

UMMA UpDate #56, January 22, 2008
e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
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"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"

Advent-Epiphany issue:

- [1] Bittersweet Moving On of Our Esteemed Coordinator
- [2] Reflections from the GBGM/Missionary Mini-Consultation
- [3] Search Committee Members for the GBGM General Secretary Announced
- [4] Levi Bautista is Elected President of "CONGO"
- [5] Our Readers Write
- [6] Missionary Reunions in 2008
- [7] Chair's Corner: Back on the Chopping Block
- [8] The Coordinator's Corner "Lift high the name of the Christ"
FLASH! Richard Vreeland is our new UMMA treasurer
- [9] This is Your Invitation...

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[1] ***Bittersweet Moving On of Our Esteemed Coordinator*** by Jim Gulley

The Reverend Fred Price, current UMMA coordinator, has been selected and has accepted the position of executive secretary for itineration, Mission Personnel, General Board of Global Ministries, effective January 28. With mixed feelings, we offer our congratulations! I feel the loss we will soon experience, but I also feel joy that Fred has the opportunity of this new challenge. With his missionary experience, his exceptional listening and many other relevant skills, Fred will help to make the itineration position an effective and valuable resource within GBGM. Undoubtedly, he will be central in the task of re-thinking how itineration should be done in the immediate future.

Fred has done an exceptional job as UMMA Coordinator over the past four+ years since taking over from Gilbert Bascom. Fred has modestly described his job as "maintaining lists". Not only has Fred kept track of lists, but he has also communicated with all who pay their membership dues, tracked receipts and expenditures and made arrangements for our annual meetings. He has done everything thoroughly and in good time. On behalf of the whole UMMA Steering Committee, I want to recognize him for his outstanding work and express our thanks for the excellent job he has done. It has been a pleasure to work with him. May God bless him in his new role.

Now that we have said good-bye to Fred, we need to say "HELLO!" to a new Coordinator. Could that be you? We need to find another exceptional person to take on the Coordinator position. Please send your nominations of persons that you think could step up and take on this important task for UMMA. Volunteers are also welcome. Take time to give thought and prayer to UMMA's need and then send your nominations to Jim Gulley: jim.gulley@comcast.net.

[2] Reflections from the GBGM/Missionary Mini-Consultation by Jim Gulley

The GBGM/Missionary Association Mini-Consultation provided an opportunity for three missionary associations to meet together with General Board of Global Ministries staff for the first time since August 2004. We met at Stony Point, NY, December 3-4. Although the 24-hour event was too short to address all issues in depth, we were able to meet our National Association of Deaconesses and Missioners (NADAM) and Church and Community Workers (CCW) missionary colleagues in person, learn of their unique interests and concerns and find some common ground for working together with GBGM.

GBGM staff from Mission Personnel, Mission Context and Relationships, The Advance and Treasurer's Office provided briefings on GBGM programs and addressed the many questions raised by the missionary association representatives. Unfortunately, due to canceled flights (Wendy Rhodehamel) and end-of-semester commitments (John Peterson) no Board of Director members were present.

There will always be two major tracks to conversations between the associations and the GBGM. One track concerns the relationship of missionaries as employees: terms of service, performance of duties, care and well-being of missionaries, etc. The second track concerns missionaries as unique resources with valuable experience to contribute to (re)visioning mission with and through GBGM – especially in this time of transition to new leadership, to provide ongoing input into the development of programs and policies of GBGM and to interpret GBGM's engagement in God's mission through Jesus Christ.

We are grateful for the openness that we have experienced in recent meetings that reflect, we believe, GBGM's desire to tap resources within the missionary community in new ways. The most immediate example is the agreement to coordinate a Mission Forum led by the missionary associations with the (annual, we hope) Global Mission Personnel Conference. We envision that a coordinated forum-conference could bring together a broad spectrum of mission-oriented United Methodists to reflect on and (re)kindle the spirit of mission within the broader church.

We urge GBGM to broaden our semi-annual luncheon conversations and to include all three missionary associations along with other key GBGM program areas. Let us begin now to focus on how to mobilize United Methodist missionary resources to "tell the story" of GBGM's engagement in God's mission through Jesus Christ. We propose the following steps and are consulting with our colleague associations to reach agreement on this or some alternative steps forward in working together with GBGM:

March 2008 GBGM Board Meeting – Form a Planning Team (CCW, NADAM, UMMA, GBGM) to define possible themes and sub-topics of a 2009 Mission Forum.

