



gospel and missionary: to prepare the room (space) in which persons who choose to respond to Christ's love may develop their potential for service and witness and find their place as tightly knit members of Christ's Body which spans the globe, overcomes all territorial and tribal boundaries, and understands all languages.

After nine months of muteness preparing room in his own life for John the Baptizer's birth, Zechariah praised God, including these words (Luke 1:72-72): "[H]e has shown . . . mercy . . . that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness . . . ."

Let our hearts prepare Him room and space for others.

## [2] CHRISTIAN HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL by Paul Eppinger\*

*"May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13"*

I want to tell you three stories from my life to help you live a life of hope. The first is about Hopevale. I had heard about the tragedy of Hopevale. During the Second World War, Japan invaded the Philippines and ordered all expatriates into camps. Eleven American Baptist missionaries had chosen to move into the depths of the jungle on the island of Panay, and continue to serve the Filipinos in the medical and educational ministries. Then, in one of the tragic encounters of war, these 11 missionaries had been surprised in their jungle camp, had been martyred, and their bodies left in that beautiful isolated spot. And now, 13 years later, we were on our way to visit that memorable location. We left the city of Iloilo early in the morning and drove about two hours over dusty mountainous roads. Then we left the jeep and began our hike to that memorial site. A Filipino Christian who knew the area met us, and he became our guide. We hiked for miles over rice paddies, with mountains around us, and then we were in the jungle. Monkeys moved ahead of us, jungle parrots called to one another, our guide hacked his way through the jungle with a machete, and we followed single file. We passed a small building that served as the Baptist Church of the area, with its thatched roof and baptistry, simply a hole in the ground, which filled with water during the rainy season.

Then we were there. In a small gully, with huge rubber trees providing a canopy over the entire area, jungle growth provided the wall. We were in the small area the missionaries had converted into a chapel. There were crude benches made of large stone slabs. There was the small stone altar still there and the remains of a stone pulpit. We could only imagine the worship services that had been conducted there. We could almost hear the singing, feel the praying, sense the presence of those martyrs as we realized we were standing on holy ground.

Then our guide led us further into the jungle and into a small clearing, which is where the Japanese patrol had left the bodies. The Filipinos, who had been hiding, but could do nothing to prevent the atrocity, cared for the bodies and buried them in a mass grave on top of a small hill.

Soon, word spread through the underground, was radioed to an American submarine, and American Baptists heard the word. After the war was over, the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society went to the location and constructed a large memorial cross over the mass grave. On the bronze marker were included the names of the martyrs with the

immortal verse from Revelation 2:10, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."

As we read those names and considered that verse, with tears in our eyes, we knew that here were 11, who, being faithful unto death, had certainly been given the crown of life. The martyrdom of those eleven during the Second World War was thought by that patrol to have ended the life and witness of those missionaries. Death meant it was all over! But in the United States, one of the daughters of one of the couples who were martyred was in college, having been sent there by her parents just before the war exploded. She had lived as a little girl in Japan where her parents had been missionaries. She knew and loved the Japanese people. Her parents had loved the Japanese and had worked for peace between the United States and Japan during those years when the war clouds were darkening. For that reason, her family had been deported from Japan and had been transferred to minister in the Philippines, and she had been sent to college in America.

Now she was in America, December 7 and Pearl Harbor had shattered the fragile peace. Her parents were in the Philippines and she had not heard from them for a couple of years. She could only hope and pray for their safety. And then the word had come that they had been martyred. Obviously her heart was broken and her life terribly and tragically disrupted. Then summer vacation came. Her professors asked her what she wanted to do that summer, and her frank reply astounded them. She chose to go to a prisoner of war camp on the west coast and work with Japanese war prisoners there.

Then the war ended and the Japanese prisoners were returned home, reporters met them on the dock and among the questions asked was, "What was the most impactful experience you had while you were in prison in America? Were you tortured? What about the food? Did you meet any Americans? And almost to a person, those prisoners responded, "The most amazing and impactful experience I had in America was meeting and being ministered to by a young American college girl whose parents had been killed by one of our patrols in the Philippines." [continued on page 5]

### [3] OUR READERS WRITE

Dear UMMA, Thank you for sending us the November bulletin. We know that you are our beloved ones. You did give your lives for the work of the Church in all over the world. You are the heroes of our times. God bless you all. Continue to pray for the Church in Africa in general and in Mozambique in particular. Sincerely, Bishop Machado

\* \* \*

Hi Ric, Thanks for this great update. I'm planning to come to Evanston gathering. Program sounds great, and it will be fun to see Evanston again after all these years. Happy Thanksgiving. And keep up the good work. Love, Pat Brockman

