

# Fall 2022 Board Report

From the General Secretary and Staff

## God's Sure Mission in Uncertain Times

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October 18, 2022

Greetings to you directors, guests, missionaries and staff and welcome to another online board meeting. It is my sincere hope that this will be the last time this report is presented on Zoom, at least for a while. At the end of August this year, I completed two years as general secretary and all my reports to you, our directors, have been on Zoom. Our planned board meetings in Maputo in April and Cambodia in October will hopefully change that. At our past few board meetings, we have been exploring our participation in God's mission today. We began this journey two years ago when we allowed Queen Esther's uncle, Mordecai, to challenge us to evaluate our context and our resources for fulfilling God's purposes in such a time as ours. We found ourselves in a "new mission age."

Our consideration of operations in a new mission age is necessarily institutional in nature but it is theological in purpose. We are dealing, as I have repeatedly said, with God's mission. Church and agency structures are means of accepting and reflecting God's grace, and grace makes possible bold witness and sustains us as we confront uncertainties.

I invite you to reflect on the following verses from the Book of Revelation as in this meeting we continue to consider strategies for promoting God's mission in such a time as this:

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
"See, the home of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell with them as their God;  
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them..." (Revelation 21:3-4a, NRSV)  
We are God's people! We are ALL God's people.

That fact brings us together, gives us meaning, makes us a community and gives a message of love and compassion to share with the world. God dwells with us in Jesus Christ and gives us our mission. Especially in uncertain times such as those we are living in now, we depend on the constancy of God.

## Strategic Conversations

Two years ago, we represented our uncertainties with four realities: 1) the COVID-19 pandemic, 2) resurgent racism in many quarters of life, 3) the ravages of climate change and 4) internal disagreements that threaten the future existence of The United Methodist Church. While the COVID pandemic may be weakening, the range of uncertainties we identified two years ago still confront us.

We enumerated five operational touchstones to assist the agency in responding to these challenges – sharpening our focus, tightening accountability, increasing collaboration, measuring impact and enhancing communication.

Toward the goal of sharpened focus, an activities evaluation identified 17 programs, each with a logical framework reflecting one or more of four missional priorities: missionaries, evangelism and church revitalization, global health, and humanitarian relief and recovery. This is the basis for the Strategic Plan for 2022–2024 that is before you for approval at this meeting even as we engage in longer-term strategic conversations looking beyond 2024. The executive committee has reviewed the strategic plan and referred it to the board for approval at this meeting. Thank you all for your review and those who provided feedback to the document.

This is the second consecutive board meeting in which our focus is on longer-term strategic conversations and is a follow-up from the last board meeting. We are grateful for your earlier input, which has been processed by the directors who facilitated the five groups as well as by the Executive Committee. As a result of this work, which has been shared with you, we have arrived at eight specific questions – you have them – for your discussion today. Your input in May at the last board meeting was very helpful in affirming the need for close alignment between our regional and sectoral work (i.e. Global Ministries and UMCOR) and more centralized operations in grants making. And your responses to the questions before us today will inform our future strategies.

We are also continuing our strategic conversations with several groups as you have heard me share before. In addition, there are significant events planned for 2023 to engage partners in further conversations on key aspects of mission going forward. In this context, I will also mention the creation (or re-creation) of a Mission Engagement unit to help us focus on this vital dimension of our work within the connection globally and our non-UMC partners around the world.

## The Voice of History

Allow me to include the voice of the past in our conversation about the future. This is not the first time Global Ministries has encountered a new mission age filled with uncertainties. A few weeks ago, I came upon the report of the general secretary presented at the final board meeting of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church in 1968, just prior to the forming of The United Methodist Church. It dealt with challenges of the “present times” arising in “new areas” of work. The 1960s was a volatile time for national, global and denominational life. Civil and human rights, including gender issues and race relations, were everyday headlines. The Vietnam War as a cause of strong disagreement. The Methodist Church was preparing to merge with the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

The mission tradition did not have a strong record in either domestic or international social justice and advocacy, but it was stepping forth in faith to address racism, colonialism, militarism and the rights of the historically marginalized. The response was described by the general secretary as ranging from “consternation” to “loyal support.” One clarifying sign was that contributions increased. The mission board general secretary in the 1960s was the highly respected Rev. Dr. Tracey K. Jones, whose report concludes that the mission board was on new ground, “making and will continue to make what it believes to be the only relevant witness Christians can make today in this torn and needy world.” The strategy, Jones wrote, was to “follow its Lord into the marketplace, among the poor and the powerful” doing the kind of mission for which the church was established.

