Welcome

Welcome to the Global Ministries Council of Theological Students. We are excited that your school selected you to be part of this group. The year promises opportunities to meet other students committed to exploring the meaning and shape of Christian ministry in this interconnected global world. This year we will especially explore the shape of theological education across the globe. Global Ministries’ staff is looking forward to engaging with you in reflection on the theology and articulation of mission. Special projects, interpretation events, and new global relationships await. This newsletter includes introductions.

We will get to know one another much better as we meet alongside the Mission-Works Event in Cleveland, On October 25-28, 2012. This meeting is mandatory for Council members since it is the only time we all will be together face-to-face during the year.

Please make your travel reservations this week. In the meantime, you can check out the blog and projects of former groups of the GM Council of Theological Students at http://globalministries.org/mission/

Introducing

The Program

The People

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Our Year Together ...

• **Gather**: October 25-28, 2012 Cleveland, OH. This in-person gathering of the Council meets alongside the biennial Global Ministries’ Mission Works event. You will also be trained as a Ministries and Mission Interpreter (MMI)

• **Network**: Connect with each other and with Global Ministries’ supporters, staff and global partners throughout the year & beyond. Learn about global mission involvement of other theological schools and collaborate on projects.

• **Interpret**: You become the Global Ministries’ liaison with your school during the coming year.

• **Explore Missiology**: The 2012-2013 Council will explore models of theological education.

• **People-to-People Pilgrimage**: (Optional) Travel together. Connect with global partners. Learn from one another. Tentative travel dates: 3rd week of May 2013
Bianca Davis

My name is Bianca Davis and I am a third year M.Div Student at Chicago Theological Seminary. Prior to attending CTS, I attended Jackson State University and Columbia College- Chicago where I received a B.S in Speech and a Master of Arts Management. I was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. I was introduced to the United Church of Christ denomination via my parents who both are UCC clergy. I am passionate about bringing people together from various different ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. I am passionate about issues such as preventing human trafficking around the world, HIV/AIDS prevention, and promoting interfaith cooperation. In the past, I have participated in projects such as raising money to send bibles to people around the world and the Haiti Relief Fund. Currently, I am the Youth Director at God Can Ministries UCC where I am working on various projects that will help educate the youth at my local church about various faith traditions in hope that it will encourage interfaith cooperation among people of faith. As an employee of Interfaith Youth Core, I have the privilege of meeting and working with people who are from all over the world and from different faith traditions. As a follower of Christ, I believe that God called us to love all people and to fight for justice on behalf of our brothers and sisters. I look forward to meeting and getting to know all of you as we travel this journey together.

Tamika W. Montgomery

My name is Tamika Montgomery. I am in the third year of my four year degree program, M.Div/MAMFT program. I recently had the opportunity to serve as a College of Missions Intern at Global Ministries. This opportunity was simply invaluable. While serving at Global Ministries, I had the opportunity to journey to Cuba. This trip was absolutely phenomenal. I was immersed in the Cuban culture. What I particularly liked about this experience is that we had the opportunity to visit many parts of the country as opposed to just one location. This trip reiterated to me the importance of being able to look at and experience another way of being and living in the world other than through my middle-class, American culture and lenses. It also illustrated the difference between ideological policy and the specific effects these policies have on the people who are affected by them. This trip allowed me to put names and faces to the Cuban people who I have experienced to be generalized and stereotyped in our American media. I treasure the people I met. The memories of them and their country that I took away with me will not soon be forgotten. I am so intrigued and mesmerized by Cuba and the Cuban people that one day, I hope to become a Cuban exchange student. Also during this summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Jamaica as a missionary. Throughout this experience, I discovered I have a heart and a passion for Jamaica and the Jamaican people. I hope to one day serve and accompany the Jamaican people. Lastly, I am thrilled that the Council of Theological Students will study southern Africa this year. I have always wanted to learn more about Africa because I believe I will one day serve and accompany the people in this region as well. I am ecstatic to further my relationship with the Global Ministries staff or shall I say "family." As the motto goes, "Once a Global Ministry family member, always a Global Ministry family member." I am thrilled to be a part of the Council of Theological Students and I look forward to collaborating with the team to further reflect upon theology and the articulation of missions, while simultaneously preparing "today's" students to be the globally, mission-oriented leaders and servants of "tomorrow."
Daniel Meyers

My name is Daniel Meyers and I am a third year Masters of Divinity student at Yale Divinity School. Over the past two years my global interests have focused on how to balance the Christian ethics of helping those in need and seeking global justice in all contexts with the equally important necessity of individual and global communities thriving with self-sufficiency in order to remain independent and autonomous of outside power. I am interested in learning more about the concept of “Critical Presence” and how it can be applied and practiced. My global experience with the church was limited prior to this past year. As a high school student I participated in two mission trips to Tijuana, Mexico building houses in four-day cycles. These experiences certainly inform my questions about how to help from the outside while not establishing dependency on outside help. In the past six months I have gotten to visit Israel on a personal trip with my wife, which was largely educational for both of us. I participated in a travel seminar with my school which took me to Uganda and Rwanda. We partnered with seminarians from Uganda Christian University, which made for a very rich cultural and theological exchange. Our group from Yale focused on learning from the experience of refugees and how faith can function as a source of resiliency within trauma. Lastly, during July and August the Global Ministries Office sponsored me as an Amity Foundation volunteer in China where I was teaching English to adult English teachers for three weeks in Sichuan Province. Israel, Uganda, and China have all been wildly informative and exciting experiences. I was able to visit a seminary in each country, worship in each country, and speak to some extent with local people in each context as well. I am excited for this opportunity to be further involved in the Global Ministries Council and hopeful that I can apply the discourse we have to my own future but also share it faithfully with other seminarians at my school.

