



Spring 2021 Board Report

from the General Secretary and Staff

SERVING FAITHFULLY AMID THE TENSIONS



“Serving Faithfully Amid the Tensions”
General secretary and staff report to directors of the
General Board of Global Ministries
March 24, 2021

Introduction

By Roland Fernandes, General Secretary

Good morning Global Ministries’ directors and staff in many parts of the world. I pray that each of you is safe, healthy and busy; I also pray you are filled with the confidence that comes with an awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit with you and with us as a community of faith engaged in God’s mission.

The Holy Spirit, as our Statement of Mission Theology affirms, is always sweeping the church into “a new mission age.” We are acutely aware in March 2021 that Global Ministries and The United Methodist Church have been swept into a new place in our history. Following the surety of the theology statement, we commit ourselves to the leadership of the Spirit as God, through us, continues to work out God’s purposes in this new age.

I have chosen as our theme for this meeting “Serving Faithfully Amid the Tensions,” the subtitle of the just published book, “Methodist Mission at 200,” which commemorates the two centuries of witness and service in Global Ministries’ lineage back to 1819. The book is edited by former general secretary, Thomas Kemper, and David Scott, our mission theologian. It is not a detailed narrative of 200 years of mission history so much as a portrait of where we are in our mission journey after 200 years of work. The subtitle recognizes mission challenges – tensions – past and present. It also models for us in a diverse selection of incidents and profiles the creative and faithful responses to tensions confronted by our mission forebears. You will all receive copies of the book shortly.

In applying this phrase, “serving faithfully amid the tensions,” to our work today, let us not move too quickly to the enumeration of tensions so that we overlook the description of our service in mission as “faithful,” that is faithful to God, to Jesus Christ, to the Gospel, to the commandment to love God and

neighbor and to share that Good News in all the lands. In Galatians 5:22-23, the Apostle Paul lists faithfulness as one of the fruits of the Spirit, along with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, gentleness and self-control.

We approach our consideration of the organizational and social challenges and tensions that press upon us in the knowledge that the Holy Spirit, in loving mercy, sustains our fidelity to God's mission and makes possible our clarity of vision as we encounter tensions. Can we remember in these days of tensions and uncertainties the example of the very young church in Jerusalem, which was set about with no end of uncertainty? Acts 4:31 tells us, the disciples after Pentecost, trying to sort out their next moves, prayed, and still shaking in their boots, "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness." Pray God will give us faithful boldness as we live out witness in today's world of tensions.

I. Challenges and Tensions Today

We are all aware of a mixture of tensions affecting our work. Let me extract four:

- COVID-19, which has personal and corporate health implications, causing operational and economic tensions and triggering the deepest social insecurities most of us have ever experienced. While some see the end in sight perhaps a bit sooner than others, we are still far from done with the pandemic on a global level. We need to respond in a calm and balanced manner using the wide breath of scientific information available to make as wise decisions as possible. Vaccine distribution has greatly improved in many areas but not in others; as always, the richer nations absorb supplies first leaving the poorer societies wanting. Direct reports from Africa indicate alarming rates of COVID-19 infection and deaths in certain areas. We must be attentive to this reality and the impact it is having on United Methodist families and communities, as well as whole populations. In Atlanta, we will continue to work remotely until at least the beginning of July, and there is no date set for when in-person travel will be possible.

- Denominational uncertainties, intensified by debate around human sexuality and theological difference, which have shaken financial and organizational systems that support our existence. The postponement of General Conference by another full year and the projected launch of the so called Global Methodist Church by the traditionalist sector have been two events that have emerged in the past month. While neither is a total surprise, they do impact our near-term objectives and we are discerning how best to deal with this. One important benefit of the postponement is the continuation of you all as directors for two more years. Having directors who know the agency well is extremely important at this crucial time of many transitions. No matter what happens, the 13 general agencies of the church cannot in the long term continue to function as at present. The general secretaries have been in serious conversations over the past several months about possible agency realignments in future. Any real developments in this area will be shared with the Board of Directors, of course.

