

**UMMA UpDate #41, April 16, EASTER 2006**  
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United Methodist Missionary Association  
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***"Linking mission workers worldwide"***

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**[1] Report from Stamford by Jim Dwyer, chair**

The April meeting of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church took place on schedule in Stamford, CT, from April 3-6. One or more of the UMMA officers James Dwyer, Fred Price, and Carol Seckel, along with the MIRs Bruce and Kathy Griffith were available to staff and directors for conversation and consultation throughout the sessions. We were also a visible presence in the meeting of the Mission Personnel Committee, chaired by seminarian John Petersen and staffed by the Revs. Edith Gleaves and Stephen Goldstein.

Prior to the official call to order, UMMA representatives were guests of Edith Gleaves, Roland Fernandes, Steve Goldstein, John Petersen and Wendy Rhodehamel, director assigned to UMMA, for lunch in a private conference room which offered opportunity for undisturbed conversations. At the opening session of the plenary General Secretary R. Randy Day personally and officially offered individual greeting to guests, including UMMA's representatives.

While there were specific concerns on the UMMA agenda, such as the work of the Mission Gathering Task Force and the Collins Task Force, the first item on our agenda was to open ourselves for information and input which the Mission Personnel Program Unit (MPPU) might wish to share with us. *(Please continue on page 2)*

**[2] 2007 Mission Gathering at GETS Near the Lake by Norma Kehrberg**

Gather at GETS – Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary – that is, on the west shore of Lake Michigan on August 9-12, 2007. The 2007 Gathering will be a giant get-together and a forum for mission, Bible study, mission singing and worship, challenging seminars on mission topics for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and a time to meet and share with mission minded persons and groups in the United Methodist Church.

The United Methodist Missionary Association (UMMA) is the initiating sponsor. Other sponsors are expected. **There will be time on the agenda for missionary reunions.** Come to be inspired and to inspire others with your stories. Plan now for you and your family to attend.

The Gathering will be a “no host” Gathering. Dormitory space at the seminary is available for the first 125 registrants. Meals will be available at the seminary cafeteria. Nearby hotels in the Evanston, Illinois area will also be identified. O’Hare Airport is about 30 minutes to the west.

The task force is in the initial planning stage for the program. **Urgently needed** are suggestions for Bible Study and Worship Leaders, Topics for Seminars and Workshops as well as information on Missionary Reunions that may want to meet in conjunction with the 2007 Gathering.

Task force members are: Carol Seckel, Gene Matthews, Fred Price, Richard Vreeland and Norma Kehrberg with Jim Dwyer, UMMA chair as ex-officio. Other members may be added as planning progresses. Richard Vreeland will serve as Registrar for the event. Details on registration and the minimal registration fee will be available shortly.

Send your suggestions to any or all parts of the program to Norma Kehrberg at [kehrbergn001@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:kehrbergn001@hawaii.rr.com), Chair of the 2007 Mission Gathering.

SEE YOU THERE FOR STIMULATING DISCUSSION, SINGING, PRAISE, WORSHIP, AND LAUGHTER!

### [3] **Other Missionary Gatherings & Reunions: Bolivian Methodist Centennial**

The Centennial of the Methodist Church in Bolivia will be celebrated in La Paz, Bolivia, from August 14 to 20, 2006. The big day is the 20<sup>th</sup> of August. Details are on a web site set up by Janet May: [http://www.pensamientos.com/Bolivia\\_centennial.htm](http://www.pensamientos.com/Bolivia_centennial.htm)  
The contact person is Bishop Carlos Poma: [iemb\\_obispado@entelnet.bo](mailto:iemb_obispado@entelnet.bo)

For a complete list of missionary reunions please refer to the February issue of UMMA UpDate: <http://www.umma-global.org/update.html>

### **Report from Stamford** *continued from first page*

There was considerable joy on the part of staff in announcing the good news, as Steve Goldstein put it, that the Board “is back in the business” of recruiting and sending missionaries. As many as 20 new assignments are in planning for the next 2 years, with a somewhat longer list of possible assignments if finances continue to stabilize. In addition to the initially budgeted 5 positions for 2006, below-budget spending for health benefits allowed another 5 positions to be planned. The amount from “Collins C” funds needed to cover MPPU expenses was also reduced substantially.

