

UMMA UpDate #63, June 16, 2009
e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
For PDF version click to <http://www.umma-global.org>
edited by Richard Lloyd Schwenk, e-mail: RicSchwenk@earthlink.net

"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"

In this issue:

- [1] Spring Global Ministries Board Meeting: UMMA's Report by Lyda Pierce
- [2] Spring Global Ministries Board Meeting: UMMA's Report by Joyce Hill
- [3] Report on Meeting of GBGM & UMMA Reps in NYC – Nan McCurdy & Jim Gulley
- [4] Changes in Missionary Retirement Benefits Passed by GBGM Directors
- [5] Concerns re: Pension & Retirement Health Care Benefits - McCurdy & Gulley
- [6] Our Readers Write
- [7] Meditation on "To Whom much is given." by the editor
- [8] Missionary Milestones
- [9] Treasurer's Tips by Richard Vreeland
- [10] This is your invitation to join or renew your membership

* * *

[1] Spring Global Ministries Board Meeting: UMMA's Report by Lyda Pierce

The spring board meeting of the General Board of Global Ministries focused most of its energies and time on issues of restructuring and the current economic crisis. As part of the response to the economic crisis, cuts were made to missionary retirement benefits.

Proposals to reduce the cost of missionary pensions and retirement health care plans were presented to the mission personnel and finance committees then to the entire board. Board members were asked to discuss and vote on the proposals without having received copies prior to the meeting for review and reflection. Nor had UMMA representatives received copies ahead of time. Brief discussions were held on each proposal and each passed without changes, after minimal expression of regret that the cuts were necessary because of financial realities. In neither case were details or case studies available which would show the impact of the changes on missionary retiree overall finances and quality of life.

The proposal to change pension benefits was presented as a one page summary as a response to the reduced size of the Collins Fund and a change in the law which now requires GBGM to have pensions fully funded. Part of the proposal providing adjustments in pension based on a missionary's country of citizenship was discussed briefly and explained as a way to provide for a relatively equal standard of living for all missionaries assuming each was retiring to their country of citizenship.

Reductions in health care benefits were presented in several pages of graphs and Jamie Stirling of Stirling & Stirling was present to assist in the explanation. He stated that while the changes do reduce benefits they are still generous compared to what other

denominations are offering. It was also stated that the reductions should not actually represent a large reduction in real dollars to each missionary as it is not an over-all health coverage plan at all, but only a supplemental plan which adds to Medicare coverage. Thus the reductions only represent a cut in a small part of the retiree's actual health care expenses. There was not data available to see what cuts would mean in real dollars for missionaries, only the estimated real dollar savings to GBGM.

A concern was raised about initiating the changes on July 2 of this year which would give current retirees little time to be notified and adjust their budgets, but this was dropped once members were assured that missionaries would be notified immediately after the board meeting and that delaying implementation would reduce the savings.

Another concern was raised about missionaries not from the US who are not covered by Medicare. The board was told that their retirement health care benefits had not been addressed yet.

Another UMMA related matter is that Judi Nebbelink was chosen as the mission personnel committee member to maintain a relationship to UMMA.

The conversations on restructuring took place in executive sessions which meant that non-members, including UMMA representatives, did not participate. A major change in the relationship between the Women's Division and the rest of the board was outlined and approval given for the change to be detailed and brought back to the fall board meeting. In a similar fashion, approval was given to develop a restructure plan for GBGM's work areas, live into the restructure and bring back details for approval at the fall meeting. The part of this restructure that will probably most impact UMMA members is the melding of mission context and relations and mission personnel.

The changes in GBGM program area restructuring were brought to the board by the General Secretary, Ed Paup, as part of presenting the results of an operational audit by an outside company. The report basically said that the internal working culture of GBGM was unhealthy, closed, toxic, and thus urgently in need of change. Parts of these restructure plans will require changes in the Discipline.

