

# Federation of Christian Ministries

Newsletter...VOL. 49 NO. 6 November/December - 2015





# Federation of Christian Ministries

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## A WORD FROM THE CHAIRPERSON...Tom Stricker



2015 has been an exciting year for the Federation of Christian Ministries. In our last Newsletter for the year, I want to highlight a few reasons for that excitement.

**Circle Continues Strategic Plan Development...** The Circle has been working on creative responses to the needs expressed in our Strategic Plan Surveys. As many of you are aware, the FCM Assembly has become a biennial event, partly to encourage regular regional gatherings that more members can attend.

There is a new position on the Circle – Director of Group Member Affairs – filled by **Becky Cartus**, part of the effort to respond to the needs of our group members as they continue to increase in number. Another new position is "Area Representative," created to provide assistance to Vice Presidents in meeting the needs of membership within each region.

**Technology Grows in FCM...** This year has also seen expansion in our online presence: there is now a blog on the FCM web site, and you will see enhancements to our FCM Facebook page and LinkedIn group, all of which improve our opportunities to remain connected. A new conversation taking place on that (closed) LinkedIn group is part of the development of the Peace and Justice Committee taking place under the guidance of **Carolyn Horvath**. Any of these offer a wonderful opportunity for becoming a stronger, more vibrant organization and I invite your continued input and participation.

**Regional Gatherings Enhance Community...** For the first time, this year has seen a gathering in all five of our regions. President **Tom Cusack** was able to be present at two of those in the spring (Northeast and Pacific) and reported having a wonderful time at both. My own experience in October at the Great Lakes and Mountains and Plains gatherings was also very enjoyable. And from all reports the Southern Region cruise event could not have been better. I truly believe these experiences have enhanced the community awareness of those who attended. As one FCM member said, "It is good to put a face and body on the internet image." Personally, I could not have come away more energized and impressed. The community building and time together was simply priceless.

I would like to call your attention to the ideas shared in the two October Gatherings that will help us meet the requests of our membership by offering more opportunities to connect regularly. Please see the articles by the Vice Presidents for more detail.

**Membership Renewal Time...** By now you will have received your FCM Membership Renewal letters, scheduled to go out October 31st. One of the responsibilities of being community is to care for the well-being of others. Your attention to a timely completion of your renewal is a matter of community participation. Please remember we are all volunteers. By immediately sending in your annual report and fees, you are allow your Vice President to **NOT** follow up with you for your renewal. I can attest from my time as a Vice President that your early return of renewals will definitely reduce the stress level of your FCM Regional Vice President. They volunteer their time so please know your prompt response will be greatly appreciated.

**Donations Further FCM Mission...** I wish to express my gratitude to those who have made donations to FCM throughout the 2015 fiscal year. Your donations bless us all. Please know that your donations affect FCM in several ways. It is no surprise that the cost of doing business has risen, yet we have not had to raise our renewal fees for three years and running. The reason for this is those who are able have made donations above and beyond their fees. Many have made one-time donations, others have signed up for a monthly giving plan. One person has been giving \$10 a week and two donate \$100 a month. These gifts have allowed us to keep our annual fees unchanged and have empowered the Vice Presidents to help other FCM members who find the fee very difficult to pay. So I thank all those who have given and encourage others who are able to join in with a helping hand. This is another invitation to be community.

Remember also there is a long term way of making a donation. You can give a gift that continues to give after you have moved on with the Lord. Include FCM in your Will or as a memorial donation. We are all in this ministry together, we are the body of Christ here and now.

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## A WORD FROM THE CHAIRPERSON...Tom Stricker ....Continued

Finally, please mark your calendars for the 2016 FCM National Assembly in Cleveland, Ohio. August 5th through the 7th. Maryanne Duddy Burke, National Director of Dignity USA will be the keynote speaker Friday evening. Bishop John Shelby Spong will be the keynote speaker for two sessions, Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon. Plan to join the larger community for a great experience.

Blessings and gratitude to you in the New Year!

**FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS....**

**SAVE THE DATES**



**AUGUST 5-7, 2016**

**FCM 2016 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

*With Open Arms*

**Keynote Speaker**  
*Saturday, Morning & Afternoon*  
**Bishop John Shelby Spong**



**Friday Keynote Speaker**  
**Maryann Duddy-Burke**  
*Executive Director, Dignity USA*



**Sheraton Cleveland Airport Hotel....Cleveland, Ohio**

Chairperson - Pg. 2



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## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT....Tom Cusack



### What's the Plan?

When you're going out for a leisurely stroll, it's not very important to have a definite goal. Using up some time and a little energy is sufficient. FCM is not out for a leisurely stroll, however so having a plan and clear goals is very important. For FCM that plan is our Strategic Plan. Our last several Circle meetings spent time to focus on defining our current strategic plan. In this article I want to bring forward to you a key aspect of that plan, and thus where we're going in the next couple years.

As the Circle reflected on the many actions on which we could concentrate, a realization developed that the reality of FCM as a "convention of churches" (our tax-related definition with the IRS) is a reality that needed special new action and energy. FCM's current group membership includes about 20 groups: faith communities, churches and service organizations. The Circle understand these groups need attention and support. In addition, while 20 groups is not insignificant, it is a fraction of what we could have as a national Christian organization. This realization suggests that finding and inviting organizations to be group members is an important activity for FCM within this new Strategic Plan.

In order to move this activity forward, the Circle created a new position on the Circle, Director, Group Member Affairs, and its first officeholder is **Becky Cartus**. **Becky** resides in Western Pennsylvania in the Great Lakes Region, and she leads a small community of faith at this time. In her article in this Newsletter, she provides an overview of her activities and planning going forward.

Additionally, I attended a conference at the end of June in St. Paul, Minnesota. The conference was held at Concordia University and was named the Intentional Eucharistic Communities Conference. I spoke to many attendees who belong to small communities of faith as they visited the FCM table. Most did not know about us so our new colorful brochure provided welcome information. I also inquired about what they need to which they gave a consistent answer, namely that they lack a connection to other communities. It seems to me the role of communication facilitator is one that would naturally filled by FCM.

