

UMMA UpDate #49, January 6, 2007
e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
For PDF version click to <http://www.umma-global.org>
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"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"

In this Epiphany issue:

- [1] Summer gathering to bring United Methodists together around mission
- [2] Mission Gathering & Forum, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Goals
- [3] Epiphany Message by Miguel Mairena
- [4] Our Readers Write
- [5] Health Tips
- [6] Point to Ponder
- [7] Coordinator's Corner, "New Year – New Opportunities" by Fred Price, Coordinator
- [8] This is your invitation ...

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[1] **Summer gathering to bring United Methodists together around mission**

United Methodists from across the denomination will come together in the Chicago area for four days in August to explore what mission can mean for the church in the 21st century.

The **"Bridges of Hope" Mission Gathering and Forum** will take place **August 5-8, 2007 at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary** in Evanston, IL. Participants will pray, sing and worship together while being inspired to share the evangelical message that leads to the transformation of lives and communities.

The gathering will critically analyze the changes in communities impacted by Christian mission, while affirming justice ministries and ministries of presence as legitimate forms of mission.

According to Norma Kehrberg, a retired missionary and former head of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the conference will bring together people involved with mission at all levels of the church, from deaconesses and home missionaries to short term volunteers in mission and long-term cross-cultural missionaries as well as UMC professors of mission. "Local church pastors and laity with a heart for mission will also be there as we discuss how mission can be a critical force in healthy, alive local churches," Kehrberg said.

Speakers at the conference include Bishop Roy Sano, Gennifer Brooks, a professor of preaching at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Steven Ybarrola, a professor of anthropology at Asbury Seminary, and Robert Hunt, director of global theological education at Perkins School of Theology. Randy Day, the head of the denomination's mission agency, and Ruth Daugherty, a former president of United Methodist Women, will also give keynote presentations. Missionaries Nan McCurdy, Miguel Mairena, Howard Heiner, and David Scott are confirmed speakers with others pending.

Workshops are scheduled on a variety of topics ranging from mission in situations of conflict to medical missions, from the challenges for mission of U.S. foreign policy to the

links between evangelism and mission. *For more information write to Norma Kehrberg, email: kehrbergn001@hawaii.rr.com*

Registration for the event is \$35 and additional information is available online at www.umma-global.org or by contacting the Gathering's registrar, Richard Vreeland, at rlvreeland@sbcglobal.net A registration form is at the end of this bulletin.

[2] **Mission Gathering & Forum, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary**

Purpose: Provide an opportunity where people of The United Methodist Church with a passion for mission will gather for worship, prayer, learning, sharing, and discussion and gain a renewed focus for mission in the 21st century.

Theme: “Bridges of hope” 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Objectives:

- **claim** understanding of a Biblical basis for mission
- **gather** to pray, sing, worship and be inspired to share the evangelical message that leads to the transformation of lives and communities
- **share**, debate and discuss aspects of mission as the critical force in the local church
- **encounter** and interact with a wide variety of mission personnel in the UMC – short term volunteers in mission, longer-term cross-cultural missionaries, deaconesses, home missionaries, home missioners, church and community workers, US-2s, mission interns, mission-involved pastors, committed men, women and youth in local, district global ministries, and all mission-passionate and mission-involved people
- **acknowledge** historical changes in the philosophy of mission and recognize that mission is “from anywhere to everywhere”
- **examine** the dynamics of ethnic diversity in mission in the UMC today
- **claim and reaffirm** justice ministries and “ministries of presence” as mission
- **examine** forces of power and their relationship to peace and justice in mission
- **analyze** critically the changes in communities impacted by Christian mission
- **provide** opportunity for participants to lead and share specific interests in mission

[3] **EPIPHANY Message by Miguel Mairena**

The Epiphany, the festival we celebrate every January sixth, refers to the life-changing experience of the wise men when they interpreted a signal in the sky – a bright star – as the message or manifestation that the leader, long-promised to the Israelites, had been born. The Israelites at this time in history were an oppressed colony of the Roman Empire, so the birth of this long yearned-for leader brought hope for liberation. The second chapter of Matthew is the only gospel included in the Bible that describes this event. The consequence of the visit of the wise men is the assassination of many boys born during this time (the slaughter of the Holy Innocents), ordered by King Herod and supported by those who benefited from and served the empire, who believed themselves irreplaceable. They didn't want to think that they could be replaced by a new generation nor that the colonized peoples could be liberated from imperial control.