UMMA was represented at the spring Global Ministries board meeting by Helen Dwyer (MIR), Joyce Hill (retired), and myself, Lyda Pierce (MIIR, Northeastern Jurisdiction). One or more of us was present at the open plenary sessions and the mission personnel and finance committees. We were given voice at the mission personnel committee but not elsewhere.

[2] Spring Global Ministries Board Meeting: UMMA's Report by Joyce Hill

During this meeting I did not feel an upbeat sense of certainty on the part of many directors who were/are faced with radical changes in the way the board will be structured, priorities set, and directions for the future determined as a result of the executive sessions of the board receiving the report of the Operational Audit. The Women's Division

meeting had just ended before lunch with the approval of changes in its relationship to and funding of the GBGM. So much of their energy was spent dealing in executive sessions with decisions to be made for an unknown future, that the mood was subdued.

During the GBGM plenary sessions I was struck that only officers, with the exception of Francia Francisco, recording secretary, were at the head table. All other staff, including the General Secretary, sat at a back table and, when called upon, spoke from a floor mike. Exceptions were the report of the Board treasurer, a presentation on Ministries with the Poor made by staff (no director participation) and Edith's Gleave's introduction of the presenter of the Mission Witness.

At the opening plenary Lyda and I were introduced and welcomed as the UMMA representatives by Bishop Ough. John Redmond apologized to me for the cancellation of both the luncheon and the time in executive sessions which made any significant conversation with UMMA representatives moot.

Plenary I. The theme of worship, which included Holy Communion, centered on being on a journey, walking together to the rhythm of the heartbeat of God. The President's address also picked up this theme: No Turning Back. (See the GBGM and UMCom websites for this and the actions by the board.)

The remainder of the plenary was in executive session to receive the report of the Operational Audit.

Plenary II. Tuesday morning following a brief worship service, a staff panel presented Ministries with the Poor, one of the General Conference program mandates to the board.

The General Secretary deferred his report so the Mission Witness could be made and in order for the board to use the remainder of the morning in executive session, continuing discussion concerning the report of the Operational Audit.

Plenary III. Tuesday evening the board continued to meet in executive session.

Plenary IV. Reports to the board, including the report of the executive committee, were received and approved, *including the changes to the Collins Pension and Health Trusts recommended by the Mission Personal and Finance Committees.*

Closing worship again emphasized that we are on a journey and asked for strength for that journey. No turning back!

Program Areas/Standing Committees

Mission Education: I was welcomed to the committee, once the staff leader, my old friend, John Nuessle, understood that I did know where I was and that, no, I was not going to Mission Personnel. Other staff, Jorge Lockward, and Jodi Cataldo and Catherine Scott made sure I had copies of all of their materials.

The chairperson, Janet Westerefield, is a friend from last quadrennium and welcomed me in her opening remarks.

Rachel M. Lieder Simeon is the Interim Deputy General Secretary for this group, as well as Mission Contexts and Relationships; so she was not present at this session of the group. I have known her as a former director.

The time in the committee included a staff presentation on how Mission Education ties into the goals and objectives of the Board, the Global Praise (song) program, and leadership development in 4 areas of the world, emphasis on Lithuania with a presentation by one of the leaders of that church. The scheduled discussion among the directors on how to use the information did not happen since they ran out of time.

This is an area UMMA needs to cultivate. There seemed to be an unawareness of UMMA's willingness to be available for the task of mission education. If the UMMA UpDates are not being sent to Rachel, she needs to be put on the mailing list.

Finance: My presence at the Finance Committee was unacknowledged and no materials were made available. I happened to be seated next to Judi Nibbelink, from Tuscon Arizona, < judiannaz@msn.com > who introduced herself to me as the director assigned to UMMA. She was most helpful sharing her duplicate documentation related to the Proposed Changes to the Collins Pension Plan and Collins Retiree Health Benefits Plan Revisions Summary with me, since it was not made available to visitors and most of the time of the meeting was dealing with it.. She had the duplicate copies, having been in the Mission Personnel meeting, and still had them with her.