\* \* \*

Dear Ric, Many thanks for an outstanding UMMA UpDate. Keith and Marilyn Hamilton, served in Bolivia, Peru, Uruguay, retired in Franklin, Indiana

\* \* \*

Greetings from Japan, Dear Richard, Thank you for keeping us in touch through UMMA UpDate. With your e-bulletin we can work and cooperate with each other no matter where we are, Yours in mission, Abet & Angie Valino, Assoc. for Seafarers-Japan

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My wife and I would like to give you a big THANKS for the great job you are doing with the UMMA UpDate. We enjoy keeping up on what's going on in the Mission field even though we have been retired for many years. Thanks again and God Bless. - Jim and Elsie Pettibone (Nepal, with United Mission to Nepal)

\* \* \*

Hi, and thanks for your good work. Please inform others about our new web site, [www.atomicbombmuseum.org](http://www.atomicbombmuseum.org) The highest monthly "hit" count was recorded recently at "over 186,000." - David Swain

\* \* \*

Dear Richard, Thanks for UMMA UpDate and your good work! Have a most joyful Christmas! Blessings, Marianne Hutchinson, retired from Mexico

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Dear Richard, OUCH - Another tooth broke off. I'm trying to wait until January and the 2007 budget. Do what you can to raise the dental ceiling, Sincerely, Frances Bray

\* \* \*

Ric, I think we do really need to push the GBGM to do something about dental care. It is at retirement age that the most serious dental problems occur, both because of often poor dental treatment where we have worked and because of age deterioration. Thanks to UMMA for dealing with this problem. Stan E. Moore at Pilgrim Place, Claremont, CA

\* \* \*

Dear Ric, Thanks for this copy of a colleague letter. I have been waiting for a year now to get a broken tooth taken care of. It will require a white crown, and the cost in France is about \$760 (€600). Keep us posted. - Hugh Johnson

*Dear Frances, Stan and Hugh, I'm sorry to hear about your "OUCH". Thanks for presenting your dental problems. There are many more suffering, but they don't voice their opinion. My wife and I too have to wait until year 2007 so that our Collins Health Benefits Plan will pay for part of our next dental appointments. We have run way over every year. The Collins Health Benefits Plan for Retirees booklet, effective Jan.1992, says on page 1: "Dental Care: Eligible charges covered up to an annual maximum of \$2,500." Our present \$1,000 maximum is quite a drop in coverage, especially when dental costs have gone in the opposite direction over the last 15 years! How is that justified? I am sending copies of this to our leaders. Wishing you and all reading this a very Blessed Christmas - Ric*

\* \* \*

Dear UMMA friends, Thank you for Arthur Peterson's e-mail [in *UMMA UpDate* #47]. "Pete" is an old friend and helped us for many years in our work. He is well aware of the religious explosion here in Brazil and in many parts of the Southern Hemisphere. This new revival is not without its problems and limitations but has connected with many people, especially the youth and the poor. In the Brazilian Methodist church that means that our churches grow about 5% a year nationally. Many Brazilians feel called to ministry and the church supports dozens and dozens of missionaries throughout Brazil and has sent others overseas to the US and Europe as well as other countries. Part of the secret to this growth is music, but certainly another big part is seeing mission as the reason for the existence of the Church. Here the Methodist "slogan" or mission statement is: "**Church: a missionary community in service of the people.**" We do not have the same divisions between church growth and social action that you have in the States. In part that is because abortion and homosexuality have not taken front stage as in the US,

but in part it is because the Brazilian people are more oriented toward tolerance than "political correctness". Despite the rosy picture that I am painting, there are problems. These were revealed at our last General Conference in July in which the church withdrew from ecumenical agencies that involve the Roman Catholic Church. This has caused division in the church and we have not arrived at the end of the story. Nevertheless, for those that look to a church that keeps evangelism and social action together, the Brazilian Methodist church has something to offer. It defends indigenous people's land, squatters, street children, etc. and at the same time has very significant growth. Hope this helps to clarify the context of some of "Pete's" comments. Gordon Greathouse.

\* \* \*

***Christian Hope Springs Eternal by Paul Eppinger*** (continued from page 1)

Does death end the witness? Can war stop the faith? Can the atrocities of one group on another kill love? NO! "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life," (Revelation 2:10). But the story doesn't end there. Several years after the end of the war, one of our missionaries was on a train traveling to Tokyo. People around him were chatting about various inconsequential subjects when he realized a man nearby was telling his buddy that he was on his way to try to find a Christian church so he could learn something about Christianity.