Some denominational uncertainties have been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic while others have developed over time. The pandemic has dramatically intensified the tensions caused by reduced income but changing fiscal trends were happening before the virus and we knew that and had begun a proactive response under the guidance of our board. A recent report from the General Council on Finance and Administration clearly indicates our awareness of the necessity of staff reduction prior to the threat of church division and the virus onset. Those figures show that Global Ministries made more reductions in staffing than any other church agency in the past four years. We have not been blindsided by economic realities. Vigilance has prepared us for a season of uncertainty and equipped us to confront tensions with a sense of faithful self-confidence. We will talk more about General Conference on Friday.

- Rampant racism in church and society, a condition that sends us back to the drawing boards to find means to achieve justice and equality for all. We are trying to address some of this through the work of our Multiethnic Ministries unit. This is one of the reasons it was made a separate unit. I will not say more here as Dana Lyles will share more later. We were all shocked with the horrific killings in Atlanta last week and I would like us to spend a moment in silence in their memory and ask Bishop Jung to offer a prayer at the end of it.
- Climate/environmental issues, which affect food security, livelihoods, habitation and health. Here again we are undertaking a significant initiative and I will say more about it shortly.

These do not represent entirely new missional concerns, but they are acute markers of our new mission age that have changed, or are changing, the way we go about our engagement in God's mission. They signify permanent changes. We are not, as an agency, a church or as a global community, going back to the way things were before 2020. That world has changed. The organically united UMC is most likely a thing of the past. How international the church will be is not yet known. We, in our microcosm of Global Ministries, will not return to a pre-2020 "normal." We will likely not need as much office real estate as permanent remote work will be an option; our staff will likely not travel as much; we will have fewer face-to-face meetings as in some situations, virtual meetings will be as effective.

We are in a new mission age into which God has swept us. Let me stress that: **WE ARE IN A NEW MISSION AGE.** And because we are in a new place in our history, we must boldly evaluate our ways and means under the critical oversight of the Holy Spirit as represented by Scripture and our Wesleyan heritage. In other words, we must confront the question: Do our programs and practices share the love of God in this age?

II. Value of the Five Mission Touchstones

The five mission touchstones that I described last November, which we have continued to work with that help define our collective approach to mission, are means to help us become better equipped for mission in this new age. In reviewing the five, let me be a bit more specific than in November:

- Sharpening our focus: (I have spoken of “narrowing” our focus, but “sharpening” is probably a more accurate and certainly more positive interpretation.) We are in the process of a comprehensive program inventory of all that we do in Global Ministries and I will go into a bit more detail about this in the three Program Committee meetings. In brief, we have listed 30 specific programs across the agency. Staff will be looking at a strategic framework for each of them over the next 10 months. What is a strategic framework? Amihan Jones, who leads our Monitoring and Evaluation function, will speak more about what this means later. This framework will feed into the shaping of a strategic plan for 2022-2024, and you, as directors, will be engaged in this process. In recent decades, the pattern has been that the structure often dictated the shape of the programs; in our new age, the programs must be allowed to determine the structure and each program should have a strategy. With an overall strategy for it, a program could be in more than one unit of the agency. This is not primarily a matter of eliminating work; it might well be adding new work.
- Greater accountability: As an example, let me cite our granting processes. The current General Board of Global Ministries is an amalgam of dozens of former corporations, initiatives, streams of funding and program commitments. We have well over a dozen grant-making processes within the agency that have emerged over the years. An independent consultant shared that he had never seen a more complex grant-making organization. While we have done a good job in increasing accountability, we need to do a lot more in trying to bring about more consistency and standardization in process. I have just named a Cross Unit Team

that will soon be looking into the whole area of grant making across the organization to see what consistency we can bring about in the short term.

- Collaboration: Internally, we have already introduced Cross Unit Teams and anticipate creating more as needed. The team on communications has been providing critical evaluation of the revised website from the perspectives of program content and constituent interests. The completion of the first phase of the new website in a very short time was a significant accomplishment. A communication strategy, with input from the Cross Unit Team and the Senior Leadership Team, is also being shared with the Mission Engagement committee at this meeting. The Fund Development Cross Unit Team has worked with the Director of Fund Development on a strategic plan for 2021, which will be shared with the Mission Engagement Committee as well.

