Serving
THE CALL TO MISSIONARY SERVICE
The Rev. Tazvionepi Nyarota (front, left), is congratulated by Evelyn Porter of the Edmonton Presbytery, a governing body in the United Church of Canada, after they voted to support the Zimbabwe United Methodist Church in Canada as a mission of the United Church. The meeting was held at McDougall United Church in Edmonton, Alberta. Rev. Nyarota is a Global Ministries missionary (Advance #3022315) from Zimbabwe serving as mission coordinator for the Methodist Zimbabwean community in Western Canada.
SERVING: THE CALL TO MISSIONARY SERVICE

Global Ministries welcomes Global Mission Fellows 2017-2019 trained in South Korea. These Global Mission Fellows come from nine different countries in Africa and from Brazil, Colombia, and China.

PHOTO: HYE-IN LEE
From the editor

SUPPORTING OUR MISSIONARIES

Missionaries are a traditional part of our extended United Methodist family. While United Methodist conferences sponsor and send missionaries, a missionary serves with and for the whole church. All United Methodists have opportunities to support a missionary in one way or another. This doesn’t always mean meeting them in person, but it does mean learning about their work and families and praying for God’s presence and guidance in their lives. On the other hand, if your church has covenanted with missionaries and sends consistent financial support, you may get a chance to meet them in person when they are on itineration. (See letters page, opposite, and p. 44.)

There are a number of ways to contact and find out about Global Ministries’ missionaries. United Methodists can make the Prayer Calendar part of their daily devotions (https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/prayer-calendar). This resource of United Methodist Women gives the names, contact information, and birthdays of missionaries and staff members of Global Ministries and United Methodist Women. As a staff member of Global Ministries, I’ve received hundreds of cards and email messages over the years. Some missionaries will add your email address to their newsletter mailing list if you ask them to.

Another good way to find more information is to visit the missionary pages of Global Ministries’ website—www.umcmission.org/missionaries. This website includes profiles of all Global Ministries’ missionaries and their supporting conferences, email addresses, missionary Advance codes, and headshot photos as well. I visit this site half a dozen times a day and find its information invaluable.

You may notice in this and other issues of New World Outlook that when a missionary contributes a story, we include an Advance number at the end with a byline. Every Global Ministries missionary can be supported through Advance giving. Whether that financial support comes from a conference, a congregation, or from individuals, gifts designated to a missionary’s Advance code help to increase the United Methodist Church’s ability to send and support missionaries.

Imagine what it would mean for a young missionary like Edison Toe (p. 33) or Tsetssegdari (Daria) Munkhbaatar (p. 22) to receive a message or an Advance gift from United Methodists they’ve never met. It is generally difficult for missionaries from outside the United States to raise significant funds from their conferences, but for someone like Edison, who has spent much of his life as a refugee, or Daria, who is the first missionary from a young church with less than 500 members in the whole country, meeting their covenant to raise funds is not possible without the extended family of Methodists across the connection.

Christie R. House

Dear Editor,

I was excited that the Summer 2017 issue of New World Outlook focused on migration. Great issue with so many different Global Mission Fellows sharing about their work. And the other articles are very helpful too. I am very involved with the JFON-NE and the General Board of Church and Society Immigration Task Force. Migration is an issue I am very passionate about.

In regard to page 14, there is a German word that is translated incorrectly (my mother tongue is German).

Flüchtingslager = refugee camp
Flüchtling = refugee
Flüchtlinge = refugees
Lager = camp

The verb “flüchten” means “to flee.”

Blessings and thank you for your excellent work with NWO.

Andrea Paret
Peace with Justice Coordinator, Great Plains Conference

Dear Editor:

To those in leadership with United Methodist missionar-
Letters from Readers

Teacher in China. Having myself served as a United Methodist missionary in Sierra Leone, West Africa, spoken to countless United Methodist churches and other groups over the years relating to our mission work—and having become acquainted with Connie first while she was in Taiwan and later China—I feel privileged to be able to share in her experiences and friendship.

It is definitely a privilege for my congregation, Clemson United Methodist Church in Clemson, South Carolina, to support her work and call her a friend. We have met and listened to various missionaries over the years, but without a doubt, Connie is proving to be one of our “blue-ribbon” representatives for United Methodist mission witness.

Her email messages, newsletters, and personal visits...her thoughtful appreciation to her supporting churches and her representation of the work of the United Methodist mission board are all outstanding! She is quick to respond, clear and precise in presentation, responds to questions and discussions clearly, and you can tell she truly loves her teaching and time in China.

Thank you to you all and the United Methodist mission board for sharing Connie Weick with us.

Lilburne Senn
Clemson, South Carolina

Heading Back to China

After 11 weeks of being in the United States, including eight weeks of driving about the countryside backroads and interstates of Illinois, I am heading back to Asia. I met so many wonderful people and thoroughly enjoyed sharing stories of being an Amity Foundation teacher in China. I only do these sorts of speaking engagements every three years. This has been my ninth itineration, having started my first in 1996, and I hope to have many more to come. What made this particular visit so enjoyable was meeting many for the first time, plus driving the most miles ever—a total of 3,600—in my mom’s car, which she so graciously allowed me to use.

I want to give a huge thank you to all who invited me to speak, and included housing if needed, and for those who provided everyone with such amazing breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack spreads. What a treat! As we all know, Methodists know how to eat (and eat well). It is one among many of our best hospitality qualities. You all certainly didn’t disappoint.

Can’t wait to see you all again in the summer of 2020. Mark your calendars! I certainly have. Ping An (Peace!)

Connie Weick
Amity Foundation English language teacher, Luzhou, China
https://connieinchina.org/

FOR E-READERS, PHONES, AND TABLETS

The best format for reading New World Outlook on smaller screens is from newworldoutlook.org, optimized for mobile formats.
In August 2017, the General Board of Global Ministries commissioned (sent) a total of 63 new Global Mission Fellows—young adult missionaries who serve two-year terms, mostly in justice ministries. They were from 22 countries and are working in 32 countries.

Compare those numbers and the diversity they represent to 2005, when 16 young adult missionaries were commissioned—eight as US-2s and eight as mission interns, the latter who served half of a three-year term in an international placement and half in the United States. The 2005 class members were all US citizens and they were almost all white. There was no possibility at that time for young adults from outside the United States to serve in short-term United Methodist mission programs even if they had been members of United Methodist churches all their lives.

In 2014, the young adult mission programs were restructured, with the US-2 and mission intern components combined into Generation Transformation, an umbrella for US-2 and international tracks of Global Mission Fellows. Candidates are accepted from and serve in many different countries in keeping with the “from everywhere to everywhere” philosophy of United Methodist global missionary recruitment and placement.

**Mission Diversity and Partnership**

The concept of missionaries from everywhere to everywhere developed over time from the affirmation of mission “partnership in obedience to God”—the partnership between younger, mission-founded churches and the older, mission-sending
denominations. The post-World War II mission movement learned that missionaries could no longer be only Americans and Europeans—mostly white—sent to poorer, underdeveloped parts of the world. The younger churches in the Global South and East made it clear that they not only would have a say in who came to them as missionaries, they would also provide missionaries for the worldwide church.

Today, about half of Global Ministries’ 180 global missionaries and at least three-quarters of the 119 Global Mission Fellows come from outside the United States. It is not only from the older of the mission-founded churches, such as those in central and West Africa and Latin America, that we draw mission personnel, but also from some newer mission initiatives. This issue of New World Outlook includes a profile of Tsetsegdari Munkhbaatar, our first Global Mission Fellow from the United Methodist Mission in Mongolia. She is serving on the island of Grenada in the West Indies.

This expanding diversity bears out the mandate of Jesus to disciples in the Acts of the Apostles to take the gospel to everywhere, a mandate followed up at Pentecost with people from many places hearing the good news of Jesus in their own languages, a reminder that God’s love can be conveyed through any tongue.

Challenges
Diversity within the missionary community expands service opportunities—presents new vistas—but it is not without a range of challenges. Three such challenges follow:

1. Restrictions on movement. A philosophy of “from everywhere to everywhere,” ready personnel, and the availability of worldwide air travel does not mean placing missionaries everywhere is easy. Some governments, notably in the Middle East and Central and East Asia, do not permit the entry of missionaries. To attempt to place them under disguise would endanger their lives. In a few countries where Global Ministries has personnel, we cannot publicly acknowledge the fact for fear of jeopardizing not only the missionaries but also the local Christians they serve. Extreme nationalism, xenophobia, or religious partiality often play major roles in such exclusions. Frequent or sporadic civil and political unrest also can mitigate against missionary placement or require plans for quick and easy evacuation when conflicts break out.

Government immigration restrictions can also hamper the smooth operation of an “everywhere to everywhere” missionary policy. For example, the United States does not allow Global Mission Fellows from outside the country to enter this country for two years of service, and it often blocks non-US young adults from entering for their three weeks of training. In August 2017, 45 of our GMF class, a majority of which were from outside the United States, were trained in Atlanta while 18 did their training in South Korea, primarily because they were refused entry into the United States. We also had a situation once in which a global missionary candidate from Africa missed training in South America because he was refused a transit visa to cross the terminal in a major European airport.

Going into all the world can be a difficult assignment.

2. Financial Factors. Economics play a big part in the contemporary United Methodist mission story of everywhere to everywhere. Each global
missionary costs an average of between $50,000 and $55,000 per year. The Global Mission Fellows program for 2017 through 2019 is budgeted at around $3 million. Global Ministries shares costs of US-2 fellows with placement sites but bears the full cost of international placements. The costs of Church and Community Worker missionaries and those of the ethnic plans in the United States are shared between Global Ministries and placement sponsors. The agency’s current total annual outlay for missionary services is $20.5 million in budget plus $4.1 million for actuarial contribution for a defined benefit pension plan.

Funding for missionaries comes from two primary sources. The majority is from World Service apportionments from local congregations, passed through the annual conferences and the General Council of Finance and Administration to Global Ministries. For 2017, a total of $25 million in World Service Funds is allocated to Global Ministries, about 90 percent of which will be received.

Supplemental missionary support comes through The Advance, the United Methodist designated mission giving channel. In 2016, some $3.7 million in missionary support was realized through The Advance, much of that through Covenant Relationships between particular missionaries and specific congregations (See http://www.umcmission.org/Get-Involved/Partnerships/Covenant-Relationships/Covenant-Relationships).

Despite increasing mission service opportunities, the numbers of missionaries cannot increase beyond current levels without a corresponding increase in income, and this is a challenge on multiple fronts. One reality is the unequal economic capacity of the church membership based on geography. The greatest capacity remains in the United States, which has a declining percentage—presently some 59 percent—of the current 12.5 million United Methodist members, compared to 41 percent in the conferences in Africa, the Philippines, and continental Eurasia, with growth most notably in Africa. Virtually all of World Service apportionments and Advance gifts come from the United States, although the small conferences in continental Western Europe contribute beyond what is apportioned to World Service and other conferences outside the United States are now expected to give to that fund.