The Israelites were waiting for a new leader, descended from one of their smallest tribes, who would help them free themselves from the Empire of their time. They had hope of returning to sovereignty.

Today, just like in that time of old, there are many peoples who maintain hope of being free, of being sovereign and who hope for the birth of a leader from their community, who will help them free themselves from the current Empire, an Empire that not only kills the boys with the blade of its sword, but kills women, men, elderly – the Holy Innocents of our day—and all those who get in the way of its lust for power, wealth and the exploitation of natural resources. This Empire kills with policies of massive impoverishment as well as by bombing cities and by economic blockades that wage havoc on children.

But God gives hope that the day will come when new leaders are born among the people who will guide them to liberate themselves from the Empire. The birth of these new governors will be recognized by wise men and women, not only from the East, but from the four cardinal points of the planet. And the people will sing, and praise and give thanks to God for the fulfillment of her promise... *Miguel Mairena and his wife Nan McCurdy are missionaries in Nicaragua. They will be speakers at the Mission Gathering.*

[4] OUR READERS WRITE

Let the Carols Continue In Bethlehem! In the words of Luke 2: 13-15:

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests. When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

Bethlehem did not only give the world the incarnate Son of God, Emanuel, the Prince of Peace and Savior of the world, but also the first Christmas carols. The shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem heard the choirs of angels sing in the sky above them, "Glory to God in heaven and peace on earth..." Since then, throughout the world the faithful have been celebrating this great and divine visitation with carols, songs and hymns of praise.

Will the carols of Christmas continue to be sung in the churches, homes and streets of Bethlehem? This obviously depends on whether the faithful continue to live in Bethlehem. If political and economic factors continue to force the faithful to migrate out of Bethlehem, the carols of Christmas will disappear with them. Bethlehem the very place of the birth of Christ can soon become a city without a song, not even a carol on Christmas Eve. Only peace could keep the faithful from deserting their city and hence keep the carol going....Yet, it would be impossible to have peace in Bethlehem without solving the bigger issues relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If not for the sake of Israel or for the sake of Palestine, for Bethlehem's sake, let us double our efforts to bring an end to this quarrel that has caused so much turmoil and bloodshed in the last one hundred years. Let us end the conflict before the conflict brings an end to the carol, hushes the song and quiets the hymn. The silence of the Christmas Carol in Bethlehem will signal the defeat of Christianity in the birth place of the Christian faith. God forbid!

Where to begin? Start by learning more about what is going on today in Bethlehem. It is easy for the diligent to *Google* the truth and it is cheaper than making a trip to Bethlehem. But if you wish to visit Bethlehem, you will be most welcome. The next step is to say a prayer and intercede on behalf of all those who are affected by the conflict, but especially pray for the survival of the Christian community in Bethlehem. Pray for those who in spite of all the oppression and evil around them continue to sing the carols. Then act in faith and advocate by: Writing a letter to your local newspaper. Send an email message to your government representatives. Teach a class

and educate the people in your church and community. Find out what other peacemakers are doing and support their efforts.

As millions worldwide have done for ages past, this Christmas and all through the year, “Come to Bethlehem” in spirit and in song. It is the hope of the contemporary faithful in Bethlehem that the challenges faced by the city, will occupy the hearts and minds of true seekers until the bells toll louder and the Christmas carols of old resound with renewed fervor and passion in Bethlehem. Merry Christmas - Alex & Brenda Awad, our missionaries in Bethlehem
Editor’s note: GBGM Mission Education Executive Una Jones is leading a 2007 Mission Travel Study to Palestine & Israel, January 15 - 26, 2007.

