

# Diaspora

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## EVENTS

- > The next Circle of Directors meeting will be held Sept 7-9 in St. Louis, MO
- > Check out the upcoming regional events listed in the **Regional News**.

To list your area event,  
e-mail: [dmburke510@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmburke510@sbcglobal.net)

## Interfaith Ministry - Hinduism

by Clem De Wall

This article is also posted on [www.insummerland.com](http://www.insummerland.com)

Hinduism, originating over five thousand years ago, predates all other major world religions. Its sacred writings, such as the Vedas, were composed earlier than even the Hebrew Bible. It is the world's third largest religion, after Christianity and Islam.

Our terminology, however, can be misleading. "Hindu" and "Hinduism," which are Persian in origin, were used simply to refer to the natives of India. Also, "religion" is a western concept, whose only usefulness may be to illustrate what the adherents of Hinduism do not do, which is to adhere to western-style religious beliefs and practices.

Hinduism, unlike what we recognize as religion, embraces secular pursuits, such as art, medicine, music, science and engineering. Some describe it as a culture, but it may be more apt to say that it provides the structure for a culture.

Unlike the other great world religions, Hinduism claims no founder or creed. Also unlike other religions, Hinduism embraces a multiplicity of gods. It would be an error, however, to think of this religion as professing polytheism. A better term might be henotheism, which is the worship of one god without denying the existence of others. Some scholars think that the early Hebrews were actually henotheists rather than monotheists. But even this term can be misleading. For many Hindus there is one God, Brahman—the impersonal but ultimate reality, something like a world soul. The countless goddesses and gods (or devas) all represent the various aspects of Brahman, the Supreme God. Each individual can therefore choose a form of Brahman to satisfy one's spiritual needs. We find here the belief that in all

*continued on page 7*

### 2008 Conference

## INCLUSIVE MINISTRY and RENEWAL in a COMPLEX AGE

A joint conference by FCM, CORPUS, WOC, and RCWP

**July 18 – 20, 2008**

**Hyatt Harborside Hotel**  
at Boston Logan International Airport

# Regional News

## NORTHEAST REGION

By Tom and Michaelita Quinn

The most recent area meeting was hosted by **Paul Stubenbort** and wife **Pat** on Sunday, June 10, at their home in PA. Eighteen FCMers and friends from the Northeast met for an afternoon of Paul's now-famous BBQ supplemented by dishes from everyone, lots of sharing, and a meaningful liturgy led by **Joe Ruane** – all on an afternoon of beautiful weather. We gave an update on the 2008 joint conference to be held in the Northeast and thanked those who had offered to help. As with every gathering, a list of Northeast Region members and a list of other regional meetings were available.

A wonderful email arrived from **Ray Grosswirth** who officiated at his first wedding as a married priest certified by FCM. Held at the Nazareth College Chapel, the ceremony was followed by a reception during which Ray also provided the dinner blessing.

**Jean and Ron Hindelang** are growing their Spirit of Life Community with a liturgy every Sunday evening at 5 pm in Weston, MA. As a Roman Catholic Womanpriest, Jean joins with Ron in celebrating the Eucharist to which everyone is welcome. They invite everyone to meet after liturgy to continue developing this new community. See their website [www.SpiritofLifeCommunity.org](http://www.SpiritofLifeCommunity.org).

Continuing their Evensong by the Sea Ecumenical Retreat & Spirituality Center, **Jim and Marie David**, both priests, provide information on current and upcoming events into 2008 at their Cape Cod Center and on their website [www.EvensongRetreat.com](http://www.EvensongRetreat.com).

We are saddened to report that **Celia Langlieb**, a certified FCM member in Connecticut, passed away in May. Celia had been struggling with cancer for 10 years. She was the co-founder of Spirit Rising, a small faith community in NJ that commissioned her into ordained ministry for their community.

Nearly one-third of all FCM members are in the Northeast Region, and they continue to get together for dialogue and support. Almost 80 percent are certified members. For the few who did not renew membership for this year, you can rejoin at any time. There is still a place for you.

