

[Topics: Mental health and integration—MH Action Plan, CAPS, West Coast USA]

23 January 2013

Dear Cynthia and Al (Fuller), Bruce, Cherry, and Todd (RSP), Theresa and Joy (APU), Marie Christine and Rodger (George Fox), Lynette and John (SPU), Jim and Glen (Regent), and Steve (Abilene),

Warm greetings from Geneva!

I am writing to share three brief items with you related to mental health and integration. Apologies for writing you all together (and for those that I have left out initially—please feel free to pass on to faculty) but I thought it would be best to share with everyone at once. For those of you who do not know me, my wife and I are RSP grads from the mid-1980s and we have been practicing from Europe in the mission/humanitarian aid sector for 25+ years and more recently branching out into the challenging domain of global mental health (GMH—[see definition of GMH at the end of this letter](#)).

1. This week I am at some of the Executive Board meetings of the World Health Organization here in Geneva. One of the topics Tuesday was the [Global Mental Health-Action Plan](#), which you may have heard about. High-level health reps from 25 countries gave statements about the Action Plan, resolutely supporting it (see a short summary on the [GMH-Map website](#)). This is extremely significant because for the first time there is a comprehensive initiative by member states for: promoting mental health broadly; accessing quality care by the estimated 450 million people with mental, neurological, and substance use conditions (MNS); confronting stigma, discrimination and human rights abuses related to MNS conditions; and scaling up by governments of their health/mental health care systems (example: in most low and middle-income countries, less than 1% of the health budget is devoted to mental health). The Action Plan has important implications/opportunities for our graduate programs and student/personal interests. Namely, it helps us: to understand how our training and practice fit into the current global context, to consider what is necessary to see the aspirations for “health/wellbeing for all” become a reality, and to stimulate the creative thinking of our students who have a growing desire to meaningfully connect/contribute globally. I think that that once you go through the Action Plan and get a feel for it, you will see many applications for Christian professionals/students in mental health/psychology.

2. The CAPS program committee has invited me to give a Post Conference workshop at the conference this April in Portland. (I hope I can see some of you at the conference.) So in addition to my other presentations (universal declaration of ethical principles for psychologists/member care ethics, hot issues/contributions in the humanitarian sector for member care practice) I will be doing this three-hour workshop. The topic is Global Integration (GI): Charting Your Course in the Service of Humanity, ([see the working definition of GI below](#)). Part of the inspiration for the title of the workshop came from the International Congress of Psychology in Cape Town RSA (July 2012) that I attended along with some 5000 other psychologists/mental health professionals and those in training. The theme of the congress was [Psychology Serving Humanity](#). It was great, and frankly, although some parts were over my head, I felt right at home. Being there reminded me of Michèle’s (my wife) and my journey into GMH and GI, and brought to mind a sobering comment by Glen Moriarty (Regent) in the Spring 2012 *JPT*:

If we want integration to be a credible and relevant voice in all corners of our world, then we need to be proactive about learning, engaging and collaborating with Christian mental health professionals outside of North America. [Kelly note: and proactive about the major need for collaborating with MHPs of other faiths or no faith and with colleagues from other sectors]...Soon the mental health professions will also scale up. [Kelly note: many are now]. We want to get in on the ground floor—not once

institutions are already established. Kelly O'Donnell has insightfully called this "global integration."....We in the integration field find ourselves in a unique position. Unfortunately, globalization and technology have caught us flat-footed. ..We have a time limited opportunity to make a huge impact in the future of faith and psychology...We can begin by answering the question I started with: Where do we want to be in 10 years? [Kelly note: and where do we want to be in 2050—when an estimated one-third of humanity may in fact live in 'misery and squalor'—3 billion humans!]

3. With the previous two items in mind, I wanted to let you know of my interest in making some initial rounds at some the graduate programs on the West Coast, before or after the CAPS conference in early April. For example, I would be interested in meeting informally as a group with interested faculty and students to discuss together the nature and scope of GI, how people are involved in GI areas now, what GI can become, and how our training programs can further connect/contribute to GI. There could also be a special emphasis on "mental health *as* mission", global mental health, member care in the mission/humanitarian sectors, and **crossing international sectors for good practice**. I could also share informally in a class or other training setting about any of these topics.

Finally, I want to say that Michèle and I are not looking for more work. Rather we sense that developing GI is an important way forward in light of the huge challenges facing humanity, and we want to help further shape and pursue GI with others for God's glory.

Warm greetings in our Lord,

Kelly

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Global mental health (GMH): "GMH is an international, interdisciplinary, and multi-sectoral domain which promotes human well-being, the right to health, and equity in health for all. It encourages healthy behaviours and lifestyles; is committed to preventing and treating mental, neurological, and substance use conditions; and seeks to improve policies and programs, professional practices and research, advocacy and awareness, and social and environmental factors that affect health and well-being." (GMH--Finding Your Niches and Networks, *Psychology International*, March 2012)

Global Integration (GI) is a developing field that draws upon the disciplines of mental health and theology. GI learners-practitioners are committed to connect and contribute across sectors/cultures/disciplines in order to more effectively address the challenges facing humanity—for God's glory. We believe that further developing GI is crucial and will require new mechanisms and new models for involvement globally as Christ-followers working in the health sciences and beyond. One key approach could be to link with colleagues in graduate schools/universities and organizations that are open to increase their global involvements, especially those in which the integration of mental health and Christian spirituality (e.g., psychology—theology) is a core component. Forming some new GI "mechanisms" such as "relational caravans" and "institutional coalitions" (colleagues and organizations travelling together for mutual support and effectiveness) could be especially important. **GI ultimately involves how we integrate our lives into our global involvements and in this sense GI as a discipline is part of a larger growing domain that is interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and multi-sectoral.** (Global Integration, *CORE Member Care* weblog, 2011)