

UMMA UpDate #52, May 18, 2007
e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
For PDF version click to www.umma-global.org
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"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"

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[1] Registration Deadline for Mission Gathering & Forum by Norma Kehrberg

Momentum is building and so are the registrations. Don't miss out! The registration deadline is June 15th. Dormitory space is limited so book now using the form below.

As part of the planning team, I have been gathering bios of the planned speakers. It is thrilling to read of the work and experience of those who have agreed to share at the Mission Gathering and Forum. And, in a quick review of the current registration list, I estimated that we will have gathered 2,000 to 3,000 years of mission experience of active and former missionaries, bishops, directors, deaconesses, mission professors, and current and former GBGM staff.

Mission witness is a part of the day's events. On Sunday evening, Dr. Elma Jocson, active missionary surgeon with GBGM will give a mission witness. Elma has served at Tansen Hospital in Nepal as a part of an ecumenical mission. You may have **seen** her on the Advance film entitled, "Here I Am Lord". In Evanston, you can **meet** her in person,

On Tuesday, August 7, the mission witness will be Elvira and Saulito Arellano. Elvira is a Mexican national who was in the process of being deported when she took sanctuary with her son in Adalberto Memorial United Methodist Church in Chicago. Elvira may not be able to leave that church, but if not, her son Saulito, now 8 years of age, will come to give witness. Saulito is a US citizen and has lobbied the Mexican legislature on behalf of families that would be split if parents are deported.

Each day, Peggy Heiner will be leading the "Prayers of the People" session as a part of the opening worship. The worship of God will be the book ends for beginning and ending each day together. Join us! Click for details www.umma-global.org/actions.html

[2] UMMA's Participation in the Life of the UMC by Jim Dwyer, past chair

Since Robert Harman first suggested that missionaries would be well-served by having an organization to keep watch over their needs and concerns in the GBGM's reorganization, much water has passed over the dam. Among other things, the leadership

of the organization has been passed three times to a new chairperson, this time for an undetermined interim with James L. Gulley at the helm, and two coordinators have managed the business aspects of the association. In that same period, the leadership of the General Board of Global Ministries has also changed substantially, and a severe financial crisis has been weathered.

At the beginning of UMMA's life, the very thought of an organization feeling the need to interject its views on behalf of missionaries from the former World Division was seen as an adversarial idea, worthy of official opposition and resistance from the highest levels.

In the course of the next few years, decisions by the General Conference encouraging the GBGM to spend off some of its resources accompanied by a rapid and apparently unanticipated diminution of those assets through unrealized losses created a crisis which did not increase missionaries' confidence that their health-care and pension benefits were well cared for. The larger concern however, was that longer-term, cross-cultural missionary recruitment, training and sending was put on hold. Some feared the reason was a change of intention of Board leadership, rather than simply lack of funding. No new "standard support" missionaries were sent, although a number of new categories and programs were created which, from the point of view of "traditional" missionaries seemed not to have been thoroughly thought-through for long-term viability and sustainability.

After much insistence, patterns of conversation began to be developed. These patterns now include a tradition of semi-annual meetings before the beginning of the actual directors' meetings which includes representatives of UMMA, Mission Personal Program Area staff, Mission Personnel Committee directors and the treasurer of the GBGM. Many may wonder what can be accomplished over lunch. My own response is that much has been accomplished, not the least of which is the growth of a mutual sense of trust and respect. There have also been concrete matters of concern raised and dealt with over lunch, if not decided there.

Whereas we often encountered an apparently intentional lack of flow of information concerning "standard support" salaries and benefits or pension annuity rates previously, we now encounter an open exchange and reporting about plans for salaries and pensions. It is now an agreed point of reference (though not yet a policy or goal) that we together hope for an annuity rate for "standard support" missionaries equal to 1 per cent of the denominational annual compensation for clergy, we see annual increases of significance being scheduled each year, and we find that "standard support" salary increases are now linked to increases of pay for staff in New York. Specific issues with other benefit schedules are reviewed as they arise. Among them was a quick correction of oversights in reimbursements of Medicare B premiums for retired "standard support missionaries who had been unaware of their eligibility for the same, despite the clear references in the Missionary / Mission Personnel Handbook.

