

UMMA UpDate #34, August 20, 2005
e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
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"Linking mission workers worldwide"

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[1] **UMMA GATHERING October 9 to 11** by Norma Kehrberg, Chair

The UMMA Gathering will be held at the Amsterdam Hotel (formerly Rodeway Inn and Budget Hospitality Inn) in Stamford, Connecticut from October 9 to 11, 2005. The meeting will begin at 3 PM on Sunday afternoon at the hotel and conclude on Tuesday evening, October 11.

This year Rev. Wendy Rhodehamel, a GBGM director will represent GBGM at the Gathering. She will be with us from the opening day until the official start of the Board meeting on Monday, October 10 at 1:30 PM. Also confirmed for the UMMA agenda is a meeting with Lynda Byrd, Director of Development of the GBGM. She will share information regarding a financial development plan to increase support for mission and missionaries. Fred Price, UMMA Coordinator, has been in discussion with Lynda these past months.

Room rates at the Amsterdam Hotel are higher than last year, though the manager has agreed to give UMMA a sizable reduction. The cost of a double room is \$109 plus tax. As before, we will join various sessions of the GBGM meeting including the opening session. Please attend the UMMA Gathering if at all possible. There are some new initiatives which need attention as well as pending items in need of review. Input from as many members as possible is encouraged and needed. Please fill out the registration blank below and let Fred Price know you are coming.

[2] **UMMA Gathering Registrations Coming In** by Fred Price, Coordinator

As of this bulletin's release, we are expecting the following UMMA members to attend the annual Gathering: Norma Kehrberg, Jim Dwyer, Fred Price, Gil Bascom, Cherie White, Howard Heiner, Ric Schwenk, Gene Matthews, Hugh & Elizabeth Frazier, Richard Vreeland, Clarence Antwi-Boasiakoh and his wife. Representatives of CCW and NADAM are invited. Other

participants' registrations are in the mail. We hope your registration will be arriving soon by mail or email. Register now so official name tags can be made for attendance in the special GBGM meetings.

[3] **SOME URGENT AGENDA ITEMS** by Howard Heiner

1. UMMA's Future: Thirty-six years ago Peggy and I joined the Board with a firm conviction that the Church's mission was where we could contribute to Christ's call for peace and justice. That same energy is what has kept me going for the past ten years with UMMA. In a constantly changing world each generation has to shape the response and the elderly need to have the confidence that the Holy Spirit is a gift to all generations. Therefore, I now believe it is time for the next generation of missionaries, staff and directors to carry on God's call for missions. I think we retirees are too influenced by our past experiences, former Board structure, past missionary support and lack of an awareness of new Board goals. Therefore, I think if UMMA is to continue, the leadership needs to be taken over by the active missionaries, the directors and staff must be supportive, and joint goals should be developed. To facilitate this I think the UMMA Steering Committee should provide guidance to this transition. It could be a major agenda item at the Gathering in October.

2. Mission Professors: An innovative direction for UMMA could develop using new alliances to address issues raised by Bill McKibben in his article, "The Christian Paradox." in the July *Harpers Magazine** He outlines how "America is simultaneously the most professedly Christian of the developed nations and the least Christian in its behavior." This will have a tremendous impact on how the Board should approach Christ's call for peace and justice.

* <http://www.harpers.org/ExcerptTheChristianParadox.html>

3. Contact with Lynda Bird: Let's hope that something develops from our conversations with Lynda Bird, GBGM staff. However, it would take a tremendous amount of work to mobilize the retirement community which may not be available in the present UMMA leadership circle.

4. Pension and Health Benefits: I do not think the directors or staff realize the problems developing around the two Collins programs. Regardless of all the previous discussions with directors and staff there is a real disconnect between their words and action taken to support the missionary community.

[4] **OUR READERS WRITE**

Richard, Thank you for the helpful *UpDate*, and all that you do to strengthen our mission connection. - Wilson Boots 25 June 2005

Hello! What a refreshing and vital report Norma Kehrberg has given about the long-neglected connection of the GBGM and the UMC with the American Society of Missiology (ASM)! In

1984 Charles Germany seconded me to teach missions at METHESCO (in Delaware, OH) in 1984. I think this may have been the first move to do so with a working missionary in a long time, if ever. I joined the ASM the same year and attended several of their annual meetings, and the Association of Professors of Mission. During one related meeting in Chicago, we urged the GBGM to send someone to seek a better connection with the GBGM. They did send someone, with a basic message that "we are doing the right thing" – but as Norma and Howard Heiner have indicated, not deeply interested in finding teachers of mission in UM Seminaries! I often inquired why NO ONE from the Board seemed to attend the annual conference of the ASM (which as Norma pointed out includes the Roman Catholics, the 'mainline' and the evangelical organizations in their conferences.) Topics for discussion and the presentations were always first-rate. For some years I (retired from India in 1991) have written book reviews for *MISSIOLOGY*, their excellent journal – I'm working on one now. We need much more active involvement. We are all grateful to Dr. Dana Robert for her involvement and encouragement for more UM involvement. So Hurrah! Thanks you Norma for reporting on this.