**Becky** will lead the effort to develop the capabilities that will allow this communication and in this way provide benefit to current members. It will also allow us to invite potential group members to join us and to gain the benefits of the networking and community that we are establishing. Building this communication capability will be a lot of work, and should you like to become part of it please contact **Becky** at [directorgroupaffairs@FCMmail.org](mailto:directorgroupaffairs@FCMmail.org). In addition, at the FCM Assembly August 5-7, 2016, she will lead a workshop for all who are interested in small communities of faith. Please mark your calendar for the Assembly.

I will continue this discussion of our strategic plan in future Newsletters. I conclude by encouraging you once again to include FCM in your spiritual life with **2 x 2 4 FCM**. That means to actually spend two minutes in prayer and two minutes in meditation for the benefit of FCM. It is heartening to know that a number of you are doing this daily. If we can add a few additional members to this prayer and meditation effort monthly, we will have more significant and effective growth than we will be able to deal with. A good future to look forward to....



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## Regional News

**Northeast Region**

Vice President...Dan Pellegrin



Like other regions in FCM, we in the Northeast are working to hold area get-togethers throughout our region. An email for this has gone out to each member on my list. If you're reading this as a regional member and have not received an email from me, I apologize for the oversight and ask that you contact me so I may facilitate your attendance at a local meeting.

We already have gracious hosts in **Tom Cusack** for South Jersey, **Carl Yusavitz** for the Philadelphia area, **Pat and Paul Stubenbort** to share the Philadelphia area and western New Jersey, and myself for New York City and suburbs.

Thanks go out to **Rose-Marie and John Marmolejo** and our Connecticut members who have already led the way by having an area meeting in Stratford. (If you are a Connecticut area member who missed that inspiring time, we hope to hold another soon!) By the time you're reading this I have every confidence more hosts will have blessedly stepped forward. At each gathering we hope to have a time for sharing and making new friends and service allies, as well as for being inspired in sharing liturgy and good food and drink.

An item on the agenda at these events will be small area representatives. These are members who agree to help primarily with the social and relational aspects of FCM members in their local area. Other regions are reporting that members are quickly volunteering for this important service once they are invited and appreciate the nature of the role.

Our list of members who are seeking Commissioning continues to grow. Please contact me should you be inspired to take this next Spirit-filled step.

Our President **Tom Cusack** wrote of "Inreach" in his last column (our Sept-Oct 2015 Newsletter). In it he suggests meditation as an important daily tool to deepen our spirituality. His column is well worth reading and re-reading.

For those of you interested in deepening your spirituality in this way, I will suggest two additional sources for further study and reflection. One is the writing of Fr. Thomas Keating on Centering Prayer. You can find him at [www.contemplativeoutreach.org](http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org). The second is for Fr. Richard Rohr's website which stresses contemplation and action. It is simply [www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org).

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## Regional News

**Great Lakes Region** Co-Vice Presidents  
Ron Davis & Amy Simpson Bennethum



In keeping with the goal of the Strategic Plan, we in the Great Lakes Region are working to provide opportunity for our members and friends to gather together more frequently to help build and strengthen relationships. And since we are in the midst of the renewal season, our hope is that as members move through the renewal process, they will be able to say that I have a sojourner in FCM who is in a growing relationship with me. It will take time, effort and hard work to develop this goal. Great strides are in the works to move forward on this overall goal already. Here is what we have in place.

**FCM in Louisville, KY** is on board in going after this goal. We have two area representatives in place: **Tony Heitzman** and **Shannon Queenan**. They have already scheduled their 2016 meeting dates:

Saturday, January 9, 9:30 – noon @ Heine Brothers-Douglas Loop  
Saturday, April 9, 9:30 – noon @ place TBD  
Saturday, July 9, 9:30 – noon @ place TBD  
Saturday, October 8, 9:30 – noon @ place TBD

**FCM in Cleveland, OH** is on board in going after this goal. Our area representative is **Antoinette Marold**. To find out the dates of their 2016 meetings, you can contact **Antoinette** at ([communications@fcmmail.org](mailto:communications@fcmmail.org)).

**FCM in Columbus, OH** is on board in going after this goal. Our area representative is **Ron Davis**. The dates scheduled for the 2016 meetings in Columbus, OH are:

Saturday, January 9, 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 Prayer Luncheon  
Friday, March 11, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Ministry in a Children's Hospital @  
Nationwide Children's Hospital  
Saturday, June 11, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Summer BBQ & Fellowship Time  
Saturday, November 12, Fellowship Meal and a time to sing  
RSVP with **Ron** at [davisron@juno.com](mailto:davisron@juno.com) for directions and address to the meeting location.

**FCM in Cincinnati/Dayton/Indianapolis:** We need to find an area representative for this area. We are grateful that **Salvador Leavitt-Alcantara** said that he would help coordinate in this area.

**FCM in Michigan:** **Bob and Christine Funaro** along with **John Schultz** are providing leadership in this state. We are thankful for their commitment to this work.

**FCM in the Pittsburgh area:** We need an area representative for this region. We would welcome a good lead or for someone to come forward and say yes on their own.

We look forward to 2016, a time when there will be more opportunities for us to meet together and strengthen our ties to one another. It is also a time when the national assembly will be in Cleveland, Ohio which gives us opportunities to welcome FCM friends to Ohio from across the country. Please take time to renew your membership, sooner than later, and let's work together to grow FCM.

All the best to you.



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## Gathering Celebrates Ministry, Community



by John Polanski, Newsletter Editor

For 20 years or so members, spouses and friends of the Great Lakes Region have made a home for a weekend in a rural corner of southwestern Ohio. The Maria Stein Spiritual Center is the kind of place that newcomers immediately come to appreciate and past attendees look forward to visiting. (If this sounds like a promotion, let me assure you that I am not alone in saying, "I wouldn't miss it!")

