young

correspondent transmitted was wrong, on the contrary, many of our co-workers and volunteers are evangelicals, very dedicated to the work in their churches, successful social exponents and recognized figures in all aspects of

impossible. We continue to persist in communicating our messages clearly. As the work of HFH is known and recognized even more, all will understand that our big dream, as expressed by HFHI's founder and presi-

"The entire ministry is based on love and faith. Love and faith are not detained at any border." —Millard Fuller

social life, and they give their best to HFH's work. But we cannot affirm that they are the majority—our committees, assemblies, partner families and co-workers are from different churches. As a matter of fact, they share in celebrations together and help us in communicating our biblical messages.

The work is difficult, but not

dent, Millard Fuller, "... has been for this ministry to be a link for an ample range of churches and groups of churches to work together." And in keeping with the biblical message, we will work toward unity for a just cause. 🏠

Belkis Santiesteban García is Communications coordinator for HFH Nicaragua.



BELKIS SANTIESTEBAN GARCÍA

New homeowners celebrate the dedication of their Habitat house in Chinandega, Nicaragua. They proudly display the Bible presented to them during the dedication.



BELKIS SANTIESTEBAN GARCÍA

Participants pray at the beginning of a meeting of Nicaraguan Habitat affiliate leaders.

God's Call to Unity and Action

by Tatiana Valdez

Each day God calls us in different ways, through unexpected voices, to reach out to others. Almost seven months ago, I began working for Habitat for Humanity Nicaragua as the Church Relations coordinator. At that time I had recently returned from studying in the United States of America. I was in the process of readjusting to my own culture and to my place as a Christian woman who was committed to those in need.

Given this commitment, Habitat for Humanity is the right place for me to be. At HFH, I am able to answer God's call "to act justly and to love mercy." (Micah 6:8, NIV) At HFH I can move from my "comfort zone" to a more challenging way of being a Christian.

I live in Nicaragua, where around 98 percent of the population calls itself Christian. We are a diverse people and speak different languages, and though we are Christians, we practice our faith in many different ways.

Thus, talking about HFH as a Christian ministry to those in need sometimes becomes a cross-cultural and religious challenge. The way we practice our Christian faith creates, (whether we like or not), sub-cultures and sometimes division among us. Sometimes, I find invisible walls that keep Christians apart from one another. HFH gives me the opportunity to help tear down those walls. According to HFHI's founder and president, Millard Fuller, "Faith must be incarnated...It must become more than a verbal proclamation or an intellectual assent. True faith must be acted out."¹ This is something I can talk about with anyone without any problem.

When I introduce HFH to people, I usually say that it is a Christian organization. However, in Nicaragua to say "Christian" means "Protestant" or "evangelical." Therefore, a Pentecostal pastor may at first think that HFH is an evangelical organization, having nothing to do with Catholics. On the other hand, a Roman Catholic priest or a nun may think Habitat is a Protestant organization. This would not be a problem if, in Nicaragua, the concept of

ecumenism had more acceptance among Christians from different backgrounds.

I never say that HFH is an ecumenical organization. Some churches do not like, nor do they understand this term. My efforts are centered on trying to get churches more involved in Habitat's work. As different churches begin working with us, the word ecumenism will not be only a word anymore, but also a deed.

The word "ecumenism" is not the only issue when dealing with different churches. I am a woman, and as such, according to some churches, I should not be talking in the church and/or about God. Since I am not a nun or pastor, I do not have power in the church. Once, while having a conversation with a pastor, it was made clear

to me that women should not been doing "men's work" in the church.

Millard Fuller said that with God all things are possible, including a world without shacks and homeless people.² I also believe in this statement, and since in God all things are possible, the unity of the church is also possible. When I say "unity of the church," I do not mean "sameness of the church." In fact, at HFH affiliates we see God's work already in the hearts of many Christians who are working together to overcome the problem of substandard housing. These Christians believe that homelessness can be eradicated from earth without paying much attention to our differences.

"The more intense the Christian's spiritual life, the more intense the response to the needs of humanity." —C. Bernard Ruffin