The need for more of an apostolic emphasis (continuing long-term missionaries where appropriate) is right on key. Howard is right: **“where there is passion there will be funds.”**

As you have said, verbal support is not enough. At issue is the need for a deeper, theological assessment and involvement with 'seriousness' on the part of the GBGM. Deep and careful thinking is needed for "mission in the 21st Century"! The Board seems to encourage local mission involvement (fine) but this often happens with little cross-cultural preparation or understanding. And who now learns the languages? In the light of the USA's present disastrous ventures as in Iraq, do we have nothing powerful to say?

Yes! I would surely urge our missionaries to consider being part of the ASM. Especially for those on furlough and recently retired it would be an inspiration and a joy – and a chance for deeper fellowship. Their journal covers many aspects and views of mission today, both scholarly and practical. Thanks a huge amount for Dr Dana Robert's work and relationships, and the UMMA for forwarding this good report.

With much hope and prayer, Gay Johnson (Rev. G. T. Johnson, 440 NE Cottonwood Dr, Bremerton, OH 98311 gayginny@comcast.net

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Dear Gay, Catching up on e-mail after a few days away, I came across my copy of Ric Schwenk's response to your message to him. It was good to hear news of you in this way and to remember that I had a small part in one step in your career.

In my years in office I tried to get to the ASM meetings as often as possible, made some wonderful friends, acquired a lasting admiration for the Maryknoll Sisters and Brothers and had some interesting interchanges with some of the conservative missiologists who showed up. Warmest greetings to you and Ginny. - Charles Germany

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Dear Colleagues in Mission!

Many of you may know that after 20 years with the Board Lilian and I finished our work in Vienna and decided to return to the U.S. to pursue our vocations here.

Since summer of 2004 I have been Director of Global Theological Education at Perkins School of Theology. Perkins has a two-fold commitment in both giving me a long term contract

and announcing the program. First our GTE program will be insuring that all MDiv students have a significant immersion experience in a culture other than their own. They will learn the importance of mission, and how to lead their churches into collaborative partnerships with churches outside their own culture and country. Secondly Perkins has made a commitment to offer its resources to short term missionaries and VIM groups so that they can deepen their biblical and theological reflection on mission. I'm sure you are aware that most VIM training is intensely practical, and has little in the way of an intentional missiological focus.

The good news is that here in Texas there is considerable interest among VIM groups and coordinators in bringing this kind of missiological reflection into VIM training events. Already I have a number of invitations to speak and lead workshops for VIM groups. Next Fall Perkins will itself host a two day seminar for VIMs and VIM leaders on preparation for cross-cultural mission and missiological reflection.

We are also setting up a web site that will allow VIMs to participate in both an online course in missiology for short term missionaries, and a series of devotions intended to prepare them spiritually to grow in partnership with Christians in other cultures.

I would very much covet your help in finding and preparing material for this web site, and for future programs for VIM groups. If you have written or would like to write a short devotion, based on a scripture passage and including your own experience as a missionary, I will find a place for it in our web site. I'm looking for devotions of 150 to 250 words, not including the scripture passage. If it all possible I hope you will identify a specific theme the devotion addresses. Naturally more than one would be welcome!

It is my conviction that it is among those who have been called to mission and have answered that call from whom we will find the best resources for forming the spirit and outlook of those participating in the VIM movement. I'll be looking forward to hearing from you, and would welcome it if you forwarded this email to other missionaries not already on the UMMA list. Your colleague in Christ's mission, Robert Hunt

- Dr. Robert Hunt, Director of Global Theological Education, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, P.O. Box 750133; Dallas, TX 75275-033 Tel.:1 214 768 1374 roberth@smu.edu

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Dear Dr. Schwenk, Thank you for sending us regularly UMMA updates. We would appreciate it if you could continue sending it to us, but please note that we have a new email address: bishopdavao@yahoo.com Thank you. Bishop Leo Soriano, Davao Area, Philippines

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Great newsletter! Jeff Hoover, Representative of UMMA in Africa, Faculte Methodiste di Theologie UMC, Kitwe, Zambia

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Thanks for Emailing me UMMA UpDate #32. It was great!! Will send Fred my Membership Dues tomorrow. Keep up this important work!!... I read all of your last issue of UU#33 and congratulations!! It covered so many events, past and coming up. Thanks for all your work (time, energy, and your electric bill!). Delaine DeHainaut Dehaine4@aol.com Retired from Latin America mission work.

