

France: New UB Churches

Jeff Bleijerveld
Director of UB Global



United Brethren churches in Paris you say? *Est-ce possible?*

Two Haitian churches south of Paris are in the process of joining the United Brethren in Christ. The connection was made through our national leader in Haiti, Rev. Oliam Richard. He and his family lived in France from 1983–2003.

When I visited France in December, Pastor Richard introduced me to these churches.

First, we visited L'Eglise de Dieu Primitif, located in Alfortville. Pastor Richard planted this church during the 1980s. The congregation now meets in a rented building that seats about 200 people. About half of the attendees are children and teens.

They don't currently have a pastor. Instead, a very good team of deacons, both men and women, lead worship, preach, and care for the congregation. While I was there, six young adults were baptized.

The second church, Communante Evangelique de Sion, is located in the neighboring town of Cretiel. Their pastor is Cesaire "Luc" Kerns, a Haitian pastor and spiritual son of Pastor Richard's. Pastor Luc came to France in 1988 and was baptized, mentored, and married by Pastor Richard.

The church began in 2000, and the 100 members meet in a rented storefront. They recently hired a white French woman to be their youth and children's pastor. They did this to more readily reach out and integrate with the local French culture and population.

Both congregations are eager to meet United Brethren from around the world. So if you are planning a trip to the Paris area, contact UB Global and we will put you in touch with their leaders.

China: Prayer Needed for House Churches

The Christian Church in China has been in a difficult new season over the last year. There has been a concerted effort by the Chinese government to intimidate house churches, expel missionaries, and slow Christian growth. As a result:

- Several high-profile house churches in major cities were shuttered and some leaders arrested.
- Hundreds of churches in the "most Christian" province of Henan were demolished, ransacked, or intimidated.
- Hundreds of missionaries of large mission organizations were forced to leave.

Given the size of the Church in China, this effort has not directly impacted the majority of Christians. However, local and foreign Christians in China are now operating with much more caution.

Incredibly, Christians in China rejoice in this season of trial and persecution! They see this as a period of refinement and strengthening for the Chinese church—a chance for the new generation of Christians who didn't

experience the persecution of the 1950-70s to mature in their love and commitment to their Savior. Let us pray for the strengthening of our fellow Christians in China.

Thailand: Vision and Prayer Trip

Frank Y, Associate Director



During January, I was privileged to lead a fantastic team of 13 on a vision trip to Chiang Rai. This group represented two countries (the US and Canada), three states, and eight churches.

So what exactly is a vision trip? For us, it was a chance to learn about the great need for the Gospel among the ethnic Thai people, see what God has been doing there, and understand how we can join him going forward.

We also knew part of our role on this trip was to pray for the work and the workers, and encourage the UB missionary team. God answered this in ways we hadn't anticipated. Within a week, missionaries Brian and Rachel Glunt lost grandmothers. Our team arrived amidst this period of mourning, and we were heartbroken along with them.

The Thailand short-term team and missionaries.



Thai Community Center

Through your generosity, we raised \$63,451 in 2018 to cover the remaining expenses to complete the Thailand Community Center. Thank you!

The center is slated to be finished this summer. It is well positioned on a busy road in a middle-class ethnic Thai neighborhood. When the center opens, we will offer a variety of classes to bless the community and build relationships that will hopefully lead to new disciples.

The \$3,450 raised beyond our goal of \$60,000 will be the seed money to help with future necessary interior purchases such as furniture, paint, and equipment.



We knew it was no accident the Lord orchestrated for us to arrive when we did. We changed the schedule one afternoon, and held a memorial service with our missionary staff. It was a time of tears, memories, and even laughter. It was also the start of a healing process. We were privileged to walk alongside our missionaries during their season of loss.

Everyone came away from this trip challenged personally and excited to help mobilize for missions and the Thailand effort. Several members are now corresponding with the missionaries to continue to learn about and encourage them.

After the community center is up and running, UB Global will send several short-term teams a year to lead classes and outreach events. Be on the lookout for details!

Help Wanted in Thailand

We are looking for a someone, or a family, to join the Thailand team as Short-Term Team Coordinator. Role: take care of the teams which come to Thailand during the year. Contact frank@ub.org if interested.