Trudy Betts

My name is Trudy Betts and I was born and raised in West Palm Beach, Florida. I have been married for 15 ½ years to my husband Dwayne and combined we have three children: Devin, 26, Kayla, 24, and Tyler, 21.

I started the new online MDiv program at Lexington Theological Seminary in September of 2010 and have thoroughly enjoyed every minute!

My first experience with global mission work was in 2006 at First Christian Church in West Palm Beach, Florida. The youth wanted to raise money for the people of Darfur after a lesson about this genocide. The fundraiser was entitled “Our Footsteps in the Sands of the Sudan”. This small inner-city youth group raised $8,600, which we gave to Week of Compassion to help feed 150 people in Darfur for one year.

Over the past three years I have traveled to Santo Domingo Xenacoj, Guatemala to serve, building stoves, laying cement floors and participating in VBS. The people of this remote village have felt forgotten for a very long time and our presence and help has been graciously embraced. I am grateful for my experience in this place and look forward to serving the people in Santo Domingo Xenacoj again next year.
Russell M. Cortez

My name is Russell Cortez and I was born and grew up in the Philippines. I have lived in Orange County, California since 1984. I am a 3rd year MDiv student at Claremont School of Theology and hope to graduate in May of 2013. I am on ordination track with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Pacific Southwest Region and a member of The Church of the Foothills in Tustin, California.

I am preparing for my third (and hopefully my last) career. I used to work in hotel management (Human Resource Development and Sales) in the Philippines and has worked as a County Property Tax Appraiser for more than 16 years. I enjoyed working in these capacities but I am most excited about what I will do next.

Last January, I went to Palestine-Israel. Just like any typical American, my knowledge about the conflict in Palestine-Israel before this trip was limited to the meager and biased information the mainstream news media have been feeding us. I would never trade my experience in Palestine-Israel for anything. It opened my mind, corrected some misconceptions about the real situation there and gave me valuable first hand experience that one can only have by being there. There, I saw the Separation Barrier which is longer, thicker and higher than the Berlin Wall; have stayed overnight and interacted with a Palestinian Christian family; was there when the UN watchdogs confronted the Israeli Military when they fenced-off the only access this particular Bedouin tribe had to the main road; and experienced being confronted by an Israeli woman right at one of the gates that separated the Palestinians from the settlers with 5 armed Israeli soldiers surrounding us.

As a visual artist, I enjoy painting and going to art galleries and museums. I am excited to be in this Council and looking forward to meeting all of you soon.

Douglass Anne

Hi! My name is Douglass Anne Cartwright and I am currently in my final year of a M.Div. at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, TX. I am interested in interreligious dialogue and global missions, particularly in the areas of worship and spirituality. (And even more specifically, in the intersections of theatre and ritual in religious life.) My travels have taken me to Croatia, Slovenia, Scotland, England, and South Africa. I am incredibly excited for this opportunity to meet and work with all of you!

Lawrence “Larry” Garcia

I’m really looking forward to the whole experience of being a part of the Global Ministries Council of Theological Students.

I lived in Japan for two years and have traveled extensively in Europe, Israel, the U.S., Mexico and Canada. A change of career student in the MDiv program, as an attorney I was a referral source for the U.S. State Department for Hague Convention international custody cases. I am a strong Disciples serving Hill Country Christian Church in Spring Branch, Texas. I attend Philips Theological Seminary.
Virginia “Ginny” Heimer

I am a Third Year student at Lancaster Theological Seminary enrolled in the M.Div/Spiritual Direction Program in collaboration with the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Washington D.C. I am a second career seminary student with a background in healthcare; I have worked in physician practice and hospital setting administration for over fifteen years. My call to ministry came when I became a member of the UCC and became an active member in my local church. I joined the Mission Group and traveled on a few mission trips with my church within the United States. My interest in global mission was ignited this past year when I traveled to Haiti and the Dominican Republic with my seminary class on our cross-cultural experience that is required for the M.Div Program at LTS. It was truly a life changing experience that changed my world view and brought me in touch with “the other” and made me realize that the Kingdom of God spreads further than I have ever imagined. My hope for this experience with the Global Ministries Council is that I be opened up even more through collaboration, conversation and the global experiences and perspectives of others to enrich my world view and subsequently my ministry. My deep desire is to serve God’s people...all of God’s people.

Clare Gromoll

My name is Clare Gromoll. I am an M.Div. student at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. I am also Student Minister at St. Paul’s United Church of Christ (in St. Paul, MN), where my work focuses within the ministry of faith formation, the ministry of belonging and community, and collaborative community and worship leadership. I am bilingual in Spanish and English, an avid walker, a lover of live independent music, a fiancé, and a stepmom-to-be. My interest in global citizenship began when I became bicultural while living in the Dominican Republic for a year as a Rotary Youth Exchange student (2000-2001). At Beloit College, I studied comparative literature, which involved literature from various geographical and historical locations (some in Spanish and some in translation to English from other languages). At UTS, every student in a degree program takes part in a 3-credit global justice trip. I had the privilege of traveling to Guatemala in May, 2011 to learn from indigenous Maya people how globalization and empire have wreaked havoc on their way of life. I look forward to learning about of Global Ministries!

Matt Frierdich


I attend Vanderbilt Divinity School and was nominated through the Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt.

My interests include Peace & Conflict resolution (esp. Israel-Palestine), intersection of political economy and human rights, role of the church/Christian witness in conflict areas (i.e. Catholic Church in Latin American in 1960-80’s) cross-cultural dialogue, and historical and political education.
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