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Christmas Greetings from Mexico! In the words of Isaiah 11:1, 3, 4
A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots...He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.

With this text from the prophet Isaiah in mind, the Methodist Seminary’s “wreath” this year was Jesse’s stump for our Christmas worship service. It was a beautiful and very meaningful moment as we gathered as a community of students, faculty, friends and families. The stump had 4 candles on its sides coming around and rising up, symbolizing the fact that the light comes out of the darkness and rises until all is light with the Christ candle on the top. - Cherie White

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From a Christmas newsletter by Paul Webster, Mujila Falls Agricultural Centre, Zambia
“He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.” From Mary’s Song—The Magnificat, Luke 1: 52-53

It is said that during the height of the British Empire, Anglican pastors were discouraged from reading these verses from their pulpits in India and other parts of the Empire. These words certainly should give rulers then and now great pause. God does indeed side with the poor, and the rich must never think that they can ignore those who lack both economic and political power.... We, as United Methodists, can be proud of our long history of speaking truth to power and answering God’s call to comfort the needy, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the prisoner. The past year has been nothing short of miraculous here at Mujila Falls. We are seeing God’s hand at work with us and the people we have been sent to serve on a daily basis. Just keeping up with His blessings has been daunting. – Paul Webster

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Dear Ric, Many thanks for all the news and the inspiring stories [in UU #48]. We are celebrating the centennial of UTS [Union Theological Seminary]. This noon, we dedicated a *bahay kubo* [typical bamboo farm hut] we built on one end of the [demonstration] farm. It seats 25 for seminars and classes. We have been harvesting vegetables from the farm and eating fish (tilapia) from our fish ponds. God is good. - Romy Del Rosario, President of UTS, Philippines

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Dear Ric, Thank you for your good work in putting *UMMA UpDate #48* together and sending it out. By the way, have you had the opportunity yet to meet the Rev. Victor Peters in Pasadena? At 104 years, I believe he is the oldest Methodist missionary still living. He left Korea at the beginning of WWII and was not able to come back after the war, but people here still remember him with great affection and there was an article about him in one of the Korean-language church newspapers not long ago. Peace, Dwight J. Strawn Methodist Theological Seminary Seoul, Korea

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Dear Colleagues in Mission: On a very snowy morning here in Seoul, I have just read the recent news release following the Council of Bishops' meeting in Mozambique forwarded by Norma. I have not studied it thoroughly but have two initial questions:

1. What about considerations of other autonomous Methodist churches? The Korean Methodist Church, with which we are affiliated, has been autonomous since 1930. It is the second largest Methodist church in the world and growing worldwide. I do not see any indication in the "new plan" of the UMC as to how United Methodists would understand and relate to such churches as ours in Korea. It seems that the UMC is trying to make a bigger worldwide church of its own without steps to consider sister relationships with others.

2. What is the relationship of this UMC with its many proposed central conferences to the World Methodist Council (which incidentally met in Korea last July)?

I am convinced that we as Americans (mostly) have much to ponder as we consider how we should live out our lives as Methodists in the world. Recently a GBGM executive wrote to a Korean church leader some words indicating that the GBGM would be setting up its own work in Korea for Asian outreach, etc. I can't help but think that the time for such an "imperialistic-sounding plan from outside" must be over and that we must be very careful about the language we use, often without thinking enough. I will be interested indeed to learn more and will welcome our ongoing dialogue together as UMMA friends and God's messengers of hope and comfort, especially at this season. Warm wishes. - Sonia Strawn in Seoul

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Hi Sonia and All, Here's a very hasty minimally pondered response to questions raised:

1. My sense is that the autonomous Methodist Churches would have little to offer in the way of input into structural changes in the United Methodist Churches. I can't imagine that they would want to. They have worked out their structures which would seem to be at least one of the perks of autonomy. An interesting question is, would the Korean Methodist Church have grown so rapidly if it was still part of the UMC.