Giving to missionary support through The Advance depends in some measure on direct, personal ties between missionaries and congregations. Facilitating even occasional missionary visits to supporting local churches, which are mostly in the United States, becomes difficult with more personnel coming from, say, Africa, notably when it can be hard to obtain entry visas for such visits. Unless a Global Mission Fellow comes into the program with upfront financial support from family or home church, two-years is a short time to build up a network of donors.

The financial challenges are real but not insurmountable. Our mission organizations have faced such challenges over the past 200 years, and they have always contributed abundantly to the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ and service to others in Christ’s name.

### 3. Contexts and Relationships

A diverse missionary community from everywhere to everywhere raises new issues regarding mission contexts and relationships, matters born out in recruitment, training, assignment, and duration of service. It involves interaction with a range of partners, United Methodist and ecumenical, and may include association with national and international organizations, philanthropies, and even corporations.

Decades of experience has taught that effective mission must consider the principle and the practice of differentiation. The mission approach and personnel must be right for the situation and culture. Missionaries are not interchangeable pieces of a system; they are valued and valuable souls able to fit specific contexts and develop deep relationships within those places. The contexts differ widely and one approach is not suitable in all cases. The importance of differentiation is clear in Global Ministries’ experience with new mission initiatives beginning in the last decade of the 20th century.

Several of those initiatives were in areas of Asia where Methodism had never before existed, including areas of Southeast and Central Asia and Mongolia, where changes in political systems opened doors to missionaries. These places turned out to be quite different from one another, each requiring distinct missionary skills. In Southeast Asia, the earliest missionaries were refugees from
those lands who had become United Methodists in the United States, but particular skill sets were required even within proximate areas of Southeast Asia. In one region, Wesleyan theology strongly appealed to well-educated, upwardly mobile young adults, while in another, poor villagers became the operative United Methodist Church. In the latter, missionaries needed to be able to train church members to access or even create jobs, while a more pressing challenge in the other was to provide contexts for social interaction.

In Mongolia, our mission began with a hospice for the poor of Ulaanbaatar, founded by a missionary nurse who also taught Bible stories to children and cultivated young musicians. In Central Asia, the key was providing educational opportunities for those on the edges of established systems, and in one case, the act of repairing a road.

Missionaries truly are summoned by God for service in the missio Dei, God’s mission, but the sense of service is almost always linked to distinct professional capacities and talents. We often must seek out specific abilities—gifts that give substance and form to the call to serve, as in St. Paul’s recognition in I Corinthians 12:28 of apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, guides—in many different languages. We look for specific skill sets—in evangelism and church development, health and nutrition, agriculture, technology, communications, and so forth.

There are certain realities and capacities that I expect are common to all missionaries’ experience, growing out of a sense of call. One of these is a sense of “going.” “Here am I, send me,” the prophet Isaiah responded to God in a vision. “Going” may be from one country or culture or language to another, or, in the case of domestic service, going from one location to another or from one ethnic or economic environment to another. The selection process is often done in collaboration with a local or regional mission partner that may ask for a missionary with certain skills and competences. Missionaries are often sent in response to invitations from churches or communities in need of workers. This practice goes back a long way in Methodism. The first Methodist missionaries to North America were sent by Methodists in England in 1769 in response to a “pressing appeal” for help from a Methodist group in New York.

“Who is willing to go?” John Wesley asked at the Methodist Conference that year. Two young lay preachers stepped forward.

Another shared quality is the ability to forge strong, respectful relationships with people whose background, culture, language, diet, style of worship, and expectations differ from that of the missionary.

Mission relations with an existing church in a country like Liberia (where Methodism arrived in the 1830s) are by nature different from those involved in starting an entirely new mission initiative in Mongolia, where United Methodist work is quite new. Yet the same principles of multicultural respect and collaboration apply in both cases. In new locales, “pioneer” missionaries must start out with an openness to and appreciation for local culture; they must seek out local partners interested in the objectives and services proposed. Most importantly, original intent must include local leadership development, with the long vision of an indigenous church or worshiping fellowship moving toward home-grown leadership.

The biblical imperative affirms that “mission is not created by the church; rather it is given to the church by God’s saving action in and on behalf of the world.” (Grace Upon Grace: The Mission Statement of The United Methodist Church. Graded Press, 1990, p. 5.) Arriving at the affirmation of mission from everywhere to everywhere required a shift from the colonial model of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, without abandoning the biblical mandate of taking the message of God’s love into the whole world.

Thomas Kemper is the general secretary and chief executive officer of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.
All in God’s Place and Time

An interview with Helen Roberts-Evans by Christie R. House

For seven years, Helen Roberts-Evans worked as the director for the Department of General Education and Ministry with the Liberia Annual Conference in Monrovia. She oversaw the administration of some 59 United Methodist schools in Liberia—schools that had survived the civil unrest in that country. Not only did she see to repairs of the buildings and the acquisition of supplies, she also acted as a conduit for conferences and churches in the United States, Norway, and Sweden who sought to assist Liberians in their recovery.

In 2016, a Liberian educator, the Rev. Dr. Sampson Nyanti, was appointed as director of the Department of General Education and Ministry. Helen assumed the position of associate director for supervision. But this doesn’t mean that her missionary work has concluded—this step gave her time to reflect on her ministry and apply for a study leave.

“After serving as the education director for seven years, I know that teachers in many of our Liberian schools need more guidance in how to teach,” she wrote in a recent newsletter. “I feel called to teach teachers and I have taken a one-year study leave to focus on the art of teaching.”

Helen returned to Boston to attend Emmanuel College for a Master of Arts in Teaching, which the college renamed as the Masters in Education while she was there.

Helen had studied at Boston University for a bachelor’s degree in Special Education. Yet, returning to places and activities to close the circle of earlier life pursuits—across her lifetime, and across her parents’ lifetime—has become a theme in her missionary experience.

The Journey Begins

In Liberia, I immediately fell at home. I saw people and met people from my dreams. At my home church in Evanston, Illinois, I heard that we are part of a connectional church, but I did not fully understand what that meant until I came to Liberia.

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HELEN ROBERTS-EVANS, MISSIONARY IN LIBERIA
A Calling to Go “Home”

Helen’s first job in education was with a school in the Boston area for children with language impairments, including children who were Deaf. Yet, she yearned to return to Liberia as a teacher, like her mom and dad and aunt before her. Unfortunately, that was during the time of Samuel Doe and Liberia’s civil war. By 2006, the conflict had ended, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a United Methodist laywoman, was elected president, and 15,000 United Nations peacekeepers arrived in the country. Helen decided it was time to make the trip to Liberia.

Her mother said: “Go back to your country. You will be with your godmother and work in an office.”

Helen traveled to Liberia in 2008 to the place where her family had lived. Everyone she met knew her godmother, Mae Roberts, even though Helen couldn’t remember her. After Sunday school, where Helen taught a lot of children, she had Sunday dinner at her godmother’s house every week.

Liberia needed teachers. Schools had been closed during the civil unrest. The church wanted to reopen its schools. Helen volunteered as director for the Department of General Education and Ministry. “Since I was a little girl, I wanted to teach in Liberia,” she repeated.

Then in 2009, Helen was officially commissioned as a United Methodist missionary to work with the Liberian UMC’s education department. After the civil war, the major task of the education department was to get the schools up and running. Her job description included supervising the building and renovating of schools, training teachers, and scholarships for students. As the buildings were renovated, her work shifted.

The Department of General Education and Ministry of the Liberian UMC now oversees 59 schools in Liberia and one in Guinea. Helen has traveled to all 15 counties of Liberia visiting Methodist schools. Every school has its own local school board, and she worked as a liaison with the schools and the government’s Ministry of Education.

Another Shift in Mission

With the schools in better shape and a new director in place, Helen sought further education in the area of teacher training—”because,” she said, “school is more than the buildings. What are the children learning? Bricks don’t teach.”

She has spent the last year refreshing her thinking and discovering new ideas in education. Emmanuel is a small Christian college where she took 12 courses in 12 months—always with a focus, in her case, on Liberia and on “Mother-tongue” education. She has also circled back to her original interest in teaching the Deaf, taking a directed research course for Deaf children. In Liberia, there are few educational facilities to meet the needs of Deaf children, and those only teach to the sixth grade. She felt led to be part of the Deaf ministry, Hope for the Deaf, in Monrovia—and her coursework at Emmanuel College encompassed educational programs for the Deaf in several different countries—programs that look at how the teachers are educated, different teaching methods, and how Deaf students learn. She is part of a group at the Ministry of Education in Liberia to develop awareness for special needs and inclusive education, as well as for early childhood development.

When Helen returns to Liberia, she plans to work with the teachers to help them understand individual differences in the children. The next step is to differentiate programs that will work for their needs, particularly for Deaf children.

Helen Roberts-Evans (Advance #3021129) has worked in Liberia as a United Methodist missionary for eight years. Her deep roots extend to the Chicago area, the Boston area, Jamaica, and Liberia.

SUPPORT EDUCATION IN LIBERIA

Several Advance projects support education in Liberia in different ways.

- Advance #15125B Scholarships for Elementary, Secondary, College & Seminary Education
- Advance #3020670 for Construction of New School Buildings
- Advance #3021654 for Sheltering the Children of John Dean Town (dormitory project)
- Advance #14488A Swords Turned into Plowshares (carpentry program at Gbarnga Mission Station)
Though I grew up in Northern Ireland, I didn’t really know what “The Troubles” were like for those living in that situation every day. I only experienced the tip of the iceberg. I grew up about a two-hour drive west of Belfast, in a rural farming community called Tempo, County Fermanagh. Tempo is a small, sleepy village surrounded by rolling hills, narrow roads, and farmlands. The local church hall was the main hub for activities, barn dances, and other events that brought any kind of social life.

Since 2011, I have been a missionary working as a mental health counselor at the East Belfast Mission (EBM). East Belfast Mission, launched from an existing Methodist congregation, provides spiritual, mental, and educational means to the neighboring population in the community. Known as the Skainos Project (Greek—from John 1:14—meaning “Tent,” or “God came and dwelt among us”), the community at EBM serves an area of men and women, young and old, mainly nonworking class, who have lived with violence, threats, anger, and hopelessness for years. This shared space for all hopes to bring community transformation and renewal.

There are still some physical barriers between Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods. Even today there are still some 88 walls, gates, and fences closing off communities. Taking my daughter Emily to gymnastics on Monday
evenings, if we don’t cross over by 6:30 pm, the gates are locked and then we have a massive detour to get home. That still shocks me and prompts many questions from Emily as we drive down visibly different streets with murals, Gaelic street signs, and a “feel” of difference that is not easily described. I know I am in Catholic areas and it unnerves me. My husband Britt, an American, is very comfortable exploring new parts of the city and moves with ease between neighborhoods around East Belfast Mission. I do not. I remember feeling quite anxious getting stuck in a narrow Republican street with tri-color flags and IRA slogans. I sensed a certain twitch and tension in my body and asked Britt to drive away quickly. He wondered why I reacted so strongly. Then I recalled a horrific event in which two plain-clothed soldiers got caught in an unsafe street and were pulled from their car and later murdered. That television image came back to me more than 30 years later.