Despite the continuing awareness that the directors have been designated to oversee the work of the board, rather than either staff or missionaries or other employees of the church, our most recent luncheon conversation also demonstrated a readiness for common conversation about missional issues bearing down upon our church from secular and religious sources. Our UMMA Statement of Concern of October 2006 has apparently been welcomed by certain directors and staff alike and a discussion of providing mutual

support in “speaking the truth to power” was initiated and carried not only by missionaries present, but also by directors and staff. Howard Heiner’s input to our conversation was also welcomed by staff and directors. And a specific request was made by the GBGM staff that UMMA should provide an invitation to the Mission Forum and Gathering in August in Evanston in each board meeting participant’s mailbox. This was accomplished.

For the first time in my own experience, guests present at the Mission Personnel Committee meeting were matter-of-factly included in the discussion of matters before the directors. While UMMA had no specific issues to present, the atmosphere of the meetings has changed.

It is also of note that it has become habit for organizers of the board meeting to seek out information on the presence of the delegation from UMMA and prepare the president of the meeting to introduce them by name. Missionaries have also been given assigned seats at the opening missionary banquets, where they were previously offered the opportunity to fill in the empty seats at the table. While it is still true that directors, staff, and press each have their own name badges in red, blue and green, while missionaries have no special identification, but are grouped as “guests” with white badges, the welcome extended to “guests” has warmed considerably!

It is important to note, of course, that 2008 is the year for reconstituting all the boards and agencies. Next year’s board of directors will have a different make-up. Whatever role UMMA members may play in electing the new directors (or accepting election) may make a difference in the transparency and openness with which our concerns are met for the next four years. However, current staff are certainly open to our concerns and supportive of concrete needs of missionaries in general and active and retired “standard support” missionaries in particular! [*Continued after article 7 on page 7*]

[3] **Beyond UMMA’s First Decade** by Jim Gulley, interim chair

A decade might, in some cases, seem like an eternity. For a 10-year old, it is a lifetime. When the pace of change moves too slowly for our taste, we might mumble, "It seems like decades since we began this effort"! One decade ago, some of our illustrious missionary colleagues envisioned the United Methodist Missionary Association as a missionary voice into mission policy and programs of The United Methodist Church through the General Board of Global Ministry (GBGM). Jim Dwyer has succinctly highlighted some of the achievements of UMMA in its first decade.

Having navigated the tides of changing finances and GBGM leadership, we now ask ourselves the question: Is UMMA prepared to live out its purpose and fulfill its objectives more fully in its second decade? I believe to do so requires some changes in UMMA. Recall UMMA's official purpose and objectives.

Purpose: To develop and nurture a vital connectional network among active, inactive and retired missionaries of the GBGM/UMC and its mission organizations and their predecessors for the purpose of promoting Christian mission.

Objectives: - to deepen a sense of community and mutual support among missionaries in active, inactive and retired relationships with the GBGM, other UMC mission organizations and their predecessors;
- to provide practical methods for members to share concerns and propose solutions that address the policies and goals of the mission bodies;

- to engage in related activities in accordance with the purpose.

I envision two essential changes. First, greater involvement of active missionaries in UMMA and involvement of others committed to mission in and through the United Methodist Church. Is UMMA prepared to widen the conversation and capable of engaging a broader audience of active missionaries and others? In what ways can UMMA facilitate both a wider audience and a deeper conversation of mission issues?

Second, the GBGM must continue to open itself to conversation with this broader missionary and mission-driven community about substantive mission issues and its changing role as a channel of mission of The United Methodist Church. Is the GBGM prepared to embrace its own missionary community and others in substantive dialogue on the changing nature of mission in the world today?

The GBGM will, of course, speak for itself. It is encouraging that key leaders of the GBGM will participate in the Global Mission Gathering and Forum at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, August 5-8. Additionally, the GBGM will hold its first missionary consultation at Stony Point later in August 2007. Missionaries must be well prepared to begin this expanded conversation with the GBGM.

UMMA's Steering Committee members have begun some self-examination. We pass those questions along to all UMMA members for their reflection, input and additional questions for us as a whole missionary community: 1) What goals should be UMMA's primary focus at the beginning of its second decade? 2) What actions should UMMA take to pursue those goals effectively? 3) What (new) commitment are members of the missionary community willing to make to ensure that UMMA serves as an effective voice of missionaries and facilitates a broader, deepening conversation with the GBGM on mission issues?

Is UMMA capable of mobilizing the voices of the greater missionary community to engage in this ongoing conversation? Are newer, active missionaries interested in this conversation? When consultations with missionaries are convened, are retired and inactive missionaries prepared to participate? And beyond talk, are missionaries prepared to move from conversation to action that reflects a (re)new(ed) engagement in mission?