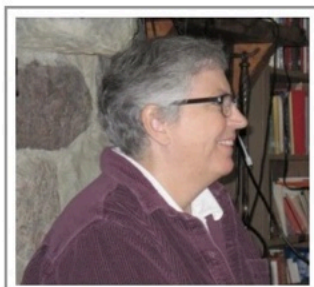
This past October, 26 happy campers enjoyed the spacious grounds and welcome quiet that allows for renewing friendships, sharing ministry and grateful reflection. Co-VPs for the region **Ron Davis** and **Amy Simpson Bennethum** teamed up to organize and produce the latest in a long line of quality experiences. Participants learned from interesting presenters, had plenty of time for socializing, caught up on the latest news on the region and FCM and took time for prayer and relaxation.

The less than pleasant weather necessitated some last-minute changes in Friday's dinner plans and thanks to **Ron's** hard work and culinary expertise the event opened with an enjoyable meal. It was clear from the start that this group appreciated whence they came, both geographically and spiritually: from western Pennsylvania to northern Michigan to the Bluegrass State and all around Ohio, they discovered how the Spirit overflows in times of sharing and permeates every moment on such holy ground.



Saturday opened with a presentation from recently-endorsed Great Lakes member **Salvador Leavitt-Alcantara** who offered a blend of personal experience and research-based information on ministering to the Hispanic community. Self-described as "politically liberal and liturgically conservative," the Central American-born and California-raised hospital chaplain began his presentation with the notion that theology is always contextual, hence the need for ministers to be mindful of our own cultural practices and attitudes.

"Given the synthesis of belief systems that Hispanic/Latino/Latina people experience, the sensitivity of the minister, particularly with regard to judgment is significant." **Salvador** encouraged his audience that remaining curious and open to the religious experience and spiritual practices of those with whom we pray and minister enhances the grace and diversity of all.



Events such as this highlight the breadth of ministry within our organization and the next presenter was another testament to the talent and generosity we offer one another.

**Judy McBride** chose FCM's own standards of ethics as her springboard to speak on ethical ministry within a diverse and changing world. She used her own training and practice to illustrate some of the principles and standards that underpin the way we serve in the many contexts in which we find ourselves. "How I live ethically is about what I do as well as what I avoid," Judy pointed out as she moved through general notions to the framework in which our organizational aspirations are set forth.



## Gathering Celebrates Ministry, Community

Great Lakes Region

Judy McBride...Continued....

Understanding the complex nature of decision-making is key as we live out the practical nuances of these principles: emotions and intellect, communication, individual and systemic realities, culture as well as the legal and professional contexts of our actions may sound like intellectual matters but they are far from it. She encouraged the group to participate in the discussion of FCM ethical standards (which have not been revised since 1999) as this is a necessary component of membership renewal. Those interested in this effort may contact Tom Stricker [chairperson@fcmail.org](mailto:chairperson@fcmail.org)

Both vice-presidents took turns as presenters with **Ron Davis** facilitating the first part of a discussion on regional activities. Harkening back to our strategic plan and its call for more opportunities for members to interact conveniently, Ron indicated the worth of setting up gatherings throughout the region suggesting that areas such as Saginaw, Michigan, Louisville, Kentucky and areas throughout Ohio (Toledo, Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati-Dayton) afforded a way for chaplains and other ministers as well as other members to gather for mutual support.

Noting that planning for the 2016 Assembly is already underway, **Amy Simpson Bennethum** sketched out the tasks that still needed attention and the dates for conference calls that will address those details. She went on to invite more discussion of regional activities and provided additional information regarding tasks the Circle are addressing. She noted that as joyful and fulfilling personal gatherings are, it is still helpful for the organization to take advantage of our online connections: our website, blog, and LinkedIn page afford ways for us to develop and enhance our interaction.

Scrambling to locate the Ohio State football game, walking through the spacious grounds, laughter echoing through evening socials and breakfast tables: all are signs that regional gatherings play a significant part in enhancing FCM. One can only be grateful for the spirit that moves in our midst and enables us to fulfill our call as individuals as an organization.



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## Regional News

**Southern Region** by Vice President....Sally Sherry



Things have been quiet in the Southern Region these months. Those to whom I have spoken with are busy with their work. We are now heading into the holiday season so I wish you the best, however you may celebrate. Mine is quiet and reflective while others are active and cheerful. May you enjoy your time ending 2015 and beginning anew in 2016.

Also it is the time to take a few minutes to get your report and dues into the main office. Please take the time to do this as early as possible. It will be so much appreciated and save additional work for the staff.

Keep the August 2016 conference in mind. It changed my life and was so lasting in remembering all the talented and friendly folks attending.

Hope to have more to report the next newsletter and I hope to hear from some of you at holiday time. My home phone is: 561-799-7906. Your calls are welcomed.

Blessings and Light!

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## Regional News

**Mountains & Plains Region** by Vice President...Richard James



The Federation of Christian Ministries, Mountain and Planes Region, held its 2015 regional retreat gathering at Lake Williamson Christian Conference Center in Carlinville, Illinois. In attendance were FCM members, several visitors, and our **Chairperson Tom Stricker**.

*Many thanks to our Regional Retreat Committee L-R: Dennis Condon, Peter Strening, David Edwin Ward, and Beth Reece, for their retreat planning efforts that birthed a successful retreat.*

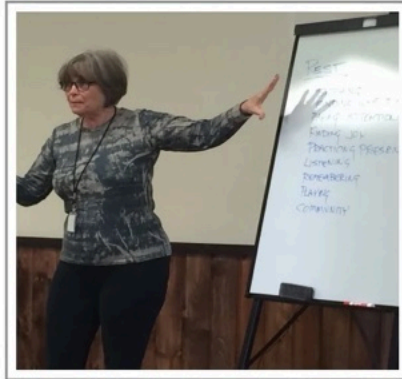
**Rev. Beth Reece** began the retreat by introducing a time of rest and reflection entitled, "This Present Moment." Our time together became a Holy Ground experience as we shared how we make sense of our ministries and life stories. She also provided Life Maps booklets as a reflection resource.