Nicaragua: Civil Unrest

Jeff Bleijerveld

Although many news sources no longer cover the civil unrest that began in April 2018, Nicaragua remains in the midst of a national crisis.

According to the US State Department, armed and violent uniformed police or civilians in plain clothes acting as police ("para-police") are targeting anyone thought to oppose the rule of President Daniel Ortega. These groups often cover their faces, sometimes operate in groups numbering in the hundreds, and use unmarked vehicles.

Rallies and demonstrations occur daily around the country. Government forces, uniformed police, and para-police have attacked peaceful demonstrators leading to significant numbers of deaths and injuries. Looting, vandalism, and arson accompany unrest.

While many of the roadblocks, demonstrations, and lootings have decreased in Managua and other major cities, they may still appear and limit availability of food and fuel.

Our United Brethren have remained neutral politically, while praying fervently for their country. With the generous support that many provided, UB Global has sent funds for relief supplies, the repair of one church building hit by homemade mortars, and sufficient funding to guard and protect the conference buildings (including the new 40-bed conference center in La Ceiba).

When the situation changes, we will be happy to resume sending teams to partner with our Nicaraguan churches. If you would like to help provide relief, send your gift to UB Global marked "Nicaragua Relief."

South Africa: HU Team

In May, Arthur Wilson, Dean of Spiritual Life and campus pastor at Huntington University, approached UB Global about the possibility of a trip to Africa with students. We thought of Impact Africa right away, which has a solid program for short-term teams. UB Global missionary Nichie Parish Stonall serves with Impact Africa in Johannesburg.

The group of 18 traveled during Huntington's J-term. Christia Whitacre, whose

husband Kevin is pastor of Anchor UB church (Fort Wayne, Ind.), came as one of two chaperones.

And, congratulations to Nichie and Chris Stonall, who were married in South Africa back in July and were able to celebrate with US family and friends in December!

Sierra Leone: Progress at Mattru Hospital

Michelle Harris, Associate Director of UB Global



The 2nd Annual Mattru staff Christmas Party, funded by ex-missionaries and friends of the hospital, included music, dancing, presentations by each department, and delicious food. A soccer match between staff at the Centennial Secondary School and the hospital took place in the afternoon. The hospital won 2-1!

A week later came the 2nd Annual Christmas party for children with disabilities and their families. This program included telling the Christmas story, activities, and a delicious meal for all 70 attendees.

In late January, Dr. Ron Baker led a medical and dental team of ten persons to Mattru Hospital. The two dentists averaged 20 patients a day. During the team's last day, Joe French, who has faithfully served as a surgical technician at the hospital for over 50 years, was honored at his retirement party. Mr. French was a help to Ron Baker when he and Jane arrived in the early 1970s.

Doctors Needed at Mattru

We need more medical doctors at the 65-bed Mattru Hospital in Sierra Leone. If you or someone you know might be interested, contact Michelle Harris at michelle@ub.org. Persons could start as early as June 2019.



Dr. Jon Yoder and the rest of the Mattru Hospital soccer team.

Thanks to a gift from the Huntington Rotary, meters were purchased to complete the solar project. The meters will allow customers to prepay for their electricity and help the solar business track usage.

India: DeltaWest

We're very pleased with the progress being made since the launch of a new service project called DeltaWest. This initiative will allow us to engage the community and achieve our ministry goals. Already, we have:

- Provided shoes in communities where children have no footwear.
- Distributed clothes to children in a village of rag-pickers.
- Hired nursing staff to serve a growing list of clients requiring in-home nursing care.

Thailand: Missionary Embedded at a University

Paula Fung, an "embedded" member of our UB Global staff in Thailand, is enrolled in undergraduate classes at a local university.

Why would someone who already holds undergraduate and graduate degrees return to college as a freshman? Paula shares why in her most recent prayer letter.

"God has opened a door for me to reach the college students here. I have been living on campus with my three roommates since September. I love these girls, have shared the Gospel, and we enjoy living with each other.

"This past month was the most encouraging month since I came here. This Christmas, my roommate made the decision to follow Jesus. I never thought it could be that fast, praise the Lord. She grew up in a Buddhist family, surrounded by Muslims, and had never met a Christian before.