To again quote General Secretary Tracey Jones in his 1968 report, “...with the coming of The United Methodist Church, we will be faced with the question of institutions in an enlarged way. Both in this country and overseas, there will be a question of whether institutions now supported by mission funds of either of the merging churches should be continued, transferred, merged or terminated.” It is ironic that the same question about institutions is being wrestled by The United Methodist Church today, 50 plus years later, as we deal with disaffiliation.

We will talk more about disaffiliation on Friday this week and the Executive Committee discussed this matter in August. The committee affirmed, in keeping with the Book of Discipline, that Global Ministries is the missional instrument of the UMC, its annual conferences, missionary conferences and local congregations in the context of its global setting. It further affirmed that Global Ministries exists to support the work of the

UMC around the world and formally recognized autonomous affiliated, united and concordat churches. The impact of disaffiliation and the consequent reduction of resources creates a financial situation that makes it even more critical for Global Ministries to focus its resources on the continuing UMC mission.

God calls us to steward the generosity shared with Global Ministries. We commit to aligning our resources and relationships to strengthen the United Methodist witness and mission in our congregations, their communities and the world. We are confident that a focused and aligned strategy will enable United Methodists in Africa, Europe, Philippines and the United States to build partnerships igniting mutual transformation grounded in the redemptive love of Jesus Christ.

## Program Highlights

Our focus in these past two years has been on what we are being called to do at this time and as we rely on the grace of God to guide our mission and ministry. Some program highlights from the last six months include:

1. **Ukraine.** The response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been phenomenal. Through the end of August \$23.2 million has been received. Our International Disaster Response and Global Migration staff have done a great job along with those in the various support functions to process more than \$17 million in grants in response to the suffering there. We have had wonderful collaboration with the UMC churches in Europe, existing and new partners and other UMC agencies such as UMNews. Katherine Hills-Uzoka, who leads our International Disaster Response work, will share briefly about our work inside Ukraine followed by Jack Amick, who leads our Global Migration work, who will talk about the response outside Ukraine.

### International Disaster Response

UMCOR's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022 with immediate assistance through the UMC in Ukraine and through local nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners and has continued to reflect the complexity and variety of immediate needs of people who remain in Ukraine. Areas of intervention include the provision of shelter, food rations, hygiene kits, non-food items (NFI), home repair, winterization, ready to eat meals for those in transit, hospital supplies, and mine and explosive ordnance education and clearance.

UMCOR has committed a total of \$6,998,723 to this important work within Ukraine through eight unique partners, with an additional three projects in development. The majority of the work can be characterized as relief – helping people meet their basic needs in the context of war. In the last several months more programming is focused on early recovery, including winterization, home repairs and establishing medium to longer term sheltering solutions.

Many people are now staying in Western Ukraine in a variety of shelter situations which will require adaptation for winter. While a lot of our work is in the Western part of the country, we also recognize that some of the most vulnerable people affected by this conflict are in Eastern and Central Ukraine, so we have strived to maintain a portfolio of work with geographic and subject area diversity, in keeping with the results of needs assessments.

In Western Ukraine we supported a local partner, Uzhhorod Alliance which is a coalition of small Uzhhorod-based NGOs to purchase a van for the transport of humanitarian goods and to help people in need of evacuation assistance. In June and July of this year, the van was used to bring humanitarian supplies to Bucha and Kyiv on a weekly basis – here are photos of a beneficiary family and the wooden boards they provided for broken windows. More recently the van has been used to transport building supplies for the longer-term IDP housing in Uzhhorod, which we are supporting.