Planning is in full swing for the **2008 Conference Inclusive Ministry and Renewal in a Complex Age** on July 18-20, 2008 in Boston. This is a first-ever joint conference by FCM, CORPUS, Women's Ordination Conference, and Roman Catholic Womenpriests. Lots of excitement is being generated about this conference so put these dates on your calendar!

## GREAT LAKES REGION

by Mary McGrath

A glorious May weekend, the beautiful Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, an extraordinary group of chaplains, hospice workers and volunteers – all added up to an amazing grace-filled experience at the **Self Care for Hospice Workers and Chaplains** weekend.

**Bob Mueller's** keynote address set a tone of refreshment, humor and wisdom that energized all. The variety of presentations enabled lots of spiritual stretching and nourishment. **Sandi Schmidt** provided a challenging experience of Tonglen meditation that proved to be very timely for several people. Her class on experiencing the presence of angels was much appreciated. **Tony Heitzman** shared creative ideas for in-car transitions to refresh, ground and heal on the Way. **Jenny Geib** offered Reiki to participants.

A Saturday morning panel discussion with **Bill Bohnert, Maurice Lefevre, Paula Fangman and Ted Jones** explored transition into retirement, with all its spiritual challenges, potential volunteer experiences, and the importance of discernment and call when planning and living retirement. Much wisdom was shared.

The Saturday afternoon outing to Churchill Downs was a great source of enjoyment and relaxation. Some unknown person handed us a group of free tickets on our way in and we had truly excellent seats. The rhythm of racing is wonderful with its slow parades of beautiful horses and widely spaced short bursts of excitement. On that beautiful day, it just unwound all my left over tension from the organizational responsibility for the weekend.

On Saturday evening, **Jenny Geib** and I explored techniques for healing and emotional release. **Paschal Baute** taught and entertained us with an energizing, integrative story-telling experience. Check out his "Holy Amazement" storytelling ministry on the internet. **Jeanne Tessier** offered two richly nurturing art projects that created opportunities for self expression and reflection. **Bill Bohnert's** discussion on "Being Peace" challenged us. The labyrinth on the grounds of the Seminary was one of many opportunities for outdoor reflection.

Sunday morning liturgy was delightfully enhanced by the presence of **Rafael Macaranas'** baby daughter. The Sunday evaluation session revealed a desire for a regular (annual) self-care workshop. The folks from Chicago suggested the hospice organizations in their area would also

*continued on page 5*

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## Regional News, continued

welcome such an experience. People asked for a followup to the retirement panel, suggesting that addressing retirement issues might become a regular part of the National Assembly.

Requests were made for blogs on the FCM website where folks could ask for mentoring and support when ministerial problems arise; one for prison ministry, one for wedding ministry (counseling), one for retirement issues. It was a richly rewarding weekend and an experience worth repeating. Many, many thanks to all our presenters, all of whom were volunteers, and to all the attendees, including our “stray” student. May the weekend’s blessings nourish us all for many seasons.

### MOUNTAINS & PLAINS REGION

**David Ward**, Vice President of Mountains and Plains, is in South America until late summer. Until his return, please address all correspondence and questions to Eileen Mackin / Clem De Wall, 11298 East Maplewood Place, Englewood, CO 80111-5808; 303-740-7665; [emackin@pcisys.net](mailto:emackin@pcisys.net) or [cdewall@pcisys.net](mailto:cdewall@pcisys.net)

### PACIFIC REGION

By Phil and Peg Ripp

Heard from several Pacific Region members recently. Here’s the news:

**George Doub** from Scotts Valley, CA, has been involved in training chaplains for the armed forces in his psycho-educational program –“Family Wellness.” He trained over 300 chaplains in a year’s time. He joins the chaplains for both liturgical worship and a number of small support groups.

**Dan Meyer** of San Diego, CA, is co-chair of the Network of Spiritual Progressives of San Diego. As an organization, Spiritual Progressives is working to bring forth the spiritual identity of the political Left as being different from the beliefs of the Religious Right. Dan also works in the peace movement. He is reading, *The Left Hand of God* by Michael Lerner and *The Sins of Scripture* by J.G. Spong.

**John A. Boylan** of Lacey, WA, is a hospital and jail chaplain who also works with victims of domestic violence. He helps spread the FCM word in the state of Washington along with **Brad Krick**, who is interested in the problems of war, poverty, the environment, and gay/lesbian unions.

