

**GA-1910**

**DIVISION OF OVERSEAS MINISTRIES/GLOBAL MINISTRIES**

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The Division of Overseas Ministries has participated in a joint witness in mission with Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ for twenty-two years. This ministry is under the auspices of Global Ministries, which has 291 partners located in 91 countries. The mission of Global Ministries is “to share and receive the good news of Christ by joining with global and local partners to work for justice, reconciliation and peace”. In addition, Global Ministries continues to appoint mission co-workers in response to specific requests from overseas partner churches and organizations. These appointments are made through the lens of Critical Presence, “that is meeting God’s people and creation at the point of deepest needs; spiritually, physically, emotionally, and economically”. One hundred and five individuals served as mission co-workers in 2018. The number included twenty-seven fully supported mission co-workers, thirty global service workers (long-term volunteers), ten global mission interns, and thirty-eight global associates. The Global Service Worker is the fastest growing category of mission co-worker appointments. Twenty-five individuals also served as short-term volunteers.

This past year found partners in the Middle East and Latin America responding to the needs of the mass movement of people. Partners in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in East Asia and the Pacific responded to the impact of climate change, which has resulted in droughts and floods. Partners in Southern Asia are working to prevent human trafficking. Peace efforts continue in Colombia, the Korean Peninsula and the Middle East. Interfaith relations have become more critical as we are called to address interfaith tensions within the United States and around the world. Many of the critical issues in mission are cross-regional, and area executives are exploring new ways of collaboration to address them. The area reports will give a glimpse into the daily challenges of our brothers and sisters and the ways in which the church is engaged in working to address them.

The Caribbean Initiative was completed December 31, 2018. It included the following countries: Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela. The purposes of the initiative were to enable members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ to understand the religious, social and political realities of partners in the region and to provide mutual exchanges. (A more detailed report is found in the Latin America and Caribbean Report.)

The next initiative will be related to Southern Asia and will be launched at the 2019 General Assembly. It will include the following countries: Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, East Timor, and Indonesia.

The Division of Overseas Ministries sponsored a People-to-People Pilgrimage for new regional ministers to Ghana and South Africa. This is a discrete program of the Division of Overseas Ministries. It is designed for regional ministers to have the opportunity to visit overseas partner churches and organizations in order to better understand Global Ministries. The following regional ministers participated in this pilgrimage: Nadine Burton, Regional Minister of the Great River Region; LaTaunya Bynum, Regional Minister of Northern California and Nevada; Penny Ross-Corona, Regional Minister Team Leader for the Christian Church of Mid-America; William Rose-Heim, Regional Minister of Greater Kansas City; Jen Garbin, Regional Minister for Canada; and Dale Braxton, Associate Regional Minister of Alabama and Northwest Florida.

### **College of Mission Interns**

Abimael Betancourt, a student at Claremont School of Theology, and Fiyori Kidane, a student at Texas Christian University, served as College of Mission Interns in the Indianapolis office from June to August in 2018. Abimael worked on the Caribbean Initiative and Fiyori worked with the Mission Personnel Office.

### **Collaborative Efforts**

Disciples Home Missions and Disciples Women continue to collaborate with Global Ministries in a variety of programmatic areas. Under the leadership of Sotello Long, the new president of Disciples Home Missions, a new leadership team composed of staff from different ministries has been established to respond to specific requests for resources from congregations and regions. Cathy Nichols, Vice President of the Division of Overseas Ministries, represents the Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries on this team. The team is organized to accompany a congregation or region in addressing a specific need.

Disciples Home Missions and the Disciples Women continue to participate in the Global Ministries' regional initiatives. Global Ministries facilitated a Woman-to-Woman Pilgrimage to Cuba in 2018. The Disciples Women are planning a Woman-to-Woman Pilgrimage to southern Asia as part of the next regional initiative and continue to collaborate with Global Ministries related to human trafficking.

The leadership of the National Benevolent Association (NBA) met with the Area Executives and Co-Executives of Global Ministries to explore possible exchanges related to the NBA's Incubate Initiative. This is a new program of the NBA that provides expertise and grants to local non-for-profits and for-profit organizations related to health, social development, and micro-enterprise projects. Representatives from NBA will visit micro-enterprise projects of partners in Southern Asia and Latin America in order to learn about their processes and procedures to determine possibilities for an exchange with similar organizations in the United States and Canada.

The Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries collaborated with the Disciples Peace Fellowship in sponsoring Ricardo (Ricky) Rivera from the United Evangelical

Church of Puerto Rico to serve as a Peace Intern during the summer of 2018. He spoke in a number of Disciples regional youth camps on topics related to the issues facing the church in Puerto Rico and peace.

### **Staff Changes**

Tom Morse resigned from his position of Executive for Mission Engagement, effective April 23, 2018.

Francesca Klein, Program Associate in the Finance Office, resigned, effective August 24, 2018.

Rune Nielsen began as a temporary worker in the Office of Resource Development April 2, 2018, and became a regular DOM employee on June 4, 2018. She serves as the Database Manager and Administrative Assistant.

Beth Guy, former Program Associate in the Resource Development Office and a former Global Mission Intern became the Director of Communications on August 20, 2018. Bethany has a B.A. degree from Park University in Parkville, MO and an MTS degree from Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas.

David Barickman began as a Program Associate in the office of Resource Development on October 29, 2018. David has a degree from Christian Theological Seminary.

Yashira Flores began her work as Administrative Assistant in the Mission Personnel Office September 18, 2018.

## **FINANCE**

Lonna Owens, Executive

The Division of Overseas Ministries (DOM) revenue for 2018 is estimated to be nearly \$6.5 million. It is too early to know the actual revenue for the year.

Of the total revenue, some is designated giving for special programs, projects, endowment contributions, capital, and new church funding. Approximately 25% is from Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ as part of the funding of our joint work together as Global Ministries. The balance of the revenue comes from Disciples Mission Fund (DMF), investments of DOM, United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS) endowment distributions, Christian Church Foundation (CCF) permanent fund distributions, operating fund gifts and miscellaneous income.

The DOM Endowment assets are invested with the CCF in the Beasley Growth Fund and the Campbell Multi-Strategy Fund. Annually DOM takes a draw, which is 4.5% of the average prior 20-quarter rolling market value of the total investment. This draw is used to support operations and designated spending based on the restriction of the endowment. In 2018, this draw was \$569,812 (*compared to \$656,020 in 2017*).

An independent audit is performed annually of the financial records and accounting systems of DOM. Upon completion of the audit, a complete audit will be provided for

the Yearbook and report delivered to the audit committee of the board. The audit committee will address any material internal control weaknesses found during the audit and suggest improvements to internal controls in a management letter to the board.

## **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Jane Sullivan-Davis, Executive  
Kelsey Cameron, Program Associate  
David Barickman, Program Associate

### **Global Ministries Special Giving and Ministry with Donors - Introduction**

In 2018, the Global Ministries Resource Development Office continued to engage members, various expressions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the United Church of Christ, and other individuals and entities with like-minded commitments to God's global mission, to provide direct and planned gifts for the work of Global Ministries. The priorities for all types of special gifts are the following:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Priority: Unrestricted Gifts, used where needed most in the work of Global Ministries
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Priority: Gifts for Mission Co-Worker Support, including intensive efforts on the current experiences in personalized fundraising for mission personnel support
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Priority: Restricted Gifts for donor-specified partner churches/programs or theme-based designations

### **Strategic Plan Update**

The Global Ministries Resource Development Office participated in several of the Global Ministries Strategic Directions during 2018, including Nurturing Community and Sharing the Story. However, the main focus of the work is on Strategic Direction #4:

*Developing Resources -- To recognize God's abundance, and growing opportunities for collaboration and generosity by strengthening existing and exploring new funding mechanisms and sources for God's mission.*

In 2018, the Global Ministries Spring Appeal letter was signed by the two Co-Executives and mailed on April 11, 2018, to approximately 29,000 households with a connection to Global Ministries. The 2018 Indianapolis Year-End Appeal, signed by the President of the Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries, was mailed October 8, 2018, to approximately 15,000 households of Disciple constituents, individual constituents from denominations other than the UCC, and constituents for whom no denominational affiliation is known.