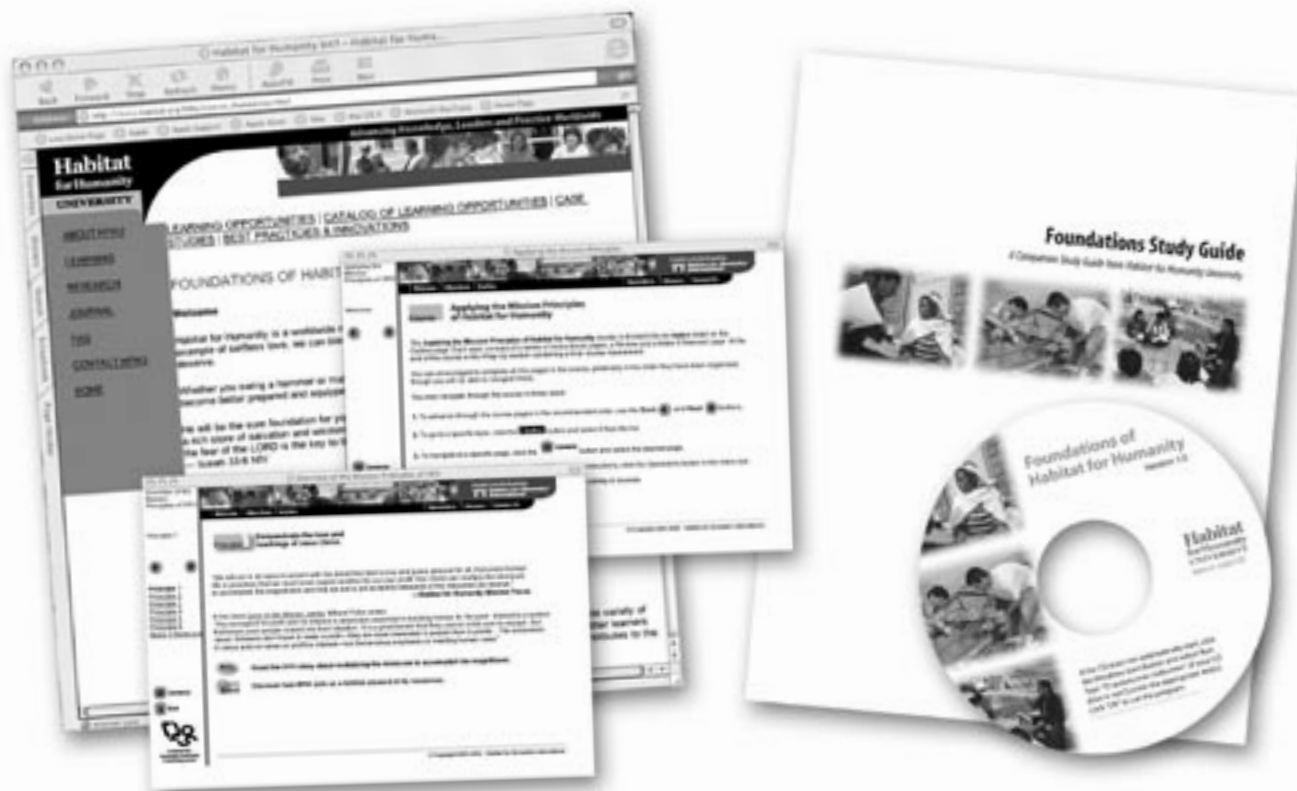
With God, all things are possible, even eliminating poverty housing in Nicaragua—and throughout the world.

In spite of all the difficulties and barriers that I encounter when working with churches, I know that sharing and acting together out our faith is possible for "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28) 🏠

Tatiana Valdez García is Church Relations coordinator for HFH Nicaragua.

¹ Millard Fuller, *The Theology of the Hammer*, 7.

² Millard Fuller, *The Theology of the Hammer*, 17.



Habitat's Christian Identity: HFHU Resources

by Jane Gruler

- Are you looking for resources to help you better understand Habitat's Christian identity?
- Are you looking for resources to help you explain Habitat's Christian identity to:
 - new and existing staff and volunteers?
 - current and potential donors and partners?
 - your community at large?

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions above, then the following HFHU learning resources will be of interest to you:

Foundations of Habitat for Humanity Course suite: Evidence of Habitat's Christian identity are woven throughout the six courses in this suite: "Beginnings of Habitat for Humanity," "Vision and Mission," "Overview of the Mission Principles," "Organizational Structure," "Strategic Goals" and "Applying the Mission

Principles." This topic is most directly addressed in principle one of "Overview of the Mission Principles" and topic one of "Applying the Mission Principles."

Foundations of Habitat for Humanity Study Guides: See Appendix C in all versions of the Foundations of Habitat for Humanity Study Guides for an excellent article by Rebekah Daniel titled "Faith Diversity Strengthens Habitat's Reach."

Coming Soon - Best Practices in Church Relations

Course Suite: This course suite is currently under construction. Course 1, "Setting the Stage," will include a short summary of the philosophy of Habitat for Humanity, including its creation as a Christian ministry and founders Millard and Linda Fuller's story. By participating in this course, learners will be able to:

- understand the nature of Habitat for Humanity as a Christian ministry;
- communicate the history of Habitat for Humanity and the Christian principles upon which it was formed and continues to function; and
- represent Habitat for Humanity's goal of including and partnering with people of all faiths and no faith.