We are still working on finalizing the Vice President position for this region. Several people who were nominated

have declined to run for the office, saying their ministries keep them too busy. We know these are not simply excuses not to run for office but good reasons these members cannot accept the vice presidency of the region. This job of vice president is just right for one of our members and we are waiting for you to come forward. The Vice President position will come open in September 2007. Contact Phil and Peggy Ripp, at 408-272-8184 or email us at [philandpeg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:philandpeg@sbcglobal.net).

**Thought for the hour**, from the Dalai Lama: “We have seen many times that today’s enemies are tomorrow’s allies, a clear indication that things are relative, very interrelated and interdependent. Our survival, our success, our progress, is very much related to others’ well-being. We and our enemies are very much interdependent. Whether we regard them as economic, ideological or political enemies makes no difference to this. Their destruction has a destructive effect on us, (whether or not we admit it).” Quoted by Michael Battle in *The Witness*, May/June 2003.

Blessings to all. Do contact us with your doings, readings, and concerns so we may pass these along to the other members of the Pacific Region.

### SOUTHERN REGION

By Eleonora Marinao and David Gaboury

The Southern Region and all of FCM lost its brother **Dan A. McGrew** on April 25, 2007. Dan was 72-years old. He served as a Maryknoll missionary priest, ministering to the people of God in Peru. He met Cecilia; they married in 1973. Together they shared the gift of love and family with three children, Danny, Andrea and Marie. Cecilia passed into eternal life 20 years ago. Dan was a long-time member of FCM. He raised his family in Miami and moved to Clearwater, FL in 1997, becoming involved in the renewal of the Church and the defense of the oppressed and marginalized. He was known as an intensely animated teacher of Sacred Scripture. He was always smiling and his laughter was his gift to many. ¶





## Chair's Column

by Jan and Paul Reithmaier, Co-Chairs

In the May 2007 issue of *New Theology Review*, Anthony J. Gittins suggests that we consider consciously de-institutionalizing “our respective religions, the more effectively to embed them in our own and others’ daily lives.” He argues that “religion seeks clear, bounded answers; it wants to quantify, reduce, set limits, and control. By contrast, revelation is God’s way of opening up for us unbounded possibilities; it expands our horizons and calls us beyond rules and law to love.”

God’s revelation is much more than what any one religious system can put into doctrine, Gittins points out. “Multiple understandings of who God is and what God asks are quite compatible with human multiplicity and with the very different contexts in which humanity must inevitably try to grasp what it can of divine revelation.” He calls people of all faiths to a dialogue of mutual respect in which they will gradually see God’s revelation expand.

Gittins argues that “given the sheer variety of individual persons and their very different ways of assimilating information and experience, there will be, within any religious system, a relatively wide variety of understandings and

responses.” It has been our experience as members of FCM that this is true even among the small number of members. Each of us has experienced FCM in a different way. FCM is much more than what its constitution says in writing. FCM is the way each of us has enthusiastically applied our understanding of the FCM spirit in our daily lives and ministries. (All quotes from “*Can We Get Beyond Religion?*” by Anthony J. Gittins, C.S.Sp., in the May 2007 issue of *New Theology Review: An American Journal for Ministry*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN.)

The summer meeting of the Circle of Directors will be at the Clubhouse Inn in Saint Louis, MO, from the morning of September 7 to noon on September 9, 2007. The Circle began a program of strategic planning at the winter meeting and will continue the program during this and several future meetings. Strategic Planning will help the Circle focus on areas that need attention, including growing the membership. Certification is given twice a year at the Circle meetings. The Circle meetings are open to all members of FCM. ¶

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## Office of the Secretary/Central Office

by Deborah Burke

Members who wish to be certified at the September 2007 Circle of Director’s Meeting must hold membership in FCM and must have completed the requirements for certification which includes a one-page statement of ministerial self understanding, three letters of recommendation (one from an FCM member), the name of your ministry colleague, signed application and fee of \$120. This information should be received by the vice president of your region well before the September meeting of the Circle of Directors. Members desiring certification in September must complete the criteria for certification in a timely manner. If portions of the criteria have not been completed, certification will be delayed until the Spring 2008 meeting of the Circle of Directors.