The Global Ministries staff team worked on four personalized fundraising campaigns for Global Ministries mission co-workers. Larry and Deborah Colvin began their service with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana. Continuing cases included those of Monica and Thomas Liddle, serving with the Protestant Church of East Timor, and Paul

Turner, serving with the Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo. Anne Gregory concluded her service as a fully-appointed Global Ministries mission co-worker in mid-2018 and has returned as a long-term volunteer serving with the Church of Christ in Thailand. All of the personalized fundraising cases are on track to meet their goal (Colvin) or have surpassed their fundraising goals (Liddles, Turner).

Special Giving promotion continued in 2018 for the Global Ministries Caribbean Initiative: Embrace the Spirit! The special giving component for the Caribbean Initiative consists of special gifts given for ministries in the seven countries involved in the initiative: Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela. As a part of the Caribbean Initiative, special gifts for AMANESER 2025 in Puerto Rico and the House of Hope in Haiti were featured in the 2018 Global Ministries Alternative Christmas campaign. Special giving promotion for the Caribbean Initiative and Alternative Christmas concludes as of Epiphany/Three Kings Day in 2019. Preparations are underway for special giving opportunities related to the new Global Ministries Southern Asia Initiative.

Throughout 2018, the Resource Development team had a special emphasis on planned giving through specific promotions. Promotions included: a monthly emphasis on planned giving, electronic and social media communications about different ways to give planned gifts, one thank you mailing in February 2018 sent to approximately 200 individuals whom Global Ministries has record of being in their estate plans, and a second mailing in March 2018 to 1,400 donors inviting them to consider including Global Ministries in their estate plans. Responses arrived via a response card, phone inquiries, and through the normal donor visit system carried out by staff. The three mechanisms of planned giving were: bequests/estate plans, establishment of endowment/permanent funds, and charitable gift annuities.

Resource Development coordinated with the Mission Personnel, Child and Elder Sponsorship, and area offices in planning and facilitating visits from Global Ministries partner entities in which fundraising for the partner ministry is a component. In April 2018, Resource Development staff helped with the itineration of Ms. Anita Paul of the Family Village Farm in India as she visited individual donors and UCC churches with existing strong connections with the Family Village Farm; and continued with the support of two representatives of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico at the regional assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Virginia. Additional international partner visits with a fundraising component are planned for 2019.

## **AFRICA OFFICE**

Marco Cable, Area Executive

### **Introduction**

On July 18, 2018, Nelson Mandela would have turned 100. Africans across the continent organized celebrations to remember this Ambassador of Peace and African Nationalist. These tributes, events, and memorials commemorating the Centenary of Nelson Mandela have been a call for reflecting, accessing and recommitting to the

causes in which Mr. Mandela committed his life. Partner churches and organizations are engaging in the political future of their countries. Responding to the changing political and religious landscape, they are planning for a stronger and more united Africa. It is out of the church's clear call from the Gospel to engage leaders in all spheres of life that has motivated this involvement in shaping their democracies. In fact, the African Church offers a more honest way for churches to engage political leadership without becoming partisan in their engagement. Christianity is rapidly growing on the African continent and this growth is attributed to the church's holistic approach to ministry. The church is providing spiritual and social engagement guidance to its membership and surrounding communities. The continent is filled with optimism with changing national governments, more inclusive churches, and young people, born after colonial rule, moving into leadership roles.

### **The Democratic Republic of the Congo**

On May 8, 2018, the Democratic Republic of Congo reported an outbreak of the Ebola virus in the Equator Province in the district of Bikoro. Bikoro sits on the shores of Lake Tumba, about 74 miles from Mbandaka, a city of over one million people and headquarters of the Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo (CDCC). The first two confirmed cases of Ebola were from Bikoro. The CDCC has 25 churches, 20 schools and 11 health care facilities in the Bikoro District. The CDCC Health Department engaged communities in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) workshops, provided handwashing kits to each church in Mbandaka, along with new protocols for baptism and communion. It is estimated that more than 500,000 were reached through CDCC media campaign. One week after being declared Ebola-free on July 24, 2018, four new cases of the Ebola virus emerged in northeastern Congo. This is the first time that the northeastern area of the country, which is already suffering from unprecedented violence, has been impacted by Ebola. The unrest in the area has made it very difficult for international health workers to contain the virus. According to the World Health Organization, the Ebola outbreak in Congo is the second deadliest in history following the West Africa outbreak that claimed thousands of lives in 2014.

On January 16th, Dr. Francisco Ekofo, a Community of Disciples of Christ in Congo pastor and Dean of Theology at the Protestant University gave a sermon at the Protestant Cathedral for the commemoration of the assassination of Laurent Kabila, father of the current president, Joseph Kabila. In that sermon, he gave what some have described as a mild critique of the current government along with a prophetic message. In his homily, Dr. Ekofo dreamt with the congregation about a nation he would like to leave for his children – a Congo with economic justice, sovereign over its natural resources, where no person was above the law and with a strong infrastructure. After the service, he and his family received threats from the government including a visit to their home by soldiers. The UN assisted the Dr. Ekofo and his family to evacuate the Congo.

### **Zimbabwe**

General Elections in Zimbabwe to determine Mr. Robert Mugabe's successor were held on July 30, 2018. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission declared incumbent Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) candidate, Emmerson Mnangagwe,

the president with 50.8% of votes over the Movement for Democratic Change Alliance (MDC) candidate, Nelson Chamisa, 44.3%. ZANU-PF also received the majority in the House of Assembly. Within days of the announcement, there were demonstrations across the country organized by the MDC. The army attacked and open fire on protesters and bystanders, killing six people.

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Mtata, on behalf of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, wrote a Pastoral Letter to Zimbabwe and the international community. The letter had a number of requests to the ZANU-PF and MDC leadership. Dr. Mtata requested that ZANU PF, “create avenues for inclusive dialogue and engagement as well as to heed to the complaints raised by the MDC Alliance. The nation needs you to commit to a nation-building dialogue process aimed at uniting the nation and creating an inclusive way forward.... To consider and prioritize a formal constitutional recognition for the leader of the main opposition consistent with practices in other developed democracies.” And to the MDC, Dr. Mtata wrote, “we also plead with the MDC Alliance leadership to bear in mind the pressing need to maintain peace and not take actions that may easily deteriorate to chaos. Volatile situations tend to deteriorate and attain a life of their own beyond anyone’s control. National peace is a mutually responsible endeavor that requires you to play your part towards its full attainment.” The Council continues to engage with the newly elected administration in areas of justice, equality and stability for Zimbabwe.

### **South Africa**

On February 27, South Africa’s Parliament voted to change Section 25 of the constitution, which deals with property, to allow for land expropriation without compensation. The issues related to land are some of the key unresolved issues since apartheid was defeated. It has been a campaign platform for South Africa’s ruling party, African National Congress (ANC), yet little has been done to ensure a peaceful transfer of land to the black majority who are among the poorest in the country. Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa, announced in his inaugural State of the Nations Address that the government would accelerate land redistribution. In August, United States President, Donald Trump, tweeted that he was directing Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to investigate South Africa land reform, farm seizures and the killing of white farmers. South Africa’s government immediately responded to Trump’s misguided tweet and accused Trump of inflaming an already high-octane debate over land in South Africa. President Ramaphosa in response and in subsequent interviews, speeches, and statements, has ensured South Africans and the world that land reform will be conducted without an impact on economic growth or food security. The South Africa Council of Churches has been pushing for such land reform since the end of apartheid. In response to the question of the role of the church when it comes to the issue of land reform, Professor Mandi Kukuni and Mr. Kojo Parris answered: “either as an institution with a prophetic mandate, major landowner or fulcrum of the lives of many in our communities, the church cannot escape involvement in the ongoing debates around land reform. Further, since the imposition of apartheid, formal institutions of governance in South Africa has been undergoing a deepening crisis of confidence. Unabated even after 1994, the Church is perhaps the largest and most widely spread structure that retains sufficient authority to provide guidance to the broad masses.

Thus, the Church not only has an obligation to address this deeply emotional issue, but it has the access and means - it cannot escape without comment.” The South Africa Council of Churches has pledged to continue to put pressure on the South African government until a just resolution is found.

