

## Using photos to spread Christ's message

By TARA MUNKATCHY  
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Photography's role as a universal language is central to the purpose of a new ministry based in Chadds Ford.

Connie Wragge, ministry leader for PhotoMission, a non-profit organization that uses photography as a tool to spread the teachings of Jesus Christ, strongly believes in the importance of a personal relationship

with Christ. To achieve this, the group she co-founded uses two modern mediums, photography and the Internet, in sharing that message

with others as a way of expressing the Scriptures' relevance today.

PhotoMission emerged from a meeting of photographers during the Millennium Photo Project, in which 5,000 international photographers documented the year 2000's arrival.

"The project's founder, Alex Klive, asked me to serve as the community liaison for the online photo project. It was while serving in this capacity that God brought many photographers into my life through e-mail," explained Wragge. "Two of these photographers were Ian Homer and Ghani Zaman, the two other founding members of PhotoMission."

Currently, there are 62 photographers living on five continents who are members of the group. You might think working together largely via the Internet ([www.photomission.com](http://www.photomission.com))

would be difficult for them, and particularly for Homer, who lives in the United Kingdom, and Zaman, who lives in India, but the challenges the distance may pose is outweighed by the audience the Internet allows the group to reach.

"I think because of technology, Christians everywhere have been able to reach out to all corners of the world," said Wragge, a semi-professional photographer. "As God's holy spirit leads people ... there will continue to be an increase in faith-based (Internet) sites."



CONNIE WRAGGE

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D5

## Photo

(From Page D4)

"It's just the chance of being part of something much bigger than myself," said Homer, in a phone interview. The Cardiff, Wales, photojournalist works on the technical part of the organization's Internet site. "It's great helping to build relationships with Christian photographers throughout the world. It's so much better to be part of something that is not self-focused ... something that helps other people."

One new addition to the Internet site allows members to upload their photographs onto the site, while another page displays the photographer members' work.

Photography is used to communicate in various ways.

"Through photography, we assist believers by adding a visual dimension to Christian Web sites, illustrations for a book, displaying a sample of God's creation used on overheads in praise services and in exhibits used at mission conferences," said Wragge, of Pocopson. "The added dimension of photography causes a person to pause and reflect on what he is reading. In many respects, photography serves to illuminate the message."

Wragge said God has increased her photographic skill in tandem with her desire to create great photos for the ministry. PhotoMission completed a United Kingdom-based project in April in which photographers supplied photos to scriptural calendars, she said. The group also supplied photographs in December for a line of Christian greeting cards.

"PhotoMission photographers are currently working to raise financial support for a photo missions trip to India," she said, noting that an Indian prayer calendar will be available for distribution to anyone who requests a free copy through the Web site next year. "Two of the five photographers going to India reside in

South Africa and Ukraine.

Two of us from the United States are joining these men and Mr. Zaman in Kolkata in November, so, in total, there will be five of us traveling. We walk by faith and not by sight where PhotoMission is concerned, so we continue to seek God's will through prayer that he will not only provide the funding that is needed for the travel costs but also the finances that are needed to print and distribute the calendars next year.

"The vision God gave Ghani, Ian and me was to help Christian photographers around the world by building an online community for fellowship and make a way for them to use their talent to support God's kingdom. If there is a missions group, Christian business or a church ministry that can use members' photography to make a visual impact for Christ, we are here to help with affordable photography."

Wragge said the ministry is not connected with any single religious denomination. Again, this is because of the need for a personal spiritual connection, she explained.

"We exist as an international ministry to bring glory to God, first through the photographers' personal testimonies of faith affirming the truth of John 14:6, that there is only one way to God and that way is through entering into a personal relationship with his son, Jesus," said Wragge.

"Secondly, the photographic aspect of the ministry supports the growth of this understanding - which is essentially the message of the Gospel. God's plan of salvation for men and women everywhere is the same: we recognize we are sinners, that we can do nothing to earn our salvation, and in confessing our sins and asking Jesus to come into our lives, we are saved by his grace for eternity. We will not one day get to heaven to be asked of our Lord, 'What denomination did you belong to while on earth?' Instead, we will be asked, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?'"

♦ See PHOTO, Page D5