Jamie Stirling of Stirling Benefits presented the basic information on the changes to the pension and health benefits programs . He emphasized that even with the changes, the plan is much more generous than the plan of any other denomination. Emphasis was on the economic savings as a result of the changes.

At no time did anyone question whether the persons being affected by these changes had been contacted or made aware of pending changes.

The changes will go into effect January 1, 2010 with the exception of the recommendation that vesting in the program at the beginning of the fourth year of service, which will go into effect January 1, 2009 (in other words retroactive!)

General Observations:

1. At the present time I cannot identify anyone in the board treasury who has a vested interest in the pension and health benefits programs so their perspective seems to be on "units" not "persons" in mission.
2. The priority concern and use of time of both staff and directors is going to be how to deal with the recommendations from the Organizational Audit which means that the concerns of the missionary community, and UMMA, can very well be perceived as distractions to the task at hand.

For much more information of the board meeting, check out these three websites which will get you press releases from the board and from United Methodist Communications:

1. GBGB: <http://new.gbgb-umc.org/news/themes/boardmeetings/>
2. Women's Division: <http://new.gbgb-umc.org/umw/news/event/boardmeetings/?C=6237>
3. UM Communications: <http://www.umc.org/site/>

Once on the UMCCom website, click on News and stories to find the stored info on the board meeting filed by Linda Bloom.

[3] Report on Meeting of GBGM & UMMA Reps in NYC - McCurdy & Gulley

Present:

General Board of Global Ministries:

Edward Paup, General Secretary

Edith Gleaves, Deputy General Secretary Mission Personnel

United Methodist Missionary Association (UMMA):

Nan McCurdy, Secretary and missionary

Jim Gulley, Chair and former missionary

Summary

On Tuesday afternoon, June 2, Nan McCurdy and Jim Gulley met Edward Paup and Edith Gleaves to discuss issues outlined by UMMA. Discussions carried over to the morning of June 3, though Edith Gleaves was not present due to other commitments. Questions developed by UMMA's Admin. Council and other UMMA members were reviewed and suggestions added on Monday evening by a small team over dinner at Grace apartments.* The modified set of questions with suggestions guided our discussions for the two days.

Discussions were cordial, open, positive and constructive. Because UMMA had requested the meeting, UMMA representatives carried the weight of the conversation while GBGM staff listened and conveyed that they heard UMMA's questions and suggestions. Following is a summary of the key questions, responses and suggested follow-up actions.

Missionary participation

UMMA raised the question: "What would a participatory strategy or approach that involved all parties [GBGM staff, board members and missionary community] look like?" In recent years, UMMA has provided input to GBGM Board and Staff through luncheons at board meetings, Global Mission Personnel Conferences, mini-consultations, Missionary-in-Residence and a designated board of director's member who serves as a liaison to UMMA. UMMA values these mechanisms and believes some can be strengthened.

UMMA has identified three focal areas that would facilitate a more participatory approach to the life and work of GBGM, including greater missionary presence, voice and input: 1) formal integration of missionary involvement in board meetings; 2) joint development of missionary fora; and 3) development of a ministry of missionary presence, interpretation and hospitality in every annual conference. Following are additional specific suggestions offered by UMMA in our discussions.

Fuller participation in GBGM board meetings - The one and one-half hour in a luncheon setting is too short to examine issues adequately. Further, representation has generally been fairly limited, primarily to Mission Personnel staff, one or two MP Committee Board members and the General Treasurer. In place of luncheons,

UMMA recommends broader, formal participation by missionary community representatives on all board standing committees. Further, UMMA recommends GBGM assist UMMA participation financially. Participation on the Mission Development Committee is particularly significant as it is responsible for goal development.

Missionary Forum - joint development of missionary fora with others in which GBGM staff (GS, executive and program staff) and board members would join missiologists, seminarians and other church leaders (clergy and lay) together explore mission theology and practice.