### **Mission Personnel**

In 2018, Global Ministries had 11 mission co-workers serving in 7 African nations (Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Ghana). They accompany partners in areas of girls’ empowerment, agricultural and community development, education, social justice, theological formation, and hunger programs.

## **EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC OFFICE**

Derek Duncan, Executive

2018 was a period of new leadership of the East Asia and Pacific office, with extensive partner visits throughout the region, and numerous opportunities to extend solidarity and accompaniment on behalf of Disciples. The following are highlights in the areas of nurturing partnership and working for peace with justice in the region.

### **South Korea**

One of the most notable developments in the region is the progress toward peace on the Korean Peninsula. The year began with the U.S. and Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea (DPRK) escalating threats to the point of potential nuclear war. Global Ministries joined ecumenical efforts to urge the two countries to engage in a process of dialogue instead of brinksmanship.



In March 2018, Korean Churches produced the statement, “Cultivating Peace, Proclaiming Hope,” which reaffirmed the five principles proclaimed in the ‘88 Declaration, still necessary for resolution of division today: Independence, Peace, Grand National Unity, Humanitarianism and People’s Participation. It called on the international ecumenical community to work with “renewed urgency to prevent another war in the Korean Peninsula, to reduce tensions and promote dialogue, and that establishment of a peace treaty for the Korean Peninsula is a critical and immediate necessity for denuclearization and peaceful coexistence on the Peninsula.”

A breakthrough occurred in early 2018 during the South Korean Olympics, followed up by a summit in April between North and South Korea focused on improving “inter-Korean relations” by increasing high-level dialogues, humanitarian exchanges, and cooperative ventures between the two Koreas, gradually transforming the military/security environment between them into a “peace zone,” and to work with

international partners to establish a “permanent and solid peace regime” to replace the Korean War armistice agreement.

US President Donald Trump and DPRK leader Kim Jong-un held a follow-up summit in June 2018 in Singapore, pledging mutual steps toward peace, normalization of relations, and denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. While analysts remain wary of the details between the US and North Korea, the commitment to dialogue between North and South Korea seems genuine. Leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ issued a statement following the Singapore Summit called “Peace is a Process”:

The statement says peace “must be pursued” by taking “steps...in good faith toward normalization of relations and, most importantly, steps that can lead to forgiveness, reconciliation, and trust which are necessary for peace to be achieved and sustained.” The denominational leaders continue, “we declare our shared hope that the Singapore Summit may one day achieve its aspirational goal of reconciliation and a just peace in Korea, and affirm together our commitment to making such aspirations for peace a reality.



In the fall, the 103rd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), was held on the island of Jeju, south of the Republic of Korea. The gathering was an important opportunity to reflect through narrative testimonies and story-telling the issues that many small nations in the Asia-Pacific area face in order to process the pain and grievances of the past, with an aim to collaborate better in advocacy and efforts toward peace and reunification in the Korean Peninsula.

### **Pacific**

In May 2018, the biennial meeting of the Micronesian Council of the United Church of Christ (MCUCC) brought together the churches of Kosrae, Chuuk, and Pohnpei of the FSM and the JRD (Jarin Rarik Dron) in the Marshall Islands. Following the meeting, the Area

Executive visited the church in Pohnpei to deliver baccalaureate and commencement addresses to the Ohwa Theological College undergraduate class.

Rev. Tafue Lusama, former General Secretary of the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu (EKT), or the Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu, was an international guest at the 2017 Disciples General Assembly.

Reciprocating that invitation, in August 2018, Global Ministries leadership attended the General Assembly of the EKT in Funafuti, Tuvalu hosted by Global Service Worker Nikotemo Sopepa. Rev. Lusama, also a Global Ministries International Board member, traveled to Washington, DC after the April board meeting to speak and present on the subject of Climate Migration at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days annual conference.



The Pacific Theological College (PTC) and the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), are running programs addressing the impacts of climate change in the region. The East Asia and Pacific office will continue to look for ways to support the Pacific Conference of Churches and its member churches, especially in their environmental programs throughout the region.

## **Japan**

This year was the 20th anniversary celebration of the Bazaar Café in Kyoto. The Bazaar Café is a café ministry that operates in the Clapboard Inn, a historic property that is being transferred to the Kyoto Conference of the United Church of Christ in Japan. The occasion was also an opportunity to honor the founder of the Bazaar Café, the Rev. Teruko Enomoto, who passed away April 25, 2018. Under the vision and leadership of Rev. Enomoto, the Bazaar Café has developed several ministries of counseling, bible study, and practices of inclusive hospitality to refugees, the LGBT community, and others marginalized or suffering from trauma and in need of community and healing. In addition to her mission appointment teaching at Doshisha University, Global Ministries co-worker Martha Mensendiek supports and volunteers at the Bazaar Café and was close to Rev. Enomoto.



The Fukushima disaster response continues seven years later and emergency relief was provided this year for natural disasters this summer, including record heat waves, intense flooding, and significant storm damage from multiple typhoons. Much of this impact was felt in the southern side of Shikoku and Honshu Islands, from Hiroshima to Kobe and the Kyoto/Osaka areas. The United Church of Christ in Japan has been responding to emergency needs throughout these disasters, with support from One Great Hour of Sharing and Week of Compassion.

### **Philippines**

Bishop Melzar Labuntog was elected new General Secretary of the UCCP at the Assembly, which was held in Cagayan de Oro on the southern Philippines island of Mindanao. The Assembly was held on the first anniversary of the May 2017 attack and burning of Dansalan College in Marawi City, a school of the UCCP that traces its beginning to the early literacy work of Dr. Frank Laubach (1884-1970), a Congregational missionary who developed an interest working with the Moro people of Mindanao and on relations between Muslims and Christians.

The new campus of the Dansalan College Foundation in Iligan City, approximately an hour north of Marawi and west of Cagayan de Oro still employs many of the faculty of the original campus, some of whom were kidnapped during the Marawi attack. It teaches many of the children whose families fled the attack on Marawi and remains committed to teaching its “peace” curriculum which is based on interfaith understanding and community relations. The school, its Principal Fedelinda Tawagan, and its new facility are all impressive and have ambitious goals to serve the UCCP and the region in the area of interfaith community-building. Global Ministries will continue to support Dansalan College and the UCCP as it discerns the future of this vital institution.

The Philippines was severely impacted in mid-September by Typhoon Ompong, which was the strongest storm to hit the northeast Asia-Pacific region in twenty-five years. Strong winds, followed by flooding and mudslides killed more than 100 and injured and displaced thousands, particularly in the North Luzon Jurisdiction – Cagayan Valley, Ilocos and Cordillera regions. The UCCP has been responding to the numerous emergency needs, with support from One Great Hour of Sharing and Week of Compassion.

## **Hong Kong**

In August Global Ministries staff traveled to Hong Kong to visit partners, including the Hong Kong Christian Council, the Hong Kong Council of the Christian Church in China, the Chung Chi College Divinity School, Hong Kong Christian Service, and the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY). The visit also included the opportunity to worship with and learn about the Kowloon Union Church and the cooperative outreach efforts of the Asia Pacific Migrant Ministry with the numerous refugees and migrant and domestic workers in Hong Kong.

Of special note, long-term mission co-worker Bruce Van Voorhis retired in 2018 after 27 years of service to Global Ministries. Bruce's last appointment was organizing and conducting human rights workshops for Interfaith Cooperation Forum (ICF), a joint program of the Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY) in Hong Kong and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and editing ICF's monthly e-newsletter faith and peace. Previously he worked with the Asian Human Rights Commission and the Christian Conference of Asia. Global Ministries celebrates and gives thanks for the gifts and service Bruce has dedicated in ministry with our partners to the work of God's mission in the world.

## **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN OFFICE**

Angel L. Rivera-Agosto, Area Executive

### **Introduction: With Faith and Living Hope**

At the last Assembly of the Evangelical Pentecostal Union of Venezuela (UEPV), this Global Ministries' partner affirmed its identity within "original Pentecostalism." "Original Pentecostalism" is the deep expression of a spirituality which anchors its roots in the national ecclesial expressions of Latin American and Caribbean countries and its connection to the processes of affirmation of human rights, social justice, and spirituality of solidarity. In songs and liturgies, and the sharing of daily reflections, the UEPV affirmed its connection with the Venezuelan culture, as well as its particular Pentecostal identity.