We are exploring ways, notably on the international level, of greater intra-Methodist and broader ecumenical collaboration; for example, working with the Fund for Mission in Europe instead of making grants directly. We are also looking at more integrated programming across units within the agency. Global Health is one such example and Kathy Griffith will speak to this.

- Measuring impact: Program offices are continuing to work more with the Monitoring and Evaluation staff to both measure outcomes and organize work to make it easier to evaluate. The goal is for all our programs to have M&E components attached to them, realizing that not everything can be evaluated or monitored in exactly the same way.
- Better communication: I have mentioned the Cross Unit Teams and the new website, and a great deal of work is underway to strengthen collaboration with UMCOM in news coverage and promotion, notably of the Special Sundays and the mission priorities funded through the

Advance. We have also been using the weekly staff newsletter to communicate on a range of issues and you have been receiving my monthly updates to the staff.

III. Lessons from the Past

We are not the first generation to be swept into a new mission age, and the publication of "Methodist Mission at 200," though it is not a year-by-year mission chronology, reminds us of faithful responses amid tensions. A closing chapter discusses tensions experienced in Christian mission across time. The book includes the dramatic story of the new mission age into which God swept the church with the founding of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1819, with its emphasis on Native Americans and overseas work. Mission outreach from the United States continued what was initiated by John Wesley in 18th century England, a faith movement born of tensions within the British state church and the burgeoning troubles of the industrial revolution.

Calamitous events on national and world levels have swept the church into new mission ages. One example from our history is the formation 81 years ago of the forerunner of UMCOR, a response to the displacement of people by conflicts in Asia and Europe. The formation of the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief (MCOR), profoundly influenced the conduct of Methodist mission going forward from 1940. The theological implications of this providential action are explored in "Methodist Mission at 200." The throbbing need for anti-racism today should not cause us to neglect the role mission played in opposing segregation and racial discrimination in the United Methodist family in the mid-20th century. Yes, there was debilitating tension over race in the church and the mission board was slow in joining the civil rights efforts. The women's mission organization, today United Methodist Women, was the pioneering force in drafting and enacting the Methodist Charter for Racial Justice, which opened the way to a new mission age in Methodism. The area of health has also provided new mission territory, sometimes in the midst of tension. We often forget that it was the churches, and notably Global

Ministries, that insisted that families and congregations embrace members who had contracted HIV-AIDS. That was less than a half-century ago.

IV. Holding Steady and Risking Innovation

Sharpening our focus and the application of the other touchstones does not imply a spirit of timidity or the avoidance of mission innovation in an era of tensions. In fact, responsibility may require fresh, even risky measures. I think the consistent biblical message is that faith helps us in the midst of fear to take risks for the sake of God's work in the world. This applies to monetary resources as well as staff energy and missionary placements. I want to share with you four proposals that are not in our present 2021 budget that I think we should undertake at this time in our journey, measures that promote our goals and objectives among the tensions in such a time as this, to return to an image we explored last fall. I will mention these, and they will be more fully addressed in the committees later in our meeting as we consider program and spending commitments. We were blessed with better financial results than expected in 2020 and this allows us to make these needed investments.

I would ask your support in allocating approximately \$5 million to the following:

- \$2 million to the Yambasu Agriculture Initiative in Africa, not only because it honors our late beloved vice president but because it is the right thing to do to meet the needs of brothers and sisters in Africa, especially in this age of coronavirus. It represents a commitment to food security and agricultural self-determination and the wise use of church land. I think that God and the love of Jesus require it. The Yambasu Initiative is not in our current operating budget. We have made one grant to Sierra Leone for \$275K, which was a great start, given that this is Bishop Yambasu's home country. We are in the process of working on a grant with Mozambique under the leadership of Bishop Nhanala. One of the key elements of these grants, which will come to you for approval, is the element of local ownership and financial

business models that can create income for churches in Africa through sustainable agriculture.