The next day, **Rev. Barbara Zeman RCWP**, presented a talk on "Women's Ordination: Opportunities for God's People." **Barbara** is a priest, chaplain, and spiritual guide for the Dignity Chicago community. During her presentation she suggested that, "the early church struggles between male leadership and female leadership are evident. So, it's no wonder that we have inherited this legacy in our bones. Women have long been co-opted into the hierarchical maze of dogma and doctrine. Women's voices, while they present another way of viewing theology, have been suppressed, silenced and subverted. And, until the twentieth century women, even in first world countries, were not able to access knowledge in a way that was available to the dominant culture."

**Reverend Zeman's** address illustrated that even as women's roles in the Roman Catholic Church are changing, the hierarchy is not bending. She outlined the struggle of women who defy church teaching and become ordained in apostolic succession, even as they disobey an unjust law (Canon 1024) and face excommunication. Barbara's encouragement to those who embrace this struggle is, "We must bring compassion to those in need. And, we must remain open to the Spirit of God breathing in and through each 'earth creature' on their way home."





*Regional Retreat Facilitators included: L-R:  
Beth Reece, Barbara Zeman, and David Edwin Ward.*

**Rev. David Edwin Ward, O.P., M.A.** facilitated a discussion on Creation Eco-Spirituality. He began by sharing that Eco-Spirituality grows out of St. Ignatius Loyola's vision of the Divine Essence as enveloping all of creation, created not as polarities between entities, but created to be one. With this in mind the goal of human efforts ought to be to work for the common good of all of creation. After articulating this theological foundation, **Rev. Ward** discussed five core principles of Eco-Spirituality: permaculture, sustainability, social justice, theology of Eco-Spirituality, and new dimensions of consciousness.



This theological idea and its core principles have led **Rev. Ward** to envision and share a new ministry project where the homeless can build their own homes. He said for example, "In Longmont, Colorado 'the not so dirty dozen' will be building homes for under \$25,000 that have green houses attached as a food source even during winter months. These houses would be super-insulated with geothermal mass for mitigating heating and cooling costs long term, cutting monthly utility costs by 50%.

## Commissioning

During the retreat a ceremony was held to recognize that **Rev. Karen Beck** was recently commissioned for ministry to the Christian Church and endorsed for institutional chaplaincy.

**Rev. Beck** is a chaplain at CHRISTUS St. Michael Hospital in Texarkana, Texas, a part of the CHRISTUS Healthcare system.

Karen said, "I am so pleased to be identified with FCM and to advance the goals and values of FCM through my ministry to others. As a chaplain who works within a hospital setting, I routinely meet people who are hurting. The specific nature of the pain varies, but the need to be helped by others does not. As a chaplain I do not provide physical relief. However, what I can do is make sure that the patient feels heard, understood, and respected. I know that not every patient will experience physical healing, but what I hope every patient does experience is compassionate care when they are hurting."



*L-R: Rev. Christy Howard-Steele Specialized Ministries Chair, Newly Commissioned and Endorsed Chaplain Rev. Karen Beck, and Rev. Richard James, FCM Regional V.P.*





L-R: Rev. Richard James, FCM Regional V.P., Newly-Commissioned and Endorsed Chaplain Rev. Tina Ward, Rev. Christy Howard-Steele FCM Specialized Ministries Chair, and Rev. Curlee Adams, Host Pastor of St. Paul CME Church.

### Commissioned & Endorsed

In addition, **Rev. Tina Ward** was commissioned for ministry to the Christian Church, and endorsed for institutional chaplaincy. She is currently a contract Chaplain at Rush University Medical Center.

The ceremony was hosted by **Pastor Rev. Curlee Adams** at St. Paul CME Church, in Chicago, Illinois and included testimonies about **Tina's** character and ministry.

**Tina's** remarks highlighted her gratitude to those that have nurtured and evoked her growth as minister. Among those she thanked were her mother, family, co-laborers of the gospel and colleagues, and FCM.



On a final note, **FCM Chairperson Tom Stricker** (right) reminded us that the Circle is searching for local area representatives in hopes of enriching FCM's sense of community.

I would like to encourage those who are interested in hosting a FCM local gathering at their home, or becoming a FCM local area representative, to contact me: [mts\\_plainsvp@FCMmail.org](mailto:mts_plainsvp@FCMmail.org)

In addition, please accept this friendly reminder that it's that time of year again for your membership renewal.





# FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS....**

**SAVE THE DATES**

**AUGUST 5-7, 2016**

**FCM 2016 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**



*With Open Arms*

**Keynote Speaker**

*Saturday, Morning & Afternoon*

**Bishop John Shelby Spong**



**Friday Keynote Speaker  
Maryann Duddy-Burke**

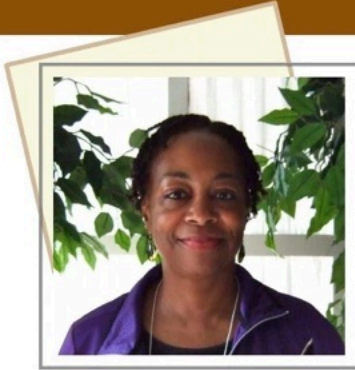
*Executive Director, Dignity USA*



**Sheraton Cleveland Airport Hotel...Cleveland, Ohio**

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## Community: Safe Or Brave Space?

by Christy Howard-Steele...Chair, Specialized Ministries



As I am becoming a clinical pastoral educator, I find myself thinking a lot about how to make group a safe learning environment. I find it more complex than when I am caring for an individual or a family as a chaplain where I may only encounter one world-view, one culture, one faith tradition at a time. In a diverse clinical pastoral education (CPE) group, there can be as many perspectives, cultures, socioeconomic statuses, etc. as there are students. One of my peers made a presentation on safe versus brave spaces based on Arao & Clemens, From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice. The word "safe" means free from risk or harm. One definition of a "safe space" is a place where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, intellectually challenged, unwelcome or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age, or physical or mental ability. It is a place where the rules guard each person's self-respect and dignity and strongly encourage everyone to agree with others.<sup>1</sup>

While it is always my goal as a CPE educator for each person to feel welcome, to be treated with dignity and respect and to be free from harm, I also seek to challenge my students. I want them to be free to disagree and express alternative points of view. This is part of learning. This is part of becoming just as the caterpillar wrestles or struggles to become a butterfly. Strong encouragement to agree and the strong desire to not make anyone uncomfortable can hinder one's ability to be authentic. When I can't disagree, I no longer feel safe or comfortable. Using the word "safe" to describe the type of interpersonal and learning engagement, learning, and relationship desired may be misleading. Safety is often conflated with comfort <sup>2</sup>(p135).