As we end this year of witnessing God's presence in Latin America and the Caribbean, we cannot avoid feeling in our spirit, mind, and will the spiritual strength of solidarity. Our partners continued embracing the Spirit through receiving pilgrimages, sponsoring workshops and projects, sharing resources, and confronting the powers that deny the fullness of life. The Caribbean Initiative came to a close with resources and experiences that will endure not only in the work of the region, but also globally. The accompaniment of our partners through civil unrest, migration, and emergencies awakened a divine presence, offering an opportunity to hear and share the Good News.

### **Puerto Rico**

Both the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S.A. and Canada and the United Church of Christ have accompanied Global Ministries' partners through the humanitarian crisis lived on the island after the passing of Hurricane María in 2017. On November 25, 2017, a delegation of the DOC General Ministries, led by the Reverend

Teresa “Terri” Hord-Owens, DOC’s General Minister and President, was invited by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico to participate in their Administrative Board Meeting held that month. In that meeting, the Administrative Board expressed gratitude for the solidarity and the accompaniment of its sister churches in the U.S. and Canada. Reverend Julia Brown Karimu, President of the Division of Overseas Ministries and Global Ministries’ Co-Executive and the Global Ministries Area Executive for Latin America and the Caribbean were part of that delegation. In the afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup>, both Reverends Brown Karimu and Rivera-Agosto participated in the Joint Commission Meeting of both U.S. and Canada and Puerto Rico churches. There, both leaders presented reports about the work of Global Ministries throughout the world, specifically in Latin America and the Caribbean. Later in that week, a delegation composed by representatives of the Latin America and the Caribbean Office of Global Ministries, Week of Compassion and UCC Disaster Ministries visited projects and partners on the island. They had the opportunity to visit the Ryder Hospital in Humacao, the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico as well as two communities in Bayamón and Naranjito related to the work of Amaneser 2025.

### **Jamaica**

The Reverend Julia Brown Karimu, President of the Overseas Ministries Division and Co-Executive of the Global Ministries with the Global Ministries Executive for Latin America and the Caribbean, visited partners in Jamaica from February 7-12, 2018. During their visit, both leaders of Global Ministries had the opportunity to dialogue with the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, the United Theological College for the Western Isles and the International University of the Caribbean. The context of unemployment, violence and crime has placed the church in the call to strengthen the ministries of local, economic development with emphasis on education and capacity building, as well as attention to the protection and shelter of children and strengthening the family. Reverends Brown Karimu and Rivera Agosto participated in a celebration worship for the 25 years of ministry of the United Church in Hellshire, a congregation located in the capital, and witnessed the appreciation for the ministry of William and Veronica Kyle, former mission co-workers of Global Ministries, who served and contributed to the construction of their house of worship.

### **Dominican Republic**

As part of the Caribbean Initiative, ten members of the Common Global Ministries Board traveled to the Dominican Republic the first week of April 2018. There, they met and visited projects of partners to celebrate relationships and to receive and share the Good News of Jesus Christ. The group had the opportunity to visit Social Services of the Dominican Churches (SSID), Proyecto Educativo Caminante, the Christian Center of Family Counseling (CECAF), ALFALIT Dominicano and the Evangelical Dominican Church. Particularly with the EDC, the delegation lived the experience of worshipping God in a Caribbean context and knowing what does it mean to be a church in the Dominican Republic. Issues like the rights of stateless people, human trafficking, the right to water and sustainable development were deep in the agenda of the pilgrimage. They had the chance to visit a Dominican-Haitian marginalized community in the outskirts of Santo Domingo, talked and shared with the families in that community. As one of the participants shared in a written report “I felt honored and privileged to have

been able to be in the Dominican Republic and take these gifts back home with me. It will be my job as a Global Ministries board member to explain critical presence and mutuality to my congregation and friends. This amazing trip has given me a renewed purpose of taking the strategic direction of Global Ministries to heart and spread this message within my community.”

### **El Salvador:**

Both Emmanuel Baptist Church (EBC) and the Salvadorian Lutheran Synod (SLS) are engaged in exciting work toward a culture of peace. Their projects address the root causes of violence, injustice, and migration. SLS focuses on trauma healing, ecumenical and inter-religious networking, communications, health and wellness, elementary and middle school projects, and the work with "*maras*" or youth gangs. EBC prioritizes youth cultural projects, Christian Education, local grants for students, youth efforts in peace mediation and sustainable development. There are also prophetic issues that our friends are working on in El Salvador. The right to clean water is addressed by the Salvadorian Ecumenical Movement (composed by mainline Protestant churches along with the Roman Catholic Church and religious institutions such as the Central American University), to address the Salvadorian Legislative Assembly's proposed bill that would privatize access to clean water.

### **Nicaragua**

Nicaragua is living difficult times. The Nicaraguan Evangelical Council (CEPAD, acronym in Spanish) and the Interchurch Center for Theological and Social Studies (CIEETS, acronym in Spanish), reported incidents of violence caused by protests against several structural reforms and policies that the government of Nicaragua has tried to put into effect in recent times - the most remarkable being the one regarding the Social Security Law. This generated a great number of protests across the country, especially from the university students. These protests led to people being killed—students, one policeman, one journalist, innocent bystanders, and other protesters. Global Ministries approved support to our partners through One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC) and Week of Compassion (Disciples) providing funds for medical needs, food, and other supplies to people affected by the present situation in Nicaragua. Global Ministries has provided accompaniment with the presence of mission co-worker, Jeanette Salley, and global service worker, Ignacio Salinas.

### **Guatemala**

On Sunday, June 3, 2018, at 2:00 p.m. local time in Guatemala, *Volcán del Fuego* erupted, the most violent eruption of the last 40 years. It impacted the central and southern regions of the country: Sacatepéquez, Escuintla, Chimaltenango, and Guatemala City. The volcano exploded and launched pyroclastic flows (a mixture of sand, rocks, and gases of high temperatures +600 degrees) that directly hit the communities surrounding the volcano. In the most remote areas, the effects included rain, sand, and ash, which interrupted air traffic in the afternoon and evening of Sunday, damaging roofs as well as crops. The Ecumenical Christian Council of Guatemala (ECCG), one of Global Ministries' partners in Guatemala along with CONAVIGUA, have been actively assisting communities near the volcano, particularly in the province of

Esquintla where the Catholic Diocese of that town is also working. ECCG is working through the post-emergence stage of the crisis by collaborating in the rehabilitation of communities, ensuring food, security and psychosocial assistance to the victims, specifically the ones that still live in shelters provided by the Diocese. Global Ministries has provided an effective accompaniment through the presence of our partners, our mission co-worker Ricardo Mayol, and funds for projects provided by UCC's Disaster Ministries and Disciples' Week of Compassion.

### **U.S. Mexico Border**

The recent Central America Caravan posed a challenge to the people on both sides of the border and raised the issues of the rights of immigrants and the root causes of migration, not only in Central America but also in other parts of the world. People are fleeing from countries like Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala because of internal violence, poverty, and climate change. Faith communities continue to show the religious significance of unity and love in the face of increased barriers for asylum seekers and unaccompanied children, which impede our moral and legal obligations to offer protection to vulnerable populations. Both DOC and UCC churches have been active, participating in the accompaniment of the caravan, leading workshops and visits to the border and signing advocacy documents affirming the rights and the humanity of migrants. Global Ministries visited the Brownsville/Matamoros Border from October 9-11, 2018. Reverend David Vargas, Global Ministries' President Emeritus and the Latin America and Caribbean Area Executive led a delegation of DOC General Ministries staff, including the Reverend Teresa "Terri" Hord-Owens, General Minister and President, to express solidarity with Global Ministries partner Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries (SWGSM). Feliberto Pereira, SWGSM's Executive Director and Founder, gave us a full report of the conditions and challenges of refugees and asylum seekers on that part of the border. He also took us to the places where the migrants arrived, seeking asylum as well as to shelters where they receive food and medical assistance.

