

Roland Fernandes to head United Methodist missions agency

People in the [April 22, 2020](#) issue



(Photo courtesy of United Methodist News Service)

Roland Fernandes has been tapped as the next general secretary of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church's worldwide mission agency. He will replace Thomas Kemper, who, after a decade of leading the organization, chose not to stand for reelection.

Fernandes, a layperson, has been with the organization since 1995, serving in various capacities, including interim general secretary. Since 2003, Fernandes has been the chief operating officer and chief financial officer.

“The opportunity to serve as general secretary of Global Ministries is one I welcome with a sense of deep humility,” Fernandes said in a press release, adding that he had recently been discerning that God was calling him to new responsibilities. “This discernment process revealed that it is still God’s mission calling me and I am thankful that the Holy Spirit and the Global Ministries directors have looked to me to lead this agency, which is so essential to our church’s faithful response to God’s grace in Jesus Christ.”

Fernandes, who grew up in India, is a founding trustee of Prayatna, a group in Mumbai that works with women and children. He is a board member of the ecumenical relief agency Church World Service and is active in Illuman, Richard Rohr’s spiritual support group for men.

In a statement, Fernandes said he looks forward to Global Ministries’ continuing leadership. “Mission is the heart of the church’s work, and Global Ministries is uniquely prepared to further God’s efforts on behalf of the whole world for another century.” —*Christian Century* staff