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e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
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"Linking mission workers worldwide"

In This Thanksgiving Issue: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

- [1] Gilbert Emerson Bascom born Mar. 3, 1929 passes on Nov. 3, 2005
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[1] **Gilbert "Gil" Emerson Bascom** passed on to his Maker on November 3 after several months of suffering with cancer. He was one of the charter members of UMMA who faithfully worked out the details of our bylaws, registration as a non-profit organization, and the first office of the UMMA Coordinator in 1996. He served diligently until 2003, doing such things as helping build our website and keeping records of our members and finances. He and Maxine printed and mailed out **UMMA UpDate** to those members who did not yet have email. They were married for 54 years and he served for 45 years as a missionary in Japan. Here is his obituary and a few excerpts of tributes to an UMMA icon and spiritual giant.

Obituary from the *News Tribune* (Tacoma) on 11/4/2005

GILBERT EMERSON BASCOM 3/3/29 - 11/3/05. Gilbert spent his life living love, not just talking about it. Born in Ithaca, NY, he grew up in Penn Yan, NY, son of musicians Lester and Miriam Bascom. Family: wife Maxine Colbert Bascom; daughters Susan Jeter (Wayne, Krystal, Pamela) and Judy Elvrom (Mason, Kara, Max, Jesse); sons Brent (Linda, Scott, Sara Marie) and Bruce (Karen); brother Gordon (Jean). Education: B.A. from Ohio Wesleyan; M.A. in Comparative Education and Religion from Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary; postgraduate studies 2 years in Moral Education at University of Kansas. A 45-year career as United Methodist educational missionary in Japan spanned teaching from junior high to university, always living on campus where the family home was open to students and staff. He served as headmaster of Canadian Academy in Kobe, an international K-12 school. As professor at Kwansei Gakuin University, he taught, assisted chaplain, served as trustee, led youth groups, helped establish a graduate program in English communication, and was made professor emeritus. Besides teaching, he helped small, struggling churches under the United Church of Christ in Japan. Since 1995 retirement, he was a full-time volunteer: treasurer and tutor of County (NY) Literacy Program, active in local United Methodist Church and conference programs, Bible teacher, bass in choir, coordinator of Mason Men at Work to help needy people with simple home repairs, moving, etc., percussionist in Tacoma New Horizons Band, president of Residents Council of Franke Tobey Jones Retirement Estates. Wherever Gilbert lived, he found joy in volunteer activities and his family,

celebrating 54 years together. Even when busy, he was interruptible for another worthwhile project. Memorial services will be held at Mason United Methodist Church, 2710 North Madison, Tacoma, at 1:00 p.m. Monday, November 7. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Mason United Methodist Church or the Charitable Subsidy of Franke Tobey Jones Retirement Estates. Praise God for his life.

Dear Friends: Peggy and I had the privilege of attending Gil's Memorial Service at the Mason UMC in Tacoma, Washington on November 7, 2005. It was a beautiful service honoring Gil's life and spirit of service and love. Excerpts from Jim Dwyer's letter were read along with many others who wanted to express how Gil had blessed their lives. Maxine expressed her appreciation for the kind words after the service and thanked me for the support from UMMA members during the past several months. - Shalom, Peggy & Howard Heiner

Dear Maxine, dear family members and friends of Gilbert Bascom: All of us in the United Methodist Missionary Association have followed with sadness Gil's struggle and your mutual strong show of courage and faith over the past several months. Each of us has strong memories of a loving and sensitive man who helped guide an occasionally (!) querulous group of missionaries into a network of solidarity with one another and a commitment to addressing the church we love and the mission agency we depend upon with insights we have gained in fellowship with Christ and Christians on many continents and in response to Christ's call to mission in our world today.

It was Gil's role among us – with the ever present, palpable and valued support of you, Maxine – to tie together loose ends, plan meetings, collect dues – and even visit missionaries on itineration assignment in places distant from your home to help build up the Church of Jesus Christ even in retirement years, whether from the Finger Lakes or Tacoma. The strong faith and deep joy you both have radiated to us through personal contacts, telephone calls and encouraging e-mail messages will remain with us even as we mark and mourn Gil's passing. Each of us is fully confident that all the joys and satisfaction of work well done and service rendered in this life will be crowned for Gil with the greatest joy of fellowship with all the saints who have gone on before us. And we would each like to imagine him checking in with Saint Peter, arranging for our accommodations at the ultimate Gathering of UMMA... With gratitude for all that has been and hope for all that will be. Jim, Dr. James Dwyer for UMMA