The UMC in Ukraine is supporting dozens of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in their shelter with the expectation of hundreds more as the government has mandated evacuations from certain regions where heating and electrical systems have been compromised and water supplies contaminated.

Between one floor of a former printing factory, a church building in Kamyanytsa and a church apartment in Lviv, the Ukraine UMC hosts 70-85 IDPs at any given time, which is far fewer than they received early in the war. They expect a surge in people seeking refuge in the coming months as people leave areas where heating and electrical systems have been destroyed and water supplies contaminated. We plan to support the Ukraine UMC into the next phase of programming to establish a longer-term shelter in the Transcarpathia region.

The slide shows three of the beneficiaries who have stayed at Ukraine UMC shelters, including baby Bogdan who was born five weeks after his family left Kramatorsk in Donetsk Oblast. Vyacheslav and

Iryna are both people with special needs who received shelter and case management services from the Ukraine UMC.

Through our \$1.1 million contribution to the ACT Ukraine response, we are also supporting Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER) in providing shelter, winterization and WASH rehabilitation for people across Ukraine at a much larger scale.

Through City Aid Center, an organization we have worked with since 2017, we have mobilized essential food, hygiene and non-food items to over 5000 people via City Aid Center's drop-in centers and community outreach. They have centers in both Mukachevo and Zaporozhia and home-deliveries for people in Zaporozhzhia and Donetsk Oblasts. They meet a critical need in cities with a lot of IDPs.

Through Arlene Campbell Humanitarian foundation, we have mobilized just under \$2 million worth of medical equipment and supplies through seven shipments of medical surplus and local procurement in Europe. Thus far, these supplies have gone to equip four facilities, but a new project with ACHF will expand the number of hospitals being worked with to 13, in locations across the country.

Sergey is a Ukrainian soldier injured in combat with a bullet lodged near his heart, which was successfully removed by doctors at Kyiv's heart institute. Through ACHF programming, we provided masks, gloves and surgical instruments, which were used to carry out the surgery and save Sergey's life.

Through our Turkish partner, International Blue Crescent (IBC), we are providing 2000 households in Odessa and Mikail areas with three months of food rations, ready to eat meals for 20,000 IDPs in the Mikolayiv area, food supplies for people staying at the Bolgrad municipal shelter (home to 150 families) and a mobile bakery to be established in partnership with the Bolgrad government. They estimate they will be able to provide bread for approximately 9000 people daily. Finally, through our partnership, IBC will also be supplying essential medical supplies to Mikolayiv, Bolgrad and Arsyz state hospitals. Pictured here are a couple of IBC beneficiaries including Oxana, who split with her family and evacuated from Kherson when it came under Russian control, and Maria, who shared insight on how unsettling it is to be forced from her home. Pictured here is also a Syrian example of the mobile bakery IBC will be establishing in Ukraine.

As mentioned, the response inside Ukraine is looking toward winterization and early recovery. IDR

is very excited to initiate a couple of large-scale projects with Mines Advisory Group and International Orthodox Christian Charities covering a range of activities from mine clearance and education to sheltering, home repair and psychosocial support. We pray for an end to the war so that recovery can begin in earnest.

## **Global Migration**

To date, UMCOR has provided grants totaling \$8,709,172 to 15 unique partners outside Ukraine to assist 83,000 refugees. Efforts to assist refugees from Ukraine can best be described in three phases. As the war is ongoing, these phases do not fit neatly into the typical disaster response relief-recovery-rehabilitation paradigm. In some ways, these phases follow that model, but in many ways the assistance in all three phases is relief, albeit through gradually more systematic mechanisms.

### ***Organic Charity***

In the first several months of the war, churches and communities in countries neighboring Ukraine opened their hearts and homes to those fleeing the war. People in Poland, Hungary and Romania rushed to the border with Ukraine to provide donated items or to offer people rides in their personal vehicles or accommodation in their homes. Recipients of this generosity shied away from being called refugees, as most anticipated returning home to Ukraine in days, weeks, or months. Some governments avoided calling them refugees, lest they be called to account for their contrasting lack of welcome in recent years to refugees from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere.