Plans underway: An opportunity to reclaim the vision and passion of the mission and the missionary movement in the United Methodist Church - **RECLAIMING MISSION: Reflection and Action on Issues of Edinburgh 2010** - Three day mission and missionary conference focusing on mission in the United Methodist Church, Scarritt Bennett Center, Nashville, Tennessee, October 15-17, 2010 - Contact: Norma Kehrberg, kehrbergn001@hawaii.rr.com

Missionary Presence, Interpreters and Hospitality Providers – Reference was made to the article written by Jim Gulley in UMMA UpDate #61 (copy was provided) and how missionaries residing in their annual conferences might be tapped as a resource by GBGM. We noted that our vision fits very well with GBGM’s newly formed Cross-functional Team that will work with Conference Secretaries of Global Ministry (CSGM).

Missionary-in-Residence - Re-assign Missionary-in-Residence to Office of General Secretary in order to give that position increased standing and full access to all program areas of GBGM. Involve MIR in program and policy discussions by sitting in on Cabinet (with voice but no vote), Core Leadership Teams and Personnel Services Team, as well as an open invitation to participate in any GBGM program meetings.

GBGM recruitment of staff with unique mission-related vocational skills, experience, commitment and vision – The number of missionaries hired to serve with GBGM has increased in the past few years, and UMMA applauds that beginning. Most of those hires have been in Mission Personnel. UMMA recommends that GBGM hire additional missionaries into other areas of the Board, tap the unique expertise of current missionary staff more fully and consider requiring substantial missionary experience as a prerequisite for all executive staff.

Observation shared: For the last fifteen years we have perceived an effort of GBGM staff to phase out long-term cross-cultural mission personnel. We believe that longer-term missionaries have an effective and necessary role. Long-term cross-cultural mission personnel knowledge of language, culture and local reality are key to sensitivity, process and effectiveness in the mission setting and should also be more thoroughly utilized by the board in designing and implementing future mission goals. The missionaries are also the GBGM’s primary link and advocates with local churches, and they could also be better utilized to interpret and promote the GBGM with local churches. For most

churches, the only connection or validity they see and feel with the GBGM is in relation to the missionaries and the churches/organizations missionaries are assigned to. The reduction in desire to support the GBGM by churches is directly related to the reduction in number of missionary personnel. They look at the multi-million dollar budget with only 200 long-term missionaries and say “what are they doing with the funds?”

Some other considerations shared:

- * Need for greater commitment to cultural immersion through language acquisition for effective functioning in settings where the language is particularly difficult
- * Maintain focus on empowering national/indigenous Methodist and ecumenical leadership, providing missionary support that is empowering
- * Increase two-way mission service – other countries to U.S.
- * Utilize effective missionary communicators (active, inactive, retired) more fully in itineration to covenant and non-covenant churches, possibly teamed up with national/indigenous personnel

How can GBGM renew its ties with the whole missionary community and sustain a life-long relationship with that community to strengthen the mission education, interpretation, recruitment and outreach of the UMC?

An example of how GBGM loses connections with non-retired, former missionaries: Jim Gulley does not exist in GBGM’s database used for Mission Matters. He would not receive any GBGM communication if the MIR did not manually send him Mission Matters.

Suggestion: GBGM should take the initiative to establish communications & restore relationships with missionaries who have “fallen through the cracks” of the current record keeping system, with the cooperation of UMMA + other associations. Specific steps that could be taken:

- * upgrade and share database information
- * engage Conference Secretaries of Global Ministry (CSGM) to track down and engage missionaries in their conferences; recruit them to interpret and promote GBGM programs and personnel within local churches, districts and conferences; consider forming Missionary Fellowships within annual conferences
- * invest resources in training CSGMs and former missionaries within to engage Conference Boards of Global Ministries, Conference Committees on Missionary Personnel (see suggestions in UMMA UpDate #61)
- * Include Missionary-in-Residence and all Mission Interpreters-in-Residence (through conference calls) on GBGM’s new CSGM Cross-functional Team
- * Utilize the whole missionary community in itineration activities

Follow-up

Participation on Board of Directors Task Forces – UMMA and GBGM representatives all acknowledged that the placement of missionary association representatives on each of the three GBGM Board of Directors Task Forces** provides a

significant mechanism for bringing many of the issues discussed in these meetings into consideration for action, especially pertaining to missionary participation on standing committees.