To Gil's dear friends and mine, too – How thankful our family is for your support through our adjustment to NO GIL at our house, since he moved to the super place with God on Nov. 3rd... He never called attention to himself and his work, but it is obvious that folks were looking, anyway. We're identifying many, many taken-for-granted blessings in our lives and thanking God. No end to his blessings for all of us. Love, Maxine Bascom

[2] **Excerpts from UMMA Gathering Minutes**, Oct. 9 -11, 2005 by Cherie White

Session #1 began at 3 p.m. at the Amsterdam Hotel in Stamford, Conn. with the presence of the following members: Norma Kehrberg, outgoing Chair, James Dwyer, incoming Chair, Fred W. Price, Coordinator, Cherie White, outgoing Secretary, Richard Schwenk, editor of *UMMA Update*, Howard Heiner, Gene Matthews, Dick Vreeland, R. Kevin Seckel, Carol Seckel joined

the meeting on Oct. 10 as incoming Secretary, Paul Perry, Callie Perry, Hugh Frazer, Elizabeth Frazer, Gerhard (Gay) T. Johnson, Wendy Chun, Joyce Hill, Sally Wisner Ott, Rep. CCW, also the MIR. Lynda Byrd from GBGM joined us to make a presentation. Thanks to those attending.

1. **The Oct. 9th session** began with a meditation led by Norma Kehrberg....

[Items 2 to 7 left out. For details click: <http://www.umma-global.org> & click Reports.]

8. Fred Price also presented the Financial Report, which he had prepared, which had the approval of Jim Gulley, Treasurer (in Cambodia) who has copies of all documents received & processed. There was a suggestion that UMMA advertise in its Update the donation of bequests, which was approved.

9. Budget for 2006. There was a discussion on some line items, but the Provisional Budget presented by Fred Price was adopted with the clarification that the Administrative Council could adapt it over the year as needed.

10. By-law changes. The recommended changes were ratified so that no term limits exist for Steering Committee members (it had already been approved via e-mail consultation). Delete “but may not serve for more than 8 years” from Section 2, a. iii. Also those whose terms were to expire in 2005 were re-elected for one more year.

Also, the new members of the Administrative Council were presented (elected & ratified via e-mail) and for the first time is composed of all active missionaries: Chair: James Dwyer; Secretary: Carol Seckel; Vice-Chair: Cherie White; Treasurer: Jim Gulley

11. Presentation by Lynda Byrd, Director of Development, GBGM. Lynda...dynamically shared on how her office is addressing diminishing funds for mission and working on a financial development plan. Strategies: 1) Mission advocacy: internal & external, 2) Church partnerships, 3) Donor cultivation, 4) Covenant relationships...

12. The session ended with a prayer by Jim Dwyer.

October 10, Session #2, 9 a.m. at First United Methodist Church, Stamford, CT.

1. The devotional led by Dick Vreeland, was very moving. [in UU#36]

2. We had the presence of Wendy Rhodehamel, Board member from the MPU, who was assigned to meet with UMMA at our request....

3. Report of the Chair, Norma (a document was shared with all present). Norma highlighted some points such as the fact that one’s missionary commission is considered forever; that the reorganization of the GBGM negated team work with missionaries; that there has been little movement with the new leadership, but that there are optimistic signs; there is a decrease in long-term, cross-cultural missionaries, yet there are new ones; there is a request that there be a systematic review of the Collins Pension Plan, since increases have been sporadic; there was a mention of work on LOA’s (Letters of Agreement) which not everyone has; non-payments of the premium of Medicare Plan B; she emphasized the fact that longer term missionaries is a theological issue, not an economic one....

4. There was consultation with Wendy Rhodehamel as to whether she will be assigned to be present in UMMA meetings just this time or over the Quadrennium. She understood it would be the full time. (P.S. the MPU (Mission Contexts & Relationships) later determined that they wanted to rotate representatives – see results later in the minutes).

5. Howard Heiner presents: “GBGM Relations and the Way Forward,” mentioning several key issues:

a. The need to have a Consultation with all 3 missionary associations (UMMA, CCW & NADAM).

b. The need for Board Directors to have direct access to all sources of decision making: partner churches, overseas & U.S. missionaries.

c. The struggle to know where God is calling us.

d. It should be a high priority of all that GBGM should lead the United Methodist Church forward in mission. How can we communicate jointly & be on the same team in this effort?

6. Wendy Chun presented her concern that her LOA hasn't been sent to her. It will be added to the agenda of those meeting with Edith Gleaves later on.

7. Ric Schwenk informed that missionaries present represent 674 years of service (includes absent spouses), speak 20 languages & are in 24 fields of service.

