

UMMA UpDate #31, February 28, 2005
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United Methodist Missionary Association
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"Linking mission workers worldwide"

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[1] **Coordinator's Corner** by Fred Price

Coming into the second year of my term as Coordinator, I continue to be awed by the missionary community - active, retired, former and those wonderful people in local churches and across the denomination who are committed to mission. One of the joys of this past year has been to hear from so many people from around the world and across the United States. One of the things I have heard repeatedly is how much people appreciate the *UMMA Update*. I share their appreciation for Ric Schwenk and the others who help to make the *Update* possible.

Membership dues paid to UMMA help to make the *Update* as well as other services possible, e.g., our UMMA website. If you are not yet a member of UMMA, or if you are a member and have not yet sent your dues for 2005, may I encourage you to do so.

You may use the form at the end of this newsletter. Once again, thanks to each one of you. May God bless you.

[2] **UMMA MATTERS** by Norma Kehrberg, Chair

At the UMMA Gathering in October, 2004, there was a desire to encourage Mission Personnel to seek priority time in the April GBGM plenary to lift up the call and role of missionaries in the UMC. UMMA also formed a taskforce of individuals willing to assist Mission Personnel to do this.

Spring Board Meeting

In late January, Edith Gleaves, deputy general secretary of GBGM, wrote to the missionary association leaders indicating what had been agreed by cabinet in regard to the celebratory plenary for missionaries. She said it would include: a service of commissioning of new missionaries and recognition of retired missionaries; missionary witnesses, active and retired would be strategically interspersed throughout the Board meeting, raising awareness of and lifting up missionary calling and service; a missionary retiree will speak in some capacity and there would be a reception for new and retired missionaries. Thus far, the UMMA task force has not been called upon to assist, but we are prepared to assist if needed. (At least two missionaries and UMMA members will be present for the retirement ceremony.)

Links between UMMA and Mission Personnel for Covenant Mission Support

For the past two years, UMMA has been encouraging Mission Personnel to find ways in which retired missionaries could assist in interpretation and to raise support for missionaries. At a meeting in Houston in late January, word has come that the following are possibilities:

a. **Desire** to work with retired/former mission personnel who would be willing to work within the district/annual conference where they reside to speak and raise support for missionaries in the Covenant Support Program. Special need is for missionaries who are not from North America.

b. **Request** UMMA to compile a list of its members who would consider doing this interpretation/support

c. **Mission Personnel Unit** would provide up-to-date information with the need for this type of interpretation support when missionaries will be on home assignment.

d. **MIR office and jurisdictional MIIRs** will work to support the retired personnel for this work by providing them with update and to aid in interpretation.

This information came to UMMA from Glenn Rowley, MIIR in the western jurisdiction and former MIR, who was designated to communicate following the Healthy Churches venue. Missionary Reunions, listed later in this UPDATE, would be an excellent venue to recruit those who may be interested.

If any of you would like to assist in this way please let me know as soon as possible. (Note that some are already doing this.) Please contact Gil Bascom, who has agreed to coordinate this. gbascom1467@earthlink.net

District Mission Celebration Event (Mission Saturation)

Lastly, I learned from Heather Wilson, GBGM Representative in the Western Region, that there is strong encouragement to start a District Mission Celebration Event, fashioned similarly to the former Mission Saturation Event. This would be an excellent way to again mobilize churches for mission. Last Saturday at a Conference Board of Global Ministries meeting in the California-Pacific annual conference, a former pastor at a church in Southern Indiana conference said that his group of churches were challenged to raise \$7000 dollars for mission through a Mission Saturation event and instead raised \$14,000. This show of support for mission might encourage

GBGM to again vigorously recruit, train and send longer term mission personnel, in addition to US-2s, deaconesses and Mission Interns.

UMMA Gathering 2005

Now is the time to begin thinking about the UMMA Gathering for 2005. It will be held in Stamford, Connecticut, from October 9-11, 2005. Plan now to join the UMMA Gathering at which time it is expected that the leadership of UMMA will be in the hands of an active missionary. It is time to move forward in planning the future of UMMA.

Lastly, special thanks to GBGM for providing the *2005 Prayer Calendar* to all active and retired GBGM Mission Personnel. Don't forget to use that wonderful tool of mission. The *Daily Suggester* is also appreciated by all who receive it from Cokesbury.

