

# GB-2210

Name of ministry:	Global Ministries
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**In what ways is your  
region/ministry thriving?**

The Division of Overseas Ministries/Global Ministries continues to thrive even through the COVID 19 pandemic. Global Ministries works with approximately 290 faith-based international partners in 90 countries. The 25th Anniversary of Global Ministries offered the opportunity for reflection in a number of settings. Hearing about the common commitment of these two denominations to be in common witness in global mission continues to be inspiring. Amidst the challenges of these days, Global Ministries provides the ongoing opportunity to be present with each other, ensuring that all are fed and clothed, advocating for the rights and lives of all people. In that witness, there is a message of hope that continues to move us forward amidst uncertainty, hope in knowing we journey together in mutuality and with respect built on the love of God given through Jesus.

The core values of community, mutuality, justice, peace and presence continue to be lived out in relationship with international partner churches and congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ.

The ministry of accompaniment continues with the presence of 101 mission co-workers serving in 42 countries in 2021. Mission co-workers served in the following categories: 31 fully supported mission co-workers; 17 global service co-workers (long-term volunteers); 13 global mission interns; and 40 global associates. The distribution of mission co-workers by area: Africa, 13; East Asia and the Pacific, 23; Middle East and Europe, 34; Latin America and the Caribbean, 24; and Southern Asia, 7. In addition, there was one short-term volunteer due to continuing travel restrictions from COVID. A successful personalized fundraising campaign was completed in 2021 for mission co-workers Larry and Debbie Colvin who served with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana. A new personalized fundraising campaign was launched in 2021 to support mission co-workers, Alex Maldonado Lizardi and Xiomara Cintron Garcia, who are serving with Justapaz in Colombia.

From January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021, fourteen mission co-workers and global mission interns were involved in a ministry of presence through missionary visits and relationship building. Until June, all itineration visits took place in new virtual frameworks. After June, new COVID protocols were implemented and mission co-workers began to do in-person visits with safety parameters in place including minimized airline flights, minimized home stays and masking during visits with congregations. Co-workers itinerating included both those home on assignment and those home due to COVID 19. Presentations of their partners and their work have been taped and placed on the Global Ministries' website along with sermons from many who preached. This virtual presence allows Global Ministries to go beyond scheduled in person events, which has resulted in the presence of mission co-workers exceeding the number of congregations visited prior to the pandemic.

The People-to-People Pilgrimage Program is another form of accompaniment of international partners. Mission pilgrimages are transforming experiences where participants receive and share God's love while walking with international partners, sharing their joys, and understanding their challenges. In 2021, the P2P program continued to be impacted by the pandemic. Recognizing the importance of maintaining the health and safety of international partners and pilgrims as a priority, the program postponed all in-person pilgrimages scheduled from January – December 2021. New opportunities for virtual pilgrimages were developed as an alternative to traditional, in-person pilgrimages. Through a series of sessions of pre-recorded materials and live interactions and discussions, participants immersed themselves in the work and witness of international partners. The following virtual pilgrimages were offered in 2021: El Salvador-Virtual Electoral Observation, February 28, 2021; Puerto Rico: In the Eye of the Hurricane, July 26 – August 3, 2021; From the Middle of the World Working with Faith, Joy, and Hope: A Virtual Pilgrimage to Ecuador with FEDICE, November 10 – 19, 2021.

Another example of accompaniment is witnessed in the Children and Elder Sponsorship Program of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ. The program works with various partners around the world and allows for individuals and congregations to sponsor a child for a monthly contribution ranging from \$25 to \$35. As of June, there were approximately 790 – 800 children and 49 elders who are currently benefiting from sponsorship.

#### Nurturing Community Around the World

**Africa:** Partners in Africa have displayed strength and resiliency as they have responded to natural and political disasters. Global Ministries continue to

accompany partners in their ministries to persons impacted by terrorist attacks, floods, droughts, political unrest, and COVID-19. Many of the challenges affecting African partners are undocumented in mainline US media; however, Global Ministries shares their stories and invites others to participate. Partners relay information from local communities and invite Global Ministries to accompany them in seeking sustainable solutions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Global Ministries accompanied partners who are innovative and creative in sustaining their ministries, who provide physical and spiritual services, and who were implementing protocols to keep their communities safe.

