

UMMA UpDate #61, December 9, 2008
e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
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edited by Richard Lloyd Schwenk, e-mail: RicSchwenk@earthlink.net

"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"

In this issue of Advent hope mixed with Christmas joy:

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[1] **Christmas Can Can by Richard Schwenk, editor**

As our founder, John Wesley, would say, "Do all the good you can, to all the people you can, in all the places you can, as often as ever you can." While the Advent season begins with a glimmer of hope in a troubled world, it leads to the joy of Christmas sharing skills and goods that will jump-start a better life. It doesn't have to be a big gift of "good". D.T. Niles described mission outreach as simply, "One beggar telling another beggar where to find food." Jim Gulley, our UMMA chair, raises these questions: "What unique gifts, skills and opportunities for mission does the whole missionary community – active, former, inactive, retired – have to offer?" Besides being our chairperson, Jim is a very active missionary on special assignment to train self-sustaining leaders in various church and rural community development projects in Haiti and Cambodia. When at home in Colorado he leads the scheduling of missionaries in visiting churches. While visiting him and Nancy last August I was inspired while joining Jim in a county jail ministry team. Teamwork at various levels is just one of his talents. We are blessed to have him as the chair of UMMA as he offers his suggestions in the following article that was tweaked and approved by our leadership team. *Advent Blessings and Christmas Joy!*

[2] **Re-engaging the Whole Missionary Community in Mission by Jim Gulley
Background**

In 1996, UMMA was formed to be a vital connectional network among missionaries. The UMMA network has served to deepen the sense of community, increase mutual support among missionaries while providing a channel for sharing concerns and proposing solutions to practical problems.

Historically the World Division of the General Board of Global Ministries held annual

Missionary Conferences which included provision for a delegated "Missionary Consultation" following the Conference. The Missionary Conference provided opportunities for missionaries, staff and Board Members to share experiences and grow in understanding and commitment to God's mission through GBGM. The Consultation following the Conference provided opportunity for direct, formal input into World Division policy making. When the Global Mission Personnel Conference (GMPC) replaced the World Division's Missionary Conference after restructuring in 1996, there was no direct replacement for the Consultation that always followed the World Division's Missionary Conference. The GMPCs were held annually after restructuring through 2001, then curtailed due to the budget crisis. After a hiatus of six years, the GMPC was again held in the years 2007 and 2008. A conference is also being planned for 2009. A Consultation was never a part of the GMPC. Most recently a "Mini-Consultation" was held separately from the GMPC among representatives of the various missionary communities and GBGM staff in December of 2007 at Stony Point.

Initially, GBGM leadership interpreted UMMA's presence at Board Meetings as an unwelcome intrusion. Over time, and with changes in GBGM leadership, UMMA's missionary presence has been increasingly welcomed. UMMA is grateful to see the openness to a strengthened working relationship with the missionary community and proposes the following ways that GBGM may involve its missionary community more effectively.

The central question is: *What unique gifts, skills and opportunities for mission does the whole missionary community – active, inactive, retired – have to offer to the General Board of Global Ministries today?* I suggest three key roles.

Three key roles for the whole missionary community

1. Missionary presence at GBGM Board of Directors meetings - Missionary associations (all three) should maintain their presence at GBGM Board Meetings to stay abreast of the full range of GBGM's mission outreach and to provide their unique perspectives to program and policy development. Board Meetings provide the broadest global perspective on mission available among United Methodists, enabling UMMA to interpret GBGM's work more effectively to its membership and the broader missionary community. In addition to attending program committee meetings, the consultations begun in 2006 as a semi-annual luncheon between GBGM Staff, Directors and UMMA should be superseded by a consultation with broader participation and adequate time for in-depth discussion.

Participants should include a broader range of both the missionary community (missionaries originating from outside the U.S.) and additional Global Ministries staff and directors. Positioning consultations in the midst of board meetings might have a financial advantage but would likely result in a qualitative loss in concentration and output if tacked on after two board meetings. Timing needs to be considered carefully.