[3] COLLINS PENSION PLAN UPDATE

UMMA has worked the past years in trying to get more clarification on the Collins Pension Plan and the Collins Benefit Trust. This has been a repeated issue of UMMA's in discussion with staff of the Mission Personnel Unit. It was again discussed with Edith Gleaves during a luncheon meeting during the October 2004 GBGM Board meeting in October.

We were happy to learn that information was sent directly to all active missionaries in December 2004, with the acknowledgment that representatives of the associations had requested this information. Excerpts have been taken from a December 15, 2004 letter by Edith Gleaves and Steve Goldstein concerning the Collins Pension Plan and the Collins Health Benefit Trust.

“In conversation with the representatives of the missionary associations this past summer it was requested that some general information regarding the Collins Funds be presented to our missionary community in a direct communication. The GBGM Treasurer, Roland Fernandez, agreed to do that for us and has offered the following summary. It was, of course, made available at the Fall Board meeting to our directors:

The three funds under Collins are:

- a. The Collins Pension Plan for Missionaries' Trust
- b. The Collins Health Benefit Trust
- c. Collins 'C' Fund

“The Collins Pension Plan as the title suggests is the plan that handles missionary pensions. The market value of assets in this Fund on 1/1/04 was \$ 97,615,450 and based on actuarial evaluation, the Plan is over funded by \$444,191. With a recommended increase to a pension rate of \$420 in 2005 (subject to Directors approval in April), there will be an additional contribution of \$2,537,935 into the Plan to leave it fully funded.

“The Collins Health Benefit Trust handles missionary health benefits. The Market Value of assets in this Trust is \$23,434,584 as of 1/1/04 and a contribution of \$3,211,016 is being made into this plan to leave it fully funded.

“The income that comes from the Collins forest each year is put into the Collins ‘C’ Fund. Transfers out of this Fund are made for support of the Mission Personnel budget and toward the two plans referred above. In 2004, \$5 million is being transferred for the Mission Personnel budget and in 2005 this amount is reduced to four million dollars. In 2004, \$5,748,951 is transferred into the two plans as referred above.”

UMMA hopes that this is just the beginning of future discussions regarding Collins.

[4] MISSIONARY MILESTONES

Note the first two Milestone tributes were submitted by Elizabeth Clarke, who traveled on the same ship to Japan in 1948 with Mary. She was also a colleague of Mario.

November 2, 2004, **Mary Jones** died in Odessa, NY, at age 89. She was a 1948 J-3 who was assigned for three years to Hiroshima Women's College in Hiroshima, Japan. She returned to Japan in 1953 and was director of the Hiroshima Christian Community Center until 1958 when she returned to the U.S. She worked in the Japan grass roots peace movement of that time and also had a great interest in the *buraku*, an outcast group suffering discrimination in Japan. From 1958-1960 she worked part-time as secretary for the Kagawa Memorial Fund and from 1960-80 was a guidance counselor for the Newark City Hospital School of Nursing. In 1980 she founded and became chairperson of the Schuler Interfaith Nuclear Concerns Group and in 1988 led a peace tour of Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, and Hiroshima for members of "the Ribbon," the group which created the "Ribbon of Peace Around the Pentagon" in 1985. (Most of this is from John Krummel's *A Biographical Dictionary of Methodist Missionaries to Japan*.) Mary was always passionate about peace and related issues and never stopped her work in those movements. She became acquainted with Frank Wesley, the artist from India, when he studied in Japan and promoted his works.

November 29, 2004, **Mario Barberi** died in an automobile accident. He was a missionary in Japan 41 years. He worked 1952-1977 on Okinawa, 1977-80 at Asian Rural Institute, 1980-1985 in Tochigi District, and 1985-1992 in Omagari, Akita. He and his wife Joy left Japan in Feb. 1992, and they retired in Vermont.

December 9, 2004, **Edna Mae New Shields** died at age 80. She was married to Edwin W. Shields, Sr. The two were accepted as missionary candidates and spent a year in training at the Hartford Seminary Foundation. They began their missionary career in Burma (now Myanmar) 1953-1965, moving on to Malaysia (1966-1978) and Nepal (1979-1985). Retiring in 1988, they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 2001. Survivors in her immediate family include her husband, a son and a daughter.