- \$1 million to environmental sustainability, also not in the budget and a matter of increasing global importance. This would incorporate promotion of activities to affirm the proposed United Methodist commitment to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. A resolution to this effect has come to the General Secretaries' Table from five general agencies, including Global Ministries, and would apply across ministries, facilities, operations and investments. This is an emerging example of intra-United Methodist collaboration. Each of the agencies is taking this statement back to their directors for consideration. This will be brought to this board for action through the Executive Committee. The measure is broad, unprecedented and, I think, what we are being called to do at this time. [This short video](#) on interagency commitment to net-zero emissions will tell us more. The Rev. Jenny Phillips, who has been one of the staff leaders of this initiative, elaborates:

The goal at the heart of this commitment is to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 across ministries, facilities, operations, and investments and to leverage the gifts of our connection, putting equity and justice at the center, as we build a net-zero emission economy by 2050. The development of this commitment to net zero emissions is an interagency effort. Already, Wespath, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Commission on Archives and History have signed on to the commitment. Other agency boards are considering it at their spring meetings. If you have questions, please contact me jphillips@umcmmission.org. I also want to let you know that we have an online Global Ministries EarthKeepers training in May and we are offering Earth Day worship resources featuring staff and missionaries. You will find details at <http://umcmmission.org/earthkeepers>.

- \$750,000—this from UMCOR funds—for Global health efforts following up on the Abundant Health campaign, especially regarding mothers and children, to support unfunded budgetary requirements for 2021 and to complete infrastructure support in some areas. Kathy Griffith articulates the planned use of these funds:

The strategy of the Global Health unit's work, which we continue to call "the Abundant Health Initiative," has been and continues to be focused on strengthening health systems at household, community and health facility levels. This year there are new elements to this strategy:

- *Improving, and even adding to, primary health care facilities (instead of larger hospitals) and the services offered through them.*
- *Integrating Global Health programs and partnering with other units for joint expertise and improved outcomes.*
- *Increasing the ability of our field partners to offer supervision and leadership.*

Increasing the abilities of field partners is important because staff at Primary Health Care facilities engage with the community. These PHCs are the first formal tier of health services for about 80% of the population. These networks, these powerhouses, now need to be strengthened. Often in rural locations, they provide essential services that include the prevention of infectious disease; prenatal, obstetric and postnatal care; child health services, including immunization and nutritional rehabilitation; malaria awareness, diagnosis and treatment and ongoing health care for whole families in the catchment community.

Through our health boards, and over the last five years, the Global Health unit has invested a great deal in both the denomination's hospitals and these smaller units. We'd now like to continue the focus on these smaller centers because of their grassroots community reach and their need to become strong, effective and more sustainable.

The proposed interventions are:

- *Construction and maintenance; security; water, sanitation and hygiene; a reliable power source and waste management. For example, the Nigeria Health Board has recently renovated seven facilities. But none of them have wells, latrines or a power source. The cost of the wells and latrines will be about \$70,000, and we hope to fund this with a WASH grant in July, God willing. Among other projects, my colleague, Rev. Jenny Phillips, has worked with us to electrify the Tunda Hospital in East Congo and is arranging for the shipment of four solar fridges (for immunizations) that she funded in a joint maintenance grant with Global Health (in December) for rural centers in Liberia.*
- *Interventions also concern support for a well-trained health workforce able to respond to the pandemic, to seasonal cholera, and to everyday health threats and concerns. As you can imagine, the health needs of communities have grown because of COVID-19, its accompanying myths and fears, and, in some cases, the diversion of resources and loss of personnel.*
- *Staff also need essential medicines, medical supplies, vaccines, diagnostic services and health information systems to make evidence-based decision making normal. I'd like to celebrate two recent Zoom trainings on data management for our partners, led by the Monitoring and Evaluation unit.*
- *To this end, the staff of the Global Health unit's three programs (Health Systems Strengthening, Imagine No Malaria and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health) are intentionally working together to complement each other, support partners and promote shared and best outcomes.*

In order to achieve all of this, we created a spending plan for programming in 10 countries and, unfortunately but not unexpectedly, had a budget shortfall as well as projects

that would remain incomplete. And so, we've requested an additional \$750,000 to our budget to support some unfunded requirements and to complete infrastructure support.

We are excited, motivated and in earnest. Thank you so much for your kind attention, for your partnership and for your prayers.

