

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP:

# ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Donna Hollopeter • Associate Director of Global Ministries

My work for Global Ministries has been both rewarding and challenging. As I report, it is my desire to share some highlights that will address both the highs and the lows. I am thankful for the opportunities, good and not so good, and for what these are teaching me.

I have had the opportunity to visit churches, missionaries, and international conferences where I have listened to each share their joys and concerns. In October 2008, Miriam Prabhakar and I visited churches in Canada during their Thank Offering emphasis. I listened to Miriam share her heart to me personally and to the churches, and I saw her enthusiasm for ministry. She is a good communicator. As she shared, people listened; and as they listened, they were challenged by what she said. That challenge continues to bear fruit as she and the ministries with which she is involved continue to be well funded.

Miriam is not the only United Brethren missionary who has been blessed with donors who have heard the need and responded. David and Melissa Kline, Jennifer Blandin, Jana Hoobler, and Randy and Toni Fennig are all in good financial status, in spite of the worldwide economic crisis. What a blessing it is for them to know that in the midst of their busy lives, they do not have to be concerned about having to return from the field to raise emergency support funds!

While these are areas of rejoicing, there are areas of concern. Jeff and I continue to express the need faced by the Simbos in Sierra Leone. With one more year of assignment, Billy and Mamei only have a surplus of a little over \$8,000 in their support account. They have expressed a desire to have an increase in salary to meet some of their special needs, but the additional support has not come from donors.

I am also concerned about new missionaries now entering into building a donor base. They are finding it difficult. It isn't a matter of people

not wanting to give—they just can't give. One of the challenges I am working with is finding creative ways to help our missionaries in their support discovery.

The staff of Global Ministries has been monitoring closely trends in giving. Missionary giving, for the most part, is holding its own. Giving to the General Fund for Global Ministries, however, has been affected. We are being very cautious in planning and spending, trying to be good stewards of the fewer general fund dollars available. While there are fewer dollars with which to work, it has been good in that we have been challenged to look for ways to achieve positive results in ministry with less monetary investment.

## Where Have I Been?

During the last two weeks of October 2008, Jeff Bleijerveld, my husband Jason, and I visited 23 churches and pastors in Honduras and El Salvador. This was an excellent opportunity to listen to our brothers and sisters tell how God is working within their congregations. We listened to stories of how God has been bringing men, women, and children to first-time commitments because of the faithfulness of the pastor and other Christians within the body. It was good to see people coming together to worship the Lord with joy and a desire to be fed spiritually.

It was good also to hear how so many areas of Honduras and El Salvador have been blessed because of ministry teams who have traveled from North America to assist with VBS, construction, medical, women's ministry, and leadership development. Our Latin American churches are becoming healthier and are at a point of looking beyond their own needs to see the needs of others in other parts of the world.

In January 2009, I was a part of one of the medical mission teams that traveled to Sierra Leone. In the two weeks we were in-country,

## REPORT 11-26

Office of the  
Bishop  
—  
Associate  
Director of  
Global Ministries

our team conducted three community outreach clinics in remote villages beyond Mattru. We also worked at the Mattru Hospital assisting with clinics, doing surgeries, helping with maintenance on vehicles and equipment owned by the hospital, cleaning, and doing miscellaneous work around the hospital compound.

This was a trip filled with a multitude of emotions. We experienced the joys of seeing several very ill individuals who were near death receive the medical care needed and be restored to good health. We also saw individuals, young and old, who were brought to the hospital so ill, nothing could be done except make them comfortable until death came. We experienced great frustration with no electricity because of a newly purchased generator not working and frustrations of complacency among the staff. At the same time, we experienced great hope because of meetings and the promise of partnerships from the First Lady of Sierra Leone, the World Bank, World Vision, and Operation Mobilization's Mercy Ships.

### **What is Coming Up?**

In May I will represent Global Ministries at the Canadian Conference Mid-Year Meetings in Port Colbourne, Ont.

Ruth Ann Price, Kurt Uhen, and I continue to work on finalizing a Crisis Management Policy for Global Ministries.

At the beginning of June, I will assist with National Conference in Sandusky, Ohio, and will be one of the resource persons during the workshop times. We are very excited about the Night of Missions program on Saturday evening and look forward to honoring the former missionaries in attendance.

Also in June, I will be part of the Honduras Medical Mission Team. My trips to Central America as a member of the medical teams, plus my work with women and as Associate Director, have challenged me to become more fluent in Spanish. I have begun taking tutorial classes in Spanish to improve my communication skills.

In July, I will be part of the China Team. Having traveled to China but not as part of the teaching team, I am excited and looking forward to this opportunity. I am also looking forward to taking TESOL classes at Huntington University. I enjoy teaching and the methodology of teaching, and I look forward to learning more about the teaching of English as a second language.

One of my responsibilities in my role as Associate Director is missionary care. I am registered for and will participate in a two-week training seminar in Liverpool, Pa., on how to improve missionary care.

The spring of 2009 was also filled with travel to a number of WMF Regional meetings as well as some meetings with prospective missionary candidates.

### **General Items**

We are currently working on some projects that will be of benefit to Global Ministries in diverse ways.

Jeff and I have both been working, as time permits, on revising the Missionary Handbook.

We have been working with Skyline Displays out of Fort Wayne to develop some very good displays to use at both National Conference and in our churches. These displays, along with a new brochure introducing Global Ministries and what we are about, will be helpful in keeping Global Ministries work and missionaries before our church families.

I look forward also to working with Honduras Superintendent Juanita Chavez and her staff in planning the 2010 General Conference. This will be the first General Conference held outside of North America. The conference will be held at the Bethel UB church in La Ceiba, Honduras, in January 2010.

In conclusion, I want to express sincere thanks to Darlene Burkett for all of her work as she handles many of the "nuts and bolts" items for Global Ministries. Thanks also to Jessica Hollopetter, my youngest daughter, for her work in pulling together research and materials for the Night of Missions at National Conference. Finally, thanks to Jeff for his leadership of Global Ministries and his support and encouragement for my work.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Donna Hollopetter*

*Associate Director of Global Ministries*