

UMMA UpDate #55, November 8, 2007
e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
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"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"

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[1] **Church & Community Workers Biennial Meeting by Doug Wingeier**

I attended part of the Church and Community Workers (CCW) biennial meeting, Oct 31 - Nov 4 at Lake Junaluska. They graciously gave me a chance to bring greetings from UMMA. In the sessions I was able to attend, I heard two interesting reports.

Steve Goldstein, Assistant General Secretary for Personnel of GBGM reported that: the staff is now almost at full capacity; that 30-35% of mission personnel are now from outside the U.S.; that two new classes of missionaries are being commissioned in 2007-2008; that there will be a summer intern program next year; that the latest regional secretaries hired (including Jim Dwyer) have been missionaries; that salary and pension rates will go up in 2008; that the relationship between GBGM and missionaries is no longer adversarial; that the process of termination of Randy Day around leadership issues was a painful struggle for all concerned; that the General Secretary position has now been posted; that it is hoped to have a new one in place by the spring board meeting, or at the latest by the time of Jurisdictional Conferences in the summer; and that Bishop Felton May as interim will provide "more than symbolic leadership." The group expressed thanks and appreciation to Steve for his support and "faithfulness to us."

The second report was by Brenda Connelly, executive secretary for Church and Community Ministries. She reported that: there are now 53 Church and Community Workers, including 15 who are new this year, and 11 in specialized ministries—2 in housing, 3 in health, and 6 in immigration services. She urged the C&C workers to "tell the story" through itineration, mission letters, and participation in Annual Conferences, Schools of Christian Mission, and Conference UMW meetings, and commended them for their response to the call to serve the poor, marginalized and voiceless. Ruth Daugherty presented Brenda with a book by Bishop Rueben Job on behalf of the group.

There looked to be about 100 persons present, and the program consisted of times of spiritual renewal, worship, committee meetings and reports, revisions and updates on the

CCW Handbook, a memorial service, and a retirement dinner. I sensed a strong kindred spirit and commonality of purpose between CCW and UMMA.

Note: CCW members read two books in preparation for the Biennial. The first was *Bridges Out of Poverty* by Ruby Payne, Philip DeVol and Terie Dreussi Smith. The "Bridges" training will help us look at the hidden rules that are part of the culture of poverty and the rules in the other economic classes in our society. Out of knowledge will grow some strategies including redesigning programs to better serve people in poverty and increasing the likelihood that we can be a part of people actually being able to move from welfare to work. Terie Dreussi Smith was their workshop leader. The second book was *Feed My Shepherds: Spiritual Healing and Renewal for Those in Christian Leadership*. Dr Linda Crane was the workshop leader. This book looked at the inner hunger and fatigue faced by many in Christian leadership and the ways we can care for ourselves in order to be what God calls us to be and be able to serve fully in healthy ways.

[2] Stamford Meeting of UMMA Leaders with GBGM Staff by Jim Gulley

Dear Colleagues, *First*, thanks once again to Rev. Edith Gleaves for the luncheon and meeting which Helen Dwyer, Fred Price and I attended with GBGM staff (Edith Gleaves, Steve Goldstein, Roland Fernandes) and Board Members (Wendy Rhodehamel, John Peterson) on 8 Sep 2007. As I expressed to several, I felt the meeting reflected a genuine sense of collegiality between all present. Thanks to all of you for the spirit which permeated our meeting. *Second*, below is a draft of the notes I made from our meeting. *Last*, I'm requesting Edi to advise us on our tentative plan to hold a mini-consultation with the mission associations. As we all acknowledged we look forward to that consultation as there were many agenda items which need much more time and attention.

Notes from GBGM-UMMA Luncheon Meeting, Marriott Hotel, Stamford CT, Oct 8, 2007 by Jim Gulley:

Discussions drew upon the agenda developed by UMMA members in e-conversations over recent months (see below). With limited time, discussion focused on a few issues: proposed mini-consultation with GBGM and missionary associations, Collins Funds update, itineration issues. It was agreed that issues related to number 1. a. to c. (see article [7] below) require more time and attention in a different venue. These might be considered in a mini-consultation or in an overlapping Global Mission Personnel Conference and Mission Forum and/or Gathering. UMMA is not considering another forum until 2009, but might work with GBGM to develop a scaled-down conference focusing on a topic of critical interest to both GBGM and the missionary associations. Options could be considered at the proposed mini-consultation.

Edith Gleaves proposed that GBGM host a mini-consultation involving all missionary associations by the end of the year. Each association would have three representatives, GBGM representation would include Edith Gleaves, Steve Goldstein, Roland Fernandes, someone from the Advance Special office, a representative of Mission Context and Relationships, the General Secretary and possibly a new Mission Personnel staff member responsible for itineration. Target date: Dec 3-4, 2007 at GBGM with Dec 10-11 as back-up dates. Edith will consult on the availability of representatives of the other associations.

Edith will work with the associations to develop the agenda, which will include some of the issues that could not be addressed in today's meeting.