As they continued to talk, the missionary politely interrupted and asked why he wanted to learn something about Christianity. The man dropped his head and slowly began to tell the story that during the war he had been a member of a patrol in the Japanese army in the Philippines. One day they had captured a group of missionaries hiding out on the island of Panay. As they kept that group of missionaries captive for one day, one couple could speak Japanese and they spent the day talking to the patrol about Jesus Christ and how he was called "The Prince of Peace," how war and violence were not the answer, but that Jesus had said, "They that take up the sword will perish by the sword." And Jesus had said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

He went on to say that now he saw the wisdom of working for peace, he recognized the folly of war, and now he wanted to learn more about the Prince of Peace. Now, he wanted to be a peacemaker. Did the witness of 11 missionaries end in jungle martyrdom? Did life end there? NO! "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life." (Rev. 2:10).

The second story is about a dream on the China Wall. I had been a part of the great Civil Rights rally in 1963 when Dr. Martin Luther King had proclaimed his "I Have a Dream" speech. In 1988 our daughter Monica graduated from Yale and committed herself to go to China to teach English in a Chinese university. She was stationed in Chang Chun and shortly after she arrived, she wrote and asked me for a recording of all the speeches which I have of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I had a small library of those speeches, so I recorded them and sent them to her, asking her what she would do with them. Her response was that the Chinese university and graduate school students knew they had to learn English to succeed in the broader world and they wanted to learn the best spoken English which in their opinion was verbalized by Dr. Martin Luther King.

Two years later Sybil and I went to visit Monica in China. The Chinese communist guide assigned to us was a young man about 27 or 28 years old. His English was superb. As part of our tour we went to the Great Wall of China and walked on top of that massive structure. In a situation like that, I always try to get by myself simply to contemplate the meaning

of the structure and what it meant in world history. So I walked about a quarter of a mile away from our group and all of the other tourists. All at once I noticed our guide walking with me, so we began to talk. I asked him where he had learned English and he replied, "At the university." "But," I said, "your English is perfect; you don't speak with any accent. How did you learn to speak such perfect English?" He replied, "By listening to the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King." He was not at our daughter's university, but universities all across China have used the speeches of Dr. King to learn English. He said, "I memorized all of the speeches of Dr. King. In fact, if you wanted to hear the 'I Have a Dream' speech, I could give it to you right here right now." We continued talking and I asked a question that we were not supposed to ask anyone in China, "Since the Tiananmen Square tragedy occurred just last year, what is your hope for the future of China?" I will never forget his reply. He looked me directly in the eye and said, "I have great hope for China because there are thousands of us across this nation that still have a dream!" Let's dare to hope in such a way that we can keep the dream alive.

My third story is when my wife and I went to a movie released in 2003 under the title "To End All Wars." It is the true story of a young Scottish captain and the miracle of his life in a Japanese prisoner of war camp during the Second World War when two young Christian prisoners literally dragged him out of the death house, gave him their own meager rations of food and water, and nursed him back to health. That young man was Captain Ernie Gordon, who was converted to Jesus Christ in that prison. He became a minister and fifteen years after the war, in 1960, Dr. Ernest Gordon became my homiletics professor in Princeton seminary.

During that semester we had to preach a sermon before the class, and Dr. Gordon critiqued our sermons with notes written on the manuscript. Recently, after seeing the movie and reading the book again, I woke up during the night and remembered that Dr. Gordon had analyzed that sermon I had preached at Princeton in my Homiletics class 40 years ago. It dawned on me that I still had a copy of that sermon with his notes penciled in as he had critiqued the sermon. I got out of bed, went to my files, pulled out the sermon, and found the very helpful and encouraging homiletical comments from Dr. Gordon. The closing dynamite statement he had written for me 40 years ago was **"Accept the fact that God is present, transforming every human situation."**

Dr. Ernest Gordon died on January 16, 2002, but the truth he learned in the agony of the prison camp which he passed on to me in the classroom is true in all situations at all times. "God is present, transforming every human situation."

Contemplating that comment since then, I have seen that God was present in that prison camp through two young prisoners who declared that even in the hell of that prison camp, they were going to live out the love of God. Because they were there, God was there. Let us live out the great hope that "God is present, transforming every human situation." \* *The Rev. Dr. Paul Eppinger is Executive Director of the Arizona Interfaith Movement. He recently retired as the Executive Director of the Arizona Ecumenical Council, an organization uniting programs of 13 mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations involving 700 churches and one million people in Arizona. He has been married 47 years to his wife, Sybil, who was honored in 2002 as the Arizona Mother of the Year. They met and trained together at Scarritt College and served abroad as missionaries.*

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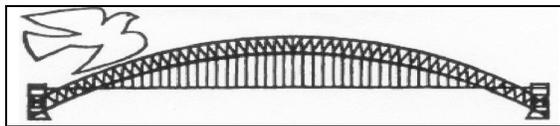
*"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." - Gandhi*