Fall Mini-Consultation - We proposed follow-up to this meeting with a mini-consultation with broader representation, including Ed Paup and other key staff and Board of Director representatives. Since Ed will not be available the day after the board meeting, we agreed to blend the mini-consultation with the UMMA Annual Gathering on Oct 11-13, 2009. The mini-consultation would likely begin in mid-afternoon through the evening of Oct 11, and if agreed, into Monday morning before the board meeting. Ed indicated he would be available before the board meeting.

Topics: We would receive reports from our three task force members, the ad hoc task force on Re-considering Pension and Health Benefit Changes (if accepted by Cabinet – see changes in Retirement benefits) and the four key areas of expanding involvement of the missionary community (board meetings, missionary forum/for a, missionary presence in annual conferences and Missionary-in-Residence. We agreed to request GBGM share the expense of the mini-consultation: UMMA – transportation; GBGM – rooms & a dinner for all participants.

Inter- and Post-meeting discussions - During the evening of our three days at GBGM, our ad hoc group of UMMA members recounted our daytime discussions, re-formulated our strategy, outlined our positions more fully and took additional actions. We re-drafted the MIR position description based on recent years experience and a review of the original and previous iterations of that position description [draft copy to be posted on web site for comment]. We also formed an ad hoc committee on Re-considering Pension and Health Benefit Changes, tapping primarily persons based at GBGM, including Dakin Cook (Convener), Sara Flores, Dick Vreeland (continuing from the original committee formed by Roland Fernandes), Jim Dwyer and Fred Price.

Other topics discussed but remain on our agenda: Letter of agreements and the “at will” clause; the (in)adequacy of the appeal procedure, appearance of a relative imbalance in domestic vs. international missionaries

Conclusion

Both of us (Nan and Jim) were impressed by how we were received and heard. Both Ed and Edith were active listeners. Ed unequivocally expressed his commitment to improving the atmosphere at the board, transparency and the integration of missionaries in a more integral manner. In addition, during our days of meetings, we corresponded with Bishop Ough concerning his inclusion of missionaries on the three task forces. In one of his responses to our assessment of the meetings we were having, Bishop Ough replied: ***"I am grateful that the discussions went well and that you are sensing our commitment to establish a stronger relationship with the missionary community"***.

We repeat what we stated to Ed in one of our e-letters: ***"Ed, you have opened the door. We are walking through in a spirit of "mutual, collegial respect" and pray for the Spirit of Christ to be at the center of our discussions, decisions and follow-up actions, this week and beyond."***

* Thanks to Lyda Pierce and Jim and Helen Dwyer who graciously opened their apartments to Nan and Jim for three nights, saving several hundreds of dollars in hotel expenses. Lyda, Jim and Helen joined Nan and Jim for extended discussions each night to prepare and to debrief.

* Bishop Bruce Ough received and, in consultation with Ed Paup, accepted the following missionary representatives to serve “as Missionary Association Observer[s]” on the GBGM Board of Directors task forces:

Joyce Hill - task force on matters related to Board governance

Norma Kehrberg - task force on implementing recommendations of the audit

Lyda Pierce - task force on the location of Global Ministries offices.

Confirmed by Bishop Ough: “Observer” means full participation without vote, which is reserved only for official board members.

[4] **Changes In Missionary Retirement Benefits Passed by GBGM Directors** **Please try to read the entire next section which includes changes in retirement benefits and missionary concerns presented to the General Secretary**

At the spring meeting, April 2009, of the General Board of Global Ministries, the directors approved several changes in retirement benefits for missionaries who participate in the Collins Pension Plan.

This is a summary of a complex set of changes as understood by UMMA. Apparently, the board approved a summary of the changes, while details of those changes were (or are) still being finalized by committee. Therefore, this document is neither conclusive nor 100% authoritative, but will hopefully help us understand the gist of the changes.