**East Asia and the Pacific:** The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be felt throughout East Asia and Pacific. While rates of spread have largely been controlled throughout most of the region, public health regulations and restrictions have had significant social and economic impacts, particularly on impoverished or marginalized populations. While vaccine rollouts have begun globally, distribution and access has varied widely both between and within countries. Lockdowns and border closures have also had serious economic impacts at both individual and national levels. The year 2021 has seen an extension of the limitations on travel and direct in-person visits with partner and mission personnel who serve them. Yet practices of nurturing community and partner relationships through virtual means have become routinized and certain benefits of these methods are starting to be witnessed.

**Latin America and the Caribbean:** Beyond a mere "adapting to the moment," Global Ministries' partners in the region have been seeking ways to develop self-sustainable processes to break the chain of dependence. They relate their theological reflection and praxis to the root causes of injustice and work to lift hope amid despair. Through this year, the work included the affirmation of unity and coordination within churches,

the pastoral and prophetic accompaniment within disaster relief, social and political uprisings, celebrating the vibrant life of the partners, and developing practical tools for communicating hope and the fullness of life in Jesus Christ.

**Middle East and Europe:** Partners continued to focus on peace, human rights, and demilitarization throughout the region. Global Ministries spoke out against U.S. administration policies and plans that destabilize the region particularly the “Peace to Prosperity” Middle East peace plan. Likewise, Global Ministries has been active in expressing concerns about the

**What are the biggest challenges facing your region/ministry this year?**

COVID-19 has presented a major challenge for Global Ministries as it has added on to many of the pressing issues facing the international partners. Many of the partner congregations are not meeting in person, which results in pastors not being paid. Partners are dealing with Covid, and additional climate disasters across the globe, thus making it more challenging for Global Ministries to provide the depth of support needed. However, partners are resilient and are coming up with solutions to address many of the challenges within their particular contexts.

As a result of COVID-19, Global Ministries has a ban on international travel. This is a challenge because area executives and other staff are unable to be physically present with partners and the partners are unable to be present with congregations in the United States. Technology has resulted in new ways of being present but it does not replace physical presence.

A decline in the Disciples Mission Fund limits the number of mission co-workers serving with international partners. Global Ministries receives more requests for

mission co-workers than it has the capacity of responding to, due to limited funds.

**What is something you hope to accomplish in the next year?**

The Division of Overseas Ministries will experience a change of leadership in 2022, therefore, it is hopeful that there will be a smooth transition of leadership. Global Ministries will create a strategy to engage new generations of Disciples and UCC in this ministry. This ministry is primarily supported by older members of both denominations and therefore, must develop new generations with both a passion and commitment to God's mission.

In addition, Global Ministries will continue to explore additional resources for the appointment of mission co-workers and to support the increasing needs of international partners.

**What is something you would like the General Board to know about your region/ministry?**

The year 2021, the 25th Anniversary of Global Ministries, has been marked by a significant number of global events, which affected the quality of life for millions of people, especially those located in nations with limited resources. In addition to the global COVID-19 pandemic, there were multiple natural disasters: earthquakes in Haiti and Mexico; floods and droughts in Africa, Latin America, and the United States; cyclones in East Timor and Bangladesh; volcanic eruptions in eastern Congo; and devastating fires in the western United States. Other events included human-made disasters, including political unrest in the Middle East, Haiti, Eswatini, Mozambique and the displacement of people because of war, poverty, and climate change. These devastating events could easily lead to a sense of hopelessness however, the church is a beacon of hope. Overseas church partners and the ecumenical community in the United States are walking in hope as they seek to bring relief to those affected by these and other life-threatening challenges.

In addition, the number of fully supported mission co-workers continues to decline. Dr. William Nottingham, President Emeritus of DOM stated over 20 years ago that there is a need to have at least 75 fully supported mission co-workers in order to interpret Global Ministries in congregations. This interpretation enables the members of both denominations to understand how the funds they give to the Disciples Mission Fund and Our Church's Wider Mission are being used to support God's mission in the world.

**How can we pray for your region/ministry?**

This is a ministry of the whole church. We all must join together and pray that we faithfully find ways to participate in God's mission. In addition, we should pray for God's total creation.