An alternative to the term "safe" space is "brave" space. The word brave recognizes the risk involved in learning. According to Boostrom (1998), "...learning necessarily involves not merely risk, but the pain of giving up a former condition in favour of a new way of seeing things" <sup>3</sup> (p 399). Brave space does not mean that anything goes. Ground rules for conversations that encourage participants to be brave in exploring content that pushes them to the edge of their comfort zones must still be established <sup>4</sup> (p 143). Such rules define where different views are expected, valued and honored and where participants own their intentions and their impact.

One of the most valuable gifts of CPE for me is the learning that occurs from the experiences and views of others that provoke me to examine, discuss, and reflect on my own experiences and views. Exploring areas of conflict or disagreement provides some of my richest learning experiences. I don't always agree but I always appreciate the opportunity to learn something if not about others, then about myself and how what I do impacts others.

I resonate with the idea of a brave space and I have also been in a number of spaces where I did not feel safe to disagree or comfortable enough to be my authentic self. There is a part of feeling safe and comfortable that is internal; that is beyond any external influence or factor much like self-confidence. Most importantly, relationships matter. It is one thing to be brave around strangers or people with whom I have not established bonds of relationship and it's quite another to be brave among people with whom such relationships exist. While the risk can be higher when I am more invested in the relationship, I also have more confidence and more experience in the ability of the relationship to sustain the challenge which makes it feel safer.

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## Community: Safe Or Brave Space?

by Christy Howard-Steele...Chair, Specialized Ministries

*Continued...*

In community our relationships begin with sharing something in common: experiences, values, goals, ideology, beliefs, etc. If we stop at the commonality, we miss the opportunity to be enriched by deeper and more intimate relationships. Howard Thurman states "Community cannot for long feed on itself; it can only flourish with the coming of others from beyond, our unknown and undiscovered brothers and sisters."

I think of community as a place of love, care, and support; a place where I can be my authentic imperfect self. In community I expect to be nurtured to grow toward becoming my best self. I also expect community to be a place where I am held accountable; a place where I can make and admit a mistake; a place where I might unintentionally say or do something hurtful or harmful; a place where in the throes of anger or my own hurt, I might say or do something I regret. Community is a place where my mistakes and my hurtful and harmful actions are lovingly and truthfully pointed out to me; a place where I can be scare-fronted.

Community is also a place where I can repent; where I can be forgiven and not necessarily in that order; a place where my relationships can be reconciled. Community is a place where I can risk being myself, risk disagreeing and still belong. What's your view? Community: safe or brave space?

**Only when we have the courage to cross the street  
and look in one another's eyes  
can we see there that we are children of the same God  
and members of the same human family.**

**Henri Nouwen**

<sup>1</sup> "Glossary". Advocates for Youth. Retrieved 24 March 2012

<sup>2</sup> Aro, Brian and Clemens, Kristi, "From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice", The Art of Effective Facilitation, 2013, Stylus Publishing, LLC.; pp 135-150

<sup>3</sup> Boosrtom, R, "Safe Spaces": Reflections on an educational metaphor, Journal of Curriculum Studies, 20(4),1998, 397-408

<sup>4</sup> Aro,

<sup>5</sup> Care-front is a term used by David Augsburger in his book, Caring Enough to Confront: How to Understand and Express Your Deepest Feelings Toward Others. It unifies concern for relationship with concerns for goals (my goals, your goals, our goals).



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## Peace and Justice



Chairperson....Carolyn Horvath

The following article submitted by Peace and Justice Committee Member.....  
James M. Barrens, FCM Minister, St. Petersburg, FL

### Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council Document

## Nostra Aetate

This October 28 marks the anniversary of an event that has been called "one of the great civil rights accomplishments of the 20th century."

On October 28, 1965, the Second Vatican Council's proclamation entitled "*Nostra Aetate*," which translates loosely from the Latin into English as "In Our Time," was released. The subtitle of *Nostra Aetate* is "*The Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions*."

It can be safely said that in the last fifty years, the world has witnessed the greatest improvements in Catholic-Jewish relations since the death of Jesus of Nazareth. There have been more positive encounters between Catholics and Jews over the past 50 years than there were in the preceding 2000 years.

The radical changes that have taken place in this generation can only be understood within the context of the 2000 years that preceded it. Throughout the centuries, Jews throughout the world have been persecuted. Often, the Roman Catholic Church played both active and passive roles in that persecution. From the earliest teachings of the Church Fathers, to the Crusades, the Inquisitions, and, ultimately, the Shoah (Holocaust), the Church often actively participated in these atrocities or stood by as they were committed, sometimes in the name of the Church.

While there are, throughout history, many examples of Catholics and other Christians risking their own lives to combat the oppression and save Jewish people, the totality of the historic record is unmistakably awful.

In the second half of the 20th century, however, in the aftermath of the Second World War and the founding of the State of Israel, in the reflected glow of freedom movements in India, Africa, and Asia, and in the midst of the American Civil Rights struggle, things began to change. Pope John XXIII called the Church together for the Second Vatican Council, and *Nostra Aetate* came to be, signaling a new beginning.

Susannah Heschel, Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College and the daughter of the great Polish-American rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, recently said: "*Nostra Aetate is an extraordinary document. It is one of the great documents of world history. It changes the course of Western history.*"

*Rabbi A. James Rudin of the American Jewish Committee said: "Like the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, and the U.S. Constitution, Nostra Aetate broke new ground and provided the mandate for constructive change."*

*Nostra Aetate* has five major, though brief, sections:

1. Introduction: Describes the unity of all people and how we all, ultimately, return to God.
2. Addresses Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions. This section declares the Church's willingness to accept the truths contained in other religions.
3. Addresses Islam and praises Muslims, pointing out the similarities between Islam and Catholicism.
4. Addresses Jews and Judaism, speaking of the bond that ties Christians to Jews. Declares that the charge of deicide is false. Deplores anti-Semitism in all its forms.
5. Conclusion: States that all men are created in God's image and, according to Christian beliefs, it is sinful to discriminate against other religions.

