

UMMA UpDate #38, CHRISTMAS 2005
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United Methodist Missionary Association
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"Linking mission workers worldwide"

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- [1] "CHRISTMAS WARS" by Bill Mooney, retired GBGM missionary

To the Editor: (originally to *The Oak Ridge Observer*, Oak Ridge, Tenn.)

The so-called "Christmas wars" miss the point. How merchants and their employees express their feelings regarding the season are but a momentary part of Christmas, and seeing fellow Christians getting so bent out of shape as to call it "war" reminds me of Jesus' words about those who "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel." (Matthew 23:24)

A Christmas card received this year is more to the point. It said, "Blessed are those who celebrate Christmas as a way of life." The late Dr. Howard Thurman (1900-1981, philosopher-theologian) well defined Christmas as a way of life when he wrote:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among the brothers (and sisters),
To make music in the hearts.*

Enough said! - Bill Mooney, retired missionary to the U.M. Church in Vienna, Austria

- [2] **Greetings for the HOLY-DAYS - Especially CHRISTMAS!** by Jim Dwyer

Greetings from the new "office of the chair" of UMMA, now moved virtually half-way around the world from Hawaii to the Free and Hanseatic City-State of Hamburg, (Ha->Ha), where the clocks read the same, but there is a difference as between night and day!

As we mark the fourth Sunday of Advent, I wish that each of us may find the necessary quiet to become open to the arrival once more of the Spirit of God's Love expressed in His son Jesus this Christmas, and that each of us may be drawn anew into sharing that Love with the world in which we have been placed for our task of missionary service in Christ's name. - Jim

Dr. James Dwyer, chair, serving Hamburg's International UMC, Hamburg, Germany

[3] **CHRISTMAS GREETINGS RESPONSE** from Norma Kehrberg, outgoing chair

Dear Jim: Greetings from the other side of the world in Hawaii as we prepare for a sunny Christmas day to celebrate the birth of Christ as we join others in such climes around the world. Best wishes for a blessed Christmas with family and friends wherever you are. I remember my first Christmas in Nepal. I had a work assignment visiting villages which took me from my mountain home, but had tucked in a Snickers bar in my backpack, yes even though a little stale. That was my special treat on Christmas Eve after a private devotion. Christ *IS* everywhere. - Norma

[4] **REPORT to the 2005 UMMA Gathering at Stamford** by Norma Kehrberg

Editor's note: The whole report of the former Chair of UMMA is on the UMMA website.

Introduction (click to the "Reports" page of this website)

Review of the Formation of UMMA

The United Methodist Missionary Association (UMMA) was formed in 1996 primarily as a counter balance to the reorganization of the GBGM. The reorganization of the GBGM effectively negated the presence, voice and role of missionaries around the GBGM table, where directors, staff and missionaries had come together as colleagues and friends.

With the initiative and energy of Ric and Caring Schwenk, Gil Bascom and Howard Heiner, UMMA was formed. The initial hopeful optimism – annual gatherings held at the time of the GBGM Mission Personnel Consultations, joint efforts of the three mission associations and yearly consultations with staff of Mission Personnel and representatives of the associations - gave way to turbulence. As the missionary community sought information on issues affecting its life and work and presented its perspective that missionaries had a right, even an obligation to provide input into the decision-making of the board, UMMA was increasingly isolated.

Yet, at the end of 2002, there was a change in leadership at the GBGM. It seemed that there would be and an opportunity for change in the position of the GBGM hierarchy towards its missionary community. Yet, the change has not been as deep as we had hoped. Though we now have a congenial relationship, in reality there has been little movement on outstanding issues that UMMA has raised over the years. Even so, I want to identify some optimistic signs.

Optimistic Signs

In 1996, UMMA identified the need for missionaries to share their perspective with the policy makers of the GBGM. The reorganization of GBGM in 1996 negated this. During an August 2001 meeting of UMMA representatives with the then general

secretary of the GBGM and the chair of the GBGM Mission Personnel Committee with other GBGM staff, it was clearly expressed by the UMMA representatives that there should be a way for the missionary community to give **meaningful** input into the decision making of the GBGM Board of Directors.

In preparation for this meeting, I reviewed the October 2004 report of the deputy general secretary of the Mission Personnel Unit. Edith Gleaves in her introduction to Bruce and Kathy Griffith, the MIRS, stated that “the primary role of a Missionary-in-Residence is to provide an avenue of missionary input into decision-making at the Board level”. These are familiar words for us.

It also appears that missionaries are being given a higher profile in the staff of GBGM. Edith Gleaves in her October 2004 report highlighted the significance of having missionaries serving as staff of the Mission Personnel Unit. She stated that missionaries Mark and Kathleen Masters would be replacing missionaries Nancy and Mark Garrison. Susie Henry, long time missionary in Bolivia completing her last term in Bolivia in December 2005, has been asked (and she has accepted) to serve as the Latin America secretary for six months from January 1, 2006.