Roland Fernandes reported that he was recommending an increase of \$25.00 per year of service bringing the Collins Pension Fund retirement rate to \$470.00 per service year. The dollar cost of this increase is \$5.1 million. Leaving the Collins fund at one of its lowest ever levels (\$6.7 million). Collins earnings have been off this year (expected to reach possibly \$4 million by year end) due in part to the lower demand for building materials with the slowdown in the construction industry. While moving missionary retirement rates slightly up, reaching the 1% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) still remains a distant target.

As Roland reported to the full board, new 2007 Federal Accounting Board Standards (FASB 158) will most likely require GBGM to book the \$22 million in estimated (not actual) future unfunded liabilities in 2007 which would wipe out all of Collins current reserves. A meeting with auditors in December will make the final determination. Roland indicated that he has held informal, preliminary discussions with the UMC General Board of Pensions exploring options for improving the management of the Collins Retirement Fund. Income from Collins funds are used to fund retired missionary pensions and health care costs and also active missionary health care costs. A return to 1994 health care benefits would have to come from future Collins income since current reserves are likely to be wiped out by FASB 158. Research by the General Treasurer's office indicates that more than 40 of 278 (14.4%) retired missionaries had exceeded the current maximum of \$1,000 per year. *[Does this include retirees who forgo seeing a dentist when they see they are going to exceed the limit? –ed.]*

There was general agreement that "Guidelines for United States Itineration Assignments of Mission Personnel" produced 30 years ago must be revised. GBGM staff have already begun that process and welcome further input from the missionary associations. The Missionary Personnel Services Committee is the body that approves policy changes. Steve Goldstein welcomed any information on groups that provide services to missionaries.

Itineration issues faced by missionaries include, among others: no resident base, no vehicle, no digital projector for expected presentations, variable experience in use of computer and digital technology for producing and presenting professional CD's or DVDs of missionaries activities. Wendy Rhodehamel observed that perhaps GBGM should equip missionaries to do the jobs expected of them. GBGM staff noted that there is an itineration budget that is available to support missionary itineration on a case-by-case basis. *Other suggestions include: a revolving loan fund or rental options for missionary transportation; consider the option of procuring the new \$100/200 laptop for students in developing countries. Would missionary children be eligible?*

[3] NEW INTERIM GENERAL SECRETARY from a letter of Edith Gleaves

Grace and peace to you, You may have already heard the news that during the Board of Directors meeting this week in Stamford, Connecticut, the Rev. R. Randy Day was not re-nominated as general secretary. The directors decided to take a different direction in leadership for the Board.

Bishop Felton E. May was named on Tuesday, October 9, 2007 by the GBGM Board directors to serve as Interim General Secretary of GBGM, effective Wednesday, October 10, 2007. Bishop May briefly addressed the directors on Wednesday, and also held a brief meeting with GBGM staff at 475 the following day. He was introduced by Bishop Joel Martinez, GBGM Board president, and by Rev. James Mooneyhan, chair of the Personnel Committee of the Board. Phyllis May, Bishop May's wife, was also present and introduced. Bishop May expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve in this interim capacity. He is a retired bishop who last served in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference. Bishop May is a strong leader of the Church and has a long and distinguished history of commitment and passion for mission, and for GBGM. Bishop May has also served as vice president of the Board and described himself to us as a "GBGM junkie".

For your information I have included in the text of this letter the news release from GBGM concerning this change, which also speaks more about Bishop May. You can also find the link to this article with a picture of Bishop May on the GBGM website and at http://gbgm-umc.org/global_news/pr.cfm?articleid=4688.

[4] **BIBLICAL BASIS FOR MISSION** by Roy I. Sano

Introduction: I feel honored to join you at this gathering to “renew a focus for mission in the 21st century.” I could spend my whole time describing life transforming assignments I received from staff and missionaries in the Women’s Division, the former National and World Division, and UMCOR. I hope you will sense how deeply indebted I feel even if I only weave brief references to those transforming experiences into the presentation.

As you explore “Bridges of Hope,” I was asked to speak directly to one of the objectives, viz., “to regain understanding of a Biblical basis for mission.” I will do so in conjunction to another objective, viz., “to share the evangelical message that leads to the transformation of lives and communities.”

We must turn to the Bible today because we face challenges comparable to the one Jesus faced. When the Pharisees asked why his disciples “break the tradition of the elders,” Jesus answered, “For the sake of your tradition, you make void the word of God.” (Mt 15:2 and 6. See too, Mark 7:13.)

In our situation, the doctrinal traditions of our elders only clarify certain portions of God’s work and words, but obscure other biblical witnesses to God’s activities. It is therefore not enough to claim we are biblical and adhere to the full Canon, because the doctrinal traditions of our elders actually operate with a canon within the Canon. I welcome this opportunity to share neglected strands in the Bible which I discovered as I tried through the years to understand the sanctity I experienced in your passions and practices in mission. Those biblical insights provide “bridges of hope” in the face of the awesome realities we encounter in the 21st century.