The GBGM have indicated they will establish offices in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This move could very well be the beginning of sharing its leadership in mission more effectively with mission partners around the globe. Let us interpret these moves as an increased awareness of the need for a broader conversation and participation in all aspects of mission by all mission partners, including the GBGM missionaries – past, present and future.

Let us take advantage of the coming opportunities to engage the GBGM leadership in a conversation on the direction of mission within The United Methodist Church and the role of the missionary community. Stop, think and pray: How is God calling me to renewed engagement in mission today?

[4] OUR READERS WRITE

Thank you, Jim [Gulley], for your willingness to serve as the interim chairperson and for your three very helpful reflection questions. Perhaps our August gathering will offer UMMA more specific guidelines. Hopefully the Mission Gathering can influence the broader mission strategy and missiology of the UMC. This is something that UMMA's Statement of Concern attempted to do, but has not yet accomplished. Perhaps the August

meeting could conclude with a legislative proposal to General Conference. - Phil Wingeier-Rayo pwingeier@pfeiffer.edu

Thank you Richard, The readings are always uplifting and very informative and I look forward to receiving them. - Becky Harrell, Iquique, Chile www.emana.org

Dear Manong Ric: Thanks for your UMMA Update. It provides me the latest news from almost everywhere related to the church. For all those news and comments we really praise God. Anacleto Guerrero, Philippines revagg@aya.yale.edu

Dear Richard, Thanks for the update. We have been blessed by your messages and realize how we are connected in the Body of Christ. I'm very sorry for the delay on my membership. I'm mailing my cheque to Fred. - Tshala Mwengo, Kitwe, Zambia

Dear Ric, Our Golden Reunion of 1957 "3s" at Pilgrim Place was great. What a pleasure to get reacquainted and share memories and hopeful goals after five decades! - Pat Patterson

[5] **MEDITATION** by Pat Patterson

"Even the Dogs: The Challenge of Building Inclusive Community"

Delivered at the opening worship of the 50th Year Reunion of 1957 of Short-term, Three Year Missionaries at Pilgrim Place, Claremont, California on March 23, 2007.

Recently I've been thinking and speaking about shalom, a reality so much at the heart of Jesus' ministry. In the Hebrew scriptures *shalom* was a concept of comprehensive justice, peace, and well-being. For Jesus, too, it was healing and wholeness, inclusiveness and community, peace and reconciliation, right relationships with God and among human beings. In these moments I want to focus on community.

In the days of our youth we were people who had the immense privilege of crossing boundaries and entering into community with people afar. For five decades we have all in one way or another been enriched by and involved in communities of various kinds, playing many creative roles. I believe that we are still uniquely called to build and support inclusive, just, and peaceful community wherever we are.

In an era when pre-emptive war shows total disregard for human life, when prisoners are tortured and imprisoned without trial, when fighting terrorism becomes the excuse for denying the humanity of not only certain suspects but many innocents around them, when spending for war and the military deprives the poor of essential benefits, when disregard for the environment threatens all life on our planet, the challenge to build just and peaceful community worldwide and at home is immense.

I've been pondering Jesus' encounter with the woman described in Matthew 15:21-28. This is an often jolting story.

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon. But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Here is a woman, an outsider, a desperate mother, who challenges Jesus to include her in the circle of his caring. Jesus has a legitimate mission to his own people, and he is pushed and pulled on every side. Often, like him on this occasion, it seems easier for us to stay within the traditional limits, easier to care for our own, and ignore the needy other. The disciples want to send the woman away.

But Jesus is persuaded by the Syro-Phoenician woman's faith. She recalls him to God's broad compassion and love for all people. One part of shalom is building inclusive and embracing community. It is the breaking down of racial, gender, ethnic, and national walls. The woman's faith persuades Jesus to hear this foreigner's plea and attend to her daughter. The early Christian community grew and was appealing and vital because it embraced the outcasts and the foreigners. We who are Christians, and our churches, are called to work constantly for the well-being of the whole creation and for life-sustaining community among all persons and nations.

Today here at home we are confronted by two more complex issues that require our best thinking and our most faithful walking in the steps of Jesus. These are issues of humane and just immigration policies and issues of inclusion of gay, lesbian, and other sexual minorities. There are hurting and excluded people today who are challenging us with "even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table."

Generous and open community characterizes the message of Jesus, testifies to Shalom, and brings the church into faithful being. It is, furthermore, the continuation of our mission engagement, a lifelong trust to which we were called 50 years ago and find ever more compelling in this critical time. May God continue to involve and use us!