"During the past semester, we have spent a lot of time together, and she went to church with me several times. At church, she met young Thai Christians her age, listened to their testimonies, and deeply understood the Gospel from the sermons of the Thai pastor. Please pray that we can talk more about faith and start a Bible study this semester."



Paula Fung



Lebanon: A Place for Future UB Ministry

Youth for Christ Lebanon (YFCL) was established in 1963, and for decades has been active on school campuses to engage youth in discipleship and outreach. In 2012, YFCL expanded its outreach to include Syrian refugee youth. In 2018, they opened Manara Youth Center, a community center in Beirut for at-risk youth. The ultimate goal with everything YFCL does is to see young people reconciled to God and to each other.

When persons from UB Global visited with YFC Lebanon in April 2018, they participated in these ministries.

School Ministry

Staff work with youth in 12 private Christian schools in Beirut and the Bekaa Valley. Many people consider the public schools deficient, so Muslim and nominal Christian families often send their children to Christian schools. There, YFCL staff interact with the students, hold weekly chapel talks, and run after-school clubs and other ministries. These activities include presenting the Gospel. Many Muslim and nominal Christian youth make decisions to follow Christ and join a discipleship program.

In addition, YFCL runs summer outreach camps and large outreach events.

Bekaa Refugee Ministry

Since the Syrian war broke out in 2011, Lebanon has received an estimated 1.5 million Syrians. Large portions of this Sunni Muslim population live in tent communities in the Bekaa Valley (East Lebanon), and their youth often lack opportunities to attend school or gain decent employment. They are susceptible to radicalization and other harmful activities.

YFCL currently has two fulltime staff living in the Bekaa and are collaborating with a South Korean mission to reach the youth in these tent communities. They run a soc-

cer ministry with the boys, and teach sewing and other crafts to the girls. The girls are starting to make things that they can sell to help support their families.

In addition, the staff make weekly visits to tents of families of the youth they minister to on a daily basis. This very important aspect of YFCL's mission slowly but surely builds relationships and trust with Muslim families, meets emotional and spiritual needs of people living in trying circumstances, and opens doors to talk about the love of God.

Youth Leader Training

This aspect of YFCL's ministry aligns with its long-term vision of ensuring that every young person in the Middle East has a chance to hear the Gospel and make an informed decision about following Christ.

YFCL believes firmly in the importance of the local church, and partners with numerous churches in Lebanon and the wider region to train their youth leaders to reach other youth in their communities.

Manara "Lighthouse" Youth Center

Manara Youth Center is located in a rough Beirut neighborhood called Bourj Hammoud. This district is densely populated by various people groups that have historically hated each other (Armenian Christians, Lebanese Shia Muslims, Syrian and Kurdish Sunni Muslims, Lebanese Christians, and other Asian and African guest workers). They share two things in common: poverty, and youth who are growing up in a tense, conflictive environment with little hope for the future.

YFCL's main mission is to see young people reconciled to God and to each other, particularly Lebanese and Syrian youth who have inherited their hatred of "the other" from previous generations.

To do this, YFCL seeks to respond to young people's holistic needs. Thus, they offer non-formal education, after-school tutoring, safe recreation, psycho-social support, a reconciliation program, and spiritual programs. The community sees the positive impact the center has on their youth.

The UB Future in Lebanon

UB Global is looking to build a long-term presence and ministry in Lebanon. Eventually, that will include a team of missionaries. If you are interested in participating, please contact UBGlobal.

YFCL's executive director, Maher Al Hajj, will attend this summer's US National Conference. You will be hearing much more about him and his work in Lebanon.

Haiti: Leadership Changes

Matt Robertshaw, Mission Chair, Canada

A small team from Canada met with the Haitian United Brethren pastors in Port-au-Prince for a day of discussions, fellowship, and prayer. Bishop Brian Magnus began by presenting the history of the United Brethren Church. For many, this was the first time they had heard the rich history of our denomination. They were fascinated to learn the details of the momentous meeting of William Otterbein and Martin Boehm, and intrigued to hear of important people and events like the Wright Brothers and the abolitionist movement in the United States.

During their time, they also discussed becoming a national conference. Bishop Magnus provided a template and explained the need to become self-sufficient, develop formal administrative structures, and elect a national leader.