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Thanks for the precise update of events of importance and interest and the resources. Very helpful. Some encouraging signs. On a pleasant summer evening at Pilgrim Place, Claremont, California - Helen Post, Retired missionary to Japan

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Thanks for the report. I found it enlightening. Appreciate being on the list. - Bishop Emerson Colaw

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Richard, Thank you for the e-bulletin of the UMMA. I appreciate the information. Thank you, too, for your article on "Covenant Relationship for a Better World." The CAL-PAC churches have responded generously over the years with almost \$3 million for GBGM missionary support since 1990. Thank you for what you continue to do. Search for information from Directory of Missionaries and Supporting Churches www.covenant-rbw.org - Dale K. Smith, CAL-PAC Conference Coordinator for Missionary Support - 704 E. Jefferson Ave., Pomona, CA 91767; Tel.: 909-620-1442; fax: 909-629-2181

[5] **SPIRITUAL NURTURE NOTE** by Carolyn Belshe Cowen

On the global horizon we read and we hear of "terrorism" terminology being co-mingled with religiosity to make political power. A Chicago professor has been tracking Osama bin Laden's speeches for several years and has written his take on the real message being presented by bin Laden: Democracy may not be the be-all for every member on the planet. The Spring 2004 issue of the *Quarterly Review* devotes that publication to "Terror, War, and the Hope of Peace". Good reading.

When we touch the zoom button, we come in closer. This focus highlights some of our own very dear, dear colleagues as they deal with health issues.* Their lives brimming with quality beyond blue ribbon delight, they have years and years of telling the story of Peace and of God's Grace. We are so gifted to share the same school of thought with these "agents of change" in world affairs!

Years ago I read, word-for-word (that is what I call meditating my way through a book treasure) one titled *The Gift of Peace* (Joseph Cardinal Bernadin) I don't even recall what precious soul referred the book to me but it certainly expanded my horizon. Whoever that person was undoubtedly had walked the walk as well and had the foresight that I needed the reading.

We think globally then locally then personally. Our vision twitches and schisms and we wonder at God's mightiness. I think I want to ask when I get there, "Why God?" With the next breath, I want to confess "Thanks Big G, you are indeed mighty, to have put up with all our squabbles on planet Earth. You were with all of us through it all. We sat under your mighty trees of green to protect ourselves from over-sizing the atmosphere with materialism." I am grateful to be nurtured by UMMA participants who guide me to think. Grace and Peace to you and yours.

**Please pray wellness for Gilbert Bascom, Paul Perry, Muriel Henderson, Sharon Crowe, John Hooper, Jack Cowen - spouse of Carolyn, and others as they are treated.*

[6] **OPEN SEASON ON PHISHING - BEWARE!** by the editor

....."Phishing" is when an email is used to "fish" for your private information. For example a false emails purporting to be from a bank, Internet providers or other business. The false email may hijack a trusted brand name, including their logo and fake website for you to click to. The subject line reads something like: "Verification" or "Sweepstakes Winner" and then asking for your account numbers, financial data, passwords, and so on. Real companies don't ask you to divulge your personal data via email. Another form of phishing is when individuals or companies keep track of your preferences when YOU surf or buy on-line. They then send you email Ads. for similar products or pleasures.

Do NOT click on any links or graphics in such suspect email messages. Delete such messages from your Inboxes and Deleted Items folders. For good information, click: http://www.antiphishing.org/consumer_recs.html

[7] **Register for UMMA Gathering 2005** by Fred Price, Coordinator

The UMMA Gathering is scheduled to be held from October 9-11 at the **Amsterdam Hotel** (formerly Rodeway Inn and Budget Hospitality Inn) to coincide with the GBGM board of directors' meeting in a nearby hotel. UMMA will make the reservation to be sure you get the best group rate. The hotel has complimentary breakfast. All other meals will be at your own expense. Please fill & return the following form to Fred Price (his address below) or email fred_price_30084@yahoo.com as soon as possible to assure your room reservations and official name tags for GBGM meetings.

- - - - - Please fill in the form below and send your registration now - - - - -

Rev. Fred Price, UMMA Coordinator

165 Grandview Ave.

Pitman, NJ 08071 or E-mail: fred_price_30084@yahoo.com

Hi Fred, Please reserve a place for _____ (your name(s)) for the nights of (state which) 9th 10th 11th for _____ persons in _____ room(s).

[] I will inform you of my flight # with arrival and departure times and airport as soon as I know those details so information can be shared with others attending for possible pooling of transportation from the airport to Stamford, Connecticut.

Airline tip: LaGuardia Airport (LGA) in NYC seems to have the lowest fares and most direct flights at this time from O'Hare Field (ORD). Compare on www from your airport.

[] I/We will be arriving by plane at approximately – Time: _____ & Date: _____ Oct.

[] I/We will be arriving by car at approximately – Time: _____ & Date: _____ Oct.