*Editor's note: Pat has written the study guide in the back of the book, **Shalom, Salaam, Peace**, by Rev. Dr. Allison Stokes. It is the spiritual life study book for United Methodist Women. Launched last year, it will continue to be used. The book deals with the urgency of interfaith understanding for peacemaking, some hindrances to peace, and keys to achieving peace, justice, and equality. It is a timely study given the state of our world today, especially the devastating war with Iraq. The book is \$7 and available from the Women's Division. www.missionresourcecenter.org/wdstore*

[6] **GBGM Steps up Missionary Recruitment**

Stamford, CT, April 24, 2007. The United Methodist Church is launching a long-term missionary recruitment campaign.

"We need missionaries," the Rev. R. Randy Day told directors of the General Board of Global Ministries at the opening of the mission agency's semi-annual meeting in Stamford, CT. on April 23. Day is chief executive of the international mission and service agency.

The campaign theme is: "The Face of Today's Missionary: Is It Yours?" Personnel are needed for work in evangelism, church development, education, medical care, agriculture, legal services, and financial administration. A majority of assignments are outside the United States.

"Our recruitment initiative is quite broad," Day said. "It covers regular, or 'standard support,' missionaries as well as persons in special categories, including short-term young adult service, Hispanic ministries, and our Church and Community Workers program. It also includes a new category, Global Health Missionaries, which is currently focused on sub-Saharan Africa."

Extensive information on the recruitment campaign in five languages can be found on the

website at www.ummissionaries.org Language choices are English, French, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Day indicated that there is no numerical goal for the campaign. "While we need new personnel in the immediate future, we are thinking long-range. We need to cultivate people with a mission call, to help young people make the educational choices that will equip them for mission, and to identify existing professionals who may want to use their talents and skills in missionary service," he said.

[7] **MISSIONARY REUNIONS in 2007**

*May 29-31 at Northwestern College, St Paul, MN, the **1948 Japan/Korea short-term missionaries Reunion**, celebrating 59 years as the first group of short-termers.

*May 31-June 3, the **Japan Mission Connection Reunion** will be held at the same place with an ecumenical group of missionaries who have served in Japan since WW-2.

*July 6-8 **Liberia Reunion**, Lake Junaluska, Wilfred Boayue sboayue@bellsouth.net

*Aug. 3-5, 2007 Join 6th **Congo Reunion**, Lake Junaluska, Starts with dinner Aug. 3 and ends with lunch on Aug. 5, Bill Harvey harvey@raex.com

*Aug. 5-8 **Mission Gathering & Forum with time for India, Philippines and SE Asia Reunions** at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL. Please see contact information below in article [9].

*Oct. 5-7, 2007 **Brazil Reunion**, Lake Junaluska, Janet Spencer jane.bob@verizon.com

*Nov. 14-17, 2007 **Fourth Gathering of Stony Point Class of 1967** Big Island, Hawaii, Dr. Mona Bomgaars mbomgaars@hawaii.rr.com

[UMMA Participation... *Jim Dwyer continues his article 2 from page 3*]

In addition to the question of our relationship to staff and directors of the GBGM, there are a number of internal developments in our organization that we should not overlook as we reflect on our short but significant history. Ric Schwenk, our excellent PR man and editor of our widely-read "Update" summarized several of them in a recent e-mail as we were helping Jim Gulley reach the decision to accept interim leadership of UMMA.

Here, slightly edited, is Ric's summary of our progress as an organization:

1. Our membership rose to nearly 400 in 2006, despite a declining number of active and retired "standard support" missionaries.
2. UMMA leaders are invited with increasing frequency to give presentations to missionary reunions and the response is quite positive.
3. Our advocacy for transparency in administration of the Collins pension and health plans in favor of the intended beneficiaries and the willingness of Treasurer Roland Fernandes to keep us in the picture is well appreciated.
4. The Missionary Personnel Committee of GBGM directors finally recognized UMMA participants and gave us a chance to speak on issues at their October meeting in Stamford. Some may feel there is still a long way to go though for real dialogue. Maybe we do need to become "official" at the 2012 General Conference.
5. Most of the directors and bishops now receive our **UMMA UpDate** e-bulletin and some send their thanks from time to time.
6. The Mission Gathering and Forum is a good start to pull many groups together this coming August in Evanston (Metro Chicago).

As I leave office as chair, I would like to recall once more the service of Howard and

Norma before me, wish all the best for Jim Gulley as my immediate successor, and acknowledge that even more important than the chair's leadership is the work of the coordinator. We have been fortunate to have had such faithful coordinators as Gil Bascom who set up the office and did the day to day administration and Fred Price who keeps doing the necessary administrative work, alongside all his pastoral duties, to keep things running smoothly. Of course, each of our task-forces has also contributed much, some in an immediate and limited way, others over the long haul, most especially the Communications Task Force under Ric Schwenk's leadership.