### **Colombia**

Reverends John C. Dorhauer and Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens, General Ministers and Presidents of the United Church of Christ in the U.S. and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, and the two Global Ministries' Co-Executives, Reverends Julia Brown Karimu and James Moos, signed a letter sent to the Peace Discussion Table, composed by the Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army-ELN, to resume peace talks as they have been taking place in Quito, Ecuador. They expressed their grave concern for the challenges facing the peace talks at events such as the attack on the police station in Barranquilla (Soledad – Atlántico), the bombing of an indigenous reservation in Chocó province and the recent wave of assassinations of social leaders could erode trust in the possibility of a sustainable and lasting peace accord among both parties and the people of Colombia. In light of President Juan Manuel Santos' decision to suspend the fifth round of negotiations at that moment, the church leaders encouraged both sides to return to the negotiations and continue with the agreed upon agenda, to declare a bilateral ceasefire agreement, that could be verified and bring peace to the Colombian people and to show political will from each side to facilitate the continuation of the negotiations. Similarly, they invited

the guarantor and companion nations to maintain their support for the peace talks as a means to achieving peace in Colombia.

Global Ministries participated in a sign-on campaign for churches and faith-based organizations in response to a death threat against the Christian Centre for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action (JUSTAPAZ). JUSTAPAZ learned of a communiqué in which an illegal armed group, self-identified as “*Águilas Negras*” (Black Eagles), threatened to kill a group of social leaders, human rights defenders, organizers, and journalists. JUSTAPAZ was included in the list. Responding to these threats and as part of the international community, the two Global Ministries’ Co-Executives and the Area Executive for Latin America and the Caribbean expressed their solidarity, support, and accompaniment of JUSTAPAZ in the face of this threat. They and the rest of the signatories of the document rejected all forms of violence that could affect the staff of JUSTAPAZ and the communities that they accompany in different regions of Colombia. They also demanded that the government of Colombia act with celerity and efficacy in investigating and judging those responsible for the death threats against JUSTAPAZ. Additionally, they demanded the provision of appropriate protective measures for the staff of JUSTAPAZ and the communities they accompany, with the goal of guaranteeing the continuity of the human rights and peacebuilding efforts they accompany, as a faith-based organization in Colombia.

### **Cuba**

On March 9, 2018, Reverends John C. Dorhauer and Teresa “Terri” Hord Owens, General Ministers and Presidents of the United Church of Christ in the U.S. and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, accompanied other heads of communion signing a letter addressed to the U.S. Congress regarding the reestablishment of the U.S. Embassy in Cuba and to continue strengthening relations between both countries. The heads of communion expressed their great concern about recent U.S. decisions regarding our Embassy in Havana, the suspension of visas and the State Department travel advisory. As a consequence of mysterious and unexplained health issues reported by some U.S. personnel serving at the U.S. Embassy in Cuba, the U.S. Department of State ordered the departure of all nonessential U.S. diplomats from the embassy in Havana, Cuba. This has resulted in a suspension of virtually all consular services at the embassy. Cuban citizens wanting to visit family in the United States for emergencies, connect with church partners, or to attend faith-based meetings or assemblies are unable to do so. As a matter of fact, the suspension of visa processing within Cuba requires any Cuban citizen wishing to apply for a visa to do so at a U.S. Embassy outside of Cuba. The increasing costs and complications of the application process—which requires rescheduling interviews, obtaining visas for third countries, international travel, and paying to stay there for at least two weeks—have caused much anguish among our Cuban partners on the island and their families abroad. That decision has affected new economic possibilities in Cuba, where Cubans have opened privately owned bed-and-breakfasts and restaurants, as well as other small businesses. With the downturn in U.S. travel, these private businesses have suffered a severe loss of customers and income. Many of them have been forced to close. The leaders urged the U.S. Congress to press the administration for the re-

staffing of the embassy in Havana, the reinstatement of consular services at the embassy, and the removal of the travel advisory for U.S. citizens to travel to the island.

### **The Caribbean Initiative (CI)**

During this past year and a half, Global Ministries has been engaged in the promotion and execution of the Caribbean Initiative (CI). Through the initiative, we invited the whole church to witness together with the Caribbean region through education, advocacy, and support of our partner churches and organizations in Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and Colombia. Church leaders, congregations, regions, and conferences experienced the incredible gifts and the strong *testimonios* (testimonies) from our partners as they receive and share the Good News of Jesus Christ. A variety of resources have been shared including Bible studies, music, liturgical materials, unique giving opportunities, People-to-People Pilgrimages, videos, children's resources, and more. In addition, discussions related to the universal challenges contained in this initiative, like the quest for peace and sustainable development in the face of climate change has been addressed through the materials and the pilgrimages across the Caribbean.

More than 30 different written, audio, and video materials as well as recorded webinars were published on our website and are still there for future reference, study, and use. That includes Bible studies, background documents for witness and advocacy, thematic presentations by partners, liturgical materials for special occasions and worship. You can access the materials through our website. One of the most important materials in the initiative has to do with the children. By inviting children to "Embrace the Fruits of the Spirit," the initiative developed a Vacation Bible School curriculum designed to help children discover the fruits of the spirit and how to apply them in their daily lives while exploring the Caribbean.

To grasp the experience of the Caribbean Initiative, it has been crucial to fully recognize the inspiring work of our partners in the region. One of the examples we can quote regarding the witness of a partner is through the challenges of the ongoing peace process in Colombia. Through meeting our partners, leaders from our churches have reflected upon the contrasts between what they read in the news and the *testimonies* from the people who put their own commitment and bodies on the line for the cause of peace and justice. The same can be reported from the church delegations that traveled to countries like the Dominican Republic and Cuba to be present in the lives of the brothers and sisters with whom we collaborate in a spirit of international solidarity. However, a most profound journey that we can describe from the experiences of those pilgrimages during this past year is that of inner transformation to embrace mission from a different perspective.

Another way in which the Caribbean Initiative connected people in mission was through giving opportunities. By this key element in mission, churches, conferences, and congregations connected with our partners in the Caribbean. Partners like House of Hope in Haiti and AMANESER 2025 in Puerto Rico could develop their ministries regarding the defense of children's human rights and solar-powered communities, respectively, thanks to donations from DOC and UCC congregations. Leaders from the

Evangelical Dominican Church and JUSTAPAZ in Colombia could participate in mission-in-residence experiences in the U.S., sharing their experiences with local congregations and networks.

When we embrace peace, when we embrace justice, when we embrace hope, we do what our partners in the Caribbean have been doing throughout the history of all of their ministries: putting their own bodies, their own circumstances and realities into their commitment for the Gospel and the sharing of the Good News. How can we put our own bodies at stake, if we are about to talk about commitment, ministry, mission, the sake of justice, peace, hope and the fullness of life? May this initiative, as the ones that came before this one: the Congo and the Middle East Initiatives and the upcoming Southern Asia Initiative, continue inviting the church to go deeper into our vision that all people and creation share in God's abundant life.

### **MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE OFFICE**

Peter Makari, Area Executive

The theme for the 2019 General Assembly, "Abide in Me," comes from Jesus' reminder that, as Christians, we cannot live full lives without faith. Jesus said, "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:4-5). The relationship Jesus describes is one of ultimate mutuality: each depends on the other to bear fruit. In mission, and specifically in the Middle East and Europe, the many relationships we nurture are based on a similar mutuality, which Global Ministries describes as "walking in hope with others in God's mission." In 2018, throughout the Middle East and Europe, Global Ministries walks with, our partners to nurture a deeper community, to pursue peace with justice, and to further God's mission in the world.

In 2018 in the Middle East and Europe, Global Ministries sought to nurture community—to accompany partners in witnessing to God's abundant grace through the proclamation of the Gospel, and exchanges of people, gifts and talents—in a variety of ways. With an intensification of unhelpful US policies toward the Middle East, it was perhaps especially necessary to ensure that we engage our partners in ways that were mutually edifying.

Through regular communication and engagement with partners throughout the Middle East and Europe during the year, and in visits to the region to visit particular partners in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, Greece, and Morocco, the realities of the continuing displacement of people on a massive scale, the impact of US policy decisions related to Israel/Palestine, and socio-political and economic realities in each context inform and affect the abilities and priorities of our partners, and our participation with them in their ministries and witness—yet our long-term accompaniment which remains steady and steadfast.