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# Nostra Aetate

by James M. Barrens, FCM Minister, St. Petersburg,

continued...

It was in Section Four that the Church officially changed two thousand years of Church doctrine and practice regarding the Jewish people.

Section Four of Nostra Aetate declared the following:

1. That the ancient charge that the Jews killed Christ was false.
2. That anti-Semitism, in all its forms, was wrong and should be condemned.
3. That an ancient bond exists between the Church and the Jewish people.
4. That God's holy covenant with the Jewish people has never been revoked.
5. That Jews should not be proselytized.
6. That biblical interpretations and teachings in religious schools should be "in accord with the truth of the Gospel message or the spirit of Christ."
7. That Catholics should engage in "biblical and theological enquiry and ... friendly discussions" with the Jewish people.

Since 1965, extraordinary, some might say miraculous, events have taken place. Catholic teaching and textbooks in religious schools and seminaries have been changed. Liturgies, including the Good Friday liturgy, have been improved. Passion Plays have been revised or eliminated. Over thirty centers of Christian-Jewish learning have been established in the United States and Canada alone, and many more throughout the world. Official dialogues have been established between almost all denominations and the Jewish people. Churches and synagogues engage in pulpit exchanges and shared adult education. The list goes on and on.

But most importantly, Jews and Christians all over the world have been encountering one another, engaging in dialogue, sharing their passion for social justice, and engaging in scripture study. And, most importantly, we are learning about one another and the sacred bonds that we all share, made in the image of God. In the end, this will be the greatest contribution of Nostra Aetate.

*"Nostra Aetate (In Our Time) marks the end of one long era in the history of Catholic-Jewish relations and the hopeful beginning of a new age of positive dialogue between our two ancient communities."*

*Eugene J. Fisher, former Associate Director, Secretariat for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005*

James M. Barrens, FCM Minister, has written "In Our Time- Nostra Aetate- How Catholics and Jews Built a New Relationship", published by Mr. Media Books. A copy is available free of charge for any FCM member who requests it. Requests can be sent to [JamesBarrens@TheJusticeFactory.org](mailto:JamesBarrens@TheJusticeFactory.org). Phone: 727-867-3079



# Federation of Christian Ministries

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## New Models of Ministry

by Virginia Lynch Graf, D.Min, with Robert A. Graf, D.Min and Rosanna Graf



### Introduction

The Greek work diakonia is usually translated as service. Ministerial service is of course, more than things we do; it is the threshold we cross to connect to the divine, the universe, to humanity. Through ministry we stretch our gifts of wonder, and imagination, intelligence and generosity. In the New Testament sweeping statements about service are reminders that ministry is acting with Jesus to give glory to God and build up one another: Col. 3:17- "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God for what you've been given." Col. 3:22, "Whatever you do, do from the heart."

How can we keep growing spiritually and respond to the call of our baptism? Each generation has challenges and needs, and often responds with new modes of ministry. Our current age has a set of challenges that call for new thinking and very particular responses. What can we do to save and redirect our current path away from human destruction? Some thinkers suggest that the three major religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – can perform a twofold ministry of embracing each other and bringing about peace while immersing themselves in the process of slowing down and reversing climate change. Working together on this common goal is bigger than any particular doctrine. It moves religious believers away from ideology and separateness toward the biggest goal of all religious groups – union with the divine and with the family of God.

### The Ministry of Jesus

For Christians, no better example for achieving this goal is found than in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus' main lesson was to help others live as God's compassion taking root in them. This he referenced as the Reign of God. Often missed by later followers, Jesus stood up to injustice whether it originated in the mandates of the Roman Law, or in the Jewish interpretation of the Torah. The governing figures of the Empire and the Jewish Temple perceived Jesus and his ministry a challenge that undermined their authority.

Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we barely understand the challenge. Over 2,000 years of teachings about Jesus' divinity and humanity, he has become a figure who worked miracles, loved children, befriended everyone, and raised his voice only once in the Temple. In actuality, the conflict arose in the way Jesus lived his belief in the Reign of God. He welcomed men and women of all stations and ethnicity to eat together, behavior that was not acceptable in his culture nor in the Temple. Jesus washed feet, healed those in need regardless of time, day, or season, respected the poor and the downtrodden – all actions which could lead to the breakdown of power systems of control, also hardly acceptable. He told stories idealizing peace and respecting nature – not in harmony with a conquering nation bent on destroying lands and people of other nations. Jesus lifted up children giving them importance in a society which gave them no status, especially if they were girls, and often abandoned them as a burden.

Jesus chose women to be his disciples, encouraged others to do whatever they could for each other, and accepted whatever was offered to him, food or shelter as recompense for his service. He led prayer and prayed alone in the garden. These actions displaced the need for a wealthy all-male priesthood and risked the family structure of male dominance.

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## ***New Models of Ministry*** by Virginia Lynch Graf, D.Min, with Robert A. Graf, D.Min and Rosanna Graf

Continued...2

### **The Meaning of Ministry Evolves**

Sadly, Jesus' model of ministry only lasted for about the first half-century. It didn't take long for many early Christian followers and writers to find sweet spots for accommodating the Romans and Jewish leaders and become accepted as a new group in society. These accommodations slowly but surely changed Christianity and the "Way of Jesus."