- Finally, a new \$1.1 million allocation for work with migrants in the United States, a grant to our partner Church World Service, is a commitment to restoring the refugee and legal asylum programs devastated over the last four years. Erol Kekic from CWS, one of the leaders on refugee resettlement in this country, shares on the topic of extending welcome to asylum seekers:

We currently face an unprecedented challenge – and opportunity – to address critical issues facing the present and future responses of the United States to asylum seekers arriving at the US-Mexico border. The urgency of the situation requires immediate action. On January 20, 2021, President Biden ended the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program, which had required asylum seekers to remain indefinitely in unsafe communities along the northern border of Mexico until their cases could be processed. Thus far, 16,000 individuals registered with UNHCR on the digital platform, and more than 3,000 have already crossed the border. Furthermore, this change in policy, combined with significantly increased traffic at the border of non-MPP-affected asylum seekers, has challenged the existing asylum services infrastructure.

Even more recently, there has been an unprecedented influx of unaccompanied children arriving at the border. As of the beginning of this month, over 4,000 children are said to be in Customs and Border Protection custody. Over 1,700 of them have been detained longer than the 72-hour legal limit, during which they are expected to be connected with a sponsor or relative in the U.S. and prepared for onward travel. This creates incredible need: both for immediate assistance to those children on release from custody and for assistance throughout their cities of

destination to help them have access to just legal proceedings. It is now our job to continue to both raise our voices together to call for just treatment of children coming into this country and to serve those who need it, when they need it, where they need it.

CWS' and UMCOR's shared commitment to serving the most vulnerable is so important in driving our work with asylum seekers, particularly those with critical protection concerns. Through its partnership with and support from UMCOR and Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON), CWS has provided support to asylum seekers along what we like to think of as a continuum of service. We help support border shelters along key areas of the southern border – both through staffing and through our work with the Asylum Border Shelter Coalition, a network of 17 shelters that help highlight the diverse array of needs and changing contexts facing these community-based organizations. We also staff and run a call center, serving the needs of asylum seekers and other migrants as they leave detention and make their way to destinations across the country.

Your generous support created the Leading With Welcome program, in partnership with Justice for our Neighbors, in three cities in the U.S.: Jersey City, Miami and Houston. Through this program, JFON provides the legal services for asylees, and CWS provides critical case management that helps people seek psychosocial support, health care and other key areas of need.

This program has served approximately 692 individuals so far, and the grant you are considering today for Expanding Welcome will help us to reach and serve even more. It will allow us to add capacity to serve clients in all of our Leading With Welcome cities, as well as to support legal service provision in an overflow capacity at CWS' Miami office, where the largest numbers of asylum seekers are currently being directed. UMCOR's support of this work is not only benefiting clients and those we meet along their journeys to seeking protection, it is

demonstrating to an even wider and more diverse audience the importance the faith community plays in standing up for the right to seek asylum in this country.

With your generous support, we will be able to serve an additional 10,000 people in supported border shelters, 1,000 through the call center (connecting those in need with those willing to help), 600 with case management, and 200 with legal services. Most case management clients also become legal service clients.

Perhaps also worth mentioning is the direct impact we believe this funding might have on the U.S. policy toward asylum seekers. Ever since the November elections, we have been conversing with, firstly, transition teams, and now, with the Biden administration, to advocate for more just and humane treatment of asylum seekers. In our opinion, more social work and immigration judges and less detention is the best way to relieve the pressure on the border and deal with the caseload already here. At this time, the U.S. Government contracts with the Geo Group to run their detention centers and their version of a case management program called ISAP. We wish to present a viable alternative to detention and case management, inclusive of access to legal representation. We believe that if we can build a solid enough body of work – and demonstrate success at scale – we can present our model to the U.S. Government as a better option and end detention as a tool of migration management. We have the network to do that – the refugee resettlement one, which is sitting underutilized because of the lack of refugee arrivals – with language and case management capacity, which will be augmented with your generous contribution. Focusing on getting people integrated into their new locations as quickly as possible, coupled with access to legal services, creates in our opinion a more likely scenario where people show up for their immigration hearings. If we are able to encourage our congregations to be in touch with our local folks and help as much as they can, I feel confident we would create a pretty major way to change a part of the immigration policy for good.

