

## Bishop comes full circle in Shalom ministry

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**A UMNS Feature  
By Suzy Keenan\***

When Bishop John R. Schol worked in Philadelphia to develop what has become a national model for the Communities of Shalom initiative, he never expected to become the national staff person, then chairperson, for the growing Shalom ministry.

Right out of seminary, Schol was appointed in 1981 to develop an urban ministry among four United Methodist congregations in Philadelphia's Frankford section. That ministry grew to build houses, start businesses, address human needs and strengthen race, class and cultural relationships. It transformed neighborhood congregations into spiritual centers within the community.

The Frankford Group Ministry, as it is now known, is one of more than 300 United Methodist Communities of Shalom in 44 annual conferences across the United States and in Zimbabwe and Ghana.

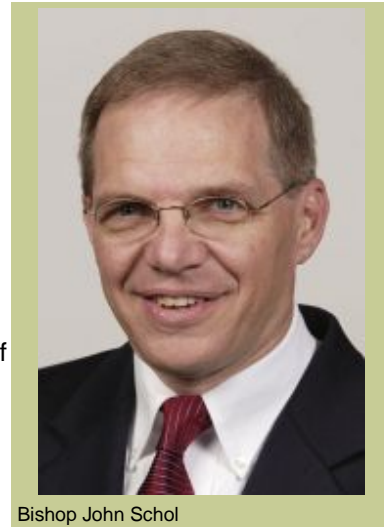
After 12 years of ministry in Frankford, Schol became the urban staff person for the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries and the national staff person for Communities of Shalom. While with the board, he helped develop the Shalom initiative after its creation by the 1992 General Conference.

In July 2004, Schol was elected a bishop and assigned to the Washington Area to lead the Baltimore-Washington Conference. The conference has taken the lead role in developing the Shalom initiative in Zimbabwe, which Schol first visited in 1995 with conference members.

Communities of Shalom draws support from the denomination's Advance for Christ and His Church (#742566). More details are available from Deanna Martinez, Board of Global Ministries, at (212) 870-3711 or [dmartine@gbgm-umc.org](mailto:dmartine@gbgm-umc.org).

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Bishop John Schol