

NEWS POSTED ON JUNE 26, 2017

Growing up Overseas Helped Prepare IM's New Short-Term Mission Director



CATHERINE NOLD

The Rev. Sandra Dorsainvil believes that being raised in African countries and Italy helped form her faith in Jesus Christ.

During that time, her father, Polynice Dorsainvil, was a global servant for United Nations Food & Agricultural Development, which took Sandra Dorsainvil; her late mother, Paulette Dorsainvil; and Sandra Dorsainvil's three siblings to the mission field in Africa. She identifies her upbringing as one of the major influences in preparing her for her latest venture—directing the Short-Term Mission initiative for International Ministries (IM).

Under Dorsainvil's direction, IM's Short-Term Mission staff will invite volunteers to participate in cross-cultural engagements and faith formation through international service opportunities. Short-term mission opportunities will be diverse and support young adult experiences, exploration trips and service work lasting from 10 days to three years.

More than 4,000 volunteers have been involved in short-term mission service through IM in the past four years. They have supported IM global servants in many regions, including Costa Rica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Volunteers have provided medical support in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, taught English in Japan and helped to restore lives after slavery in Thailand, to name just a few examples.

Dorsainvil brings a unique blend of vision, skills and experience to her new post. She's been a parish pastor and a regional associate executive minister with portfolios in mission and stewardship, and she holds Masters Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling from Boston University (1985) and in Pastoral Ministry from Boston College (2009). She earned her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Boston University (1984), and it was during her undergraduate years that she became an American Baptist. (Dorsainvil's parents were Roman Catholic.) Upon graduating from Boston College, Dorsainvil says, "I renewed my commitment to the Lord that year. I have had spiritual directors and mentors along the way. They have shown me the humility of Jesus, perseverance, joy and love for humanity."

Dorsainvil notes that all of the work that global servants are doing in their respective environments "speaks to our current concerns in the world." She sees her ministry as an expression of Jesus' own love for the world: "In John 11:35, we read the shortest phrase in the Bible, 'Jesus wept.' I believe Jesus weeps every time we face injustices and don't uphold our responsibility to care for our creation."

Dorsainvil explains, "What appeals to me about short-term mission is that it gives opportunities to everyone to be God's instruments of peace, love and mercy, utilizing their own skills and talents. It provides an opportunity for anyone with a heart for service and compassion to live Matthew 25. The very nature of the phrase 'short-term' allows participants willing to open their hearts, hands and minds to be transformed under God's guidance while they serve for a set time, in a specific setting, alongside a trusted leader who can provide the initial guidance needed for those who are stepping out of their comfort zone for the first time.

"People sitting in the pews and shepherding those in the pews have been called to be God's servants," Dorsainvil continues. "As Christ's followers, we have been called to serve, teach, mend broken bodies and hearts, pray with others, lead, and so on in Jesus' name. As we learn to love one another, grow in our faith and be instruments of peace, we learn to be the light of truth, mercy and hope that Jesus was while on earth. This ministry of service blesses all of us, givers and receivers alike, and is at the core of our Christian faith."

In 2018, short-term mission opportunities will include an exploration trip to Vienna and Prague to gain greater understanding of the refugee crisis and its impact on children; a heritage trip to Liberia and Ghana in support of the first IM missionary at the Vocational School for Girls in Frankadua; and an environmental and eco-justice opportunity in Iberoamerica.

"Working with and leading the Short-Term Mission team is a continuation of my ministry call, my upbringing in African countries and Italy, my desire for interfaith dialogues and my support for better stewardship of God's creation and for treating our brothers and sisters

from all walks of life with dignity and respect,” Dorsainvil says. “We are all on an Emmaus Walk, and we are called to accompany one another along the way.”

Dorsainvil says that colonial-era attitudes she witnessed in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s taught her much about injustice, grounded her concern for advocacy and guided her in “Jesus’ ways of being a change agent for truth, peace and love,” ultimately shaping her call to ministry.

Dorsainvil will visit regions, churches, association meetings and small groups via video chat and in person to share and help facilitate continued interest in global mission. She will facilitate trainings and conversations about short-term volunteer opportunities available around the globe.

“Mission is an integral part of faith formation,” Dorsainvil says. “With God’s guidance and lead, I see short-term mission service opening the doors wider to the mission field as we work collaboratively with IM Vocational Development and all our area directors. We are an inter-generational team, eager to serve and to accompany our many volunteers who are seeking to be the hands and feet of Christ while being better stewards of God’s creation. As we integrate the priorities of Responding to the Call, IM’s strategic plan, we are in step with what God is asking for us all.”

Dorsainvil will be attending the Biennial Mission Summit of the American Baptist Churches USA in Portland, Oregon, on June 30 to July 2. Stop by the IM booth in the exhibit hall to welcome her to the IM family. She’ll be glad to engage anyone interested in pursuing a call for short-term mission volunteering.

Sandra Dorsainvil may be reached at sdorsainvil@internationalministries.org and by phone at 1-800- 222-3872, ext. 2164.

IM welcomes comments on [Facebook](#).

For more information, contact catherine.nold@internationalministries.org.