Certified members may order wedding, Holy Union and baptismal certificates from the Central Office. Send a check for \$5 for six certificates to me at 1528 Rockway Ave. Lakewood, OH 44107.

I am seeking feedback from members about *Diaspora*. Please email your thoughts and concerns to me at [dmburke510@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmburke510@sbcglobal.net) ¶



# Committee on Specialized Ministries

by William J. Manseau, D.Min., Chair

## A Concern and a Need to Act

### Background

In 1973, the Society of Priests for a Free Ministry, founded in 1968, left behind its focus on expanding radically the horizons for a Roman Catholic male priesthood to undertake the task of contributing to the transformation of that Church's ministry by supporting not only a married clergy but the ordination of women as priests and freeing the ministry of the laity. They accomplished these tasks by encouraging and empowering one another through a SEEDS program of service, enablement, education, development and spirituality. The new, grass roots pastoral initiative reorganized itself and took a new name as the Fellowship of Christian Ministries. They created their own ministerial structures and communities—engaging themselves for the long haul. To avoid the charge of schism, they created an ecumenical identity that enabled them to maintain their Roman Catholic identity and have freedom of action ministerially.

### Problem

The FCM articles of incorporation filed in Belen, New Mexico in 1968, were duly amended. In 1974, new By Laws were drawn up and submitted to the State of New Mexico and the IRS describing FCM as a church. For the next 31 years, FCM believed that it had been recognized as a free-standing church by the IRS. In 2005, as FCM sought to provide a member seeking a military chaplaincy position with a required "Religious Endorsement," we discovered that FCM was not recognized by the IRS as a church but as a "religious organization"—a big difference in the eyes of some agencies.

Since 1973, FCM—as an ecumenical faith community—has granted Ministerial Certification, which is its equivalent to ordination, to hundreds of men and women throughout the nation and thus clergy status enabling them to be recognized by civil authorities as having authority to solemnize marriages and otherwise function as ministers of religion. However, a growing number of FCM members began seeking employment in specialized ministry settings, such as pastoral counseling and institutional chaplaincies (hospitals, hospice, jails, the military, etc.). Over the past 25 years, these civilian and military settings began to require that the professional ministers they hired be accountable to some faith group or denomination and not "lone rangers," that

they be endorsed by the faith group not simply ordained, consecrated or commissioned.

Thus was born the entity "Religious Body Endorsement." As FCM grew in experience with their members who chose specialized ministries, we realized we had to do more than simply assess members for readiness and endorse them. We had to provide spiritual support and procedures of accountability such as they would enjoy in a local congregational setting. This was the world that FCM entered when its Certified Members began seeking employment in institutional chaplaincies that required candidates to be endorsed by a Religious Endorsing Body (REB).

In response, FCM sought recognition in 2001 by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), a major gate keeper organization for professional ministers in the United States and was accepted as a faith group member. As a result FCM was invited in 2002 to attend the first national meeting of faith groups and denominations who were functioning as Religious Endorsing Bodies and who were seeking to standardize their REB procedures through sharing best practices. I was appointed to represent FCM in that meeting. I gathered information that enabled FCM to establish its own procedures as a REB, received orientation into how FCM was to function as a REB and participated in a process that elaborated a common set of standards as a REB.

### United States Military Chaplaincies

A major player in the world of Endorsement for Specialized Ministries is the US Department of Defense (DOD) which employs thousands of military chaplains in the nation's armed services. The DOD created its own standards for recognizing a religious group as a REB, chief of which is that a REB must have and serve a specific, identifiable lay constituency, i.e., it must be in fact a local worshiping community, a convention of such communities or represent a group of such communities.

Both the USDOD Office of Military Chaplaincy and the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) require that a REB be recognized by the IRS or the National Council of Churches as a "Church", a Convention of Churches or represent such. FCM believed for years that it had met the criteria. Yet, in 2005, we learned that ACPE had also classified us as "a religious organization" and not as "a church" as had the IRS.

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## **Committee on Specialized Ministries: A Concern and a Need to Act, continued from pg. 5**

The lack of recognition by the IRS in no way affects FCM's Ministerial Certification Program. However, it does affect FCM's status as a REB in a limiting way since neither the Office of Military Chaplaincies nor the APC recognize FCM as a REB because the IRS and the National Council of Churches does not recognize FCM as a church.