As there have been several questions in recent days about the situation on the border, I have asked the Rev. Jack Amick, our director of Global Migration, to speak to this:

UMCOR is closely watching the situation on the border. What we are witnessing there are short-term reactions to the segmented roll-out of individual policies that we hope will soon be a new architecture of comprehensive U.S. immigration policy. The changes the Biden administration has made are positive and steps toward a more humane approach. But until more of these good policy threads get woven together, we do not have a complete fabric. UMCOR is in regular touch with the UMC shelters and participates actively in a number of coalition and network calls related to the border. In addition to the longer-term capacity development efforts for assisting asylees through CWS, that were presented by Erol, UMCOR recently provided emergency grants of up to \$10,000 to each of the transitional Methodist shelters. With these funds, shelters are addressing everything from transportation to clothing to food to emergency housing for immigrants who test positive. Given the circumstances, we are granting maximum flexibility to our partners in identifying and interpreting how these funds should best help those in need within their specific context.

But how can we take on these new expenses at a time when budgets are declining? Because the immediate financial picture, as the financial report indicates, is not as bleak as it was projected. Our financial picture for the year 2020 was more favorable than anticipated as apportionments came close to 80% against the 50% projected by GCFA for a significant portion of the year and, you will recall, we received two bequests of \$7 plus million each earmarked for mission through Global Ministries and UMCOR but not otherwise specified. We will soon begin work on the 2022 budget for GBGM and UMCOR and at the appropriate time, the expanded budget committee of the board will be involved in the process. Right now, we need to use our unexpected resources to do the work of Jesus Christ in a hurting world – in this new mission age!

I also want you to hear about some of the innovative work we are doing through our other two missional priorities; missionaries, and evangelism and church revitalization. The Rev. Judy Chung introduces some representative active missionaries who are crossing boundaries amid today's tensions to share the love of God:

When a United Methodist missionary is commissioned, each is vested with an anchor cross, as a symbol of our faith and hope. The anchor cross reminds our missionaries to hope in Jesus Christ and stay rooted in faith as they participate in a perilous journey of mission. The challenges of mission have existed throughout history but seem to be increasing even more so today. Yet, in spite of all the challenges and obstacles, Christ still calls us, as the church, to be in ministry in all the world.

So, we are #stillinmission, continuing the legacy of mission by responding to God's call against all odds to engage in mission in creative and innovate ways. I am so thankful for our missionaries who have shown resilience and faithfulness in the midst of the pandemic and would like to share just a few stories of how we are #stillinmission today.

Warren is a Global Mission Fellow from the Philippines who found a way to be in mission in creative ways as the lockdown continued in Ireland, where he works. He shares that during the lockdown, he could see that many people were feeling loneliness, anxiety and depression. In fact, it was tough for him at the beginning as well. But he decided that instead of focusing on what's on the news every day, he would be productive by learning new things. With the help of a friend, he learned how to bake scones and bread. They came up with an idea to bring these baked goods to people in the community who are living on their own. This simple act of learning how to bake led to the ministry of compassion, care and solidarity as he was able to provide bread to 69 individuals.

Grace and James are missionaries serving in Mongolia. During the pandemic, there were strict rules for lockdown prohibiting gatherings and restricting their mission work. So, with more time indoors, they focused on translating much needed Sunday school curriculum for children. With the help of local leaders,

they are preparing to publish two books this spring, making it possible for many children to learn about Jesus in their native language for many years to come.

The pandemic has not forced all communities to go into lockdown. So in a rural community in Zambia, United Methodist missionary, Temba, has continued to work with the local community to grow crops, feed goats and market eggs to support sustainable agricultural development and food security. The picture being shown is of local customers loading their motorcycles with a precious cargo of eggs and more than 300 kg of maize to deliver merchandise through bumpy unpaved roads in Mujila Falls, Zambia.