August 2008 Co-host (Deaconesses taking the lead) a Mini-Forum on a "Theology of Commissioning" in coordination with Global Missionary Personnel Conference + Meeting of the 2009 Mission Forum Planning Team

October 2008 GBGM Board Meeting + Introduction of Missionary Associations to new Board Members + Meeting of 2009 Mission Forum Planning Team

April 2009 GBGM Board Meeting + Meeting of 2009 Mission Forum Planning Team

August 2009 Joint Mission Forum and Global Mission Personnel Conference (theme to be determined)

We challenge you to think together with us on ways to mobilize the whole missionary community of the United Methodist Church! We challenge you to define who is “the whole missionary community of the UMC”

Grace and peace, Jim Gulley, Fred Price and Hugh Frazer, Chair, Coordinator and Member, United Methodist Missionary Association

Following are selected highlights of the Mini-Consultation discussions:

1. GBGM is working with other agencies to provide leadership for the United Methodist Church on the four proposed quadrennial goals (2009-2012): leadership development, church growth, ministry with the poor, and global health. GBGM leads on addressing poverty. Work remains before the General Conference votes on these proposed goals. Programs will be constrained within the proposed \$245 million 4-year budget for GBGM.

2. “Telling the Story” – is seen as the best way to increase support for GBGM: Covenant Relationships, The Advance and the Funds Development Office are central to GBGM’s story telling.

GBGM could tap missionary expertise in mission theology (Evanston 2007 Mission Forum), global health (deaconesses) and interpretation (e.g., Schools of Christian Mission, model of Paul Jeffrey) and other areas. “GBGM needs to re-focus its time and energy”, one staff member suggested. It’s not yet clear how and where the focus should be. There is hope that the next General Secretary will bring new vision. The new Mission Personnel Itineration Executive will also have a significant role to play.

3. All agreed that coordinating a Mission Forum with the Global Mission Personnel Conference would be valuable to missionaries. UMMA is not planning any Forum in 2008. NADAM and CCW will explore providing leadership for a mini-forum on “Theology of Commissioning” in association with the GMPC. Association representatives will discuss further.

4. Jorge Domingues, Mission Contexts and Relationships, addressed a question of priorities – GBGM’s priorities are formally proposed through the Mission Development Committee (MDC). Africa has received increased funding priority in the past two quadrennia (Africa Development Fund). The New Mission Initiatives are a priority for Mission Personnel, while funding comes mostly through conference and local church partnerships. Missionaries are increasingly drawn from a global pool.

5. Roland Fernandes, General Treasurer, stated that “... the goal [of his office] has been to raise the [pension] rate as much as [GBGM] could without increasing unfunded liabilities” moving toward the goal of 1% of the DAC. Collins Pension Funds might be

moved under management of the General Board of Pensions, which manages over \$16 billion and has historically produced good returns on investments. There is presently no longer a concern of having to book future unfunded liabilities since all increases will be covered by available plan funds or contributions to the plan.

6. UMMA's request for dental coverage maximums to be increased will be considered.

7. Shawn Bakker, the Director of The Advance, outlined some of the changes that are underway, including: establishing core values, setting goals and initiating new application processes and timelines to reduce the gap between application (deadline April 1, 2008) and (potentially) receiving funds (Jan 1, 2009). There was a lot of interaction with questions and suggestions.

8. The process of selecting a General Secretary for GBGM is underway. No one present, including staff, had seen a list of the Search Committee Members. Association members believe that the list should be made public.

[The Search Firm led by Joyce Lapenn receives applications, conducts background checks and forwards candidates to the Search Committee. The Committee is scheduled to conduct interviews twice in February (earlier and later). The goal is to have a candidate by the March board meeting. On January 10, 2008, Bishop Martinez sent a memo to all GBGM directors with the names of the General Secretary Search Committee. See separate article below.]

9. With new GBGM directors beginning in the Fall of 2008 UMMA will need to communicate who we are – UMMA's purpose, priorities and activities. We must request through the Cabinet any special activities we might propose that would take place during the Board meeting. *Please find the Edited Note on the Action & Reports page of UMMA Website: <http://www.umma-global.org/actions.html>*

[3] **GBGM General Secretary Search Committee Members Announced**

Bishop Joel N. Martinez, GBGM president, announced on January 10, the members of the Search Committee for a new General Secretary. They are as follows: Aida Irizarry-Fernandez; Alfred Maloney; Andreas Staempfli; Amy Bowers; Bishop Benjamin Justo; Bishop Joel N. Martinez; Courtney Harvey; Daniel Soliz; Denise Honeycutt; David Wilson; Emily Innes; Grant Hagiya; Irene Kabete; James Mooneyhan; Pat Weeks; Maggie Jackson; Mary Baldrige; Marilyn Zehring; Robert Lockaby, Jr.; Richard Shinhoster; and Timothy Bias.

Bishop Martinez asks that the Board and others concerned "keep the Search Committee (individually and collectively) in your prayers. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact a Leader of the Search Committee: Bishop Joel N. Martinez at bishop@umcswtx.org ; James Mooneyhan at jmooneyhan@mindspring.com ; or Maggie Jackson at mag.jackson@csuohio.edu ."