Meanwhile, on the strength of FCM's participation in the annual REBs meetings and my relationship with the REB community, FCM had been recognized as a REB member of the COMISS Network on Specialized Ministries and the Association of Religious Endorsing Bodies (AREB). In the past two years, FCM has sought to identify faith communities within its current membership and beyond that it can represent as a REB. We have reached out to the Ecumenical Catholic Communion and to Spiritus Christi in Rochester, NY without success to date. Most recently, we have agreed to serve as a REB for the St. Barnabas Mission, an FCM member community that is recognized by the IRS as a church. Because of this recognition, FCM now technically meets the REB requirement. But St. Barnabas is a very small community and FCM needs to broaden and deepen its affiliate community membership.

Earlier, in response to this problem, FCM entered into an agreement with the International Council of Community Churches (ICCC) to which FCM belongs. By this agreement the ICCC accepts our Specialized Ministries Endorsement process as a partner for individual FCM candidates for Endorsement who have also become members of the ICCC. This partnership will work for some but not all FCM members, so a permanent solution is still being sought.

## **NCMA**

The National Catholic Ministries Alliance (NCMA), consisting of CORPUS, WOC, FCM/RCFCC and RCWP, exists to enable and to nurture the grass roots reform of the Roman Catholic presbyteral ministry through the collaborative ministries of women priests, married priests and lay persons called to the work of reform and renewal. Each local community could be viewed as the local embodiment of the Alliance. The Alliance is based on the Hebrew Scriptural principle that "a friend helped by a friend is like a strong city." (Proverbs 18:19) and on the New Testament principles inherent in Acts 2:41-42. The Alliance sees these principles most recently articulated by the Second Vatican Council in its Decrees and Constitutions on the Liturgy, Ecumenism, Religious Freedom, Revelation, the Church and the Church in the Modern World. Much of the hope brought by the Church of Vatican II was dashed by the retrenchment policies of John Paul II.

An Emmaus Catholic is anyone who has heard and rejoiced at the good news brought to the Church by Vatican

II, and who, having heard it, left the old life behind for a new life of hopeful discipleship and transformation, service to the poor, and the pursuit of wholeness for the Church and World. The communities founded by Emmaus Catholics by virtue of their message of new life in the Spirit can be called Emmaus Catholic Covenanting Communities, which are sponsored by the NCMA. Through their coordinating body, the NCMA has the authority to identify and designate other partners to share in their mission to provide settings for congregational ministries by those called to minister as Catholic priests be they married or single, female or male or as lay ministers and to participate in the endorsing of specialized ministries.

## **Sacramental Faculties**

The priest members of NCMA's sponsoring organizations derive authority for their sacramental ministry by virtue of their ordinations in Catholic communities. However, by its very nature priestly ordination is intended to be accountable to a Catholic faith community. Since neither married male RC priests, ordinarily, and women priests enjoy such recognition in the civil sphere, they must seek other ecclesial affiliations that will bring civil recognition as clergy. Should they desire recognition from an ecclesial community rooted in the Catholic tradition, there are potential NCMA ecclesial partners such as the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, the FCM's St. Barnabas Mission, the Celtic Christian Church, etc.

## **NCMA, FCM and Specialized Ministries**

NCMA Emmaus Catholic Covenanting Communities' members called to specialized ministries that require technical Endorsement relationships with a REB can access that process through FCM's REB program. FCM alone of the NCMA partners has the experience, the knowledge and the connections with the REB community to do so.

## **The Challenge**

FCM must continue to expand its REB services to other faith communities beyond its current membership or it may well find its standing as a REB in jeopardy for lack of sufficient lay constituent-based organizations. It makes little sense for RCWPs who want to work as institutional chaplains to obtain FCM Ministerial Certification and then have to get the requirement for Religious Body Endorsement from some other group. Now is the time for the NCMA sponsors and their partners to help each other and stick together. ¶

things, even in the transient, the unchanging reality is present.

Brahman, or God, is a trinity in which there are Brahma, the creator of the universe; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer.