Counseling Services

The EBM counseling service was set up 10 years ago. We work with six volunteers and offer around 50-hours a week of free mental health support to the community. We strive to create a safe, warm, and respectful place for people to explore their difficulties and journey with them to help them make new and better decisions.

Because of the trauma that Northern Ireland has endured in the past, there are many people with severe depression, along with other mental health challenges that have arisen through a time of such conflict. I try to offer hope and perspective to people in very difficult places. The counseling service at EBM has been and continues to be in high demand.

My clients knew guns, bombs, and death beatings in ways that truly shock, repulse, and leave me with disturbing images sometimes. Violence leaves lasting footprints. Shadows haunt a person, coming through in addiction, depression, and inappropriate behaviors.

The emotional effects of Northern Ireland’s Troubles are very much present today. Suicide is increasingly high. It has been estimated that 3,600 people were killed in Northern Ireland’s bloody conflict between 1969 and 1997. A less well-known statistic is that almost as many people took their own lives in the 15 years that followed. Issues of guilt are common among my clients. They cannot comprehend why they acted or did what they did during that time. Guilt and shame can be paralyzing. This leads to depression and relationships that are marked by hostility, cruelty, and other negative patterns.

Reconciliation is not always possible or recommended (in areas of abuse). We cannot undo the past but we can decide to live wholeheartedly today. I also balance two pictures the client shares with me: the one they came from and the one they hope to be. As we deal with the wounds of pain and despair, I also gently share the new picture of light and goodness and a better way. We walk there together.

I remember a client who, over the course of four years, told me about reconciliation with her dad. After years of distance and frustration they came together for dinner. Nervously she greeted him and the conversations just flowed. He never said sorry. Remarkably, she didn’t need to hear it. Having the man open the door and begin again was enough. It was as good as it would get—and that was enough.

I was so unbelievably proud of the woman she was becoming. It was enough to have what she had. That is healing—not perfect but so much brighter than what she had before.

To know that the presence of God is close by within the walls of counseling is serene. How incredibly beautiful, to know that God, the sovereign one, who gathers nations, rejoices over us—that is the Garden of Eden for me as we live in barren lands.
MISSIONARIES

CAMBODIA—

Passion to Praise and Zeal to Learn

by Andrew Lee
Cambodia! If you had told me early this year that I’d be serving in Cambodia as the country coordinator for the Global Ministries office, I’d have said you were out of your mind. But here I am, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, with my wife of 13 years and our two daughters, ages eight and six. We arrived on June 25, 2017, and we have been adjusting to living as foreigners in a foreign country.

I served as a short-term missionary in Bangladesh for a year when I was in college. It was then that I felt called to serve God’s people and thought I’d serve as a missionary right away. But God had a different plan. I went to seminary and started serving local churches in Hawaii. After seven years of serving at a wonderful church located in Kaneohe, I had nothing more to ask for. I was happy, the church was growing, and I had bigger plans to do more wonderful things with the great people there. But God called. And I—I simply answered, “Yes.”

Establishing the MCC

In Cambodia, one of my main job descriptions is to work with the six other great missionaries who have been serving in Cambodia. Some of our missional works here include CHAD (Community Health & Agricultural Development), women’s ministry, street children’s ministry, and assisting with the Methodist Church of Cambodia (MCC). In fact, I am currently working with four other Methodist agencies from four different countries to help establish the autonomous MCC Methodist denomination of Cambodia. It is historically a unique project in the mission world where Methodist agencies (United Methodist Church, Connexio-Switzerland, Korean Methodist Church, Methodist Mission of Singapore, World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches) are working cooperatively to establish one denomination in a nation they have been serving together. There are about 140 MCC churches (including small house churches), and we are very excited about completing this project in the near future.

In a country where people have suffered so much in modern history, I cannot help but praise God for the good works God has started to help the people of Cambodia rise up and stand on their own as a denomination. There is still much work to be done to reach out to the nation with the good news, where only 2 percent are Christian, but I look forward to seeing more Cambodians complete this holy task, without needing foreigners, as they become more autonomous.

Cambodian Christians

In the few weeks that I have been serving in Cambodia, I have met many Cambodians who are in love with Jesus. I’ve recently participated in a youth camp, sponsored by Connexio-Switzerland (a United Methodist network for mission and service), in which 200 youth gathered from various provinces of Cambodia in Siem Reap for a week to worship and learn more deeply about God. Seeing their passion to praise God and their zeal to learn more about God has moved my heart to realize that God is truly present and working in this country. There are still too many people stricken with poverty that need to find hope in Jesus and I look forward to spreading this good news with them.

In looking forward to doing more wonderful works in Cambodia, I cannot help but thank my family for being brave enough to join me in this endeavor. The culture shock seems to have finally settled in, though both my wife and I know that our children have much yet to experience. But this is an adventure that we are willing to take with joy as God’s instruments to serve God and God’s people!

Seeing their passion to praise God and their zeal to learn more about God has moved my heart to realize that God is truly present and working in this country. There are still too many people stricken with poverty that need to find hope in Jesus and I look forward to spreading this good news with them.
Global Ministries provides opportunities for people with different kinds of skills who feel a call to serve God in mission. Service opportunities exist within the United States and in international placements.

Our church and mission partners ask for:
- Accountants;
- Pastors;
- Administrators;
- Farmers;
- Professors/Teachers;

to name a few.

**Steps to Becoming a United Methodist Missionary**

1. Do you feel called to missionary service?
   - Engage in conversation about your call with pastors, mentors, missionaries, family members, and others.
   *Timeline—Discernment can take a few months or even a few years.*

2. Application Stage
   - Apply online.
   - Applicant contacts his or her Annual Conference Committee on Mission Personnel (CCMP) for an interview (if you are part of a conference that has one).
   - CCMP interviews and makes a recommendation.
   - Upon recommendation by CCMP, your information is placed in the applicant pool.
   *Timeline—three to six months.*

3. Exploring Stage: Do my gifts/passion fit the need identified by Global Ministries?
   - Global Ministries matches the gifts and graces needed at each placement site with those who are in the applicant pool. For Global Mission Fellows (GMF), applications are reviewed and applicants must first meet the program criteria to receive an invitation. The matching process of gifts to needs comes after acceptance into the GMF program.
   *Timeline—three months to a few years (it depends on the needs of the placement site).*
4. Selection Stage
- Global Ministries will conduct a virtual interview when a potential match is identified.
- A recommendation is made if both the applicant and the interview panel discern that this is the right fit.
- You are presented to Global Ministries’ leadership for approval.

Timeline—one to three months.

5. Preparation Stage
- Global Ministries makes an official offer of hire if the candidate is approved and receives the necessary wellness and background check clearances.
- Candidates participate in a three-week missionary training and orientation.
- Candidates are commissioned to missionary service upon completion of training.

Timeline—one to six months.

6. Service Stage
- Global Ministries sends newly commissioned missionaries into service.

Service lengths vary:
- Racial and Ethnic Ministries missionaries and Global missionaries have a three-year term that is renewable at the end of each term.
- Church and Community Worker missionaries commit to serve five to eight years or longer.
- Global Mission Fellows, International and US-2 tracks, serve 2-year terms and follow a different application process.

Timeline—one to six months.
Global Mission Fellows

What are you thankful for this year?

by Kayla Pless

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
1 Thessalonians 5:18

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
Jeremiah 29:11

Volunteers at Restore Hope Ministries in Oklahoma pack Thanksgiving dinners for 600 families in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, area.
Photo: Kayla Pless
The holiday season is in full effect, with Halloween at the end of October and Thanksgiving approaching rapidly. Before we know it, Christmas will be here! Yet, holidays can leave numerous families in a lot of stress, whether because they are trying to provide presents, pay bills, or even put a meal on the table.

All parents want to give their children gifts or a special meal and when they can’t, it’s heartbreaking. Restore Hope Ministries helps provide groceries to low income families in the Tulsa County area. During the Thanksgiving holidays, we help families celebrate and share a special time together without the hassle of spending hundreds of dollars on the meal. Restore Hope provides a Thanksgiving meal for 600 families in the area.

I personally scouted two local grocery stores in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for regular-priced groceries during the holidays. A normal holiday meal costs around $71.00 for a two- to three-person household. This year, we saved over $28,000 by using the food bank and avoiding products in bulk-selling stores; we found it costs us around $32 a basket to feed a family during the holidays. The items we provide to clients in our Thanksgiving baskets are: turkey, corn, green beans, peas, applesauce, fruit cocktail, peaches, butter, cake mix, carrots, potatoes, cornbread mix, gelatin, marshmallows, whipped topping, dinner rolls, cranberry sauce, yams, cream of mushroom soup, onions, and celery. The next time you’re thinking about donating to a nonprofit or charity food program, know that your donation is being used in an incredible way, and you are probably helping in more ways more than you think you are.

Working People Need Help
One of the questions people answer on the application for the Thanksgiving baskets is whether they have received income in the last 30 days and over 75 percent say they have. While we don’t know how much families receive, or whether that income is social security income, we do know that they have received some sort of income. Not all people who need help are unemployed, nor do they fit a stereotype of “lazy.” The majority are extremely hard-working; they either went into debt because of medical bills or they had to do household repairs. There are so many things that happen in this world that are out of our control, but being able to give back when others need help is one of the most rewarding feelings.

On the application, we ask two more personal questions:

What are you thankful for this year?
Some of the responses included education, children, “to still be alive,” Restore Hope, have a roof over our head, family. We ask this question to remind our clients that even in tough times, they all still have something to be thankful for.

What are you hopeful for next year?
Some responses to this question were: father will return, cure for HIV/AIDS, a family member will stay out of jail, children will become honor students, a liver transplant, to be able to help someone else. Sometimes bad things just happen, and it is out of our control, but we can all still be hopeful that there will be good in the future.

Last Thanksgiving, for the first time in my 22 years of life, I did not spend the Thanksgiving holiday with my family. And now that I have been away for another year, I’ve realized Thanksgiving time was something I took for granted. So, I advise anyone who is feeling down or having a hard time during the holidays to remember that we all have something to be thankful for.

Kayla Pless is a Global Ministries Global Mission Fellow US-2 (Advance #302226) from North Carolina currently serving for two years with Restore Hope Ministries of the Oklahoma Annual Conference as a church poverty liaison. Restore Hope responds to the basic needs of working-poor families in the Tulsa area, helping them regain stability and move toward economic and spiritual vitality. This piece was originally posted on the Generation Transformation Book of Fellows website, https://thebookoffellows.wordpress.com/.
One of my favorite Old Testament stories is Moses and the burning bush. Moses, after being exiled from Egypt, stumbles upon a burning bush one day that is imbued with God’s spirit. From this burning bush, Moses receives his call to free the Israelites from captivity. It’s a transformative moment in Moses’ life. Yet, however much I enjoy this story, I never experienced a “burning bush” moment.