8. Medicare Plan B premium reimbursements are part of the Collins funded pension benefits for standard support missionaries. It has been brought to the attention of the staff that some missionaries are not receiving this benefit. It is felt that the Directors do not know how the income intended for the CPP (Collins Pension Plan) is being used. UMMA will continue to request review of and information about the funds for clarification and understanding.

9. At this point, Wendy Rhodehamel withdrew from the session due to another commitment. There was an 11:30 break for lunch.

10. We reconvened at 2 p.m. at the GBGM Opening Session. Bishop Oystein Olsen from Norway presided in the absence of Bishop Joel Martinez, President of the GBGM. There was a multi-media worship service with communion, followed by presentations. When UMMA was presented & we all stood, the assembly applauded & Bishop Olsen shared our statistics of years of service, languages & fields of service represented.

11. UMMA remained in the session until it adjourned to go to supper. Treasurer Roland Fernandes gave his report, mentioning that the GBGM was out of its financial deficit. Gen. Secretary Randy Day gave information & asked for prayers for all those areas which have suffered from natural disasters. Paul Dirdak from UMCOR gave a visual presentation of GBGM's response to these situations; and Sam Dixon from ECG (Evangelism & Church Growth) reported on response to disaster throughout the world.

12. After supper, the different units met. Many of us visited the MPU session. There was the impression that the Directors still do not have a clear idea as to how missionaries are being supported. A draft of the new Handbook was presented, highlighting certain points where changes had taken place. Wendy Rhodehamel reported on her meeting with UMMA in the morning. UMMA's request to speak to the directors was not honored.

October 11, Session at First United Methodist Church in Stamford, CT – 9 a.m.

1. We were greeted by the minister of the church, Rev. Douglas MacArthur.

2. Norma Kehrberg led us in the opening prayer.

3. Fred Price explained that with the rise in hotel costs, UMMA could not subsidize people as much as in the past. Each of us settled our financial obligations with Fred...

4. Sally Ott, CCW liaison presented her report, mentioning that she would be rotating out & that Gayle Lesure would be the new representative. Norma K. thanked her for relating to UMMA & her faithfulness. Sally expressed an interest in the renewal of the joint consultation of the 3 missionary associations.

5. Presentation of Debriefings from our small group sessions: ... [For a full report click to: <http://www.umma-global.org>]

d. It was requested that a policy be established for regular increases for payment for service years (this in relation to the Collins Pension Plan)...

e. Medicare B premiums reimbursement. Steve G. said that they were working on it, reviewing each case & that everyone would be paid in full & retroactively... [A benefit for those who qualify with 15 or more years of service.]

f. UMMA asked that Directors implement a policy which sets the per service year rate at 1% of the DAC (Denominational Ave. Compensation). Such a policy would ensure that the rates would be reviewed every year automatically since the DAC changes every year.

g. Matters related to the CPP will be worked through the MIR's & Kevin & Carol Seckel. If there is no answer by March, we would request a meeting before the April Board meeting, working with Jim Dwyer.

h. Debriefing of the previous night's MPU meeting. A major issue was the problem with LOA's, especially Wendy Chun's situation. A problem seems to be the clarification of her job description in terms of GBGM's mission priorities...We expressed solidarity with her.

i. Kevin Seckel reported on the MCR session in which it was stated that in the last 3-5 years the missionary pool has gone from 391 to 245 missionaries.

j. We broke for lunch & reconvened at 1:50 p.m. to meet in groups.

6. Group Sessions Reports & Related Actions:

a. **Group # 1: Finances and Membership**

1) A move was defeated by the Gathering to raise membership dues.

2) A focus on increasing membership was considered the best way of raising funds & that we should sharpen our approach;...with the recruitment of new members.

3) Reunions were seen as an excellent way of promoting membership and collecting dues.

4) 2006 is UMMA's 10th Anniversary & we should capitalize on it.

5) We should recognize Gil Bascom as a Charter Member.

6) Mention in the *Update* our "Achievements" to promote UMMA...

7) Howard Heiner will monitor reunions & designate an UMMA representative to be present.

8) Use MIR's to promote membership, especially with new missionaries as they are commissioned.

b. **Group # 2: Relationship of UMMA to GBGM**

1) Help GBGM & Church-at-large define its vision of mission in the world: theology, geo-political issues, etc.

2) There is an issue of labor relations & it is important to promote fair labor practices.

3) A distance from GBGM has been created; we should focus on bishops, ministers and local congregations.

4) Continue a presence at the professors of missiology meetings.

5) There should be a personal letter from the new Chair, James Dwyer to the Directors in the MPU & the GBGM Staff to engage them in the vision of mission.