2. Regarding ties to the World Methodist Council, which seems to be more of a society rather than a policy making body—it already engulfs the entire Methodist family and would likely continue doing so. - Gene Matthews, genematt@mchsi.com

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Hi Ric, I'm headed to Cambodia for one month, 14 Jan - 16 Feb, to assist in the consolidation of the CHAD (Community Health and Agricultural Development) program into the newly merged Methodist Mission in Cambodia structure. Keep us in your prayers. There are many challenges for this new Methodist Mosaic! Grace and peace and Happy New Year! - Jim Gulley

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Hi Ric, Yesterday I copied and sent Registration forms to several missionaries who served in Malaysia. They indicated an interest in the Mission Gathering. Our Registrations have already gone to Dick Vreeland. Also, I was deeply inspired by Paul Epplinger article in the latest *UMMA UpDate*. We need to hear more such stories and hopefully some one can someday publish them as a book on "Witnesses of 20th Century Missionaries"! Keep well. Keep the Faith and pass it on as well. Shalom, Salaam, Peace, Lionel & Marion Muthiah, missionaries in Indonesia & Malaysia, retired and active in North Dakota *Thanks for the idea Lionel, please send to me. - ed.*

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Hi Ric, As of Jan. 6, 2007, I have already received 28 registrations for the Evanston 2007 Mission Gathering. These include: 3 NADAM; 2 NCVIM; 23 UMMA; 7 India, 8 SE Asia; 4 Philippines. Some folks fit into more than one category. - Dick Vreeland, registrar **P.S. Please accept the invitation at the end of this newsletter, fill in form and send to me.**

[5] HEALTH TIPS - *Prevention is Better than Cure*

Nitrites in cured meat is linked to lung disease. People who regularly eat cured meats are 71 % more likely to have symptoms of lung disease than people who never eat this type of meat, says a new study from the US. Dated 16/9/2006. <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?id=70484>

Additives do cause temper tantrums. Parents have long suspected that artificial food colorings can affect their child's mood and behavior. Now a government-funded study shows that parents were right all along. Dated 9/8/2006. http://www.foodcomm.org.uk/parentsjury/add_2.htm

[6] **POINT TO PONDER by Albert Schweitzer**

"There are no great discoveries and progress as long as there is still one unhappy child on earth."
- Albert Schweitzer, missionary doctor, 1875 Kaisersberg Alsace (France) – 1965 Lambarene Gabun

[7] **Coordinator's Corner "New Year - New Opportunities" by Fred Price**

The year 2007 comes with a couple of opportunities. The first is to send in membership dues for 2007. Only \$25.00 per person for Full Membership which includes the right to vote for Steering Committee members, or \$15.00 per person for Affiliate Membership which does not include voting rights. The second opportunity will come shortly as we hold our next round of elections. You will hear more details by email or by snail (regular) mail. We will again be electing persons to the Steering Committee. For active missionaries, this will be by geographic region. Retirees will vote as a single body.

Allow me to once again thank you for the many ways you have served and continue to serve the Christ whose birth we have just celebrated.

----- Please fill out now, cut off here, and send to the address below -----

Your Name: _____ Spouse's Name: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Individual Member = \$25.00, Couple = \$50, Affiliate Memberships = \$15.00

Please make checks payable to: "UMMA" and mail to:

Fred W. Price, Coordinator, 165 Grandview Avenue, Pitman, NJ 08071 USA

[8] *This is your invitation to come join the...*

MISSION GATHERING & FORUM

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

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.

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.

Wheelchair participants will have an elevator to reach chapel meetings.

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 to Richard Vreeland -----

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