#### **Syria**

In many countries, the eight-year Syria war continues to impact daily life—for those who have been displaced and those to whom they have fled. Several partners in Syria, the

Middle East, and Europe are actively engaged in addressing the urgent humanitarian needs of the half of the Syrian population who have been forcibly uprooted. Global Ministries, with the generous contributions of Disciples and UCC members, contributes to that response, which is personal, humane, and continuous. Even as the fighting has ebbed and the world's attention seems to have moved on, the fact that so many millions remain as refugees and internally displaced requires the persistent care and response from the global community.

## **Egypt**

Eight years after the beginning of the so-called “Arab Spring” and the Egyptian revolution that captured the imagination of people everywhere, the country has passed through significant political change, and the economy is struggling. The population has reached 100 million, all living on a narrow strip of land along the Nile River. Our partners there, the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) and the Coptic Orthodox Bishopric for Public, Ecumenical, and Social Services (BLESS) are deeply engaged in local community development to address the needs of the poorest of the poor. Additionally, CEOSS has initiated interreligious and intercultural dialogue to improve relations in the country and between the people of Egypt and others. From June 24-29, 2018, CEOSS brought a seven-person delegation from Egypt to encounter interested institutions and partners in the United States as part of an Egyptian-US Dialogue Initiative, with the support of Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ. In an intense week of meetings, public fora, and advocacy in Chicago and Washington, DC, the delegation strove to provide a more complete and human perspective on the realities of life in Egypt today, and to explore ways that the relationships between Egypt and the US could be strengthened—governmentally as well as through public diplomacy, civil society, and religious institutions. The dialogue initiative is part of an ongoing emphasis that began in October 2014, and will be followed by a reciprocal visit in Egypt in February 2019, and a further encounter in 2020.

## **Israel-Palestine**

In 2018, US policy directions toward Israel/Palestine resulted in an exaggeration of support for Israel at the expense of rights and justice for Palestinians, including the less than 2% of the population that is Christian. These shifts included the fallout of the decision to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, defunding the UN Relief and Works Agency which is responsible for large-scale programs for Palestinian refugees, and efforts to curtail speech that supports Palestinian rights. Global Ministries walked in solidarity with Palestinian partners through visits and through advocacy. In 2018, participating in a conference of the YWCA of Palestine called “Youth Participate and Youth Decide: Towards Freedom and Justice” in October, supporting United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 which urges “UN organizations and civil society to consider ways to increase meaningful and inclusive participation of youth in building a sustainable future that promotes justice, respect, and security. The prolonged military occupation of Palestine and the consistent violations of rights, targeted mostly against young women and men, have created a desperate and hopeless state for youth.” We also participated in the annual olive harvest, a program of solidarity organized by the Joint Advocacy Initiative of the YWCA and YMCAs in Palestine.

Further, Global Ministries was represented at the 9<sup>th</sup> annual conference of Kairos Palestine, a seminal document-turned-movement offering an authentic and important voice of Palestinian Christians. Further, Global Ministries signed two major ecumenical statements and letters, on the occasion of 70 years since the founding of the State of Israel and the Palestinian *Nakba* (“catastrophe”), and on the dangerous shifts in US policy toward Israel/Palestine named above, by supporting peace, justice, and equality. This, in addition to continuous advocacy efforts throughout the year to urge peace and resolution to conflict in the region, including Syria and Yemen, with a more just US policy.

## **Europe**

Global Ministries continues to pay close attention to the ways that our partners provide bold and humane voices and responses to the refugee presence, often dubbed a crisis. In Italy with the Waldensian Church’s Mediterranean Hope, in Greece through the Evangelical Church’s Perichoresis, and with the Reformed Church in Hungary, our partners are offering a vision and actions that boldly reject the anti-immigrant sentiment—and even policies—of their societies and governments. By appointing mission co-workers to serve with these church partners, and by supporting their witness, Global Ministries and our partners live out God’s radical love by confronting powers that deny the fullness of life and the integrity of creation. In addition, Global Ministries affirmed a formal relationship with the Church of Scotland, a communion with which we have worked positively over the years. Such an affirmation reflects our core value to build interdependence and unity among all of God’s children.

Through partner relations, advocacy for peace with justice, the appointment of mission co-workers, financial support for programs, participation in interfaith relations, and by sharing the stories of our partners and the people they serve, Global Ministries’ engagement in the Middle East and Europe reflects a commitment to Christ’s love and God’s mission, and a belief that, in order to share with partners to work for God’s justice, peace and reconciliation. Neither we nor our partners can do it alone. We are intertwined with our partners as vines and branches, bearing a fruit that is not always easy to recognize, but fruit indeed—the fruit of shared participation in God’s mission.

## **SOUTHERN ASIA OFFICE**

Deenabandhu Manchala, Area Executive

Populist politics fueled by religious supremacist versions of nationhood in India, a fragile democratic formation in an atmosphere of terrorism in Pakistan, subversion of constitutional norms and democratic institutions in Sri Lanka, unprecedented floods in Kerala, India and the earthquake in Palu in Indonesia that saw thousands dead, and the continued displacement and dehumanization of many marginalized sections for economic growth and unrestrained industrialization, are the backdrop of the context in which Global Ministries partners in southern Asia region find themselves as they strive for justice, peace and dignity for all.

## **East Timor**

As a follow up to a survey and evaluation of IPTL-GM partnership in Lisadila, a vocational training school in horticulture has started from November 2018. It will become fully operational in about six months and will benefit many families, especially as it addresses the employment needs of those who have no access to higher education in this remote part of the country. Capacity building of IPTL Pastors continues as Rev. Tom Liddle, a GM mission co-worker facilitates training in partnership with the leadership of the IPTL.

## **Indonesia**

Global Ministries provides agricultural training farm for farmers and pastors in organic farming and herbicides, and staff development of the Theological School in Lewa (STT, Lewa) in Sumba, Indonesia. Global Ministries also supports GMIT's (Protestant Church in West Timor) the House of Hope, Kupang, Indonesia which has recently been opened to be a shelter for women rescued from traffickers in the Nusa Tenggara region of Indonesia. Additionally, there is an active collaboration with other partner organizations agencies such as the UnitingWorld of the Uniting Church in Australia and civil society organizations working on issues of human trafficking and religious freedom.

## **Sri Lanka**

The Church of American Ceylon Mission continues to receive special attention. It has had its biennial assembly at which a new constitution, covenanting themselves to be a congregational church, was adopted. Global Ministries continues to help resolve divisions within, and the consistent accompaniment seems to be resulting in positive developments. Global Ministries' facilitated events in 2017 and 2018 have resulted in some concrete planning for mission engagement in the Wannu region of Sri Lanka and for its life and ministries during the next four years (2018-2022).

## **Partnerships for God's Justice in solidarity with the victims of human trafficking:**

Asia, especially Southern Asia, is perhaps the largest cluster of countries where the socially and economically disempowered people are constantly deprived of their livelihoods, displaced, forced to migrate and thus fall prey to traffickers. This reality has presented itself as an opportunity for Global Ministries in its ongoing exploration for new meanings and expressions of partnership. Through a call to be in solidarity with victims of human trafficking, Global Ministries in collaboration with the Protestant Church in West Timor, Indonesia (GMIT) convened a gathering of church workers, activists, and theologians to reflect on the meaning of partnership for God's justice. About 53 people from 11 countries met for five days in Kupang, Indonesia. The gathering provided an opportunity for those present to learn from one another's expertise and experience, develop new partnerships, and to resolve on mutual accompaniment. It affirmed the need for partnerships for justice in contexts where forces of evil and death seem to collaborate to abuse and dehumanize the vulnerable people. The conference participants attempted to reimagine partnership beyond resource sharing and bilateralism, particularly when faced with common challenges, such as human trafficking and forced migration beyond other things. They asserted that partnership in mission is inclusive of all who are committed to the values of justice, peace, and human dignity, and hence is and has to be multi-directional. The conference participants resolved to

work together vigorously through the new partnerships that were facilitated during their time together in Kupang. A full-length report is available on the Global Ministries website.

#### **Forum for Freedom of Religion or Belief:**

Many religious minority communities in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are facing new and complex threats on account of the increasing nexus between political powers and religious fundamentalist forces. This forum will give visibility and strengthen advocacy efforts of the civil society organizations and faith communities in their respective countries as well as in the region. It was formally launched in Bangkok, Thailand in December 2018. Global Ministries has played a key role in the formation of this forum for rights and justice to the marginalized communities in South Asia.