Changes in Pension Benefits

Changes in pension benefits are to become effective on January 1, 2010.

Already Retired – No change in pension benefits except that the pension rate will be automatically increased each year based on an escalator index.

Active, Withdrawn or Terminated – May retire with full benefits at Social Security retirement age (or at age 62 with 25 years of service) providing they have served more than 3 years as a missionary. Those with less than 25 years of service may take early retirement beginning at age 62, but benefits will be reduced by ½% for each month of early retirement.

Pension rate will be frozen at the rate in effect at that time of leaving service and will start receiving the annual increase based on an escalator index once the retiree starts receiving pension benefits.

Pension rate will be based on the Gross Domestic Product Purchasing Power Parity (GDP PPP) index which links purchasing power of different countries with the U.S. dollar and **will be the rate for the country of citizenship of the missionary at the time of first employment.** There will be a minimum benefit level for countries where the index value is too low. Adjustments may be made when a missionary has dual citizenship, changes citizenship while in active service, or other special circumstances (such as living in exile from one’s country of citizenship). These adjustments would need to be negotiated with the GBGM. Pension change for actives would be effective January 1, 2010, so the years of service till that date would be at the current rate of \$495 per service year. Years served from 1.1.10 on would be based on citizenship at the time.

Changes in Health Benefits

Changes in the health benefits for retirees affects all retirees, current and future, effective July 2, 2009, at least those who are US citizens and/or those living in the US. There is a lack of clarity about those who will not have access to Medicare.

Currently, Stirling & Stirling health care benefits for retired missionaries (with 15 or more years of service) are only supplemental benefits designed to provide help to those on Medicare with additional costs that Medicare does not cover.

I. The new level I plan is for those who retire with 20-24 years of service. Also included are persons with 15-19 years of service who are already retired and those yet to retire who began employment as a missionary before January 1, 1997. Note this change: Those who began employment as a missionary after January 1, 1997 would need 20 years of service in order to receive level I benefits.

II. The new level II plan is for those who retire with 25 or more years of service.

	-----P r e v i o u s P l a n s-----		-----N e w P l a n-----			
		Level I	II		Level I	Level II
Rx Retail & Mail Order		75%	90%	Generic	80%	90%
				Preferred	65%	80%
				Non-Preferred	50%	60%
Medical		75%	90%	Patient balance after Medicare	50%	75%
Hospital	Of \$1,096 owed by patient under Medicare	75%	90%	Medicare covers all but \$1,096 for hospital stays under 60 days	50%	75%
Medicare Part B premium	paid of the \$96.40 per month cost	100%		% paid of the \$96.40 per month cost	50%	75%
Nursing Home Medicare pays nothing	Per month up to max of \$1,000/year of service	\$900	\$1,200	Per month up to maximum of \$500/year of service	\$600	\$900

[5] *Summary of Concerns about Missionary Pension & Retirement Health Care Benefits presented to the General Secretary on June 3, 2009 by Nan McCurdy and Jim Gulley*

1. Financial Questions

If the only reason for the reduction is the current financial crisis, we would ask the Board to commit to an increase in missionary retirement benefits when (and if) the stock market and the US economy improve.

2. Differential Treatment for Missionaries with Other than US Citizenship seems unfair.

Some of us believe there must be a more egalitarian way of reducing pension benefits other than separating missionaries into US and non-US categories.

We have requested a re-consideration of the policy changes adopted by the Board of Directors at the Spring 2009 Board meeting to see if there is a more equitable system. We have proposed a meeting with GBGM leadership and the committee who made the recommendations with expanded representation from the missionary community.

One recommendation we have already made is to “grandfather” in all current missionaries for retiree health benefits and apply policy change requiring 20 years of service to receive health benefits only to new missionaries.

Interim conclusion - UMMA leadership can neither endorse the other changes made to the pension program nor provide adequate recommendations for alternatives until we are able to know all of the assumptions made and the outcomes of the alternative systems. As it stands, the changes made in pension benefits divide our community.