I will proceed through two phases in this presentation. The first is to track what the Bible means by the witness of the Spirit, and the second is the stories of salvation which the witness calls us to promote. Click to www.umma-global.org/mission07.html for the full message.

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"You have to help people know there's a future with purpose and meaning for them. You have to replace the hate with something positive." - Gary Mason

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[5] **Missionary Service: Relic of the Past or Hope for the Future?** by Doug Wingeier

Dr. Doug Wingeier, emeritus professor of practical theology, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

My son Phil has already referred to David Bosch's classic work, *Transforming Mission*, but has focused on the Enlightenment paradigm and the emergent postmodern paradigm of mission. Early in the book Bosch identifies three New Testament Models of Mission, which I now want to draw on. These are the approaches of: Matthew: Mission as Disciple-Making; Luke-Acts: Practicing Forgiveness and Solidarity with the Poor; and Mission in Paul: Invitation to Join the Eschatological Community. Over more than a century, the mission experience of our family represents each of these models.

First, The MATTHEW MODEL of MISSION is epitomized in "THE GREAT COMMISSION"—a phrase, I only recently learned, was invented by the translators of the King James Version. "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age'" (28:18-20). The key elements in this missionary mandate are: the authority of Jesus, going to all nations, making disciples, baptizing, teaching, obeying commandments, Jesus' presence, and the urgency of the approaching end of the age. The great mission movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries partook of these elements. My maternal grandparents--Phil's great-grandparents--Charles and Emily Buchanan--during their time in Singapore (1896-1906) and Java (1907-1923)--operated out of this Matthew model—Mission as Disciple-Making. *For the full message click to www.umma-global.org/mission07.html*

[6] **OUR READERS WRITE**

Cherie White wrote from Mexico: Sonia and All: United Theological Seminary in Ohio has had a missionary-in-residence in the past. The last one I knew of was Starr Bowen. I think your idea of MIR is excellent & that seminaries, need to promote it a bit more so that missionaries would know about it. I was amazed to see in the paper recently, a meeting between the presidents of North & South Korea. Blessings, Cherie

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Thanks for the good report. It's great to see the increasing importance of the role of UMMA in relation with GBGM and in new initiatives. Good work in your reports, Appreciated. - Everett and Vera Woodcocke

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Thanks so much Richard for sharing this with me. I continue to look for and advocate the partnering with UMMA to assist in the on-going challenge and opportunity for mission interpretation. I have every hope that these relationships will come to fruition. Thanks for all that you do. - Lynda Byrd

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Hi, Ric and Caring, I thought of you all when I learned of the death of Emma Ruth Osborn on September 19, 2007. Spouse Noel Osborn of 4009 Bluebird Ct., Lebanon, OH 45036 survives. As you know, she and Noel served the GBGM in the Philippines for 37 years. Surviving are children: Cynthia Osborn and Phillip Osborn. A memorial service was held September 28th in the Otterbein Lebanon Chapel. Memorials are designated for the Otterbein Lebanon Benevolent Fund, 585 North State Route 741, Lebanon, OH 45036. Thanks for all you do to keep us connected. - Mary Lois & David Hilton

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Dear Dr. Schwenk, Thanks for communicating these events to me. I do appreciate it so much. Hope you can come to the Union Theological Seminary Centennial celebration (Nov. 21-23 in the Philippines). God bless, I just came from Gattaran and Tabuk [remote northern Luzon] for lectures. - Rev. Rudy Juan, Philippine military chaplain

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Ric, Got an email from the Upchurch's. They expect to be at General Conference (Fort Worth, TX, April 23 - May 2, 2008) and wanted to hook up with other UMMA members. I do not know who will be there so I wondered if we may put something in the Update asking who among our members will be there so they can get in touch with one another also. - Fred Price *Please let Bill & Diana Upchurch dianabillupchurch@yahoo.com know if you plan to be at the General Conference.* -ed

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"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed." - Albert Einstein

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[7] Chair's Corner: Back on the Chopping Block by Jim Gulley

The UMMA Steering Committee in recent months has been crafting an agenda that we believe merits attention in our conversations with GBGM leadership. However, we still need much more input from the broader missionary community. Here's a question for each of us: ***What would mobilize me for greater involvement in God's mission?*** At the October 8 luncheon meeting, UMMA offered the following agenda as representative of its concerns and aspiration to be an effective partner in mission with GBGM. Please take time to read the draft agenda below. Please reflect on it and provide your feedback to your UMMA leadership, beginning with me jim.gulley@comcast.net. We need you to get involved!

1. Discerning a Spirit-led strategic focus for United Methodists through GBGM:
Breaking Down the Walls of Hostility / Sending Forth Ambassadors of Reconciliation:
 - a. Understanding GBGM's vision and goals at conference, district and local levels of the church
 - b. Clarifying GBGM's priorities: Is GBGM starting new UM Churches while neglecting historic autonomous Methodist Church and ecumenical partners? Has GBGM achieved a balanced program of mission outreach?
 - c. The vital role of long-term, cross-cultural mission personnel in promoting mutual understanding and competency across boundaries necessary for effective mission service