Elsewhere, in Nepal, medical doctor Lester Dornon has been treating patients despite the risk of exposure to COVID-19. When he and his colleagues were treating a young woman, they noticed that she was breathing fast and that she may possibly have been infected with COVID-19. When the test results came back in a couple of days, she was confirmed to have COVID-19, which means Lester and 17 other medical staff had been exposed. Lester had to quarantine at home for the next five days, being careful to maintain safe distance from his wife Debbie, who was recovering from a broken leg. He managed to care for Debbie during this period and shares this reflection during his quarantine:

We are trying to stay thankful and to keep trusting God by doing spiritually uplifting reading and watching some shows (thankful for internet!!), praying and keeping in touch with family and friends. What is God's plan for us during this time when we feel like we have absolutely nothing to contribute? I hope to use some of the time to think about our hospital procedures again to avoid this kind of shut down and to prepare presentations I need to give in the future. Perhaps we just needed to stop doing our "busy work" and to "be still."

After spending five days "being still" before God, I am happy to report that Dr. Dornon is back to work, having tested negative for COVID-19.

Indeed, even when missionaries are faced with challenges, obstacles and closed borders, they are finding ways to be still, to be engaged and to be used by God.

Yes, no matter what our circumstances are, God is continuing to work in and through us to continue God's mission in this world.

God's mission is continuing as young people are responding to God's call to mission. Even though we are still uncertain whether a new class of Global Mission Fellows can be deployed because of on-going travel restrictions and border closures, almost 150 young adults from 31 countries applied to participate in this 2-year mission service opportunity. Even if they are able to travel to their placements, the journey ahead will be a perilous one with challenges and difficulties.

This is true for all our missionaries. As they respond to God's call, they don't always know where the journey will lead. Yet they are continuing to trust in God and to have hope and faith in God.

In closing, I'd like to read this poem written by one of our GMF, US2s, Shiree Fetterly.

Into the Unknown

Into the unknown is where you'll find me

With God as my shield

I will cross boundaries

With God anything is possible

Faith is what I have

Strength is What God gives me

He calls me beloved

I am chosen by the one above

I will cross boundaries

For the Lord is my protector

God will lead me through the wilderness

Crossing boundaries into the unknown is where you'll find me.

May God's grace and peace be with you in your journey as you cross boundaries into the unknown.

I've asked Dr. Dana Lyles to describe the unfolding Community Developers Cohort Program in collaboration with annual conferences in the U.S.:

If you recall, the Multiethnic Ministries unit unveiled the 2021 Annual Conference Community Developers Program at the 2020 Fall Board Meeting. I am happy to announce the program launched on February 22 with five annual conferences. We are excited that the California-Pacific, Mountain Sky, North Texas, Upper New York and West Ohio annual conferences are participating in our first Community Developers Program Annual Conference Cohort.

Cohort applications were submitted by seven annual conferences inclusive of all five jurisdictions. However, the one application submitted by an annual conference in the Southeast Jurisdiction was incomplete, and the applicant did not respond to follow-up questions. The Community Developers Program made the decision to allow two annual conferences from the Western Jurisdiction, given the particular program focus of the Mountain Sky cohort. Mountain Sky will focus on providing historical trauma resources and programming to Native American communities. The CDP office felt this programming is needed and supports our commitment to working with Native American communities.

The remaining four annual conferences in the cohort program are focusing on a variety of issues, including food insecurity in a Dallas area community, educational support for low-income students in Syracuse, closing the socioeconomic gap of citizens in Los Angeles and addressing gentrification and increasing community engagement in a Columbus, Ohio, suburb. Each team has begun developing a program implementation plan and will receive a grant of up to \$20,000 at the conclusion of the program. Each annual conference team is required to contribute at least 10% of the requested grant amount. Grants can be used for exploratory activities such as community mapping, congregation and community engagement, creating and expanding community partnerships, community assessments and asset-based community development.

We hope to continue this program in the future as an alternative to the traditional Community Developers Program. Early feedback from cohort teams indicates that this model is enabling congregations to become engaged in their local community by combining resources with other congregations. It is our prayer to continue the cohort program in the future with representation from all five jurisdictions.

Our traditional Community Developers Program with individual churches continues to be of interest to congregations. Our office is currently working with congregations in submitting tier grants for exploratory CDP funding.