Instead, my call to service through Global Mission Fellows came from an examination of my heart. I began discerning a call to ministry during college and became involved in several ministries. My senior year of college, I worked in a local church as a missions intern. During my internship, I began spending more time outside the church in the local community, meeting some of the people experiencing homelessness in our community. I liked to visit a woman who went by the name of “Q.” We discussed the latest news, our favorite Bible stories, and why Q paints to make a living. These interactions taught me how ministry is about building relationships with people. I was drawn to the US-2 program because of its commitment to serving alongside communities, not serving “to” or “for” someone. At the heart of the program is the idea of building equitable relationships.

When I began my service with Networking, Outreach, and Advocacy for the Homeless (NOAH), my boss suggested I read Tattoos on the Heart by Gregory Boyle. Boyle lays out his belief that “kinship is what God is pressing us on to.” As a caseworker, I’ve learned how to live out this kinship with our clients. Some of my favorite moments happen in small ways. With one client, we discussed who would make it to the Super Bowl that year, checking in after every game. Another liked to talk about music and share new tunes he had learned to play on the piano. One of my favorite clients decided to teach me his favorite gospel song, “God is Greater.” Out of these interactions comes a greater trust and a willingness to take steps, together, toward their goals. Each of these moments allows us to break down society’s barriers and find ourselves as God intended—as equals, as kin.

I’ve learned this year that no matter how we receive our call, it is predicated on our relationships; with God, with others, with our own souls. As these relationships grow, so does our sense of how to live out our calling. Moses’ call may have been conveyed through an impossible flame on a fire repellent bush, but Moses learned to live out his call through his relationship with God and the Israelite people. Our call is not a fixed thing; it is instead an ongoing conversation with God, with one another, and with ourselves as we seek to cultivate kinship.

Isaac Dunn, from Abilene, Texas, serves as a Global Mission Fellow US-2 (Advance #3022220), class of 2016-2018. The NOAH Project (Networking, Organizing, and Advocating for the Homeless) is a ministry related to Central United Methodist Church in Detroit, Michigan.
There is one thing that motivates me every day—to make a difference in people’s lives. I see people struggle, especially single mothers, innocent babies, and families who don’t have shelter. I never knew that in the United States there could be people who are homeless.

My father worked as a pastor for the Evangelical Free Church for 18 years. Now both my parents work as missionaries, my dad as a leader of ReachAfrica, which is an organization with the mission to plant churches across unreached areas in Africa. My mother works with young uneducated girls in the DR Congo, teaching them practical skills they can use to earn a living. I have four siblings; two sisters and two brothers.

My dad was inspired by the available opportunities found in English-speaking countries, specifically the United States. He urged me to continue my studies abroad. I began studies at Daystar University in Kenya. Meanwhile, I had submitted my USA visa application, and after a year, I received a notification letter to proceed. Eventually I enrolled at Ottawa University in Brookfield, Wisconsin.

In Wisconsin, I discovered and decided to attend a United Methodist church not far from my apartment. There I met three US-2s on a mission trip with the church.

One of those US-2 friends had served in South Africa for a year and a half, and she told me about her experience living as a foreigner—facing language barriers and the anxiety of living in a new culture. That resonated with me because I was going through the same situation. She encouraged me to join the program, and I felt that my call was geared toward immigrants, having relatable experience.

I started work in 2016 as a Global Mission Fellow US-2 in St. Petersburg, Florida, as a citizenship/immigration services coordinator with United Methodist Community Ministries/Suncoast, the outreach program of the Gulf Central District. This program provides students seeking citizenship with assistance in the process. After a year, I moved to the program’s housing-support department. We are providing houses for the homeless and those with low-income. We also help them budget and repair their credit, so they can better provide for their families.

I’m humbled to be part of this journey, to help people understand that God loves them and still is in control. Not long ago, I received a call from a woman who was crying because she would become homeless in two days. She didn’t know what to do. I collected all her information and talked with her, giving her a word of hope to keep her calm. We helped her find a place to live and she was grateful. While my contribution seemed small, it was humbling to support her in her time of need.

Tresor (“Tre”) Selenga Kumugo, a Global Mission US-2 serving with the Florida Conference, is originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His work can be supported through the Advance, #3022247.
My name is Tsetsegdari Munkhbaatar, a Global Mission Fellow, international class of 2016-2017. I am the first Global Mission Fellow and the first United Methodist missionary to come from Mongolia, where the Methodist Church is still a young mission initiative. In truth, the editor of New World Outlook mentioned this to me in an email when she asked me to write an article for the magazine. That made me nervous—old feelings that I felt after training and the five months that followed. This made me seem so responsible. Maybe things feel like this when you are not sure you are meeting people’s expectations.

For missionary service, I have gotten used to answering questions, such as: “Why did I decide to be a missionary?” In part, I became a Global Mission Fellow because my mom said: “You have to go, my daughter. You will do God’s work. Working for God’s glory is the most peaceful job in the world, because every moment you get the chance to think about God. That’s what is most important in a human’s life.” She repeated it until I went to the training. Remarkable, really, when you consider she is Buddhist.

Another question I was asked was: “Is that your only luggage?” When I reached Grenada, my new friends asked me this. I took just a medium-sized suitcase and a small backpack to live for two years. I did not worry about anything because mom said: “God will provide, live simply.”

She also said, “Do not complain and don’t let me hear any bad words about your placement site.” And she hasn’t heard a complaining word from me about my work place and my daily life. But that’s not because she forbade me to do so. In truth, I had little to complain about. My missionary life so far has been filled with blessings for which I thank God.

Here are just a few of the blessings I speak of: when I arrived in Grenada, Hilary and Relin (last year’s Global Mission Fellows) were still here to talk to me, advise me, and help me, so I did not feel lonely. And I am living in a brand-new house—practically. They made repairs and finished other maintenance just before I got there. My work place and coworkers are the most caring people that I have ever known. When I think—I was physically sick for four months before my first training, and the doctor said I was too tired. I made friends with vaccinations and pills, and even stayed in the hospital. But once I got to Grenada, a magical thing happened: I have not felt sick since I got here.
Warm Winds of Grenada

This gave me courage that my decision to enter missionary service was the correct one for me—though, it was almost made by my mom. But now that I am here, I think this is a great opportunity, to be the first one. Through this I understand that if you love God from your heart, God will give you a humble soul to pursue the work God has for you and to experience its fruits.

I am serving as an accounting officer for GRENCODA (Grenada Community Development Agency) in Grenada, the “Spice Isle.” (Grenada is an island country in the south-eastern Caribbean Sea. There is one large island of Grenada and six smaller islands at the southern end of the Grenadines island chain.) Our organization exists to provide guidance and support to rural individuals, families, and communities to improve their quality of life. It does this by encouraging people’s participation in community-based initiatives, which build self-reliance, particularly among small farmers, women, low-income workers, and youth. If you want to know about our work, check out our Facebook Page using the name Grenada Community Development Agency—GRENCODA.

I have been working with community members and youth on the issue of saving and developing the environment, especially climate change and Grenada’s coastal ecosystem. These are interesting new topics for me. I already have a big heart for Grenada. Learning about the people and their culture makes me fall in love with them more day by day.

Grenada is an entirely new world for me. (I come from the frozen plains of Mongolia, after all.) It’s a great place, even though it’s hot. For hot days, I can go to my fridge and dream about home and winter. No need to be sad. I yearn to be more Grenadian and work with a missionary heart now. Grenadian fruits and beaches make me jealous. It’s beautiful here.

Good Enough to Serve

I have been asking God: “Why me? What if I can’t do this?” I had no idea about missionaries and I didn’t see myself as a good Christian. My mom, older sister, and older brother are not Christian and my younger brother does not go to church every Sunday. Only my younger sister and I went to Chingeltei Church. I didn’t even ask my family or my boyfriend to come to church. Seven years ago, when I was 15, we moved to a new place and found an announcement about free English classes. So, I went.

There I met a young American woman named Erin Eidenshink who was a mission intern serving in the Chingeltei Church. My first missionary! I went for language classes, but I found God. And I have been growing in the faith, thanks also to the strong words of the Rev. Sun Lae Kim, Chingeltei’s missionary pastor.

Now I understand what missionaries do. It was with me from the beginning. Missionary work can’t be described or limited by a person’s words, profession, appearance, or even self-doubt. God knows me better than I do.

This adventure and experience the past few months has affected me mentally and physically. My words cannot describe how wonderful this program is or how big my blessings are. I wish many more young Mongolians would join in this work to experience how God transforms the world through people.

And when I return to my homeland, I will tell people in my generation that we also can become God’s hands to give light to the world.

Tsetsegdari Munkhbaatar, a Global Mission Fellow (Advance #3022236) from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, is a member of the Chingeltei United Methodist Church. She holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the Global Leadership University of Mongolia and completed additional academic work in accounting at Ming Chuan University in Taiwan.
From Everywhere to Everywhere: Missionaries in Service

WHERE DO MISSIONARIES SERVE?

North America
152

South America
30

Europe
47

MISSIONARY SERVICE CATEGORIES

Number of Missionaries
32
137
186

Church and Community Workers
Global Mission Fellow - International
Global Mission Fellow US2

Korean Ministry Plan Missionary
Mission Advocate
Special Initiative Missionary
UMN Regional Missionary

WHERE DO MISSIONARIES COME FROM?

Church and Community Workers
Global Mission Fellow - International
Global Mission Fellow US2
Korean Ministry Plan Missionary
Mission Advocate
Special Initiative Missionary
UMN Regional Missionary

FEMALE
235 55%

MALE
191 45%

CLERGY
98 23%

MARRIED
209 49%

SINGLE
217 51%

SERVING IN THE US
99 23%

SERVING OUTSIDE THE US
327 77%

% of Total

Other

Congo, (Democratic Republic)
Kenya
Korea
Philippines
United States
Zimbabwe

8%
4%
3%
8%
30%
6%
41%

GRAPHIC BY HAL SADLER

NEWWORLDOUTLOOK.ORG
## Everywhere: Missionaries in Service

### Where do missionaries serve?

**Asia**
- Total # of Missionaries: 81
- % of Total: 8%

**Africa**
- Total # of Missionaries: 116
- % of Total: 41%

### Missionary Service Categories
- Church and Community Workers
- Global Mission Fellow - International
- Global Mission Fellow US
- Global Missionary
- Korean Ministry Plan Missionary
- National Plan for Hispanic and Latino Ministries
- Mission Advocate
- Special Initiative Missionary
- UMW Regional Missionary

### Where do missionaries come from?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total # of Missionaries</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
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<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving in the US</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving outside the US</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistics compiled in August 2017.*
FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Transformation

by Richard Boone

Each day I walk into a state prison—home to some 2,300 male inmates and about 500 staff. Most of the men in this prison don’t look or act any different than other people I meet in my town, but then there is John. When I first met John, it was a challenge for me to look into his eyes. John is about six feet tall, lean, and strong; he always had this angry look, and tattoos cover his body, including his face. The tattoos were his way of telling the world to stay out of his face, that he was ready to fight. Getting past that angry mask took real focus to see into his eyes. As a pastor, and in my current role as a Church and Community Worker in the West Ohio Annual Conference assigned to the Horizon Prison Initiative, I meet people with tattoos and tongue piercings, but none as stark as John’s.