Of more concrete individual interest to active missionaries is the decision to pay a 3% increase in base missionary salary retroactive to January 1, 2006, and the intentional and explicit coupling of this to the staff raise for 2006 that was granted last October.

Treasurer Roland Fernandes gladly agreed to conversation with Richard Vreeland on behalf of UMMA’s Collins Task Force. Sharing the desire of the task force to be in conversation was a part of a broader conversation related also to our request to consider the need for an increase in pensions for currently retired missionaries. Of course, open discussion of pension increases is not the same as a pension increase, but may bode well.

An informal question of whether it would make working with UMMA easier if we sought formal status from General Conference was welcomed with a surprising affirmation (with only a bit of hedging) by the majority of those present at lunch, and this affirmation was reiterated by several persons later on in other conversations. Our secretary Carol Seckel has already begun researching the statuses of CCW and NADAM

and the processes by which they received them. It is your chair's intention that this question should find wide discussion among our membership in sufficient time to present the matter to GBGM Cabinet before the October 2006 Board meeting. Such a step could be easily taken with their agreement, rather than against their possible opposition in the course of GBGM's preparation of legislation for General Conference. (If no agreement is offered, or the modalities of the status cannot be agreed upon, the option of presenting the request to General Conference through other channels might still be considered, or the matter could be dropped or delayed. More on this in a future communication.)

During the course of the week, 13 deaconesses and two home missionaries (the very first "male deaconesses," as it were, in accord with 2004 General Conference legislation) were commissioned in a moving evening worship service. For those who have felt a de-emphasis or even rejection of the concept of "life-long missionary service," the nature of the commissioning of deaconesses and home missionaries as a "commitment to life-long service" was very explicit.

Several reports deserve our attention — among them immigration issues and church members' amazing financial response to the Katrina and general hurricane relief appeals of UMCOR. There was also a scintillating forum on mission theology to spur reflection by directors as they consider an update to the Board's official statement with input from Professors Dana Robert, Harold Recinos and Thomas Thangaraj. Maxie Dunham, with staff support from Rena Yokum, also presented the results of the study to enhance the presence and role of mission theology in United Methodist seminaries. I hope all who read this will also look at [www.gb-gm-umc.org](http://www.gb-gm-umc.org) for additional reports.

From UMMA's point of view, there was a continuing improvement in atmosphere in our relationship with Board staff and directors, although some issues continue to perplex. The chair enjoyed a good and lengthy conversation with one staff member who wanted to understand why "standard support" missionaries felt the Board was devaluing our contribution as "long-term" cross-cultural agents of mission. The staff member in question seemed then to understand where our feelings came from, but at the same time assured me that it was more external circumstances (and the internal culture of the past years which left no one feeling comfortable) which had created the conditions I was describing, neither intention nor policy decisions.

The directors noted six pending retirements and celebrated the contributions of the following staff members: David Wu and Shirley Wu, S T Kimbrough, Keith Rae, Jeannie Blankenship, and Bill Carter.

Explicit reference was made by the General Secretary in his presentations, but also others, to the necessity of utilizing the zeal, insights, experience and skills of retired missionaries who wish to continue to support the work of Christian mission. [In separate conversations with Jim Winkler, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society in Washington, DC, I discussed the possibility of revitalizing some aspect of the Peace with Justice Educators program to provide an outlet for retired GBGM missionaries who might appreciate this opportunity. No concrete proposals have been made, but Dr. Winkler expressed interest.]

On a personal level Board President Bishop Martinez took opportunity to ask about the chair's personal history and share a bit of his own. Separate conversations with Board Vice-Presidents Bishop Violet Fisher and Bishop Øystein Olsen brought personal illumination on matters of racism, as per the official definitions of the Board and the

church, and of racial and religious issues accompanying east-west and south-north migration facing even the Nordic states in Europe where roughly 20% of the population of Oslo, Norway, consists of immigrants, many from specific regions of Pakistan.