6) That UMMA be recognized in the "U.M. Book of Discipline" (this issue was not discussed fully).

c. **Group # 3: Organizational Make-up of UMMA**

1) Future of the Steering Committee – keep as is... [items 3 & 4 were re: bylaws]

4) Task Forces are a good place for retirees to contribute

5) Plan for a Global Mission Conference sponsored by UMMA in which there could be a discussion of the broader missional concept & to help raise consciousness.

6) Gay Johnson suggests adding a “Missional Moment” to the Update.

7. General Matters:

a. The Provisional Budget was approved. It is a balanced budget & can be improved if the financial strategies are implemented.

b. Budget. Jim Dwyer, Fred Price & Jim Gulley will work on line items.

c. Norma K. will send a thank you note to Rev. MacArthur for the use of the church.

d. UMMA Gathering 2006. The Steering Committee will decide the location. It will not necessarily be in conjunction with a GBGM Board meeting. In any case, UMMA should always have a representative at Board meetings.

e. Mailing list, hard copies. Gene Matthews volunteers to handle this for a year.

8. Jim Dwyer is installed as new Chair of UMMA.

9. Howard Heiner leads us in a final devotion... [as seen below]

Original by Cherie White Click: <http://www.umma-global.org> then Reports for full minutes.

[3] **Spiritual Nurture Note: “Fear & Faith in a Time of Grace”** by Howard Heiner

As a community of faith we are challenged to nurture God's vision of mission during a toxic climate of fear. The headlines are distressing – suffering and misery from Katrina and Rita, bombing and death in Iraq, violence in Israel, and environmental degradation throughout the world from globalization. What sustains us in this fearful uncertainty where we live and work, whether it is in this country or overseas? I would like to outline three key elements as we think about that question.

Facing our Reality: Jan Love, Deputy General Secretary of the Women's Division, wrote an open letter to the RENEW Network. She stated: "...One (challenge) is that witnessing to the love and grace of Jesus Christ in situations of injustice can get you into considerable trouble and be dangerous, both in your community and in the church."

Fear: Fear is not evil or bad, but a natural emotion that calls us to react. It can serve as a stimulus for positive action or paralyze us to a point at which we are unable to act. Hebrews 13:6 reminds us, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" Adversities force us to place our future in God's care. We often find that even in a time of social violence, economic upheaval, or natural disasters, we experience a time of grace.

Grace In A Time of Danger: We live in a world of uncertainty – unstable governments, overwhelming domination by wealthy countries, unequal distribution of resources. These forces can lead to extreme poverty and persecution. Christians feel strongly that their faith calls them to speak out against the injustices in their country. We know first hand the truth of Jan's statement "witnessing to the love and grace of Jesus Christ in situations of injustice ... can be dangerous, both in your community and in the church." When the El Salvadoran people were under brutal persecution in the midst of a civil war, Archbishop Romero comforted them with his spiritual guidance. He told them:

"It helps now and then to step back and take the long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts. It is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work...This is what we are about: we plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that

they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development...We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. It enables us to do something small, and to try to do it well. We are workers, not master builders; shepherds and sheep, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own."

[4] **Missionary Reunions for 2006**

March 27-30, 2006 - **The River Plate** Argentina and Uruguay Missionary Group Reunion at the Florida Conference Life Enrichment Center, Leesburg, Florida. Contact: Valene Long <ValL321@aol.com> or 941-748-7520. Reservations due Nov.15, 2005.

June 23-26, 2006 - **Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, & Myanmar Reunion**, Scarritt-Bennett Center – Contact: Lionel Muthiah, new chair, Phone: 701-663-1928, Email: LMuthiah@bis.midco.net **Need to send \$150 per person before Nov. 30, 2005** to: Lionel Muthiah, 1804 12th Ave. S.E., Mandan, ND 58554

June 28-30, 2006 - **Servants of Sierra Leone Biennial Reunion**, Holiday Inn Select, Naperville, IL. 60563, near I-88. Email: Marilyn Kopp, mngkopp@bitwisesystems.com Tel: 309.444.2136

Aug. 4-7, 2006 - **Philippine Missionary Reunion** Lake Junaluska Conference & Retreat Center-Lambuth Building, Lake Junaluska, NC. Contact: Claudia Webster clwebtr@cablespeed.com 7619 SW Surfland St., South Beach, OR 97366

September 8-11 - **Nigeria Missionary Reunion**, Glen Eyrie Conference Center (near Colorado Springs, CO). Contacts: Delphine Jewell edjewell@juno.com tel. 405-753-9035 or Gerald Faust gkfaust@ria.net tel. 719-456-0011

September 15-18, 2006 - **Chile Reunion for Missionaries and Chileans** living in the USA, Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center, Blackstone, VA. Email Walt Whitehurst <WaltPungo@aol.com> or Stan Moore <Berylstan@aol.com>