If there is a need now to reduce pension benefits – as the economic situation surely appears to dictate – we believe that all missionaries should carry the burden of a reduction in benefits, not just non-U.S missionaries. Additionally, as stated above, assuming that at some point in the future the stock market will recover and more money will become available, we request a commitment be made to increase benefits for all missionaries.

We are waiting a response from GBGM leadership. We understand the decision about whether or not to reopen the discussion on retirement benefits policy will be made in the GBGM Cabinet. *Note: For a fuller Statement of Assumptions and Responses go to **Actions and Reports** link on UMMA’s website <http://www.umma-global.org>*

[6] OUR READERS WRITE

Ric, Norma and I are "interpreting" this week, with a circle of our UMW and a general UMW in another church presentation of "I Believe in Jesus" – we always include an orientation to GBGM structure and financing, since that's the key to mission for most local churches. I've done a "Theology Comparison" as part of that "show. - Bill Matthews

Hi Ric, If I have not paid my dues, I would like to do so. I am still teaching English in South Korea most of the year, and my son takes care of my business. Please let me know as I thoroughly enjoy the updates. - Leta Gorham

*Dear Leta, Thanks for your quick reply to UMMA UpDate and asking about your dues as well as telling about your work in South Korea. P.S. If there are other missionaries there who would like to receive a *Complimentary Copy* of UMMA UpDate and become members, please have them send me an email: RicSchwenk@earthlink.net A membership form is at the bottom of this issue.*

Hi Schwenks, Many thanks for this UMMA update. I don't recall having received such a thorough one before. Kent & I will check it over carefully, and try to join in as best we can. – Peace/hope/LOVE, Earlene (Hammel) & Kent Hawley

Sorry if I missed out on something, but where is Steve Goldstein now? - Jeannie McGinnis *Dear Jeannie, Others are missing him too. He has just been assigned pastor of Zion's Hill UMC, 470 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT 06897-2198. He sends heartfelt greetings to all. We wish him well.* - Ric

Dear Ric: Always good to hear from you. Be assured that all of us are indebted to you for your faithful and careful work of communication on our behalf. One note for your list of our sisters and brothers who have passed on - Dr. Lenna Belle Robinson, formerly missionary to Korea died at Brooks-Howell Home in N.C. She lives on in Korean society because of her dedicated and fearless efforts on behalf of persons with epilepsy. We are all proud and blessed to have been her colleagues. - Sonia & Dwight Strawn, Methodist Theological University, Seoul, Korea

Dear Ric, Thanks for another excellent report. Am I ever glad for the raise in the dental. I just went to the dentist and with cleaning and some small fillings over \$1000! Now I have another \$1000 for the rest of 2009. Keep up the good work. - Frances Bray

Thanks so much Ric, I will get my dues to you soon. Your UpDate was great, I enjoyed reading what has been going on and will be going on. Blessings, Delaine De Hainaut

To Ric Schwenk, UMMA Newsletter editor: Our Wisconsin Conference Board of Global Ministries enjoyed a brief but cordial meeting with GBGM General Secretary Ed Paup who was in our Wisconsin area in January. Among other things, he said his passions are "poverty, planet, and peace"; that we need to decide if we are going to minister with the poor--or try to eliminate poverty. If the latter, "there are systemic issues that need to be addressed." I couldn't agree more! He also wants to establish a JFON (Justice For Our Neighbors) office outside the U.S. partly to demonstrate that illegal immigration is not just an American problem--also a good idea, I think. - Chomingwen Pond, Menacqua, WI, served in Sierra Leone & Zimbabwe. P.S. Mission Motivation Committee is due to meet soon, so I can ask then if anyone is interested in being on the UMMA e-mail list. I'm glad GBGM recognizes the importance of having people with long-term mission experience outside the country involved in policy making and implementation!