All was not lost, however, for the tensions between the followers of Jesus and between religious fervor and society often sparked new ideas, and ministries. It is impossible to highlight all these new thinkers and ideas for new ministries. Taking large time leaps, mention is made of some who kept the ideas of Jesus alive and birthed new ministries: the faithful women at the Cross and Mary Magdalene, witnesses to the Resurrection, House Church Leaders, Stephen, Paul, Early Martyrs, Desert Mothers and Fathers, Patrick, Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, the Beguines, Francis and Claire of Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, Martin Luther, Mother Seton, Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal, Teilhard de Chardin, Edith Stein, Albert Schweitzer, Father Kolbe, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, Oscar Romero, Matthew Fox, Mother Teresa, FCM, Married Priests Now!, Women's Ordination Conference and RCWP.

In each era, down to our own, new ministries form and embrace the sacred and spiritual through example, education, and openness. Whatever the need, ministers of all stripes look for effective ways to bring to the forefront issues of justice, hunger, homelessness, health, death and dignity, physical and psychological abuse, forms of helplessness, ignorance and exclusion, war and peace, unbridled power over others, unjust penal systems, human trafficking, protection of the earth, poisoning or wasting natural resources, the gifts of science and spirituality.

### **New Ministries Surface as one Becomes More Grounded**

To become grounded is another way of believing in yourself and your gifts. Becoming grounded is a human need that helps us achieve our goals. It is not self-centered because in its pursuit, acknowledgement is made of our dependence on outside sources. What steps can one take to become a grounded minister? Choose time for reflection. What makes you marvel? Is it being out and enjoying nature? Is it new discoveries in the universe? Is it a loving relationship between yourself and a child? Parent? Spouse? Friend? Student? What makes you laugh? Find your source of laughter and make it part of each day. Value Silence. Silence helps clear thoughts and confusion. It opens up a space for new thoughts. In the presence of others, silence can be effective too. Sometimes holding hands in silence can be restorative to relationships. Choose time for prayer. Setting aside times for prayer is an important threshold to cross. Because of its restorative value, it moves one from feeling duty bound to inner peace and relaxation. Most people think of prayer as praise to a Creator, or as petitions for help. While that can be part of prayer, prayer is also a way to lay bare your inner thoughts and feelings. Prayer is dialogue. It benefits you. It brings you face to face with divine interconnections with the world. Unfortunately, many think of prayer as duty. Collect and Value the Wisdom of Others. Group discussions can lead to new insights, as well as pinpoint shortcomings in popular thought and culture. The Book of Proverbs is a book of practical wisdom collected from community and personal experiences. It can make you laugh, cry, and inspire you.

Read, Write, Sing Psalms. Recognized psalms are emotional verse. They express feelings of love, praise, hate, fear, desire, need for help, and even revenge. You may like some psalms, and dislike others. Psalms put you in touch with real people with real issues. They may help you express yourself, and comfort you during times of stress. Join or form a prayer group. Attend church services. Consult with others. Speak and pray regularly with a prayer partner. Seek out a spiritual director. Most of these ideas are traditional methods of grounding oneself, and still valid.

Center yourself on one particular thought or area of interest and allow yourself to become totally immersed in it for a set time. For some people, to choose a certain physical posture helps them to become centered. Discover what is pleasant or joyful in work. Much of each day is spent working. This may or may not be for a salary. Is there a healthy balance of joy and tolerance? If tolerance overrides the day, perhaps you need a change in the work you do. If you can't change jobs, find something you enjoy and make it part of your life: swimming, meeting up with a friend, hiking, painting, writing, tinkering, etc. Reading moves you into new realms. Libraries and bookstores are places of enjoyment.

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## New Models of Ministry

by Virginia Lynch Graf, D.Min, with Robert A. Graf, D.Min and Rosanna Graf

Continued ...3

### The Need for Ministry Amid Changes in Traditional Religion

Today, many people have walked away from the institutional church, regardless of the denomination. Many persons claim that traditional churches are cold icons of the past, irrelevant to modern life, and even demeaning. A family member, friend or minister may choose to deny any truth in these statements, or try to listen and be of help to the persons who have walked away. Some ideas that follow may be helpful to yourself and others.

#### 1. Update Your Theology

Matthew Fox's book Original Blessings advises us to re-examine the way we think of Creation. The way we perceive our beginnings sets the stage for how we relate to God, to the Universe, to each other. For Christians and Jews, Genesis 1: 1 through 2:3 is "The first Creation Story." It emphasizes co-creation, a blessed relationship between God and humans. The second creation story, Genesis 2: 4 through chapter 4, emphasizes the fallen nature of humans, a relationship in need of redemption. Which do we emphasize in our spiritual relations, being fallen people prone to sin and evil, or recognizing our divinely given blessings?

2. Re-examine the way we think of Jesus. Over the centuries, emphasis has primarily been placed on Jesus as Redeemer, he who died for our sins. This development harkens back to a number of historic factors: the reluctance for Jews to believe in a messiah who died a criminal's death; attempts to explain why Christians sin after baptism, a serious gap between the thoughts and philosophies of educated people, (e.g. 4% of the Roman Empire,) and illiterate masses; ignorance about science / health related issues, literal teaching of the bible, mass conversions through armed victories, periodic persecutions and martyrdom, class distinctions, wealth and power, lack of educated clergy.

Early Christianity did not place such emphasis on the suffering Christ, but rather on the resurrected Christ. This hope filled philosophy and spirituality helped them form a new kind of community. Today archaeology, social/cultural sciences and biblical studies have become more sophisticated revealing once again the Jesus of history. Jesus' "Way" invited people to live as compassionate presence in the same way that God lives among us. Results of some of the best research in these areas of study are available to us through gifted writers such as Marcus Borg, Dominic Crossan, Matthew Fox, Elizabeth Johnson, Wayne Meeks and Raymond Brown.

3. Learn Christian History. Religious History is primarily based on patriarchal systems. It has contributed to the overall concept that men are natural leaders in the home, marketplace and religious institutions. It is responsible for the divide, even today between men and women: salaries, opportunities, church leadership, and spousal relationships..

Although Jesus was raised in a patriarchal society, he rejected the conventions of his day. He welcomed all men and women even sharing meals regardless of their status, poor and rich, Jew and Gentile, slave and free. For the first half-century of its existence Christianity developed in this fashion. Slowly, it reverted back to the norms of Roman society: separating people, even at meals, and restoring the concept of male superiority. Learning Christian History may move us to appreciate and utilize the talents of women and men and enable us to move forward in society, and in religious institutions. It may help prevent repeating the mistakes of yesteryear.