All of the resources will be available both online and on CD-ROM. In addition to being self-study resources for learners themselves, these learning products can

also be used by presenters and trainers in face-to-face situations. One recent user shared the following: "I was asked to do a short Habitat overview. I printed out the pages of the Vision portion of the Foundations of Habitat suite, and I'll make copies of a few of the pages for the group participants. It will be a good refresher for the experienced volunteers. It really nails down the fundamentals of Habitat for the newcomers. And it will inspire all of them."

Please visit www.hfhu.org for the latest updates and testimonials from learners.

To keep the HFHU curriculum relevant, we need to hear from you! Feel free to send your questions and suggestions to [hfphu@hfhi.org](mailto:hphu@hfhi.org) or to Jane Gruler at jgruler@hfhi.org. 

Jane Gruler is the International Content and Knowledge manager for Habitat for Humanity University.

HFHI and UN-HABITAT Partner to Address Urban Poverty and Disaster Response Issues in Developing Countries

by Kathleen Moore

Habitat for Humanity International and the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT) signed a formal agreement on Sept. 15, 2004, to address urban poverty and disaster relief issues in developing countries. The Agreement of Cooperation was signed during the United Nation's World Urban Forum, Sept. 13-17, in Barcelona.

"This collaboration is an important step toward meeting the World Millennium Development Goals of halving the number of poor by 2015 and in improving living conditions among slum dwellers," said Anna Tibaijuka, undersecretary of the United Nations and executive director of UN-HABITAT. "From policy-level decisions to the implementation of strategies, the combined experience of UN-HABITAT and Habitat for Humanity International will be a powerful force to meet the challenges of slum upgrading and providing decent housing in cities all over the world."

Building on each organization's experience in providing housing and shelter to people living in poverty conditions, the organizations have agreed to pool resources and expertise to upgrade slums, improve housing conditions and provide basic human services in urban areas, particularly in countries ravaged by political unrest and natural disaster.

With the rapid growth of urban areas around the globe, slum and poverty conditions have increased, especially in developing countries. According to a UN-HABITAT report, by 2001 the world's slum population had grown to 924 million. In Ethiopia, for instance, slum dwellers represented 99.4 percent of the total urban population. In Afghanistan, more than 98 percent of the total urban population lived



COURTESY OF HFHI'S WASHINGTON OFFICE

Anna Tibaijuka, undersecretary of the United Nations and executive director of UN-HABITAT, joins Tom Jones, vice president at HFHI and managing director of HFHI's Washington Office, to sign the Agreement of Cooperation between the two organizations.

in slums, according to the report.

This agreement brings together organizations that not only have the capacity to help improve living conditions among the poor, but will have a huge impact on international housing policy," said Tom Jones, vice president of Habitat for Humanity International. "Working together we aim to place housing for low-income people at the center of the international development agenda by addressing issues that perpetuate the cycle of poverty housing."

Specifically, the agreement states that the organizations will work together to:

- Elevate housing issues in the international policy arena.
- Construct and improve housing and provide basic human and sanitary conditions in slum and post-conflict areas.
- Make needed infrastructure enhancements in slum and war torn areas.
- Help build the capacity of local organizations to address

poverty and housing needs in developing countries.

- Collaborate on research efforts and data collection regarding the prevalence of slums and related poverty housing issues.
- Increase global awareness of poverty living conditions through international training sessions, conferences and workshops. 🏠

Kathleen Moore is the director of external affairs for HFHI's Washington Office.

Demonstrating Servant Leadership

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of prestige.

Christianity's notion of love embodied by Habitat for Humanity challenges this concept. Jesus encourages us to lead by loving—by serving others so as to set the example. This is a concept that is not accepted eas-

ily among Central African leaders, especially those who are not Christian. Leadership is a position for the power it wields and the potential for wealth. At HFH, we emphasize servant leadership. This is the reason why much effort should go to training leaders. In the Central African Republic, we have formed a national steering committee consisting of people who want to serve. They joined

us in a build day at the affiliate of Bawi Tedoa last June. A common Central African saying states that when the head of the fish is rotten, the rest of the body follows. So we must make an effort to build servant leaders who can practice a new *ndoyé*. 🏠

Simone Bodemo is the national director for HFH Central African Republic.