Current MIIRs – Jerri and Bill Savuto (Kenya), Al and Mavis Streyfeller (Senegal), and Carol and Kevin Seckel (Latvia) – were appointed to serve in their roles from active mission service. Glenn Rowley, also a missionary, serves in the Western Jurisdiction as the MIIR. Missionary representation is present at various levels of the GBGM. However, only the persons involved can inform us if they feel they are trusted, empowered and enabled to give meaningful input at decision making at the board level.

During the past years, UMMA has observed the dramatic decrease in mission personnel, particularly in longer term, standard support missionaries. However, there seems to be a change in general mission recruitment. Edith Gleaves highlighted in her October 2004 report that 48 missionaries were to be trained and commissioned in 2005. At this meeting seven longer term, cross-cultural, standard support (GBGM missionaries) and four missionaries related to the National Plan for Hispanic Mission will be commissioned. At the April Board meeting 14 deaconesses and five Church and Community Workers were commissioned and this summer eight US2s and eight Mission Interns were trained for a total of 46 new mission personnel. (Deaconesses are individuals who work in professional areas and are in relationship to the UMC as a deaconess. Seeking their own placement, their employing agency, not the GBGM takes responsibility for their terms of employment.).

Another optimistic sign is the initiation of a Pastors’ Academy for Mission, which, if realized as intended, could result in a strengthening of mission on the part of pastors in the churches. This initiative was announced at the April 2005 GBGM directors’ meeting. Several professors of mission have been involved in the initial stages of this program. (In June 2005, UMMA, among other groups, was asked to develop a presentation on “Apostolic Missionary Service as a Vocation”. In late August it was learned that the plans developed at the meeting with missionary professors in June were changed.)

In April, 2005 Randy Day, General Secretary, also announced the formation of a Seminary Task force for Mission composed of three directors of the GBGM – Maxie Dunam, Grant Hagiya and Joan Johnson, all related in some way to seminaries; three seminary professors - Myron McCoy at St. Paul; Dana Robert at Boston and Harold Recinos at Perkins; and Bishops Ken Carder and Al Norris. Their assignment is to assess

the current situation in teaching mission, look at ongoing ways the GBGM can interact with seminaries and Courses of Study for local pastors and envision strategies for the fiscal under-girding of the recommendations.

These two initiatives from the GBGM through the General Secretary indicate awareness and concern to get mission in our church back on track. It is unfortunate that neither of the initiatives include specific representation from the missionary community, a major oversight. Missionaries share passion and awareness for mission and are trusted and respected in local churches.

Another significant organizational analysis came at the close of the last quadrennium in a report from the GBGM Executive Committee in April 2004. The executive committee recognized the disconnect between GBGM mission personnel and the GBGM, and referred to this disconnect specifically in their recommendations to this quadrennium's board of directors. In their Executive Committee Report (see attachment 1), Article D of Section 2 states that among other issues, "particular attention is given to the process to enhance the participation of missionaries and other leaders from across the church in Board cross-functional teams, task forces and advisory groups." This direct recommendation is not incarnated in the make up of the committee in the Pastor's Academy for Mission or in the Seminary Task Force.

At the initiative of UMMA, the Mission Personnel Unit directors forwarded an action in April 2004 that the GBGM nominate three directors for representation at the UMMA Gathering. It was approved by the Mission Development Committee and forwarded to the cabinet. In July 2004, Debra Bass indicated (in response to my July 2004 letter inquiring about the nomination of the representative to the 2004 UMMA Gathering) that it was decided by cabinet that only **one** director would be nominated to represent GBGM at the UMMA Gathering and that it would not be one person nominated for the quadrennium. This is the first meeting with a representative from GBGM and we are happy to welcome the Rev. Wendy Rhodehamel. I requested that Debra have the cabinet change their earlier decision so that there could be continuity in representation, but that earlier decision has not changed.

Fred Price reported following the April GBGM meeting that the directors of the Mission Personnel Unit (MPU) requested that a missionary speak at each meeting of the GBGM directors. At this October's meeting, two mission initiatives, Senegal and Cameroon would be introduced officially. Unlike other recent mission initiatives, the mission initiative in Senegal was formed out of the efforts of longer term, cross cultural missionaries. Also at this meeting, Lynda Byrd, finance development director for the GBGM is sharing ways in which retired missionaries may assist in helping develop financial support for the board.

These optimistic signs indicate that although some of us may think too little has happened, mission **is** on the agenda of the GBGM.... <snip> < Please **click to** <http://www.umma-global.org> and then "REPORTS" for Norma's full and enlightening report, including "Present Reality on outstanding issues of UMMA"

[5] MISSIONARY MILESTONES

Long time UMMA member, **Thelma Maw**, physical therapist, missionary, knew in her heart she needed to travel abroad to help others in need. During the Korean War, she endlessly worked to establish a physical therapy program at hospitals, and received

numerous awards for her dedication and hard work. Ms. Maw died on November 15, 2005 at Pilgrim Place in Claremont.