#### **Celebrating Diversity: Global Ministries' Southern Asia Area Focus, 2019-20**

Global Ministries invites its constituencies to focus their efforts on learning and solidarity with communities and churches in a specific region for a two-year long process. In 2013-14, the Democratic Republic of Congo was the focus, 2015-16 the Middle East, and 2017-18 the Caribbean. 2019-20 will be an occasion for learning, being challenged and enriched by different expressions of Christian witness in certain distinct and diverse contexts of Southern Asia. It will be an opportunity for learning and interaction in order to be challenged and enriched by different expressions of Christian witness in select contexts of Southern Asia. It will explore and attempt new expressions of partnerships, with an emphasis on facilitating and nurturing partnerships for justice to the marginalized people. The four foci will be: 1. Struggles for an affirmation of human dignity in response to human trafficking, slavery, and forced migration. 2. Freedom of religion as a human right in the emerging context of aggressive assertions of majoritarian religio-political ideologies. 3. Churches as open, just and inclusive communities amidst cultures of discrimination and exclusion. 4. Agriculture as counter-culture to industrial and consumer cultures that destroy earth's resources and commodify people and relationships.

#### **MISSION PERSONNEL**

Catherine Nichols, Executive

Lorna Hernandez, Coordinator, People-to-People Program

#### **Mission Personnel**

As a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, the Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries participates in ministries which attempt to break the divide among God's people by partnering with churches and church-related organizations in the sending and receiving of missionaries. The exchange of people and their gifts unites people across geographical, racial, gender, and economic barriers. A critical component of this ministry includes the presence of missionaries in congregations, allowing congregations to share the vital ministries of the partner churches and our people to people pilgrimages, which offer individuals and congregations opportunities to

cross boundaries and share the love of God as they receive the love of God from those they encounter.

Through the Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, mission co-workers are participating in ministries of critical presence around the world. They are engaged in a variety of ministries including theological education, leadership development, community and development work, human rights, health ministries, children's ministries, and pastoral ministries.

A total of 105 mission co-workers served in 43 countries in 2018, serving in the following categories: 27 fully-supported mission co-workers; 30 global service workers (long-term volunteers); 10 global mission interns; and 38 global associates. The distribution of fully-supported mission co-workers by area: Africa, 7; East Asia and the Pacific, 4; Middle East and Europe, 5; Latin America and the Caribbean, 6; and Southern Asia, 5. In addition, 20 individuals served as short-term volunteers.

Seventeen persons were appointed to church and/or church-related institutions around the world, including ten re-appointees. Terms varied from fully-supported to Global Service Workers. This distribution by area of total appointments was Africa 6; East Asia and the Pacific 1; Europe 2; Latin America and the Caribbean 3; Middle East 3; Southern Asia 1.

Eight new fully-supported Mission Co-workers were appointed or re-appointed in 2018: Kahala Cannon, Swaziland; Larry and Debbie Colvin, Ghana; Fritz-Gerald Joseph and Emmanuela Loccident, Morocco; Fiona Kendall, Italy; Jeffrey Mensendiek, Japan; Michelle McKay, Haiti; and, Mark Knowles and Danielle Murry-Knowles, Lesotho.

One new global mission intern was appointed through Week of Compassion funds in 2018: Danielle Lee, Korea. Six new Global Service Workers (one year or longer) were appointed during 2018: Maria Breckenridge, Zambia; Ros Gnat, Germany; Benjamin Drolet, Lebanon; Anne Gregory, Thailand; A. Violeta Rocha, El Salvador; and, Ignacio Salinas, Nicaragua.

There were 20 short-term volunteers (two weeks to eleven months) appointed in 2018 who served in or will serve in 2019. List of names and term dates are available upon request.

The overseas associate category is a recognition normally given to members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ who are serving outside of the United States and Canada with a church, ecumenical institution or project that involves a ministry that is in accordance with the mission principles of the Common Global Ministries Board. There was one new associate appointment in 2018: Ainsley Anderson, Japan.

Seven individuals completed their service with Global Ministries in the category of fully-supported appointees: Mark Behle, Lesotho, retiring after 34 years of service; Amelia Casillas, Paraguay; Anil and Teresa Henry, India; Loren McGrail, Israel-Palestine; Susan Valiquette, South Africa, after 20 years of service; and, Bruce Van Voorhis, Hong Kong, retiring after 28 years of service.

Five Global Mission Interns completed their service in 2018: Joanines Adorno-Diaz, India; Mary Kathryn Ball, Ecuador; Stewart Barker, Swaziland; Joshua Busick, Dominican Republic; and, Toni Reynolds, Dominican Republic.

Twelve individuals completed their service as Global Service Worker in 2018: Pedro Carlo-Muñiz, Paraguay; Scott Couper, South Africa, after 20 years of service; Eleazar Fernandez, Philippines; Jerri Handy, Mexico; Nancy Lott-Henry, India; Linda James, Democratic Republic of Congo; Susan “Andy” Jepson and Lindley Kinerk, Sri Lanka; Lauren Robinson, Philippines; Magyolene Rodriguez, Nicaragua; Bethany Waggoner, Lebanon; and, Allison Trezona, United Kingdom.

### **Missionary Relationships**

From January 1 – December 31, 2018, 24 missionaries were involved in a ministry of critical presence through missionary visits and relationship building:

Amelia Casillas (1 month) Paraguay; Anne Gregory (3 months) Thailand; Bruce Van Voorhis, (4 months) Hong Kong; Jeffrey Mensendiek (1 Month) Japan; Scott Couper (1 month) South Africa; Susan Valiquette-Couper (4 Months) South Africa; Kearstin Bailey (1 months) Hungary/ Greece; Lindley Kinerk and Susan Jepson (2 months); Jerri Handy, Mexico (2 months), Mark Behle (4 months) Lesotho; Loren McGrail, Israel/Palestine (4 months); Mary Kathryn Ball (1 month) Ecuador; Joshua Busick (1 month) Dominican Republic; Stewart Barker (1 month) Swaziland; Lauren Robinson (1 month) Philippines; Allison Trezona (1 month) United Kingdom; Magdolyne Rodriguez (1 month) Nicaragua; Joye and Bob Ray (2 days); Toni Reynolds (1 month) Dominican Republic; Mary and Gary Olney-Lord (2 days); Joani Adorno, India (2 months); Tom Liddle, Timor, (2 months), Monica Liddle, Timor, (2 months); Larry and Debbie Colvin, Ghana, (2 months).

### **People-to-People Pilgrimages**

The People-to-People Pilgrimage Program continues to assist Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ congregations, regions, conferences, and other related organizations with mission pilgrimages to meet our international partners face-to-face. In 2018, the People-to-People office assisted with inquiries, provided educational materials and supported delegations, resulting in 67 mission pilgrimages. The numbers of pilgrimages per area were 3 to Africa, 4 to the Middle East and Europe, 3 to Southern Asia, 2 to East Asia and the Pacific, and 55 to Latin America and the Caribbean. The countries visited were Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Israel/Palestine, Jamaica, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, South Africa, and South Korea. The Guides for Leaders, Participants, and Advocacy are still available to delegations in an effort to prepare them before, during, and after their international pilgrimage. The Caribbean Initiative offered and experienced an increase of pilgrimages to this region, which was a focus this year on the webpage, designed to offer information on costs, itineraries, and partner information.

## **GLOBAL ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION**

Rebekah Choate, Program Associate

The Global Advocacy and Education program provides leadership in implementing the Global Ministries strategic direction “Working for Peace with Justice.” The advocacy program coordinates with the area offices in relation to regional justice issues that are of concern to our global partners and the communities they serve, and responses are guided by the actions and position of our partners. Opportunities to take action in response to regional or global advocacy concerns include awareness-raising in Global Ministries updates, on the website, and using social media; through supportive letters, statements and solidarity actions by denominational leaders; engaging Disciples members in ecumenical advocacy campaigns and initiatives; and by resourcing board and General Assembly actions.

