

Associate Director, Global Ministries

Donna Hollopeter, Associate Director

I count it a privilege to report to this body and to share highlights of the work I have done over the past quadrennium. This has been four years filled with excitement, challenges, and uncertainty. As you are well aware, many changes occurred following the General Conference of 2001.

- The mission arm of the denomination went from being known as the “Department of Missions” to Global Ministries.

- International Conferences, that had once been financially dependent upon funding from the US, moved from dependency to partnership.

- A new International Executive Committee was formed and elected Bishop Brian Magnus of Canada as its Chairperson.

- A new Global Ministries Director was elected.

- Global Ministries became involved in partnering with local churches and conferences in project-based endeavors.

- Training of lay and clergy in all of the national conferences focused upon meeting the needs of people groups, micro-enterprise development, strategic planning of mission programs and outreaches, etc.

- Global Ministries continued to strengthen its missionary donor bases and change missionary compensation packages, making them more equitable and sensitive to compensate for years of service, education, continuing education, and cost of living adjustments.

Global Ministries moved from being accountable to the Commission on Missions to the Global Ministries Leadership Team. God put together a team with a heart for missions and for seeing the Kingdom enlarged through evangelism, church planting, and the strengthening of

existing ministries. It has been a pleasure to work with the members of the GMLT.

This past quadrennium saw changes in personnel that not only impacted Global Ministries but the general church as well. For many years, Mrs. Mabel Mundy served the Department of Missions faithfully as administrative assistant. During this quadrennium, Mabel left Global Ministries to assume a position and responsibilities in the accounting arm of the denomination. Her change to this area of work was a good fit but left a vacancy in Global Ministries. I appreciate the years that I worked with Mabel in the area of missions and appreciate the work that she continues to do through her position in accounting.

To fill the vacancy left by Mabel, Darlene Burkett was hired, first as a part-time staff person and then full-time. She has learned the many facets of the work very well, and I am thankful that she is a part of the team.

As you can see, there have been many structural changes. It has been a good four years in the fact that, in the midst of change, Global Ministries’ focus has remained steady. It has been and continues to be the desire to provide healthy partnership opportunities to our North American churches as well as our National Churches abroad. It is not the desire of Global Ministries to be the dominant party but simply co-facilitators with our other brothers and sisters in Kingdom work.

Global Ministries has faced challenges as well. As we moved from providing large levels of financial assistance to our National Conferences to a project-based partnership, it was not without concern. We realized that our brothers and sisters in our National Conferences could possibly feel abandoned. We were well aware

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of great needs, but we were also well aware that there were resources within each of the National Conferences that had not been allowed to properly develop because of dependency. Leadership, developmental, and even financial potentials were present but had not been allowed to flourish to their fullest. I am sure that through the challenges they faced because of these transitions, our National Conferences had times of anxiety. While we are not out of the period of transition, we have moved far enough to see that, though sometimes painful, the changes have been good and conferences have become strengthened because of them.

Global Ministries was also challenged with how best to meet the needs of our missionaries. While we had moved from fully supporting our missionaries several years ago to asking them to raise a portion of their support and now to raising 100% of their support and ministry expense, we did it with more than a little concern. We were concerned for our missionaries. How would they feel about being asked to do something that is often one of the least liked or understood parts of becoming a faith-based mission organization? How would our congregations respond after years of knowing that United Brethren missionaries didn't have to raise their support? It is with great thanksgiving that I can report that our United Brethren missionaries are fully supported. United Brethren people and churches have responded faithfully, enabling our missionaries to stay on their respective fields without concern for lack of funding. I praise the Lord for this wonderful support and response!

Our team at Global Ministries also wrestled with the challenge of helping local churches reach their maximum potential in the local mission program. It is our desire to be good stewards with not only the finances that the Lord has provided but to be good stewards of the time that we spend in the local churches. With a staff of three, we want to provide assistance when and where needed so that the local church can become mobilized for Kingdom work. I am thankful that Global Ministries has had the opportunity to share in most of our local churches and meet with many local church mission

teams for training and strategic planning. The staff of Global Ministries is committed to helping local churches in any way we can to reach a higher level of mission awareness and commitment.

Finally, the past four years have been ones of uncertainty. As I shared in my yearly report to the National Conference, vision-casting and long-term plans were put on hold while the church considered the possible joining with the Missionary Church USA. There were many days and weeks filled with the uncertainty of should we be working with joining in mind or with some other plan of transition in mind. The work of missions continued, but more in a maintenance mode. The debates, meetings, and waiting for the vote were at times frustrating and yet necessary. But for the sake of being perfectly honest, it was probably the most difficult time I have experienced in my 11 years working here. While we are still faced with uncertainty of the future and what our denominational structure will be, I look forward with greater anticipation to what the Lord is going to do. I truly believe we are standing at a door that has abundant possibilities waiting behind it.

Women's Missionary Fellowship

Eleven years ago, when I became the WMF Executive Secretary, I knew that two of the greatest challenges we were facing as an organization were how to attract more women who were younger and had a vision for missions and how to be helpful, positive supporters of the mission vision of the local church. I set as a goal to see the WMF grow and become an ally to mission commissions and pastors in support of mission programs.

One of my great joys in working in missions is to have had the privilege of working with the women of the denomination involved in local WMF groups. I am thankful for the wonderful friendships and relationships that have been developed. I am thankful for the hard work that the women have done in supporting projects, missionaries, budgets, and programs. The women of the WMF are to be commended for how they have year after year responded and ministered through prayer and financial sacrifice. Because of the financial support of the WMF,

ministries in Haiti and El Salvador were birthed; missionaries have become fully funded; training centers in Sierra Leone that teach work skills and minister to the physical needs of war widows have been established; and a new Women's Ministry program was birthed for our denomination.

Four years ago, when the Women's Ministry Program was introduced and acted upon by the General Conference, there was some concern as to how Women's Ministry would impact the WMF. Would these two entities be partners or competitors? Would WMF die? I praise the Lord that I can say that 1) there has not been one incident of competitiveness between WMF and Women's Ministry. The two have worked well together and have been very supportive of one another. 2) While we continue to struggle with the same problem we had 11 years ago of not being able to attract a younger constituency through WMF, we continue to exist, we continue to raise a large portion of the Global Ministries budget and I believe, are doing a better job of being supportive of the whole mission program of our local churches and denomination.

As I have shared with our WMF ladies, we may never attract large numbers of younger women but God still has a ministry for us no matter what age we are. I believe there is still a great need for prayer support for our missionaries and national workers. There is still a need for financial support for local and de-

nominal missions programs. There is still a need to be a strong ministry arm of encouragement, help, and support to mission teams, pastors and mission commissions.

I count it a great privilege to work with the Women's Missionary Fellowship and look forward to what we can do in the future.

In Conclusion

I want to express thanks to my family for the continued support of my work. I feel truly blessed to have a husband who has been encouraging and supportive. I thank my children and their extended families for their support as well.

I want to thank the congregation of Corunna United Brethren Church for allowing me periodic time away from them. They are a wonderful church family.

Thanks also to Gary Dilley who has been great to work with and to his wife, Rhonda, who has been a blessing to all of us at the office as well as to the people of our National Conferences.

I, like you, am standing at that door behind which all kinds of possibilities lie. I look forward to opening it and seeing what is on the other side!

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Hollopeter
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WMF Executive Secretary

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