#### Helpful Media and Spirituality

1. Initiate Spirituality Discussions via Skype or Google Hangout.
2. Initiate Spiritual Book talks via Skype or Google Hangout.
3. View Ted Talks on Spiritual Topics.
4. Prayer Chain via E-mail with your house church, friend group, FCM etc.
5. E-mail monthly scripture passages, or uplifting/thought provoking quotes, poems.
6. Share a Google document <https://www.google.com/docs/about/> on a topic and encourage others to contribute
7. Check out [www.Meetup.com](http://www.Meetup.com) to discover spiritual meetings/discussion groups or to invite others to your group activities.
8. Create and share a spiritual playlist on Spotify.
9. Books on CD or for your iPod, Kindle, Nook etc. [www.LibriVox.org](http://www.LibriVox.org) hosts many free audio books.
10. Subscribe to Daily Audio Bible Podcasts by Brian Hardin on iTunes





# Federation of Christian Ministries

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## My Moral Injury

by Paul Joseph Schleitwiler



At the Mountains and Plains regional meeting of the Federation of Christian Ministries this October the discussion at one point was of "moral injury." The concept of Moral Injury was introduced by Jonathan Shay. It has been defined as "perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations".

I may push some buttons on the way to explaining the title, but I hope you will follow me to the conclusion.

My family were not slavers nor have I ever owned slaves. My grandfather taught me that everyone was made unique by God and it was necessary to listen to and respect each one. My grandmother worked with Native Americans and taught me their principles of care for each other and the community. She taught me that there was good and bad in everyone and, even if it took extra effort with some, it was worth looking for the good. I played with Native Americans, Hispanics and Black Americans. I knew them as individuals, not some collective other. I joined the Franciscan order because their charism embodied what I had learned as a child. After I left the order, I met and married a Japanese woman and we have biracial children. In my second marriage, Mary and I have worked as part of the justice and peace ministry in FCM, the St. Giles Family Mass community, Call to Action and other organizations.

And in the process of that work I have become aware of my privilege, that is the manner in which what I have which is denied to others.

Although I could play with my friends wherever I wanted to, they could not always play with me where I lived. On Sunday, they couldn't sit in my pew. I could choose to walk away from priesthood; women are denied ordination in the Roman Catholic Church. I have benefited from an education many can't afford. I could change careers by my choice. I have benefited from the work of others who weren't paid a living wage, people living paycheck to paycheck who couldn't leave an abusive job. Homeless and hungry I have passed by because I was too busy to attend to their needs.

This and more constitute my moral injury. The first part of healing is identifying what is wrong. Then you have to find a way to correct it.

Fasting doesn't put food in the mouths of the starving. Giving them food I would have eaten doesn't allow them choice or preference. Healing my moral injury requires more than giving up my privileges.

I have to work for such causes as a living wage and jobs for the unemployed and underemployed. For the ordination of women in the RC church. For the right to marry whom you choose. For more than mere civil rights. I have to work for the lifting up and dignity of each person, until there are no more privileges, only freedom, justice and charity for everyone.

Perhaps my grandmother's teaching that everyone was both good and bad has kept me from being debilitated and paralyzed by my moral injury. Others might see their own behavior in more black and white terms or consider their "crimes" more heinous. But healing is possible even though the past cannot be undone. This is my moral injury and what I see I must do about it.

(Editor's note: Thanks to Paul, a member of the Mountains and Plains Region, for this reflection.)

# Federation of Christian Ministries

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## FCM Communications

by Antoinette Marold ....Email: communication@FCMmail.org



### FCM Member Ministries Listed on the FCM Website

#### Ministry Listing

It's time to renew your FCM membership for 2016...that means it is also time to add or renew your Ministry Listing on the FCM Website!

One of the benefits of your FCM membership is to have a listing of the ministry services that you offer to the public. **Please Note:** You must request this listing and it must be renewed each year when you renew your membership.

Instructions for a Ministry Listing on the FCM website are under the Find a Minister dropdown.

Login to the Members area of the FCM website. Click on Ministry Listing and complete the form.

You can request a listing under three (3) categories. If you are requesting a listing under Weddings, you must be commissioned by FCM.

New and renewed listings are posted February 2016 and will remain for the 2016 calendar year.



# Federation of Christian Ministries

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# Federation of Christian Ministries

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## FCM at WOW

FCM Members Present at Women's Ordination Conferenc



Editor's note: Thanks to **Paul Stubenbort** of the Northeast Region for sending along information and photographs



FCM was present at the WOW Conference (Women's Ordination Worldwide) September 18-20 in Philadelphia. Besides our usual banner depicting our ministries, we added a new poster for the occasion. The answer to the question "So now what?" is, of course...FCM!

The exhibit was tended by **Joe Ruane** and **Paul Stubenbort**, as well as **Carol Johnson**, a Roman Catholic Womanpriest and Northeast Region FCM member.

Joe was also involved in an exhibit by **Global Ministries University**, which many of our members attend for valuable courses to strengthen their ministry.

The conference drew some 500 participants, many of whom were FCM members. Many who stopped by our exhibit were pleasantly surprised by what FCM is and what it offers its members. That's why our FCM exhibit is valuable...it broadens our outreach to those who have a need for what we offer.





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### FCM CERTIFICATES

These lovely certificates are available from the FCM Central Office. Please specify your choice: Baptism, Marriage, Holy Union, and the number of certificates you need. Certificates are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Each certificate is printed on certificate weight paper in blue ink; they carry the FCM logo and seal.

### FCM Website

[www.federationofchristianministries.org](http://www.federationofchristianministries.org)



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### GLOBAL MINISTRIES UNIVERSITY

GMU offers degree completion programs and individual courses online. FCM members are eligible for a 5% discount on degree programs. **For more information, visit the web site:** [www.globalministriesuniversity.org](http://www.globalministriesuniversity.org)  
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