Let us all pray for the members of the committee as they carefully consider the candidates.

[4] LEVI BAUTISTA IS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF "CONGO"

The Rev. Liberato "Levi" Bautista, assistant general secretary of the United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS), has been elected president of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO). He is in charge of GBCS's United Nations ministry and was elected at CONGO's 23rd General Assembly, held last month in Geneva, Switzerland. He will serve through 2010. He is a graduate of Thoburn Memorial Academy, one of the first Methodists high schools in the Philippines. He was also a leader in the national UMYF and in the National Council of Churches.

CONGO is an independent, international, non-profit membership association of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) founded in 1948. It facilitates the participation of NGOs in United Nations debates and decision making. CONGO is most active at the major UN centers of New York, Geneva and Vienna, but its work stretches out to all regions of the world.

Bautista declared in his acceptance speech: "Our world demands transformative energies that will improve the lot of many of the world's poor and marginalized [to help them] on their own account through participation in their own development, and with our solidarity and accompaniment." For more information, go to www.ngocongo.org

[5] OUR READERS WRITE

Please pray for me as I execute my duties and shuttle between New York, Geneva and Vienna and other places around the world in the next three years on behalf of CONGO. This of course is on top of my UMC-GBCS duties. *Dios ti agngina*-Thanks again, Levi Bautista

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Last month the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church at its semi-annual meeting once again declared war incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ, and called on leaders of all nations to begin an immediate and full withdrawal of troops from Iraq. But, once again, can the call be heard by a society possessed by a primary faith in economic and military power? Fifty-seven years ago President (General) Dwight Eisenhower solemnly warned us that our greatest enemy is the military-industrial complex whose victory has recently appeared as *Pax Americana*. How shall we celebrate the Birth of the Child who taught: "Blessed are the peacemakers" for all the world? Let us cry out "Hosanna," come quickly, justice and peace for everyone! - Elbert Wethington, 4309 Sunny Ct., Durham NC 27705

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Thanks, Richard, for all the updates. God be praised for all the efforts and ministries of those who have dedicated themselves to the glory and honor of God. We had a grand celebration of the Centennial of our Union Theological Seminary, with over 1000 attending. God bless, Rev. Anacleto G. Guerrero, Philippines.

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With the help of the GBGM, I was interviewed from our site by a professional journalist. The recording is now being featured on the home page of the GBGM Website. Please

"click" on: www.gbgm-umc.org . You can download it for later sharing with your church and mission committee. These are free opportunities to learn more about our project and we thank the people at GBGM for making it possible. Please use the IPOD for any group or committee in your church so that they can get our latest news.

Tshala reports that he has been very busy planting our maize crop and that it is mostly planted. We will be starting on the soybeans, sunflowers and potatoes soon. The chickens are laying over 1300 eggs per day, now, and our pigs, goats and cattle are doing well. The peaches are coming ripe and we have sweet corn in the garden. I will be glad to be back at Mujila Falls, Zambia. In Christ, Paul L. Webster

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Stan Moore sent me a copy of the update which I have just read and appreciate your work in getting it out to us. Sincerely, Frances Bray, Pilgrim Place, Claremont, CA

[6] MISSIONARY REUNIONS IN 2008

July 25 – 27 Korea Reunion at Lake Junaluska. Includes all denominations meeting together with breakout time for United Methodist related missionaries. Contact Gene Matthews: genematt@mchsi.com or phone: 319-358-9464

Aug. 8-11 Philippine Missionary Reunion of UMC missionaries & friends at St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO. Contact Gloria Coltharp: adaptiveservices@mindspring.com

[7] Chair's Corner: Back on the Chopping Block by Jim Gulley

Before I depart for Cambodia today, I want to share my space with you.

UMMA needs additional leadership and membership. Some have said that with the numbers of missionaries decreasing (natural attrition and through reduced ranks of the incoming), UMMA is bound to shrink. Shrinkage is not inevitable. Although we may experience decline in body and mental functions as we grow older, our spirit and commitment can remain alive and strengthened, through God's grace. UMMA may, I believe, become even more vital to mission in and through the United Methodist Church and the General Board of Global Ministries in the years ahead. I have two requests:

1) ALL MEMBERS: Consider throwing your hat into the ring to be on the Steering Committee and / or to serve in a leadership role. We are shifting responsibilities among those positions and invite you to consider serving. We are grateful.

2) STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Contact every active missionary within your region of responsibility and find out how their work is going, what support they are receiving and might need. Be sure to include newly commissioned missionaries. We will post their names and contact numbers / addresses on our website. Mark Abbott in Spain has already begun this process. Let the rest of you follow. I will be following up with each of you.