The new intention of GBGM cabinet and staff to achieve transparency is filtering through to hallway conversations and reduced tensions in interpersonal and official relationships — surely a cause for rejoicing, no matter what other fiscal or management issues missionaries may want addressed.

It was my privilege and joy to be able, along with Fred and Carol, to represent retired and active missionaries at the spring GBGM directors' meeting in Stamford. No few directors and staff also expressed their appreciation for our presence there and looked forward to our continuing contributions. From the statistical reports, it is interesting to note that our total membership (active and retired) is now apparently larger than the pool of active missionaries the Board is supporting!

#### [4] **Nurture Notes: Going Deeper, a Spiritual Experience** by Howard Heiner

Our Pastor has challenged us to go deeper in our understanding of our calling to be Disciples of Christ. In response, a group of men from our local Church held a 3-day retreat among towering Douglas Fir trees in the mountains of Southwestern Oregon. We met to explore the diversity of the spirituality that forms each individual's life, worship, and faithfulness to God's calling. Each of us must go deeper in seeking God's meaning to thrive in our relationship with the Holy Spirit in today's social, economic and environmental turmoil.

We were encouraged to be bold in our response to the Lord's Prayer, centering on: "Thy Kingdom come thy will be done." Going deeper in our relationship with God enables us to share our concerns with our faith community and to establish priorities in our responses to a hurting world. The Retreat was, as the Celtic people might say, "a thin place near the power of God" where you feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.

#### [5] **Missionary Milestones** by Elizabeth Clarke

**John W. Krummel** died on March 30 at Brooks Howell Home in Asheville, NC after a 38 year missionary career in Japan. He was a loyal UMMA member. John went to Japan as a J-3 in 1956 after graduating Phi Beta Kappa from DePauw University with a Bachelor of Sacred Theology. Later he earned a MA at Boston University School of Theology. He was ordained in 1961 in the Central Illinois (then) Conference.

He was an English teacher and Christian Activities Secretary, and later, became a professor and chaplain of the College of Economics. In his last term he was chaplain of the entire Aoyama Gakuin (25,000 students from K through university.)

His interest in and contribution to Christian history in Japan, focused on the development of the Methodist missionary movement, and leadership in several academic international and Japanese organizations e.g.: the Japan Wesley Association, the Japan Christian Literature Society, and the World Methodist Historical Society (V.P. for Asia) He was one of the feature staff of the *Japan Christian Quarterly*. He published articles and books about Methodist mission history in Japan, e.g., contributed to the *Encyclopedia of Christian History in Japan* and *The Methodist Episcopal Church in Tokyo 1873-1993*. A final major publication in 1996 was the monumental *A Biographical*

*Dictionary of Methodist Missionaries to Japan, 1873-1993*, which he edited in both Japanese and English. It serves as a basic resource for missionary history in Japan.

John's great love of art helped him to introduce the Christian faith to faculty and students through exhibits which attracted much attention and interest.

Fusako, John's wife of 42 years lives at Brooks Howell Home, 266 Merimon Ave., Asheville, NC 28801- 4632. E-mail: fusakok@bellsouth.net. Their son, Jay, while teaching at Temple U, is currently completing a second PhD in Asian religion.

#### [6] **Consider CarePages: A Ministry of Support for Patients and Families**

*CarePages* bring together patients and families to offer strength, support, and encouragement when it's needed most. It is easy to update your family and other friends and they can easily post messages of encouragement. *CarePages* is available free for families everywhere. It is non-commercial – supported by 450 health-care facilities nationwide. CarePages.com provides private and secure sites. For security, the pages can't be found with a Google search, and patients and families pick who gets access and can block unwanted visitors. To get started, please visit: <http://www.carepages.com>

*Editor's Note: Our family is very grateful to CarePages and all who used it to keep updated during the month-long hospitalization of our grandson Jeremiah. Many thanks for all your prayers. He is up and about – improving with weekly rehab from his home. Please pray that he will take more food by mouth rather than by tube.*