A cornerstone advocacy event Global Ministries sponsors is the annual conference Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice. The 2018 Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference, held April 20-23, was titled “A World Uprooted: Responding to Migrants, Refugees, and Displaced People”. The 2019 Ecumenical Advocacy Days, entitled "Troubling the Waters for the Healing of the World," will be held April 5-8, 2019. As the Main Representative accredited to the United Nations, the associate participated in a WCC symposium on the role of religion and faith-based organizations in international affairs with a theme of, “Perspectives on Migration: Displacement and Marginalization, Inclusion and Justice. Global Ministries was also represented in the first Disciples Public Presence meeting of grassroots activists in September 2018 in order to network and resource local church leaders and activists with global advocacy tools.

With the Africa office, Global Ministries works with partners to support peaceful and democratic elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Elections were supposed to be held in November 2016, they then were postponed to December 2017, and have now been scheduled for December 2018. US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, has been calling for elections to take place and for a peaceful transfer of power, which is a good thing. Global Ministries will continue to work with partners to support democracy, peace, and human rights in the Congo and in the surrounding region.

With the East Asia and the Pacific office, Global Ministries provides support for implementing the 2015 Disciples resolution “A Call for Peace, Justice, and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula.” In 2018, attention focused on the steps towards calming tensions, particularly the summit between President Trump and Kim Jong-un. The associate was also a delegate to the NCKK’s 2018 Peace Treaty Campaign in Japan and South Korea. Peace and human rights in the Philippines is a priority for Global Ministries’ advocacy and has been focused on indigenous peoples’ rights and the extra-judicial killings under the Duterte government’s war on drugs.

With the Latin America and the Caribbean office, the focus of advocacy for the Caribbean initiative is on relations with Cuba, the peace accords in Colombia, the status of Puerto Rico, the economic situation in Venezuela, climate change and the hurricanes that ravaged the Caribbean in 2017, and the situation of migrants and refugees. In

particular, advocacy backgrounders were produced on issues talked about during the webinars.

With the Middle East and Europe office, advocacy focuses on peace, human rights, and demilitarization throughout the region. Many of the action alerts come as part of the implementation of the resolution passed at the 2017 General Assembly, “A Call for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to Advocate for the Rights of Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation.”

With the Southern Asia office, human trafficking continues to be a large focus of partners in the region along with advocating for the rights of marginalized groups and more resources will be produced for the Southern Asia Initiative launching in 2019.

## **MISSION ENGAGEMENT**

Marcy Gansler, Executive

Beth Guy, Director of Communications

Brandie Midgett-Crosby, Communications Associate

### **Caribbean Initiative**

The Caribbean Initiative continued in 2018 after being launched at the 2017 General Assembly in Indianapolis, IN. In 2018, five webinars were held with Caribbean partners on subjects such as migration/ human-trafficking, peace, economic justice, and sustainable development. There were approximately 150 live views of webinars and several more who later watched the webinar recordings. Videos sharing Caribbean partners’ perspectives on mission were also created as a way to hear and learn directly from Caribbean partners. A new children’s curriculum, Embrace the Fruits of the Spirit, was promoted as a free VBS and/or Sunday School curriculum. The curriculum was downloaded approximately 270 times and reviews from churches who used the curriculum have been overwhelmingly positive. A seven-day devotional/Bible study written by the Reverend Dr. Oral Thomas, Acting President of the United Theological College of the West Indies, was added as a resource as well.

### **World Communion Sunday**

Global Ministries was pleased to add six new communion stories to the list of World Communion Sunday resources this year. These resources come from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Indonesia, Mexico, and Cuba. In 2018 alone, the World Communion Sunday page on the Global Ministries website received over 9,000 unique page views. Resources for World Communion Sunday continue to be in high demand and developing new materials is a priority for Global Ministries.

### **Social Media**

The Office of Mission Engagement has started the process of strengthening the social media presence of Global Ministries, beginning with the launch of the Global Ministries Instagram page. Through Instagram, Global Ministries is sharing information about programs and projects. There are also “humans of Global Ministries” posts sharing personal stories from leaders of partner organizations, and “where in the world” posts highlighting beautiful images from locations around the world. While still in the early

stages of gaining an Instagram audience, Global Ministries already has approximately 170 followers and has about 11 interactions per post on average.

Also, in strengthening the social media strategy, the Mission Engagement Office has started utilizing the social media scheduling software, Hootsuite. This has helped to streamline social media posting and has provided statistical data to ensure that Global Ministries can communicate with the constituency via social media most effectively.

### **Global Mission Church**

The Office of Mission Engagement worked on streamlining the process to become a Global Mission Church. This new process asks congregations to meet five criteria each year to keep or gain the Global Mission Church designation. Through the new process, churches are asked to Pray, Receive, Give, Learn, and Advocate – with specific activities listed for each action. Global Ministries will begin heavily promoting this new, simplified version of the Global Mission Church process in 2019. It is the hope that more churches will begin the Global Mission Church process as it will be easier to implement.

### **CHILD AND ELDER SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

Linda Lawrence, Program Manager

The Global Ministries Child and Elder Sponsorship program works collaboratively with fifteen of Global Ministries' partners. Individuals, local Disciples and UCC churches and organizations commit to providing financial aid to children and elders from Global Ministries partners participating in the program. Partner sites vary in the number of children and elders they serve and the services that are provided.

In 2019 the program will include its third elder care program. In many countries, individuals do not have social security or retirement benefits. The program will be partnering with the Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture's Ajyal "Generations" Senior Care Program in Bethlehem, Palestine. A site visit was made in 2018 by the Middle East area executive and the sponsorship program manager. The word "Ajyal" means generations and is the first program in Bethlehem to provide support to residents over age 60. The program includes spiritual and cultural programs, basic health services, computer classes, a book club, drama group, and choir. Currently, the Ajyal program is providing services to approximately 100 seniors.

In 2018, we invited the sponsorship coordinator of the Family Village Farm to visit the United States. Mrs. Anita Grace Paul spent a month visiting congregations that have supported children at the Family Village Farm as well as students attending King's Matriculation School. Currently, all eligible residents for the sponsorship program are sponsored and more than 100 students of King's Matriculation School have been able to pay tuition and receive daily hot meals during the school year through sponsorship.

Mrs. Paul's visit proved to be very helpful. She was positively received by all the local churches she visited. In 2019, Ms. Betty Murillo, Director of Dumaguete Kalauman Center for Development (Kalauman) in the Philippines will also participate in the Mission Co-worker in Residence Program. She will visit and share stories with local Disciples

and UCC churches that support Kalauman children. Depending on the schedule of her visit she may be present at the General Assembly and General Synod.

Kalauman provides holistic services and programs for children, adults, and the Dumaguete community. The program was operated on the campus of Silliman University for more than 30 years but was displaced by a university expansion plan. Beginning in 2017 to the present, Global Ministries sponsorship donors and others have contributed to a new building costing approximately \$130,000.00.

The Child and Elder Sponsorship Program continues to have a Critical Presence in many areas of the world because of ongoing needs and the support of sponsors. Through this program, children are allowed to be children and elders are provided assistance to live out their lives in dignity and love in their own tradition, faith, and community.

#### **RAMBO COMMITTEE**

Landa Simmons, President  
Rambo Committee, Inc,  
1648 River Ridge  
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The Rambo Committee's main priority is assisting in building the capacity of the Christian Hospital in Mungeli to respond to the critical medical needs of the community. During the last 15 years, the hospital has achieved tremendous expansion and growth in terms of infrastructures, equipment and resources. The hospital has experienced challenges in the recent past in terms of leadership, but is now under the capable leadership of Dr. Raj Singh.

#### **DISCIPLES AMATEUR RADIO FELLOWSHIP, INC.**

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The Disciples Amateur Radio Fellowship (DARF) has provided Radio and communications equipment for overseas mission work since Jim Sugioka convened the organizational meeting at the International Convention in St. Louis in 1958.

In 2015, the installation of a fourth generation of HF communications equipment was completed in The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), consisting of 26 solar powered HF Stations. The DARF is reviewing a request from the Disciples community for an additional ten stations.

Over the years, DARF has provided equipment for mission work in Paraguay, the Philippines, Lesotho, DRC, and Guatemala.

DARF continues regular daily and weekly communications among its membership using networks on the 20 and 75-meter amateur radio bands and using Skype. It also occasionally publishes "The Mission-Aire," reporting on its work and activities.

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### **Recommended Action**

The General Board receives this report from the Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries and forwards it to the 2019 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.