A chief concern was forfeiting the much-needed support of the North American churches. However, they were assured that although Canada and the United States would no longer pay the salaries of their leadership, they would continue their partnership on a project-by-project basis.

In addition, Christian Horizons' child sponsorship will continue, as will the sending of medical, construction, and ministry teams. The Haiti Executive Council was tasked with completing these steps and pre-



Haitian leaders and friends. Rev. Oliam Richard is seated on the far left. In the middle is Brian Magnus, Bishop of the UB Church in Canada. Matt Robertshaw is in back, third from the left.

paring for elections at their National Convention in August 2019.

Jamaica: Regent College of the Caribbean

David Kline, associate director

Harold and MaryAnn Hancock and Patti Kuntz have been hosting work teams from UB churches on the campus of RCC. Their focus has been building a new dining hall.



RCC will use the building itself, and also rent it to the community for large occasions, thereby providing income for the college.

Currently, teams and local contractors have been finishing walls and ceilings, readying the largest room for a steel roof system. King Street UB (Chambersburg, Pa.) raised funds to have the roof fabricated and installed. Salem UB (Chambersburg, Pa.) and Heart O' the Lakes (Brooklyn, Mich.) have sent teams to pour concrete floors and ceilings in the kitchen areas.

If you are interested in donating to the project, we are still about \$24,860 short of this phase of the project. If you are interested in sending a work team, please contact David Kline at david@ub.org.

Olingers: New Endorsed Missionaries

Jim and Heidi Olinger are members of the Hillsdale UB church in Hillsdale, Mich. Jim recently became president of the Nicaragua Christian Education Foundation (NiCE), based in Highland, Ill. The foundation serves churches and Christian schools through student sponsorships, meal packing projects, and short-term mission teams. Their goal is to come alongside and equip local believers to reach their country for Christ.

Jim will oversee all operations of the foundation in the US and Nicaragua. He brings 22 years of pastoral experience and nine years



L-r: Grace, Jim, and Heidi Olinger.

of cooperation with the foundation.

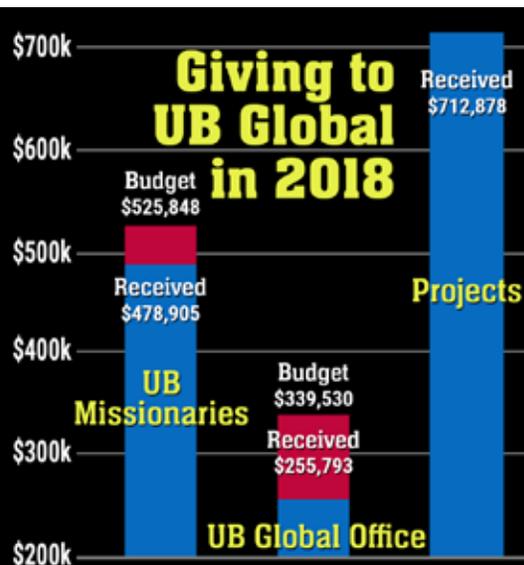
Jim and Heidi have been married for 23 years, and will be experiencing an empty nest this fall as Grace enters her freshman year at Huntington University.

Upcoming Events

April 6, 2019. IGNITE mission conference at Bethel Temple of Praise, Yonkers, N. Y.

October 12, 2019. IGNITE at Jerusalem Chapel, Churchville, Va.

July 17-20, 2019. US National Conference at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. The Friday evening service will feature Maher El Hajj (Director of Youth for Christ – Lebanon) and Dave Datema (Frontier Ventures).



Top Giving Churches per Attendee

- \$270 Bethany House of the Lord (Cumberland, Md.)
- \$173 Kilburn Avenue (Rockford, Ohio)
- \$146 Mount Carmel (Mt. Solon, Va.)

Top Giving Churches (Total Giving)

- \$88,394 Emmanuel (Fort Wayne, Ind.)
- \$38,671 King Street (Chambersburg, Pa.)
- \$24,268 College Park (Huntington, Ind.)



Contact UB Global toll-free at:

1-888-622-3019

Jeff Blejerveld: jeff@ub.org

Jana Gass: jana@ub.org

Michelle Harris: michelle@ub.org

David Kline: david@ub.org

Frank Y: frank@ub.org

UBGlobal.org