During this first phase, that can best be described as organic charity, churches engaged with people that approached them and provided services that they might provide indigent persons seeking food, clothing, or shelter from the church. Food pantries and clothes closets were expanded, and people dug deep and generously to provide for guests. Empty retreat centers and other spaces were turned into accommodation centers. With a few exceptions, churches essentially surveyed their existing resources and did what they could to be welcoming. UMCOR provided emergency grants to assist with these efforts. In most cases, it seemed that churches were not interested in creating NGOs to address specific needs or in hiring additional staff or otherwise permanently scaling up to provide assistance. This phenomenon seemed to be widespread across most denominations



in Europe. UMCOR provided \$233,000 to assist UMCs in Europe with their assistance efforts to an estimated 5,000 beneficiaries. Additionally, UMCOR provided \$900,000 to ACT Alliance to assist with protection measures, as the vulnerability of refugees to irregular assistance programs and unvetted volunteers became more generally apparent.

### ***Scaling Up***

By late spring and into mid-summer, it became clear that the war was not ending anytime soon, and that larger efforts at assistance than what local churches could offer would be required. In some cases, host families were eager to go on vacation. Resorts that had been used to house refugees were looking forward to summer tourist revenue streams. The regional partners represented in the ACT Alliance appeal (to which UMCOR contributed \$1,650,000 to refugee assistance efforts), began to realize that much larger efforts were required. International agencies, after first rotating staff through their field operations in short-term intervals, saw that more permanent staffing was required. International Orthodox Christian Charities, Church World Service, and Habitat For Humanity International began to establish permanent operations in places like Romania, Poland, and Moldova. In some cases, national partners, like Diaconia in the Czech Republic, managed several small-scale grassroots partners with special interests, such as Roma-led organizations, in order to reach the scale that was required for this crisis. During this scaling-up phase, UMCOR provided larger grants totaling \$5,806,172 and assisted an estimated 40,000 refugees. Some of these programs included innovative approaches such as trauma care and holistic collaborations in Moldova, cash assistance to hosts and refugees alike in Romania and Poland, resettlement assistance in the U.S. and independent housing in Poland.

### ***Permanent Solutions***

As the war goes on, and with the hope that it will someday end, there is the recognition that, statistically, only 30% of all refugees ever return home. With that in mind, UMCOR's future endeavors to assist refugees from the war in Ukraine will likely need to focus on independent housing, legal assistance, trauma care, language acquisition, job retooling and resettlement. To the extent that funds are available for this purpose, the third phase of our assistance to those who have now more or less permanently fled Ukraine, will be on helping them successfully start new lives in new places.

- Missionaries.** Last spring, we announced the commissioning of 54 missionaries and Global Mission Fellows between April and July. This was the group of new personnel who formed parts of 2020 and 2021 classes that we were unable to commission in a timely manner because of the pandemic. For 2022, we are bringing on 35 new GMFs and 12 long-term missionaries. The training was virtual. We will have an in-person commissioning service for 17 persons in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on December 4. Nine are GMFs serving in Asia and eight are Global Missionaries serving in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, and Europe. We will have an in-person commissioning of four persons serving in the United States today in Atlanta, and we will commission 25 GMFs from the 2022 class next April at the board of directors meeting in Maputo, Mozambique.

As I mentioned earlier, we are engaging in a series of strategic conversations with our missionaries around the world and their input along with our directors among others will contribute to a broader conversation on the Principles of Missionary Service in the middle of next year with participants including staff, directors, missionaries, mission experts, etc.