My job title as the Horizon Program Coordinator sometimes leads inmates to think that I am employed by the state of Ohio. They are surprised to find out that I am a missionary, but they are still suspicious of my motives. Inmates whom John trusted vouched for me and told him I would not be wasting his time. I valued him and listened to his story.

Inside John was darkness that I could feel surrounding him. He was raised by violent criminals, and he was a member of a white supremacist gang that ran the streets with guns and drugs. He’s been in and out of prison since he was 15 years old. John considered the first man he beat up in prison to be a badge of honor and he’s jealously guarded his reputation through violence ever since.

But the violence and anger are not what truly made John’s soul dark. John’s real turmoil was that the person he hated most was himself. It seemed to me that he could not stand being present with his inner person. He described how he hated what he had done to others, he hated who he had become, and yet he felt totally powerless to change. Worst of all, he hated that he could not drop the mask of violence for a second to let anyone else know how much pain he was in for fear that his enemies would smell his weakness. He had no hope of ever being a father to his sons, and his only confidence was that he would meet his sons inside the prison walls one day.

Darkness Gives Way

John accepted my invitation to be a participant in the Horizon program and moved into the Horizon dorm. Five mandatory classes, two elective classes, and three family meetings a week added up to John having to open up about himself. Horizon’s strategy is not to give pat answers but to give people an opportunity to walk a path of spiritual growth through self-awareness, self-evaluation, and self-surrender to God. Because everyone you live with is in your small groups and mandatory...
classes, Horizon is your 24-7, 365-day reality. John struggled with other “men in blue” holding him accountable to the rules of the Horizon agreement, but they did it out of a spirit of love and grace. One who had the same kind of traumatic past, the same experience of running the streets, and the same burden of guilt built a relationship of mutual trust with John.

That was a year ago. Today, John is a baptized believer in Christ. He is gentle and kind and protects the weaker guys in the Horizon dorm. He has a huge toothless grin, and I swear that even the tattoos on his face seem to smile. John studies the Bible for about two hours a day. It is his first time ever reading the Bible, so he comes up with some wild questions. Because of his violent background, he finds more truth in the stories of David and the Psalms of David than I have ever known. John has worked so hard on having a healthy sense of his inner well-being that I recruited him to be one of the leaders in our Horizon program. I believe that John’s experience of God’s unconditional offer of forgiveness is real. I see how God’s love, grace, and mercy are at work in him. When I look into his eyes today, I see a shining light—a light that is stronger than any darkness.

Listen and Love

Here is what I believe: The darkest place inside a prison is within a person. Even though John was honest enough to wear his darkness on his face, many inmates that look fine on the outside still have darkness inside. More importantly, most of the people we meet every day outside the prison hide darkness behind their masks.

To see the prison through the eyes of the inmates, I spend time listening to them. John Wesley interpreted Matthew 25:36 to say that to truly visit people in prison, you must look into their eyes. Most religious volunteers come into prison to do ministry to inmates (not with them). The volunteers talk, preach, give advice, sing and dance, but they rarely listen. Ministry is what they are busy doing. In the very DNA of being Methodist is the tradition of building long-term relationships with people through small groups. I don’t walk into prison to be the hero, to be busy, or to fix people. I figure authentic transformation of a human soul is God’s work. Kairos Prison Ministry says it well: “Listen, Listen, Love, Love” (for more information see the Kairos website at www.KairosPrisonMinistry.org).

There is a cost to this kind of ministry. There are times when my heart is overwhelmed with the pain and trauma of the person I am present with. It feels like the darkness pulls me underground to a place devoid of love where there is no light. It creeps back sometimes, even when I sit with my family at church on Sunday morning. I believe it is the price that Jesus paid for me and my life is no longer about my personal comfort.

What led to the transformation of John from darkness to light? God’s love. Every time I have an opportunity to be trusted enough to go into the darkness and sit with a person, God is faithful to shine the light of the love of Christ. The prayer I pray each day before I enter the prison is, “God, your love is the most powerful force at work in the prison today, show me where you are at work today.” Fortunately, God’s love is not just working through me, the entire Horizon community is a city set on a hill full of men sharing God’s love.

The Rev. Dr. Richard Boone is a Church and Community Worker missionary (Advance #3022049) with the General Board of Global Ministries serving as the Horizon Prison Initiative coordinator, West Ohio Conference.

Since 2000, Horizon Prison Initiative has worked to transform prisoners who transform prisons and communities. Participants in our 10-month program work to discover and understand their faith, learn to live within a family, and address the path that led them to prison. It’s a challenging emotional and spiritual journey, and it works: 91% of Horizon graduates who are released from prison stay out of prison. (The national rate is 33%.)

To learn more about this powerful program, visit horizonprisoninitiative.org or follow Horizon Prison Initiative on Facebook and LinkedIn.
My call to ministry formed in my local church. I served as a worship leader, a Sunday school teacher, as chair of the administrative board—I was active. Then one Sunday our District Superintendent came to church and asked me if I was interested in going to lay-speaking school. I didn’t know what it was then, and I didn’t know what I wanted to do. He said, “pray about it, and I’ll contact you again.”

I owned a custom drapery-workroom business with my friends. I was working and I was doing church work, going back and forth. So, I prayed about it, and I said, “Sure, I’ll go.” I’m always willing to learn new things. I went to lay-speaking school and was certified as a lay-speaker. I was asked to fill in the pulpit at the church in Clinton, Oklahoma. The church membership was very low. I was one of many that went and filled the pulpit periodically.

I became familiar with the kids out there—they were much younger then. I was going through a hard time in my life, learning to live by myself again, and learning to trust God. I think the turning point was when I was at church one Sunday and as I was heading home, the thought crossed my mind: “I think it’s time to move on.”

By that time, we had a new District Superintendent and I told her I thought God was calling me to do something else. She said: “I know exactly what you need to do.” It was an “ah-ha” moment for me.

Once I committed and said yes to God, doors started opening. But I had to close some doors too, and that was difficult. I had to give up my business. That was scary and exciting at the same time, but overall, a big sense of relief.

Truly, in my heart, I was thinking: “God has seen you through so much. How can you turn away from him? How can you not serve him in whatever capacity you can?” That was the turning moment for me.
After that, things started falling into place. That didn’t mean the struggles went away. But my faith was strong and I knew that God would see me through.

**Clinton/El Reno Ministry**

In 2012, I was commissioned as a Church and Community Worker and assigned to work with a new venture of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC), the Clinton and El Reno Church and Community Ministry. Today I meet with the children and youth twice a week, and other times for events for this ministry, the Clinton Indian Church and Community Center (CICCC).

Recently I received another appointment through the OIMC—I’ve just been appointed to a new faith community in Oklahoma City, the North Oklahoma City Native American Fellowship (NOCNAF). I’m traveling back and forth from Clinton to Oklahoma City.

Our focus at Clinton is on mending the relationship between the church and the Native American community that I work with—I serve the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal communities. I share the love of Christ with them and remain focused on education—because education is so very important for our Native American children and youth. By focusing on Christ, but also connecting to our traditions, cultures, and ceremonies, we become who God created us to be. God blessed us with these ceremonies and traditions. We’ve learned tribal hymns, had beadwork and moccasin-making classes, and we’re forming a parental alliance to support a dance troop that can perform at Native functions. It is also important for them to learn their hymns and hold onto their language so that it won’t die.

We welcome involvement with the local Clinton First United Methodist Church 10 blocks away, part of the Oklahoma Conference. A volunteer, Karen Chapman, from the United Methodist Women’s group comes and helps with the kids on Thursday evenings.

Recently, I made connections with the Wesley Foundation at Southwestern Oklahoma State University as a supporting partner. The Rev. Velma Carriaga comes each week to help us out, and a bunch of her Kappa Phi young women come each year to host various events for the children of CICCC. We are reaching out to the community and letting them know that we are here to serve the Native American community and children, trying to help them reach their potential and their goals.

**Learning to Serve**

Since 2012, we’ve been in relationship with Providence United Methodist Church in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee. Providence has provided for some financial needs and repairs for the CICCC, and they host Vacation Bible School each year. From this relationship and friendship my youth became friends with the people and youth of Providence.

The year before last, we decided to take a mission trip to Mt. Juliet to visit the covenant church that supports us. We raised our own money—Indian Taco sales, raffles, donations from various groups and individuals—more than $3000 to take this trip. Some of these kids had never been out of the state of Oklahoma. We traveled with the Rev. David Wilson, our conference superintendent, and we took off to Mt. Juliet.

Once there, we worked in their food pantry. We fellowshipped with their youth and we worshiped together. The night before we left, they had a special service for us. We sang tribal hymns—and they laid hands on each one of the youth in prayer. It was a wonderful trip.

On the way back, one of my youth, Kehly Riggs, leaned over to me in the van and said, “Donna, you know, I didn’t know that people still cared.” That was a powerful statement. She felt the love from this group, the care. She’s had a hard struggle in her life. This confirmed to her that God loved her and blessed her with these wonderful people—and that God is still in her life.

I’ve tried to instill in these youth that when an opportunity comes, you need to go, leave your comfort zone, and experience God’s creation. The world is open and it’s there for you. Rely on God and ask God to help you as you move forward in your life. Even if everyone else takes off, God will be there.

**A New Chapter**

I just finished the course of study at Perkins School of Theology and graduated last week with a certification—a step toward ordination. For me, that was a very big step. I quit school when I was a sophomore in high school, got married, had a baby. Finally, in 2009 I passed my General Educational Development (GED). I didn’t know anything about college, or study habits, and God placed people in my life that helped me. I share this with my children and youth in Clinton too say: “Hey, you can do this. If you rely on God and if you are faithful, God’s gonna make a way for you.”

Donna Chaat Pewo is a Church and Community Worker (Advance #3021377) with Global Ministries and a licensed local pastor with the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. She is Comanche, originally from Lawton, Oklahoma, and her home church is the Billy Hooton Memorial United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City.
"Do they have anyone who can help," the police officer asked as he gestured to the woman who sat on the dark street curb clutching her four young children. Stunned and exhausted, the children were no longer sobbing. Like shipwrecked survivors, abandoned and alone, the kids clung to their mom. Their anxious fear-filled eyes darted around as if a shark might suddenly emerge directly from the pavement where they huddled.

Four men had broken into the family’s apartment, crashing through a bedroom window in the dead of night. They landed on the bed where the mom and two little ones slept. One intruder snatched up the two-year-old and threatened to kidnap him. When two older children stumbled in, another intruder grabbed the nine-year-old boy. Holding a gun to the child’s head, he promised to shoot if the children didn’t quit screaming.

The intruders terrorized the family for 30 minutes. They stole potato chips, Barbie dolls, and modest Christmas gifts still in boxes. After the police left the crime scene, I noticed the living room couch was gone. “Donna, did the men steal the couch,” I asked in bewilderment.