Hindu beliefs and practices attract many Christians. In recent times many Westerners have sought enlightenment from religious teachers or gurus in India. Western Christians have turned more and more to the East to learn how to meditate, to pray and to grow spiritually. Mainline Christian churchgoers may be devoted practitioners of yoga.

Throughout the world, the most accepted notion of the after-life is not heaven and hell, but some version of the Eastern belief in reincarnation, which many Christians are beginning to accept (but probably without telling their pastors).

Christianity may be indebted to Hinduism, but not in the same way as it is to Islam. Whereas Islam contributed much to science, math and medicine, some scholars claim that Hinduism was actually a source of Christian beliefs. If so, it would explain a long-standing problem in Christian doctrine that pagan philosophers pointed out. Early Christian apologists had to explain the objection by pagan philosophers that the followers of Jesus offered nothing new, but instead copied other religions, such as Hinduism and Mithraism.

Revered as a savior, Krishna proclaimed, “I am the resurrection.” He cured many of their illnesses, cast out demons and raised the dead. He was merciful, and he was criticized for his association with sinners. He encountered a woman at a well. He chose disciples to pass on his teachings, celebrated a last supper and forgave his enemies. He descended into hell, was raised and ascended to heaven in the presence of many witnesses.

The most frequent Christian response seems to have been that the similarities between Christianity and earlier religions were due to a trick of Satan, who created saviors like Jesus in order to discredit Christianity. In other words, Satan, knowing in advance about the birth and death of Jesus, cleverly created other religions with a similar history and message, all in order to trick those who heard the Christian message into thinking it was false. Needless to say, the pagan philosophers were not persuaded.

Since the “trick of Satan” response has hardly withstood the test of time, we need to revisit the question: How do we explain the similarities between Jesus and Krishna, who lived somewhere from 14 centuries to five thousand years before Christ? Hindus esteem Krishna as the second person of the Hindu trinity, a manifestation of Vishnu, both a God and the Son of God; his actual father was a spirit; his adoptive father was a carpenter. He was visited at his birth by wise men and shepherds, guided by a star.

I have no explanation for these similarities. I can only encourage you to join me in trying to learn more about this ancient culture and religion. Toward this end, we can learn

from this culture and its adherents by considering the words of the Indian Sri Sathya Sai Baba, who has for many years been revered by multitudes as a prophet, teacher, healer and miracle worker. (I should also note that he has his share of debunkers.) These are some of the more notable sayings attributed to him:

“I have come to light the lamp of love in your hearts, to see that it shines day by day with added luster.

“I have come not to disturb or destroy any faith, but to confirm each in his own faith — so that the Christian becomes a better Christian, the Muslim a better Muslim, and the Hindu a better Hindu.

“There is only one religion, the religion of Love. There is only one language, the language of the Heart. There is only one caste, the caste of Humanity. There is only one law, the law of Karma. There is only one God, He is Omnipresent.

“Honor all religions. Each is a pathway to God.” ¶

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**Next Circle of Directors Meeting:  
Sept. 7-9, 2007 – St. Louis, MO**

## Directory of Members

2006 Directory of Members is organized by regions. For a free copy: contact Sherry Mullins - (505)437-4895, [paladin49@zianet.com](mailto:paladin49@zianet.com) to download a PDF version. Contact Central Office for CD version \$5.00, also in PDF or printed copy in full color \$10.00.

## CERTIFICATION

The certification dates correspond with the Circle of Director's Meeting and is posted in the *Diaspora*.

## FCM Central Registry

The FCM Central Registry for Baptism, Marriage and Holy Unions is managed by Paul Reithmaier, 7415-K Triwoods Dr., Shrewsbury, MO 63119. Forms are available from Paul or can be printed from the regional website <http://home.att.net/~fcmmp>. A small donation to cover the cost of maintaining the service is appreciated.

## Global Ministries Univ.

GMU offers degrees completion programs, certificates, courses online. FCM members are eligible for a 5% discount on degree programs. For more information, call: 760 238-7570, email:

[info@GlobalMinistriesUniversity.org](mailto:info@GlobalMinistriesUniversity.org)

Or visit web site:

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

## FCM Certificates

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

## DIASPORA

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