#### [7] **Chair's Corner: JimD's Jottings on "Differentiation" by Jim Dwyer**

Thanks to the financial support of the Ministerial Education Fund through my home annual conference (North Indiana). I was able to attend a recent continuing education event in West Bend, Wisconsin, sponsored by the "Interim Ministries Network" (IMN) related to the Alban Institute. I had chosen the course Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry to help me review and process (yet again) the severe crisis which I had had to deal with in my missionary *point of assignment* (POA) in Hamburg related both to struggles within the congregation I was assigned to serve, the charge in which the congregation had developed and the relationship of the two to "judiciary middle management," as the IMN would describe the level of leadership below the headquarters and above the local church.

The seminar focused on both analysis of the situation in which a pastor is placed and the appropriate healthy response of the pastor to the conditions discovered, with an eye to a mutually satisfying resolution of any critical areas preventing healthy congregational life. While the course focused explicitly on "intentional interim ministry" aimed at preparing the way for the congregation to work healthily with the next "settled" pastor — something rarely practiced in the UMC — the analyses, insights and skill sets can be utilized (and should be) by any pastor entering a new assignment.

The word "differentiation" played a key role in one of the units. It has since occurred to me that reflection upon the variant degrees to which differentiation is forced upon missionaries in their POAs and, on the other hand, may or may not be permitted to mission board staff in their responsibilities as "middle management" and their function as bureaucrats (i.e., those who must maintain the administrative overview and apply or bend the rules in the structures which the church order, the Board or the General Conference gives them) would be useful to us all. "Differentiation" is, in part, the individual's ability

independently to evaluate a situation and act upon it while leaving room for respect for the dignity of other individuals encountered in the situation or its context. Healthy differentiation does not need or want to make other people look bad or lose face in the course of the resolution of a conflict. A well differentiated personality, however, will also assert her or his perception of the truth to the degree that resolution of unhealthy situations and relationships require it and leave responsibility for the behavior of others to their own healthy or unhealthy differentiation. Well differentiated persons are ready to suffer for their views, but seek to avoid causing others to suffer in their place or for theirs.

Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, and Jesus himself provide models of differentiation. Unfortunately Elijah's was the only career that ended well (as the chariots of fire swung low "for to carry [him] home") – overlooking for the moment Jesus' delayed resurrection and ascension. Moses was not permitted to see his work completed, because he overstepped boundaries set by God, John the Baptist literally lost his head, and Jesus got himself crucified in the course of his clear differentiation (and prayed that God forgive those who refused to understand what he was about).

GBGM missionaries, it seems to me, not infrequently find themselves in a certain degree of isolation where they are left alone to develop skills of differentiation which bring with them a high level of confidence in the correctness of their analyses of situations. This high degree of confidence is frequently related to much learning in the "school of hard knocks" – as my father often called painful trial-and-error – perhaps without the necessary theory to explain successfully to the uninvolved what actions had been necessary and why without seeming simply strong-willed and stubborn (which some of us certainly can be).

GBGM staff, on the other hand, as well as staff in national settings and international settings of other sorts, perhaps including those ultimately responsible for bureaucratic oversight of missionaries' POA work, are constantly constrained by finances, compelled to draft and negotiate letters of agreement (LOA) which must be crafted to satisfy self-contradictory criteria of New York lawyers, the scrutiny of those who have ordered the current set of GBGM priorities and goals, and the expectations of annual conference boards of mission and covenant congregations, as well as the well-differentiated missionary's own view of his or her role.

The healthily differentiated missionary will seek to do her or his job with regard to POA, LOA, and "middle management" at the POA and in New York in a fashion which seeks to communicate well the necessities and contingencies of the work, while also maintaining confidence in one's own insights, direction and conviction — even if we don't end our careers like Elijah, passing on the mantel to an Elisha dogging our every footstep to be assured of succession when God picks us up for our last flight with His/Her fiery limousine service.

Especially as we look to events of Holy Week and Easter, it is useful to recall what Jesus' self-differentiation brought him and to respond accordingly:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,