- Yambasu Agriculture Initiative (YAI).** This initiative that was launched soon after I took over as general secretary, and in which we have invested over \$6 million to date, is gaining traction throughout the annual conferences in Africa. Dr. Kepifri Lakoh, previously technical advisor, is now director of the initiative, based in Sierra Leone. The YAI is presently convening the second of what will be three two-week training sessions at the Songhai Center in Benin, bringing together an estimated 80 annual conference staff and practitioners engaged in this effort to both contribute to food security in Africa and to strengthen the economic foundations of African United Methodism through agribusiness.
- Global Health.** The lessening of the crisis over COVID is permitting more work with partners at both health facility and community levels, notably to improve knowledge, the quality of services, their measurement, effectiveness and sustainability. In July, the Central Congo Health Board's Maternal Newborn and Child Health coordinator was part of a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) outreach to multiple communities on behavior change. Currently, the Nigeria Health Board's Imagine No Malaria coordinator is organizing the Global Fund's mosquito net mass distribution campaign in part of Taraba state. In July and August, three Global Health team members spent five weeks in the East Congo, South Congo, and North Katanga episcopal areas to listen and learn about the context

and conditions that health boards and the health network staff are working in and plans they are developing. This extremely valuable trip will impact future programming.

5. **Philander Smith College:** (Points 5–8 presented by Dana Lyles, director, Multiethnic Ministries) The purpose of a grant of \$2 million to Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas, is to fund the renovation and expansion of the research laboratory and clinical spaces of the Dr. Joycelyn Elders School of Allied and Public Health. The plans include an Allied Health Simulation Center and expansion and renovation of laboratory, research and clinical spaces on the second floor of the Kendall Nugent Center. This project aligns with Global Ministries' longstanding support of this United Methodist College, notably an \$8 million grant for the 2004 construction of The Harry R. Kendall Science and Health Mission Center and the 2014 Campus Center Capital campaign. More recent program grants from Global Ministries have supported social justice mission projects, the Christian Scholars program and an empowerment program for African American men.
6. **Kendall Scholars Program.** The historic Kendall Scholarship Program is being reshaped. It will continue to serve undergraduate and medical students of African American or Hispanic/Latinx descent pursuing health care-related degrees but will make fewer, larger grants targeted to enrollees in United Methodist-related Historic Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The funds come from an endowment set up by bequest of the late Harry R. Kendall, founder of the Washington National Life Insurance Company of Evanston. Going forward, grants will go to two undergraduate degree candidates or higher in each of the nine HBCUs. Fields of study include medicine, dentistry, nursing, social work or public health. We hope that Global Ministries will also be able to establish an agreement with Meharry Medical College to provide mentorship to undergraduate students and support for two graduate Kendall Scholar Program participants.
7. **Sager Brown/Community Developers Collaboration.** The Sager Brown material resource center of UMCOR in Baldwin, Louisiana, and our Community Developers Program are exploring a partnership to contribute to the social and economic welfare of the Baldwin area. Baldwin, a town in St. Mary's Parish, has a declining population, reported at 1,762 people in 2020, 69.7% African American. The average per capita income is low, educational opportunities limited and the population aging. The Community Developers Program seeks to empower racial and ethnic communities through the tools of organizing, economic development and partnership building.

8. **Day of Remembrance.** On September 30, Dr. Dana Lyles represented Global Ministries at the Day of Remembrance event held by the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC) to remember and honor victims and survivors of U.S. Indian boarding schools. Global Ministries is partnering with United Women in Faith to discover whether any of our schools were complicit in abuse occurring at those schools. While the investigation cannot change what occurred in the past, we can bring awareness to the sins of our Methodist-related actions.
9. As part of the five touchstones, the monitoring and evaluation unit has been focusing this year on conducting two evaluations: a baseline evaluation for the Abundant Health Initiative, which incorporates all the core programs funded by Global Health, and an impact evaluation for U.S. Disaster Response programs. Both evaluations are multi-site – meaning multiple countries for the Global Health evaluation, and multiple states for the U.S. Disaster Response (USDR) evaluation. These evaluations are the first significant undertaking of Global Ministries to measure impact, through rigorous statistical and qualitative methods. The Global Health evaluation is capturing results from the past five years of programming and granting, which for the nine health boards included in the evaluation was more than \$25 million.