“Si, Miss Vickie, si, si,” Donna replied. She speaks perfect English, but the trauma had left her almost mute. The men had loaded the low-value sofa directly into a pick-up truck waiting outside the back door. Finally, after slamming Donna across the room and injuring her arm—and instilling as much terror as possible into the hearts and minds of this extremely vulnerable family—the men left.

**Help and Hope**

Donna called me for help at midnight. Like Samuel, who heard God call as he lay on his pallet, I rose from my bed and responded to God’s call. For 32 years, I have served as a Church and Community Worker of the General Board of Global Ministries. My primary task throughout the years has been to find help for people who have had their lives ripped apart and their hopes dashed. When lives are devastated, the causes can include crime, poverty, addiction, domestic abuse, low academic achievement, mental illness, racism, and socioeconomic prejudice. Sometimes, the causes overlap and the devastation seems total.

I have been inside more prisons than I can remember, held hands and prayed with murderers and serious felons. I have been present as a mother fell to the floor in utter desolation when her child was arrested; and, I have heard the inconsolable wail of an eight-year-old who was told that her father had died after hanging himself. I have held an immigrant mother dying of cancer in my arms as she begged: “Please take care of my children. Mi mamá no está aquí, please take care of my children.”

I have learned that the sound and meaning of a sob is the same in any language and in any culture. I have learned that when hearts, spirits, and minds are broken, people cry in anguish...and God hears the people cry.

God hears the cries and God responds through everyday people like you and me. Every United Methodist mission anywhere in the world exists because United Methodists—like the prophet Isaiah—have answered God, “Here I am, Lord, send me.” Side-by-side with our Lord and the people who are hurting, we push up our sleeves, pull out our wallets, and do God’s holy work to bind up the wounds of the brokenhearted and set those who are made captive by sin—either their own sin or the sins of others—free.
For 32 years, again and again, I have witnessed hundreds of ordinary people doing God’s work wherever God sends them—into jails and prisons, ghettos and barrios, and sometimes into gated communities and high steeple churches—and it always seems like a miracle.

Ezekiel 36:26 tells us that God will rid us of our wicked hearts made of stone and give us a new heart that is of God. This is indeed a miracle. With a new heart and new spirit, we are willing to go wherever God sends us to do God’s work.

Our hearts turn to stone when filled with sins such as fear, greed, and pride. I suspect my own heart becomes rock-hard when I despair because public debates are raging about walls and war, about who should be convicted as a criminal and who should be exonerated, about who belongs in a country and who doesn’t, about who is faithful to God and who is not. I harden my heart to shut out my fear and despair. I lay down on my pallet and do not hear God’s summons.

Then the miracle happens. God calls me repeatedly until I rise up and leave fear and despair behind. I give myself to the Lord’s service, and go into the world with a new heart that beats for God.

When the police asked if Donna’s family had anyone who would help, I knew with certainty that United Methodists would help. Throughout that long night and into the hours of the next day, and the following days and weeks, Christian servants would walk beside Donna’s family, help them heal and live beyond the trauma, and hold them tightly in God’s love.

Vickie Sigmon (Advance #982916) has served as a Church and Community Worker in North Carolina since 1985. She works with the Open Arms Community in Winston-Salem. In 1999, she was assigned to work with the Yadkin Valley District to discern, design, and develop Open Arms Community. Open Arms is now a neighborhood-based faith community offering hope and help through ministries with Latino immigrants and their families. Vickie and her husband, Kevin Hayes, live in the neighborhood and are privileged to witness God’s people building the kingdom every day.
My journey into Church and Community ministry began (without my knowledge), when I was a young teen. I enjoyed going to the local school on Sunday after church to help register community residents for oral Polio vaccinations. I thought it was an honor to be asked by my teachers to assist with this community activity. I always thought I was third, well really fourth (my elderly great aunt lived with us) in command at home until my three orphan cousins came to live with us. Then I was the oldest sibling.

I graduated from high school and received a scholarship to Alcorn A&M College (now Alcorn State University) and majored in chemistry, with the idea that I could work and then get a Master’s Degree in Sociology later. After attending Alcorn, I developed an interest in nursing and our local hospital was just being built. I was accepted into the first nursing class in 1971. I worked at the local hospital for six years and went to work at the McComb Children’s Clinic for the next 18 years. My duties included staff nurse, making rounds with the pediatrician, and instructing mothers about infant care at home.

Career Evolution

I served as a Home Health Nurse and thought this is what I’d always wanted. Then I saw an advertisement in our local paper for a 12-hour per week opening for a part-time Parish Nurse at a local church mission. When we heard “parish,” we thought of Louisiana. I applied and was hired. The part-time status lasted four months, but I was already doing 40+ hours. The pastor/director called and asked if I would consider a full-time position, as funds had become available through a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant. I prayed, accepted—and it has been a joy.

That project (Project Forward), now with St. Andrew’s Mission, was accepted as a United Methodist Project with General Board of Global Ministries and I was commissioned as a Church and Community Worker in 1998. Later, in 2006, I was consecrated and commissioned as a deaconess.

I serve at St. Andrew’s Mission as Parish Nurse and helped with the opening of the first Free-Health Clinic in our area. We have eight volunteer physicians, a nurse, and a receptionist, presently. I coordinate community health fairs (at schools, churches, malls), blood drives, screenings at our activity center, and as instructor for First-Aid/CPR, parenting, anger management, and Bible studies.

St. Andrew’s Mission has three thrift stores and a partnership with a fourth. It supports a food ministry that serves hot, balanced meals twice weekly and provides food subsidies to the elderly and handicapped. An activity center serves people 45 years and older. Other ministries include a free health clinic, Mission House for homeless men, and the most recent addition—the Job Incubator, with space and support for small business owners.

Throughout all these years, my mission statement, chosen in 1998, is still relevant to where I’m called: “Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to where you’re called. Pray for it. If it prospers, you too shall prosper.” (Jeremiah 29:7)

Earnestine Varnado is a United Methodist deaconess and missionary serving as a Church and Community Worker (Advance #982905) with St. Andrew’s Mission, located in McComb, Mississippi.
What three words best describe you?
Activist
Passionate
Courageous

Whom do you admire most?
Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr.

When is God revealed for you most often?
I always feel God most when I am ready to give up on a difficult situation. Especially at the point that I have given up—that’s when God shows up for me.

My faith journey...
A significant point along my faith journey was when I received a scholarship from United Methodist Women to attend college. At the age of 10, because of conflict between rebel and government forces, I was forced to flee from Liberia without my family. I spent two years in a refugee camp in Côte d’Ivoire, when, through attending a United Methodist church in the camp, another Methodist family took me in. I had to flee again with my foster family from Côte d’Ivoire to Ghana when conflict broke out in Côte d’Ivoire. I finished secondary school in Ghana, but I never would have made it through college without the financial help of my church. At age 22, I was finally able to reconnect with my family in Liberia.

Global Mission Fellow calling...
I was motivated to get involved with Global Mission Fellows because I feel privileged, and I feel opportunity in life comes with responsibility. Having been sponsored by the United Methodist Women, I feel I have a responsibility to contribute to society, thereby working to support the vision and mission of my church through engaging and working with communities to alleviate poverty and promoting social justice.

Statement
My dream is to provide education to children, youth, and teenage mothers. To achieve this, I plan to establish a daycare and recreational center in my home country. Both centers will serve as places where kids and youth will grow and learn in a safe space. The children will be trained to be innovative and creative. I also dream of empowering at-risk young people who feel rejected by society and their parents because of their involvement in drug addiction. What I hear from at-risk youth is that they lack empowerment skills. They want to become self-reliant, but they don’t have the skills needed to work and earn a living for themselves. As a result, they tend to live in the streets and harass others—posing a threat to society. Some of these at-risk young people are former child soldiers, while others got involved in drug addiction through peer pressure.

The above-mentioned situation motivated me to establish a local charity organization called Visionary Youth Empowerment-Liberia in Monrovia.

Edison De-Conti Toe (Advance #3022389) was commissioned as a Global Mission Fellow in August 2017. He has been assigned to South Korea at the Border Peace School as a peace educator. Edison is a member of Burns Phelps Memorial United Methodist Church in Brewerville, south of Monrovia. He received a Bachelor of Business degree in human resource management from Pan African Christian University College in 2015.
At one point in my ministry, my heart’s desire was to become a missionary working with people of different ethnicities and backgrounds. I think that’s been a passion I have had since I was a child. I grew up in Brazil, but I also have ties to Boston, where my mother and brother live and where I studied as a teenager. I grew up thinking about sharing God’s grace with people.

I didn’t set out to pastor a Portuguese-speaking congregation in the heart of Miami. Yet, that’s where you’ll find me today.

Fluent in both Portuguese and English, I was assisting a United Methodist congregation with a ministry targeting Brazilians in Boston when leaders from the Florida Conference contacted me about the possibility of starting a new Brazilian faith community there. They had identified a sizable population of native Brazilians settling in the Miami area.

In 2015, I moved to Miami to start a new faith community on the campus of First United Methodist Church in Miami, which has found fertile ground. The fledgling congregation has grown to about 45 people, with gatherings twice a week, five small groups, and a weekly program that teaches Portuguese to 87 Brazilian children. That ministry also has the goal of preserving the Brazilian language and culture among those children raised in United States.

My work with the Brazilian community in Miami also seeks to develop cultural opportunities for people, building relationships and strengthening a holistic perspective of mission. Before becoming a pastor, I was a psychoanalyst and then worked as a sociology professor in Brazil. Recently, the famous philosopher Viviane Mosé came to Miami for a dialogue event on Philosophy and Theology and the challenges of immigrants. Mosé and I presented a lecture about “liquid modernity” and the challenges of post-modernity.

**Immigrant Faith Communities**

The Miami Brazilian mission is the Florida Conference’s latest effort to meet the diverse needs of a state with a high influx of immigrants. Those
efforts include missions or ministries targeting Hispanics, Haitians, Koreans, Micronesians, Filipinos, and people of Slavic descent, with services tailored to their cultural and often alternative language needs, according to records compiled by Florida Conference Knowledge and Information Services.

According to the Department of State of Brazil, 250,000 Brazilians live in Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. The Wall Street Journal cited Miami sources who believe as many as 300,000 Brazilians have settled in Florida, with Miami listed as a top destination.

Before I was tapped for the Miami challenge through a partnership of the Florida Conference and Global Ministries, I had applied to become a Global Ministries missionary through its National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry. Both arms of the church are providing funds toward the missionary position in Miami.

Violence and unstable economic conditions in Brazil lead many to leave their homeland. The Miami climate is almost identical to Rio, which is why Brazilians head to Miami.

The population of Brazilians in Miami and those settling in other parts of the United States are far from the same. The differences have guided me in designing ministry plans. As a missionary and a church planter, you need to understand what the needs and the problems are in the community. You need to understand the context and the scope of ministry development.