[8] **COORDINATOR'S CORNER by Fred Price**

Most times this space is taken up with requests for people to send in their membership dues. This month, however, I want to report on our current membership statistics. Please, remember that our goal for this year is to reach and surpass 400 members. As of today, May 15, 2007 we have a total of 275 persons who have paid their dues. Of that number 215 are full members (members who vote) and 60 are affiliate members (members who do not vote). We have seven new members and seven who have renewed their membership after an absence of three or more years (three of those after an absence of five years). It is a good start. Thanks to those of you who have sent in your dues and those of you who are in the process of doing so. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Mission Gathering in August.

----- Please fill out now, cut off here, and send to the address below -----

Your Name: _____ Spouse's Name: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Individual Member = \$25.00, Couple = \$50, Affiliate Memberships = \$15.00

Please make checks payable to: "UMMA" and mail to:

Fred W. Price, Coordinator, 165 Grandview Avenue, Pitman, NJ 08071 USA

[9] *This is your invitation to come join the -*

MISSION GATHERING & FORUM

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

2121 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201

August 5 – 8, 2007

Opening plenary Sunday evening, August 5 at 7:00 PM in the chapel at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Music by Joline Bestounes and Stephen Edwards of Community UMC in Naperville followed by Bishop Roy E. Sano speaking on "Biblical Basis for Mission". Program ends at 12 NOON August 8. The annual UMMA meeting is scheduled from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

Housing:

Loder Hall Dormitory Housing on Campus Forty-five rooms at \$186 for three nights for single or double occupancy (Thus, 2 persons would divide this and pay only \$93 each for three nights. If only one in the room the room rate is still \$186). No AC. Bathrooms down the hall. (dormitory style housing). Reservations for dormitory are made on the form below.

Best Western Hotel: Garrett Event Rates \$99 per night plus taxes (about 15-20 minute walk). Parking additional. Limited number of reserved rooms available until July1, 2007. Call Best

Western Hotel at 847-491-6400 and ask for the Mission Gathering and Forum group. Airport Express to the Hotel \$22; Taxi, approximately \$35.

Hotel Orrington: \$119 per night, plus taxes (about six blocks from campus). Limited number of reserved rooms available until July 1, 2007. Parking additional. Call 888 677 4648, contact Group Reservations and ask for the Mission Gathering and Forum at Garrett-Evangelical. From O’Hare call American Taxi at 847-673-1000 – Cost \$25.

Other Hotels in the area may be less expensive but farther away.

Wheelchair participants will have an elevator to reach chapel meetings.

Travel: By train: Blue line from airport to downtown, then red line and then purple line to Evanston City Center. Garrett is about eight blocks away from the train station. If driving, parking at Garrett is limited and will cost at least \$5 per day.

Food: \$105 for full three days (\$35 per day). Includes entree for evening meal, continental style breakfast and executive style bag lunches. Limited options for food preferences. Otherwise, meals on your own at cafeteria at Northwestern, a 10 minute walk away.

----- Please fill out, cut off here and send to Richard Vreeland -----

REGISTRATION FORM

For details & forms click: <http://www.umma-global.org/pdf/gathering.pdf>

Name of delegate: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ___ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Health Insurance Carrier: _____

Plan #: _____ Policy #: _____

Affiliation (Check all that apply): NADAM, NCVIM, UMMA, India Reunion
 SE Asia Reunion, Philippines Reunion, Other (please name) _____

Housing:

Hotel – I will reserve and pay for my own hotel room.

Loder Hall Dormitory (Rm. total = \$186. Roommates name: _____)

<u>Item:</u>	<u>Loder Hall or</u>	<u>hotel</u>
Registration per person – Non-refundable	35.	35.
Food per person (Refundable until May 1, 2007)	105.	105.
<u>Dormitory (Total for 1 or 2 participants per room)*</u>	<u>186.</u>	<u> </u>
Total =	326.	140.

Payment: Make check payable to: **Trinity UMC** with \$326 for Loder Hall option, *or* \$140 if you reserve & pay for your own hotel room. PLEASE SEND TO:

Richard Vreeland, 182 Ameren Way – Apt. 752, Ballwin, MO 63021-3317, USA

Information on registration Tel: (636) 825-6351; email: RLVreeland@sbcglobal.net