In the times of uncertainty and uneasiness in our U.S. racial/ethnic communities, it is important to engage missionally in neighborhoods surrounding racial/ethnic congregations. We believe the Community Developers Program will continue to be a relevant mission program across the United States as we actively engage in and with racial/ethnic communities.

One of the critical pieces of our work that will enable us to get to where I hope we can for the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, is the work with Monitoring and Evaluation. Amihan Jones, as director for this program, has done a wonderful job with her team of helping us on this journey to make M&E an integral part of all our programming. Amihan shares more:

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) has been busy working with the programs and leadership as we go through the process of strategic planning, which will help Global Ministries better show impact through our many programs. One of the first exercises M&E engaged with this year was streamlining the definition of beneficiaries, at both the individual (household) level and at the institutional or organizational level. This process with the Senior Leadership Team helped provide a foundation for understanding who we reach regardless of program, while realizing there are contextual circumstances that make each program unique.

In this second phase of strategic planning and frameworks, M&E will engage with each program lead to build out a strategic plan and logical framework. Some questions we ask of each program include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Why is the program important? What major concerns or problems does it address?*
- *Who benefits from the program? (for example: target group, beneficiaries or institutions)*
- *What conditions, systems or behaviors are changed because of the program?*
- *What long-term, sustainable change occurs because of the program?*
- *If the program engages in capacity-building with partners, what is prioritized?*

Along with answering the key questions above, we will use the Logical Framework model, which is a planning tool consisting of a matrix that provides a structure to help specify the components of a project or program. By utilizing the same model for all programs, Global Ministries will be able to better analyze problems and programs systematically to clearly formulate logical and measurable objectives and identify risks and conditions for success at the program level and for the agency. In addition, utilizing logical frameworks will help us have an objective basis for monitoring and evaluating our work. We hope that through this process of analytically reviewing each program, Global Ministries will be able to strengthen the programs and ultimately result in positive impact for the people and institutions around the world that we work with.

Along with this process, we will highlight the COVID-19 response.

COVID-19 continues to be a high priority for Global Ministries, and M&E is monitoring the work to respond to needs through the various programs in Global Ministries. M&E continues to maintain the COVID-19 dashboard and to-date, Global Ministries has awarded 270 grants to 262 partners in 52 countries around the world.

Just over half of the grants awarded have been closed, and from the results, more than 200,000 people have been reached through COVID-19 response. More than 110,000 people in the U.S. have been reached alone.

In addition to the results above, M&E continues to provide support in monitoring program results and conducting trainings and evaluations. It is the hope that M&E will continue to be utilized in order to

improve processes and highlight the great work and impact Global Ministries continues to have around the world.

The Finance Report was presented by Mike Gurick. This report was sent to the directors prior to the meeting.

Conclusion

Let me thank the staff members who have reported this morning and those who did not speak but contributed to this report, and to all our staff who are working so diligently on all aspects of our work. In the midst of many tensions, we are trying to focus on what we are being called to do.

As a board, we have a great deal of work to accomplish in less than two and a half days. I want to also thank Mei Liu and our technical staff for the careful facilitation of this virtual meeting.

Before concluding, let us join our thanksgiving to God for the life and ministry of the Rev. Junius Dotson, convener of the General Secretaries Table and general secretary of Discipleship Ministries, who died in late February at age 56. He had only a month earlier announced his diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. It was an enormous shock. I took upon myself the sad task of conveying the prayers and condolences of Global Ministries' directors and staff to the Discipleship community in a letter to Bishop Mark Webb, the president of Discipleship Ministries.

In concluding, I return to the beginning: We, the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, are in a new mission age, challenged to faithfully respond to waves of tensions – some new, some longstanding. We seek to comprehend and apply our most Christ-filled and creative attention to these challenges. We dare to do this because God, through Christ, has blessed us with the fruits of the Spirit identified by Paul in Galatians. We dare to faithfully engage in God's mission because God, in grace, makes our work possible. And let us look again at the listing of the fruits: it begins with love. Our work is to exemplify and share the love of God and neighbor. This was the mission message of Jesus, the first disciples, St. Paul and John Wesley. It is hopefully this message that propels us into the future.