The people I worked with in Boston were people who dreamed about having a better life for themselves and their children, often seeking educational opportunities they couldn’t get in Brazil or working for low wages that they would share with loved ones back home. They also tended to come and work in the United States but always planned to return to their native country.

In contrast, those in Miami tend to be more affluent and academically educated. In general, they come to the United States seeking a better quality of life. Information from some organizations indicates more than 67 percent of Brazilians in Florida have American citizenship or permanent residency status, and more than half own homes in South Florida, according to the missionary’s ministry plan submitted to New Church Development.

In this light, I have been working with a social media missionary strategy to reach out to the community. This population responds to small group meetings in different formats, such as shared interests in sports or music. In addition to reflecting on Bible themes of salvation, grace, and faith, group discussions will tackle timely social issues, such as immigration, abortion, and sexuality.

The Rev. Marcelo Gomes (Advance #3022065) is a provisional member of the New England Conference of The United Methodist Church serving as National Plan missionary in Miami, Florida. He is a member of the New England UMC Board of Global Ministries and of the National Committee of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries representing the Brazilian Ministry in the US. Currently, Gomes is studying for a Doctor of Ministry at Boston University School of Theology. He is the author of four books on philosophy and theology, psychoanalysis, and education.
MISSION VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Giving Service at Home—And at a Home Away from Home

Interviews with Elliott Ott and Celinne Mencias by Christie R. House

The call to serve in mission reaches people in different ways and generates different responses. Following a calling doesn’t necessarily result in full-time missionary service. Global Ministries provides opportunities for volunteer mission experiences for people of faith who are 18 and older and have time to give to a short-term mission placement.

Opportunities for volunteers (US residents) are diverse; they include working in positions as teachers, pastors, camp directors, children and youth assistants, health care administrators and practitioners, or case managers for refugees. The length of service is a minimum of two months and can extend for up to two years or more depending on the volunteer.

Increasingly, young adults are finding windows of opportunity to devote a few months of their time to concentrated mission service. Elliott Ott, from Ohio, and Celinne Mencias, from Illinois, are two such volunteers interviewed for this story.

ELLIOTT OTT

Elliott Ott has served as a mission volunteer through Global Ministries at two different locations—and he’s still in his 20s. He’s also answered the call to serve through his local church and conference ministry programs. You might call him a permanent mission volunteer.

In 2014, he served in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the Wings of the Morning Aviation Ministry, where I first encountered him. He worked as a mechanic in the hangar. I was on my way to Kindu to visit the East Congo Episcopal Area.

Then a few years later, during the first half of 2017, he volunteered as a maintenance worker with a Methodist camp ground and retreat center in France.

What Are You Doing?

Elliott said he felt a confirmation of his call to mission ministry while participating in a young adult Bible study in Toledo. The pastor of his church asked, “What are your goals, your dreams, and what are you doing to achieve those?”

Elliott confessed, “It just kind of clicked. I wasn’t really doing anything. There was something I had been thinking about for a long time, but I hadn’t taken any actions to achieve it. So, within four months, I was in the Congo working with the United Methodist Church aviation program.”

Let’s back up. Not just anyone can work with Wings of the Morning with four months’ notice. Elliott had been working in Toledo full-time as an aircraft mechanic for about three years. He grew up on a farm in Northwest Ohio and had a strong desire to work in aviation from a very young age. He said he’s attended a United Methodist Church “since I was born.”

“I went to school for aviation maintenance while I was still in high school with a vocational program. I went to college for a year and then I started working as an aircraft mechanic full-time. I had mission in the back of my head for a while, but knew that I needed some practical experience before I could start working in mission,” Elliott explained.

“So, for me, the call to ministry was quite sudden,” he continued. “But it took someone to urge me on and say, ‘Hey, you should really look
into this rather than waiting. Who knows where God might be asking you to be? I felt like God was urging me to take a step away from the daily grind, so to speak, and to pursue a way that furthers God’s kingdom.”

**Hanging Out in the Hangar**

Soon Elliott found himself in Lubumbashi, working in the Wings of the Morning hangar with the Congolese maintenance staff. For the most part, they didn’t speak English, and Elliott didn’t know much French, which was ok, because they spoke in Swahili, mostly. But they all shared one language in common—“plane.”

While others might find this a frustrating situation, Elliott said he had a wonderful time with the people in the Congo. “That was one of the biggest highlights for me in my service there—the people I met,” he explained, “the energy and joy they have, the hope they have for the future, and their willingness to learn.”

Before that trip, Elliott had only left the United States to go to Canada. The DR Congo was a big leap for him.

Elliott worked in the DR Congo for six months. He took time to sit down with people and listen, even when he didn’t understand all the words. And some, like missionary pilot Gaston Ntambo and his family, were fluent in English.

“I worked out at the hangar a lot, organizing, doing inventory, working on the plane,” Elliott said. “I liked to hang around with these guys just to be present and show, if nothing else, that I cared. One time, they were cooking lunch outside the hangar and they invited me to eat with them. No silverware, or plates, or anything—conditions that people in the US generally wouldn’t accept. But I sat down and ate with them in the hangar. It was nothing extravagant—but the food was great.”

Later, the workers told Gaston that Elliott was probably the first white person that had ever sat down and shared a meal with them in the hangar. When they invited him, they thought he’d decline, like everyone before him. His actions made an impression on them.

Then Elliott returned to the United States and went back to his job in Toledo. At one point, he thought he would pursue full-time missionary work, and he even applied with Global Ministries. He wanted to go back to the DR Congo. In the meantime, he began speaking at churches and sharing about the work in the DR Congo. He served to connect others in the church to volunteer ministries.

**Bound for Europe**

Before long, Elliott decided to take another mission volunteer assignment, this time in France, where he could work on his French-language
skills. He packed up and headed to the Centre de Vacances Landersen in Sondernach, a retreat center of the Methodist Church in France.

Living in France took some adjustment. In Congo, almost everyone is Christian. In France, Christians are a minority. He found himself striving to be strong in his Christian lifestyle and walk. “It was harder in France to avoid burnout,” Elliott admitted. “I lived only 200 ft. from the center. I could work a 12-hour day and go to bed. It took more focus for me to take my days off and spend more time in Bible study—to relax and enjoy my experience there.”

The center makes an impact on its community by hosting many kinds of groups and bringing them into the Christian space. Elliot explained that what he does, maintenance, doesn’t always directly relate to the people who are benefitting from the Christian services. “But for me, it is knowing that these groups can come and have a positive experience and things work for them—so my work contributes to their overall positive experience. You never know how that will impact them.”

After three months in France and a whole new set of friends, Elliott is not sure what comes next, but he’d like to return to Europe. He may start looking for work there. He’s still looking at long-term missionary service, but he recognizes that leadership and strategies have changed in the DR Congo and that “God guides your life in mysterious ways.”

“I will still continue to support my local church in mission and the ministries that I’ve been involved in. Being a missionary isn’t always about going to unfamiliar places or spending a lot of time far away from home. Mission starts at home, in your community and your home church.”

CELINNE MENCIAS
Celinne Mencias moved with her United Methodist family from the Philippines to the Chicago area when she was 11 years old. She lived in the United States and went to college to study nursing. She learned about Global Ministries’ Mission Volunteers program through participation in the National Association of Filipino American United Methodists (NAFAUM), which met in Chicago two years ago. A Generation Transformation representative talked about ways young people can serve in mission.

“I’m a nurse practitioner,” Celinne said. “I graduated in January 2017. While I was still in nursing school, I thought, ‘When I graduate, I really want to do some type of mission work.’ After graduation was the perfect opportunity for me to go somewhere and serve.”

Maua Methodist Hospital
Celinne received her mission volunteer training soon after she graduated and boarded a plane for Maua, Kenya, to work with Maua Methodist Hospital. Maua is a town on the equator in the mountains. Celinne mused about it’s beautiful weather, lush vegetation, and many people. “It’s a booming town,” she explained. “They need a lot of services because the population is growing. It used to be a rural, sleepy town where there were no grocery stores. Now it’s gained three grocery stores within the last five years.”

The population is also changing. There is still poverty, but more businesses are cropping up in Maua, so some people are well off.
Celinne’s official title in her volunteer capacity at the hospital was Community Health Nurse. She helped the hospital nursing department in the facility but she also went out into the community with the nursing department to do some outreach, such as: vaccinations for kids, prenatal care, and palliative care—a program for HIV/AIDS patients.

In God’s timing, Celinne arrived in Kenya just when she was most needed. “In the three months I was there,” she explained, “Kenya underwent a government doctors’ strike. The county hospitals closed because the doctors weren’t working. But Maua Methodist Hospital is a mission hospital, and its doctors are not connected to the government. We received a lot of sick patients from the county hospital during that time.”

Maua Hospital added extra beds. Celinne provided an extra set of hands to help with whatever nursing care they needed. Maua also has a nursing school attached to the hospital campus, and Celinne worked the students—they acted as translators with the patients.

Celinne observed: “I was trying to inspire the students to follow their calling through nursing, to serve others. Some of the students told me they admired me for volunteering as a nurse. They thought of nursing as just a job. But it truly is a calling.”

After returning home from Kenya, Celinne accepted a new job working as a nurse-practitioner in Oak Park, Illinois, at a family medical clinic. But, she says she sees more volunteer work in her future. “The Lord calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves,” she said. “I think volunteer work is a great opportunity for anyone—and, yea—there is a lot of need in the world.”

Christie R. House is the editor of New World Outlook magazine.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Mission volunteers are expected to fundraise for their monthly living expenses, as well as for transportation to and from the placement site. An important component of this program is to connect the church in mission. Before being considered as an individual volunteer, interested candidates must apply and attend a training and orientation session.

There is more than one way to volunteer in mission. Global Ministries is also connected with the jurisdictional United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM), NOMADS, and Primetimers (a Global Ministries program for older adults). For a full outline of volunteer mission opportunities through Global Ministries, visit: http://www.umcmission.org/Get-Involved/Volunteer

HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS:
Available through from The Upper Room bookstore (http://bookstore.upperroom.org) or Amazon (https://www.amazon.com). English, Spanish, Korean, or French.
Missionary Gatherings

Basically, what the Panama missionary gathering did for me was life-changing and inspirational, both from a personal and a ministry point of view. I have come back recharged to go a thousand more steps in serving our communities here.

REV. CHARLES MULEMENA, MISSIONARY AND COORDINATOR, COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN THE AMAZON-BRAZIL
United Methodist missionaries serving in 18 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean gathered together in Panama City, Panama, July 2017, at the invitation of Global Ministries’ general secretary, Thomas Kemper. This gathering was the most recent in a series of retreats for United Methodist missionaries and their families in service around the world. The purpose of these events, as Kemper noted in his letter of invitation, is to gather missionaries and their families “for a time of worship, fellowship, reflection, and renewal...offering you the valuable opportunity to engage in conversation with Global Ministries staff, enjoy fellowship with other missionaries, and simply pause to refresh your mind and spirit.”