[The editor remembers Edna being held hostage for a day in Sarawak while she bravely and patiently witnessed to the troubled man until he gave himself up to the police.]

December 26, 2004, **Florence Ross** (nee **McKay**) **Bain** died at age 71. She served as an A-3 in the Belgian Congo, 1955-1958. During training in Nashville she met Stan Bain, a missionary preparing for Sarawak. After letter writing for three years they were married upon returning to the U.S. In 1962 they were assigned to Sarawak, Malaysia for 10 years. While Stan served as pastor in Hawaii, Florence Bain substituted as a music teacher before becoming the Executive Director of the American Cancer Society on Kauai. Florence sang in the Kauai Chorale and after moving to Oahu, joined the Sweet Adelines, and the Honolulu Symphony Chorus. She directed and sang in various churches choirs. She is survived by Stan, a daughter and a son.

[5] **Missionary Reunions & Gatherings**

June 1-2, 2005 - **The 1948 Japan/Korea J-3's & other former J-3's** will gather at Camp Berachah near Seattle/Tacoma WA. Contact: Elizabeth J. Clarke at 715 Avery Rd. Claremont, CA 91711, Tel 909-624-7455. E-mail: eclarke743@aol.com The program will include "Japan Today" led by Joe and Keiko Stroud (UMC retired 2003) and "Korea Today" featuring Patricia Patterson, (UMC, 1957-1973). Pat went on to become Executive Area Secretary for Japan and Korea, and then became as Coordinator of Japan-North America Commission on Cooperative Mission prior to retirement in 2000.

June 2-5, 2005 - **Japan Mission Connection** (ecumenical) will meet at Camp Berachah, beginning with evening meal and ending with noon meal on Sunday, June 5. The program theme is "Quilt of Faiths." Along with worship, fellowship and conversation, there will be five plenary sessions and discussion featuring speakers John B. Cobb, Alice Cary, Robert Mikio Fukada, and James Phillips. Contact: Gil Bascom, UMC, e-mail: gbascom1467@earthlink.net

June 24-27, 2005 - **India Missionaries Reunion** Venue: Mercy Center, 2039 North Geyer Road, St. Louis, MO 63131-3399 Contact: Carlos A. Welch, 1690 Denver Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70810 Dr. Sarla Chand (nee Lall) will provide an update on the status of and challenges for Christians in India today and the Methodist Church of India. Time for re-connecting, prayer, worship and Bible Study.

July 8-10, 2005 - **Liberia Reunion**, at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Contact: Wilfred and Stella Boayue, 340 Wickerberry Lane, Roswell, GA 30075 Phone 770-649-9373 Email: boayuew72@cs.com

June 23-26, 2006 - **Malaysia, Singapore & Indonesia Reunion** – Fri. to Mon. We will need to know how many want to stay the extra day on Monday before December 2005. Contact Ernest Heard, in Nashville hearde@mail.belmont.edu with cc to Phil Wilson, the new chair; revphilwilson@webtv.net

August 4-7, 2006 - **Philippine Missionary Reunion** Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center-Lambuth Building, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Contact: Claudia Webster clwebtr@cablespeed.com Registration and deposit deadline, 1 year in advance.

October 9-11, 2005 - **UMMA Gathering 2005** Stamford, Connecticut. Plan now to join the UMMA Gathering. Join the fellowship and help in planning the future of United Methodist mission.

[6] **Spiritual Nurture Note** submitted by Carolyn Belshe Cowen

What would you tell someone who asks you to help get them started in a discipline of prayer?

"I ask everybody to include three elements in their prayer. One is some portion of scripture every day. I explain to them the "Liturgy of the Hours," and how the backbone of monastic prayer was the Psalms. The other part of their prayer is conversation with God in which they really speak their minds. We talk about the things that make it difficult to speak our minds to God, especially about being afraid of God. The third part of their prayer is silence: just sitting in God's presence without saying anything or having any expectations of God or of themselves. I call it "kitchen table prayer" – just spending time with God as we spend time with a friend without talking." - An excerpt from an interview with Roberta Bondi, theologian

----- please fill out now, cut off here, and send to Fred -----

United Methodist Missionary Association Membership/Renewal for 2005

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DUES: \$25 each for Full (voting) Membership; \$15 each for Affiliate Membership.
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