For the USDR evaluation, the focus was on disaster case management recovery programs funded from 2018 onward and includes six partners, mostly annual conferences. The USDR lead evaluators are from the Pulte Institute for Global Development, which is based within Notre Dame University. The UMCOR committee will hear more about these evaluations.

10. **World Council of Churches Assembly and Climate Change.** I attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the WCC as a UMC delegate, which was delayed for two years by COVID and met in Karlsruhe, Germany, for 10 days in late August and early September. The theme, “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity” incorporated mission components and topics of importance to us. These include the war and humanitarian needs in Ukraine, peace in the Middle East, reconciliation and reunification on the Korean peninsula and larger roles for women and youth in church life. There remain many, many points of disagreement among the 362 Protestant, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Pentecostal and Evangelical member churches. While the ongoing patriarchy of the Orthodox churches was particularly disheartening, the issue that drew the strongest consensus was the necessity of the faith communities to address climate change and promote the integrity of God’s

creation. A commission has been created to address this and Karlsruhe boldly set forth arguments for reduction in what I would call religious tourism and faith business flights. Such talk hits close to home for Global Ministries and must become an item in our mission strategy conversation. We are clear that we do not expect to resume travel at the level of 2019 and before. We are working on tangible and measurable criteria to enable the reduction of our carbon footprint and to tie into the commitment the general church agencies made toward net zero emissions by 2050. Some of these steps may not be popular but we need to be courageous.

11. **Korean Methodist-United Methodist Mission Board Consultation.** For two days in August, Global Ministries hosted in Atlanta the first mission summit between the two mission boards in 20 years. The purpose was to discuss mutual mission partnership opportunities throughout the world, building on the shared history and current realities facing both churches. The presidents of both boards and of both councils of bishops were present. There was a great spirit in the meeting and we look forward to ongoing conversations on areas of significant collaboration.
12. **Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem:** Bishop Jung and I spent the last week primarily in Palestine to mark the 10th anniversary of the **Methodist Liaison Office** in Jerusalem. This is a joint office of the British Methodist Church, the World Methodist Council and The United Methodist Church through Global Ministries. Our primary role in the Methodist Liaison Office is one of accompaniment: walking with Palestinian Christians and with all who are working for justice and peace in the Holy Land. We met with several partners, primarily Palestinian Christians, who have long suffered under the weight of military occupation and dispossession. Based on what we witnessed and heard, we need to acknowledge today that in these past 10 years of common work in the MLO, the situation on the ground for Palestinians has gotten far worse. One of Global Ministries' longstanding goals that guides our mission is working with partners in oppressed communities who are seeking justice, freedom and peace. All three of those components was sadly missing from what we saw. The increase in illegal settlements, the wall that separates the Palestinians from their land and one another and mounting violence are clear indicators among others about this. In spite of this, it is important for us to reaffirm our commitment to the office, for the church provides a ray of hope for the Palestinian Christians. This was shared by all our partners as they want us to be the voices for those who cannot be heard. I started this report with the Revelation text which talks about "we are

God's people." From what we have done and are doing to each other in many places in the world, including Palestine, it is evident that we all do not see things this way.

## Financial Report Fall 2022

Presented by Mike Gurick, Chief Financial Officer

### Conclusion

I want to conclude this report by going back to the 1968 Tracey Jones report, as Jones says, "One of our primary tasks, and it is a traumatic one, is to smash some of the outmoded images of mission and missionaries, not through attack on the past but by focusing on the content of mission today." Strong words, some of which we would not use today...but the essence is similar as our agency faces a new mission age as it did in the late 1960s. As I have repeated before, our current Statement of Mission Theology ends with the affirmation that God is always moving the church into such an age. I hope you can see from our efforts over the past years and the plans for the months ahead, that we are trying to position and plan for mission in the coming age with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I am thankful for your continued engagement as directors in this process.

We are in a "liminal" time. Richard Rohr says: "liminality is a form of holding the tension between one space and another. It is in these transitional moments of our lives that authentic transformation can happen." My prayer is that this long transitional moment can be truly transformative for our church, and in particular, for our agency, so that we may be true channels for God's mission.