She was born on February 19, 1916 and grew up in Nebraska in a family with 6 sisters, 3 brothers, and 4 half brothers. She attended Chaffey Junior College and the University of California at Berkeley for a bachelor's degree in physical education. An injury led her into the field of physical therapy. She graduated in 1944 from the Children's Hospital School of Physical Therapy in Los Angeles. As Ms. Maw was working for an orthopedic surgeon and then headed the therapy department of St. Joseph's Hospital in Burbank. She felt increasingly called to mission work, and was approved for service by the Woman's Division of the Methodist Church. The opportunity to go to China, which she hoped for, did not open up, so she was sent to Korea, where she began a career that lasted nearly 35 years.

"We all grew up active in the church, and for many of us, the coming of missionary speakers opened up the world to all of us," Ms. Pat Patterson said in her eulogy. "After World War II, we wanted to do things to make friends with people in other nations. Thelma was adventurous and interested in all types of things."

Six months after arrival in Korea, she was forced to evacuate when the Korean War broke out in the summer of 1950. She returned to work in Chunju in November 1951 and then back to Severance Hospital in Seoul, her assigned place, in June 1952. Physical therapy was almost non-existent in those days. Ms. Maw pioneered the development of training and integration of therapy into medical practice, often using simple local materials and training local workers.

By 1955 Ms. Maw had helped open the physical therapy department at Severance Hospital, and in the following year aided the establishment of the Korean Physical Therapy Association and the Korean Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled. Her work continued to face new challenges, such as the many industrial accidents that occurred during Korea's rapid industrialization. Often she worked with homebound patients with spinal cord injuries.

For two years, starting in 1969, Ms. Maw was assigned to Church World Service for work with Vietnam Christian Service. Her work was in the government rehabilitation center in Da Nang. In 1971, Ms. Maw was given a grand prize by the Asia Social Welfare Association of Korea for pioneer work in rehabilitation. On leaving Korea for retirement in 1982, she received the Moran Medal, a very distinguished civilian award from the Korean government. She was honored by Jong D Won, president of the Korean Physical Therapy Association, in a letter, which read in part: "Today we pay our respects to you, the mother of physical therapy in Korea. We pledge to carry on your mission, and to continue building from the base that you created. We promise to do our best to honor your commitment and your life..." Thelma will long be remembered for her commitment, faith, generosity and humor. - Abridged and adapted from the *Claremont Courier* of Nov. 26, 2005.

[6] **What Was God Up To When Coming Down?** – Richard Schwenk

Flying back to my home area in Wisconsin from California was not easy in the rush before Christmas. After spending most of my Advent seasons as a missionary in the tropics, I identified a white Christmas with snow scenes on cards – these more than my boyhood winters. But nostalgia overtook me as I drove through 9 inches of snow to

attend the 3rd Sunday in Advent service at my home church in River Falls, Wisconsin. I was inspired as the Rev. Janet Ellinger read Isaiah 61:1-11 and preach on “**What’s God Up To?**” It was the “Good News of Deliverance”:

“The Sovereign Lord has filled me with his spirit. He has chosen me and sent me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to announce release to captives and freedom to those in prison. He has sent me to proclaim that the time has come when the Lord will save his people and defeat their enemies. He has sent me to comfort all who mourn, to give to those who mourn in Zion, joy and gladness instead of grief, a song of praise instead of sorrow. They will be like trees that the Lord himself has planted. They will all do what is right, and God will be praised for what he has done. They will rebuild cities that have long been in ruins...The Lord says, I love justice and hate oppression and crime. I will faithfully reward my people and make an eternal covenant with them.” (GNB)

Pastor Janet spoke of how Christians are called to be “**Light Unto the Nations**” and pioneers of faith and service. It is more productive to be a “pioneer” than a “settler.” A settler is quite satisfied with what is and “having arrived” – while a pioneer reaches beyond with a vision of what ought to be and determination to make it happen.

This was meaningful to me because I went to Wisconsin to help organize a branch of the Wisconsin Historical Society that would preserve what remains of my ancestral homesteads and the “Big Woods” from the bulldozers of housing developers. The awakening of the pioneer spirit was felt as 31 neighbors met and approved our Heritage Society bylaws. A significant “win-win” plan was approved that will save a large “sacred grove” of the “1852 homesteader’s woods” for all generations to enjoy. Driving back towards St. Paul, I crossed the St. Croix River on the Interstate-94 Bridge and saw thick ice a mile wide except for a narrow channel of water. The sermon on Sunday and the meeting on Monday suddenly took on additional meaning as I thought of how we may be frozen assets at times. But God’s goal is to thaw us into “living water,” urging us to flow in a Holy way and with the Christmas hope of Isaiah and Jesus running in our veins.

[7] 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>

Our annual **UMMA Gathering** is being planned. See the next issue of *UMMA UpDate* for early October 2006 dates. A 2007 missionary event is also in the think-tank to be coordinated with other missionary gatherings.

[8] **AS A NON-PROFIT ORG., WE WELCOME YEAR-END GIVING**

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Opportunity for year-end giving to support our non-profit organization is now made easy. Simply write your check to: “**UMMA**” make a notation: “for **Dues**” or “for **Budget**.” Send to: **Rev. Fred Price, UMMA Coordinator**
165 Grandview Ave., Pitman, NJ 08071