The gathering was held in a hotel ideally situated at the edge of Panama City, where the mouth of the Panama Canal empties into the Pacific Ocean. Forty-two missionaries from the region, accompanied by 24 family members, gathered at the hotel for several days of Bible study, workshops, and dialogue with Global Ministries staff. At the heart of the community was worship; each day, missionaries led the group in prayer and song, giving thanks to God for the opportunity to gather for spiritual refreshment.

Veronica Apecena, a missionary serving in social and health ministries in Bella Unión, Uruguay, said the gathering was a breath of fresh air for her family. She attended with her husband, Adrian “Fede” Apecena, also a missionary in Uruguay, and their son, Kin. “It was such a joy and an honor to meet the other Latin America missionaries, many of whom have served for a couple decades or more,” she said in an email message. “It was also refreshing to be around so many families who are bi- or tri-cultural, as is our family. We were blessed by the presence of the other MKs (missionary kids) and the time that our son got to spend with them under the care and supervision of Larry and Kristen Schmitz. We were reminded of how we are a mission family and how God uses Kin in our place of assignment as much as God uses us.”

On Sunday, July 16, missionaries and families worshiped with two local congregations of the Evangelical Methodist Church in Panama, one of which, La Resurrección Methodist Church, is pastored by a Global Ministries missionary, the Rev. Rhett Thompson.

The gathering also encouraged fellowship among missionaries through excursions to two United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites: Panama Viejo, the archaeological site of the first European settlement on the Pacific Ocean, dating back to 1519; and Casco Viejo, the historic district of what is now central Panama City, established in 1673. A tour of the Panama Canal helped missionaries in Latin America to more fully understand the importance of the canal to the development of Panama and the region.

A Series of Encounters
Gordon Greathouse, a missionary with more than three decades of service in Brazil, served a term as missionary in residence with Global Ministries, 2013 to 2016. His wife Teca’s retirement from missionary service was recognized at the Panama gathering. While working as the missionary in residence, Gordon introduced the idea of reestablishing Global Ministries’ former practice of bringing missionaries together for times of sharing, learning, and fellowship. He once noted, “Isolation is something we missionaries all experience.”

Gordon Greathouse presented a proposal to general secretary Thomas Kemper and the Global Ministries’ board of directors and convinced them of the value of such events. He was granted a budget to fund “regional gatherings” during the 2013-2016 quadrennium: in Latin America, Europe, Asia, Central America and the Caribbean, Africa, and among missionaries serving in the agency’s mission initiative countries. The team did such a good job of planning and limiting expenditures on these events that there was enough money left in the fund for four events during the 2017-2020 quadrennium.

While each gathering has its own unique aspects, there are similarities among them all. Nearly every missionary appreciates the opportunity to meet with Thomas Kemper and other Global Ministries staff. Participants enjoy getting to know other missionaries who serve “nearby” (generally on the same continent or in the same region), and the opportunity to discuss how each goes about serving in his or her place in God’s mission in ways both similar and different. The gatherings are designed as times of relaxation and rejuvenation, through which agency and regional leaders express appreciation to the missionaries for the sacrifices they make as they serve God. Leaving the stress of living in a foreign context to gather with others who also serve away from home—and be a bit pampered and appreciated for a few days—is something most missionaries value.

The first of these new gatherings was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in September 2014. Twenty-three United Methodist missionaries serving mission initiatives in seven regions of Southeast and Central Asia inaugurated this first experience. Gordon and Teca Greathouse, serving as missionaries in residence in New
York, and missionary Mary Zigbuo, the support development coach with Global Ministries at the time, hosted the gathering in coordination with Gary and Cindy Moon, missionaries in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

In November that same year, the second gathering took place in Berlin, Germany, where 27 missionaries gathered from across Europe and the Middle East. Matthew Laferty, who currently serves in Austria, said missionaries arrived at the beginning of a month-long 25th anniversary commemoration of the fall of the Berlin Wall and that the theme of reconciliation was carried throughout the gathering. The third gathering drew together the missionary community of South America in Quito, Ecuador, where seven new missionaries were commissioned, marking the first time that United Methodist missionaries have been commissioned in Latin America in collaborative action with a mission partner, the Evangelical United Methodist Church of Ecuador.

The fourth missionary gathering was held in Hiroshima, Japan, hosted and co-sponsored by the Wesley Foundation of Tokyo with the assistance of its staff members—Hikari Chang, a United Methodist Women’s missionary; Yoshi Fujimori; and Natsuko Takito, who served as the director of the children’s program for the gathering. Global Ministries missionaries serving in Central America and the Caribbean met later in 2015 in San Jose, Costa Rica.

In February 2016, nearly 70 missionaries from four continents serving in 14 countries across Africa gathered for worship, fellowship, study, and consultations with Global Ministries staff in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Panama event in June 2017 began a new round of regional missionary gatherings for the current quadrennium.

Communication Channels Open

The Latin America and Caribbean missionary gathering in Panama was a wonderful and important time of fellowship with a great variety of activities that allowed missionaries to get to know and reconnect with their colleagues in the region, learn about the ongoing transitions at Global Ministries, opt for some informative workshops, and enjoy the sites of Panama with their families, according to Dr. Belinda Forbes, a missionary with Acción Médica Cristiana (Christian Medical Action or AMC) in Managua, Nicaragua.

“The worship times were as diverse as our missionary community,” Forbes noted. “Bible studies and reflective processes were thought-provoking and topical for our regional context and the excursions helped build community and provided a break from our normally very busy lives. The children’s program was excellent; our 16-year-old daughter Kiara had a great time with other “MKs” and the organizers provided fun and creative activities. Panama was a superb choice for this event, both for ease of travel and for the interesting sites to see."

Another Nicaragua missionary, Maria de Lourdes Ramírez Meneses (Lourdes Ramírez) from Mexico, summed up the gathering as a great opportunity to meet new friends and share experiences with colleagues. “We all know that this journey will be filled with challenges, but with God’s mercy and love, we are able to represent God in our service as missionaries.”

Christie R. House is the editor of New World Outlook magazine. Thanks to the missionaries who contributed to this article: John Calhoun; Kristen and Larry Schmitz; Matthew Laferty; Charles Mulemena; Veronica Apecena; Lourdes Ramírez; and Belinda Forbes.
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15. Extent and Nature of Circulation:

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<td>i.</td>
<td>Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation</td>
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16. Publication required. This Statement of Ownership will be printed in the Fall 2017 issue of this publication.
17. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal and/or civil sanctions.

Christie R. House, Editor, October 1, 2017

Digital Subscription Only Readers: 503
Most Global Ministries missionaries return home every few years. They visit with family and friends and they visit a much broader extended family of supporting churches—some Covenant churches, some giving support to projects, and some faithful in contact and prayer. Often, missionaries visit their supporting churches in a two- to three-month whirlwind of a trip called itineration, meeting and greeting people, speaking at worship services, conference gatherings, and United Methodist Women events.

Claudia Genung, a missionary in Japan, and Richard and Alma Navarro, missionaries in Taiwan, share their summer of itineration through photos.

At the Groundlings Summer Day Camp, a vacation Bible school, a joint program of Los Altos UMC and St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church in Long Beach, California, we learned about origami cranes—Claudia Genung.
Claudia Genung-Yamamoto

The Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto is a missionary assigned to ministries of community outreach and church development in Kobe, Japan. She assumed these responsibilities in 2011 after serving two decades as a missionary with the National Christian Council of Japan in Tokyo (NCC-J). She serves the Kobe Jesus Band Church as associate pastor and its community ministry through Kagawa Memorial Center. Claudia’s husband, the Rev. Toshimasa Yamamoto, is a mission volunteer and former General Secretary of NCC-J, as well as a former Global Ministries missionary. This was Claudia’s eighth itineration journey.

(Above) Walnut UMC, Walnut, California—Where the Rev. Krista Givens is the pastor and a former Global Ministries missionary. I visited with Jim Brewster, left.

In July, I preached at West LA UMC. The pastors are a clergy couple, Revs. Gary Oba and Janet Cromwell (below, left). I am teaching a Japanese song for peace with Rev. Becky Hirota (below, right). After the service, the church had a picnic in the park (left)!

My husband Toshi and I are with Kelly Schaefer, the director of the Creation Care Program at Camp Mokuleia, Hawaii. Kelly is a former young adult UMC missionary who had been assigned to Asian Rural Institute, Japan.

Sage Granada Park UMC in Alhambra, California, in July. Here I am with Elaine Chung (left) and Janice Hurtado (right).
Richard and Alma Navarro

The Revs. Richard and Alma Navarro from the Philippines serve with Overseas Filipino Workers ministry in Taipei, Taiwan, Methodist Church in the Republic of China. As part of their itineration, they visited two Mission u schools and various local churches in the United States. They have served as missionaries in Taipei, Taiwan, since 2014, but this was their first itineration in the United States.

Apart from sharing our call stories and work as global missionaries, we also share music as a family. Our daughter Charis reads Scripture and plays guitar and piano. Our son Chadesh Matthew has a song solo part.

Charis and Matthew were so glad to have visited Jollibee outlets in the United States. This food chain is most loved by Filipino children and even adults. There is no Jollibee outlet in Taiwan, so they seemingly crave it.

We visited Hawaii’s Plantation Village, an overview of plantation buildings that were found on many sugar plantations throughout Hawaii from the early 1900s. It shows the strong migration of different ethnicities to Hawaii and narrates the struggles of these migrants for survival. The place is a replica of their tenacity in life and it shows that everyone has the right to live peacefully in the world God created.
Visiting the Lincoln museum in Springfield, Illinois, reminds us of how slavery in many forms has happened everywhere, even in our times. Lincoln’s passion to free the slaves from their struggles inspires us to become more fervid in our work among Filipino migrant workers who experience modern slavery.

Richard catches a fish. Fishing needs passion, patience, and perseverance. Our fishing experience in Illinois shadows our story of how we are called to minister to migrant workers in Taiwan.

Baptismal pools are rare in any United Methodist Church anywhere. Everyone is welcome to use this small baptismal pool in McCabe UMC, Little Rock, Arkansas.

A 1889 Bible found in Roanoke, Illinois.

Ministering to migrant fishermen (Filipino, Thai, Indonesian) in Hawaii was a great opportunity for us to share our testimonies and emphasize the importance of having a community while away from family. Matthew sang a touching song about the struggles a migrant worker goes through and also the heartache the family feels missing their loved one. Both struggle emotionally, yet all endure until the time the family is reunited.

I (Alma) found my long-lost friend in Hawaii! We were out of touch for more than a decade and I learned she was in Hawaii just two weeks before we got there. She was my nurse in Taiwan when I was a migrant worker in 2000 and had an accident. That accident was my turning point to becoming a pastor, and later, a missionary to Taiwan.
DEVASTATING STORM SEASON
IN THE ATLANTIC
Support and sustain UMCOR to continue its Disaster Response throughout the year.

Photo: Kathleen Barry

Helen Crowe from Chapelwood United Methodist Church in Houston removes debris from a home flooded by Hurricane Harvey.