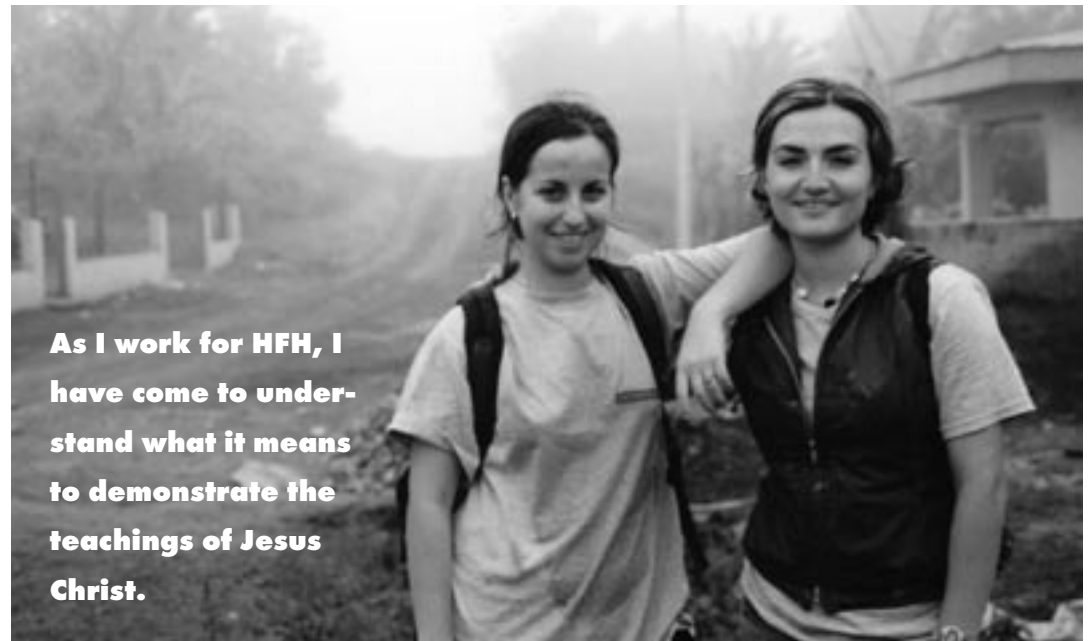
A Personal Reflection on HFH's Christian Identity

by Filiz Telek

As a non-Christian working for a Christian organization, I have experienced some very interesting moments. I often feel odd when I am asked which denomination I belong to when I'm representing Habitat in a "Christian" environment, or when I explain to family and friends who are Muslims that I work for a Christian organization.

Have I ever felt uncomfortable as a non-Christian working for a Christian organization? Not for a single moment. I believe that at its core, HFH is about improving people's lives regardless of their backgrounds. HFH is not a Christian organization because it says so in its mission principles or because homeowners are given Bibles at house dedications. In my understanding, HFH is a Christian organization because it calls forth human partnerships; it calls forth good faith, and giving without expecting any return. As I work for HFH, I have come to understand what it means to demonstrate the teachings of Jesus Christ. I have also come to admire the methods HFH uses, which transform people and communities through human partnerships, hard work and faith without preaching or force.

I have also been enriched by the diversity HFH embodies, which allows me to meet numerous people of different faiths from all walks of life. My experience has always been that these diverse people manage to find common ground and work in partnership. I have learned a great deal from the differences as I stepped into a Christian organizational culture—to explore the same good values of the same good human heart. Different practices and inevitable spiritual discussions at HFH have



Filiz Telek (left), Youth Programs coordinator for Europe and Central Asia, and Beatriz Mass, a Campus Chapters and Youth Programs staff member, pose near a build site during a Campus Chapters and Youth Programs meeting in San Ramón, Costa Rica.

challenged me, and at the same time, have helped me explore my own spirituality and put my values and beliefs into perspective, for which I am thankful. Our weekly devotions have become special times that I look forward to, a time to raise my head above the daily rush and reflect on why I do what I do.

We all do what we do for different reasons; inspired and

called by different things, but we do work for a common goal at HFH. For whatever reason we are here, whatever religious or non-religious background we come from, being part of this organization means accepting its Christian identity, principles and values. It also means accepting and respecting the diversity HFH embodies.

Have I ever felt excluded at HFH because I am not

a "Christian"? Not for a single moment. Instead, I have always felt at home with the care and kindness of people of Habitat, from staff to volunteers to homeowners, for we share the same good human heart. 🏠

Filiz Telek is Youth Programs coordinator for HFH's programs in Europe and Central Asia.



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HFHI Mission Statement

Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with God and people everywhere, from all walks of life, to develop communities with people in need by building and renovating houses, so that there are decent houses in decent communities in which every person can experience God's love and can live and grow into all that God intends.

International Affiliate Update Mission Statement

The mission of the *International Affiliate Update* is to promote a borderless Habitat for Humanity by providing information, training and communication around the world by creating:

1. A vehicle of communication between Habitat for Humanity International and local Habitat affiliates.
2. A vehicle for sharing and communicating among local Habitat partners.
3. A blueprint for steady growth of the total Habitat organization and of the various local affiliates that make up the organization.