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[4] **EVANSTON 2007 MISSION FORUM & GATHERING** by Norma Kehrberg  
Reserve a place now for the **Mission Forum and Gathering** scheduled from August 5-8, 2007 at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, IL. Please fill out the **Registration Form** at the end of this newsletter, calculate the costs as outlined and make out your check to Trinity UMC and send to Richard Vreeland. The proposed agenda will be available shortly with Bible Study and Mission Witnesses for all the plenary sessions. Roundtable discussions are being scheduled for the afternoon sessions of Monday and Tuesday, August 6 and 7 and will include sessions on medical missions, mission and development and a leadership session for VIMers. On Monday, August 6, the India, Southeast Asia and Philippines missionary reunions will be held from 2-7 PM. And, all along there is time for meeting and greeting people as well as sharing in small group discussion. Sign up now and do not miss out on dormitory housing.

### **MISSION FORUM AND GATHERING**

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary  
2121 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201  
August 5 – 8, 2007



**“BRIDGES OF HOPE”**

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

**Join Bishop Roy E. Sano, Ruth Daugherty, Gen. Sec. Randy Day, Nan McCurdy, Robert Hunt, Steven Ybarrola, and others as we share, preach and discuss mission.**

Opening plenary Sunday evening, August 5 at 7:00 PM in the chapel at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Music by Joline Bestounes and Stephen Edwards of Community UMC in Naperville followed by Bishop Roy E. Sano speaking on “Biblical Basis for Mission”. Program ends at 1 PM, August 8.

**Registration:** \$35 per individual.

Wheelchair participants may have some difficulty using one elevator to chapel meetings.

#### **Housing:**

Loder Hall Dormitory Housing on Campus Forty-five rooms at \$186 for three nights for single or double occupancy (Thus, 2 persons would divide this and pay only \$93 each. If only one in the room the room rate is still \$186). No AC. Bathrooms down the hall. (dormitory style housing). Reservations for dormitory are made on the form below.

Best Western Hotel: Garrett Event Rates \$99 per night plus taxes (about 15-20 minute walk). Parking additional. Limited number of reserved rooms available until July 1, 2007. Call Best Western Hotel at 847-491-6400 and ask for the Mission Gathering and Forum group. Airport Express to the Hotel \$22; Taxi, approximately \$35.

Hotel Orrington: \$119 per night, plus taxes (about six blocks from campus). Limited number of reserved rooms available until July 1, 2007. Parking additional. Call 847-556-

7987, contact Group Reservations and ask for the Mission Gathering and Forum at Garrett-Evangelical. From O’Hare call American Taxi at 847-673-1000 – Cost \$25. Other Hotels in the area may be less expensive but farther away.

**Travel:** By train: Blue line from airport to downtown, then red line and then purple line to Evanston City Center. Garrett is about eight blocks away from the train station. If driving, parking at Garrett is limited and will cost at least \$5 per day.

**Food:** \$105 for full three days (\$35 per day). Includes entree for evening meal, continental style breakfast and executive style bag lunches. Limited options for food preferences. Otherwise, meals on your own at cafeteria at Northwestern, a 10 minute walk away.

----- Please fill out, cut off here and send -----

**REGISTRATION FORM**

For details & forms click: <http://www.umma-global.org/pdf/gathering.pdf>

Name of delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Health Insurance Carrier:** \_\_\_\_\_

Plan #: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Affiliation** (Check all that apply):  NADAM  NCVIM  UMMA  India Reunion  
 SE Asia Reunion  Philippines Reunion  Other (please name) \_\_\_\_\_

**Housing:**

- Hotel – I will reserve and pay for my own hotel room.
- Loder Hall Dormitory (Rm. total =\$186. Roommates name: \_\_\_\_\_ )

<u>Item:</u>	<u>Loder Hall or</u>	<u>hotel</u>
Registration per person – Non-refundable	35.	35.
Food per person*	105.	105.
<u>Dormitory (Total for 1 or 2 participants per room)*</u>	<u>186.</u>	<u>_____</u>
Total =	326.	140.

\* Refundable until May 1, 2007

**Payment:** Make check payable to: **Trinity UMC** with \$326 for Loder Hall option, *or* \$140 if you reserve & pay for your own hotel room. PLEASE SEND TO:

**Richard Vreeland, 182 Ameren Way – Apt. 752, Ballwin, MO 63021-3317, USA**  
 Information on registration Tel: (636) 825-6351; email: [RLVreeland@sbcglobal.net](mailto:RLVreeland@sbcglobal.net)