[7] MEDITATION on "To Whom much is given." by the editor

"To whom"... Just type those two words in a Google search and see the amazing biblical, theological, philosophical, sermons and examples you will find based on the text: "To whom much is given, much is expected" - Luke 12:48. It is a mandate to develop talents, intellect or other gifts to benefit not just yourself but others. The most endowed should not moan about doing more than others, but consider it their mission.

Melinda Gates speaking at Harvard at the close of her talk mentioned she was inspired by a growing public interest in social enterprise and philanthropic work, Gates predicted that future solutions would come from the combined work of the private and nonprofit sectors and government institutions. Her organization and others like it, she said, help by shining a light on problems, bringing all parties to the table to talk about solutions, and

funding a variety of efforts. *“Foundations,” she said, “can show a way or a plan [forward].” Another key to success is finding talent that can make change happen. Bringing together people who have unique skills is critical, but so too is identifying where other talent may be found. “You darn well better make sure that wherever it is that you are working on, you are working with the local and the regional people, who understand the culture and understand the nuance and understand how to put these new systems in place.”*

[8] MISSIONARY MILESTONES of Moving On to Glory

October 10, 2008 Margery McWilliams, UMMA member, after 30+ years service in Japan

October 17, 2008 Marian A. Jones Kjera, UMMA member, served 2+ years in Mozambique.

February 20, 2009 Dr. Lenna Belle Robinson would be 105 on May 4. Every county in South Korea has a *Rose Club– Epileptics Anonymous* thanks to the work of Lenna Belle. She found epileptics were isolated in their homes, when she discovered her language teacher, a seminary graduate could not be ordained because of her epilepsy. She started Rose Clubs for them to get education, medicines, and come to know the love of Jesus. The Rose Club motto is *“Just as the thorny rose bush brings forth a lovely fragrant blossom, so the epileptic can have a worth while life”*. Over 80,000 patients with epilepsy learned through Lenna Belle Robinson that Jesus loves them and they can conquer the stigma of epilepsy. Today, in Korea, it is a governmental program. Korean missionaries started Rose Clubs in Nepal where they helped build a hospital at Dolkha. They founded the Nepali Epilepsy Association in 1981. Also there are many young students who came to know her as a mother who helped with tuition and gave them love. from Roberta G. Rice, M.D.

March 12, 2009 Vivian Woodyard, UMMA member, served 19 years in Nigeria.

March 22, 2009 Bienvenida Figueroa, served 18 months in the Dominican Republic

March 31, 2009 James A. Morriss, UMMA member, served 5 ½ years in Bolivia.

April 21, 2009 Edwin Temple, UMMA member, served 10+ years in Malaysia.

[9] TREASURER’S TIPS by Richard Vreeland

Happy 1st days of Summer! 2009 is almost half over and many have not as yet paid their fees for this year. Since I have not received any remittances during the past two months, I guess that it is time for a "gentle" reminder. Please review your check register to see if you have paid. If not, you may use the form below to provide the necessary information when sending your remittance. If you have any questions as to the status of your account, please contact me at: RLVreeland@sbcglobal.net Your e-mail address is

especially important as it provides the fastest and least expensive way of acknowledging your check Thanks for your promptness.

[10] **THIS IS YOUR INVITATION to Join or Renew your Membership**

We hope you will include the work of UMMA in your prayers and consider one of the following **new options for membership**: If you are not yet a member, we hope you like this ***COMPLIMENTARY COPY*** of *UMMA UpDate* and will want to join or keep up your professional membership dues. If you have paid already, Many Thanks.

--- Please fill in this form, cut off here, and send to Richard Vreeland with 2009 dues ---

Your Name (Given, SURNAME):

Spouse's Name (Given, SURNAME):

Address:

City:

State/Province:

Zip:

Country:

Email:

Phone:

Please list the country(s) where you served as a GBGM missionary, including USA:

Professional membership dues payment options. Check one [box]

[] Membership for a couple: \$40.00; [] Lifetime membership for a couple: \$800

[] Individual membership: \$25.00; [] Lifetime membership for an individual: \$500

Affiliate membership (no vote—just interested in mission work & UpDates): \$15.00

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

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