In addition to leaders of missionary associations, missionaries on "itineration assignment" (visiting churches to share their work first-hand) and those in the field representing strategic program activities should take their place alongside national leaders

at the GBGM Board Meeting table to give a strong field-based interpretation of the church in mission. Who better to interpret the opportunities and challenges of mission than those who live and breathe in the milieu of mission daily?

Further, board meetings provide both missionaries and national / indigenous church leaders opportunity to “network” with other leaders from around the world. This allows all to learn and grow from the shared experiences of the church from a wide range of cultural contexts and strengthens our witness through The Methodist Connection.

2. Participate in mission forum involving GBGM leadership, including the General Secretary, program staff and directors. GBGM missionaries, staff and directors need opportunity to grow in theological understanding, missionary practice and the act of sharing the good news through local churches. In addition, GBGM missionaries, staff and directors should come together with missiologists from UMC and other seminaries to plan, organize and host “Mission Forum/Fora”. Theological seminaries and their host annual conferences should host these mission fora on a rotating basis so that seminarians and local churches from within the surrounding annual conference(s) could easily participate. These mission fora would elevate the level of missiological discourse and bring together the whole church around mission. Envision it annually: lay people and pastors coming into direct contact with missionaries, mission staff, directors, mission theologians and theological students. Program content: mission theology today, mission practice today and one day to go forth for “Telling the Story: Engaging Local Churches in Mission”. How transforming to bring the UMC together around the mission of Jesus Christ in the world today!

3. Engage the whole missionary community in a “Ministry of Missionary Presence, Interpretation and Hospitality” – The whole missionary community should be challenged to (re)engage in mission in their local churches, (sub)districts and annual conferences. (Active) Missionaries typically have an itineration assignment every three years to visit churches that provide support. Constrained by limited time, the number of churches that any individual or couple can visit are few relative to the total number of UM congregations.

There is another pool of missionaries that have been largely untapped as a resource by Global Ministries: former or inactive missionaries and retired missionaries. Inactive missionaries are those who served one, two or more terms but did not make mission service their life-long professional career. Retired missionaries are those for whom missionary service was their life-long career. Many within these two reservoirs of mission “field” experience have a wealth of knowledge and experience that is at best underutilized. One missionary couple – one spouse being a Filipino by birth – returned to the U.S. for retirement. In eight (8) years their annual conference never requested their services! What a failure of stewardship of a valuable, scarce resource!

Nearly half of all GBGM missionaries now originate from countries outside the U.S. Most have little financial support. Global Ministries is looking for additional ways to link missionaries to churches where they may itinerate effectively, including among pockets

of their own country-people or language group in the U.S. Retired and inactive missionaries could also be valuable resources to assist this growing cadre of missionaries.

I believe that many of the 1500+ former missionaries of the United Methodist Church could become principal **hospitality-providers** for this **new corps of “missionaries from everywhere to everywhere”**. We missionaries thrive on cross-cultural experience! We have unique linguistic skills for listening and interpreting. We have the capacity to be crucial bridges between the Western world and the new world of missionaries from abroad. Now we are uniquely placed to become **hospitality-providers** to the missionaries of this new age of mission, if we but hear the call.

Next steps

The question is: *How can Global Ministries mobilize missionaries (former, retired) who are no longer on active, professional assignment by GBGM and (re)engage them in mission within their local church, district and conference on behalf of Global Ministries and the Gospel of Jesus Christ?* The steps seem straightforward. I believe it’s a matter of sharing the vision, setting priorities, allocating resources (especially human) and walking together to implement the vision and plan. Together, Global Ministries and missionary associations can take the following steps:

- Share databases of information on the entire missionary community to build the most up-to-date data that can be used by Global Ministries, Conference and General Boards.
- Formulate a joint draft plan with representatives of annual conferences to identify missionary presence within the conference.
- Establish an office within Global Ministries with principal responsibility for this task, utilizing some of the existing human resources in Missionary Personnel.
- (Global Ministries) should serve as a model for linking Mission Volunteers (individuals, UMVIM teams) with active missionaries in the field so that the short-term work explicitly addresses the priorities set by local people.
- Share the **draft plan** with missionaries in every annual conference; include in the plan an invitation to join a Missionary Advisory Board reporting to the Conference Board of Global Ministries. The Missionary Advisory Board would focus on cultivating missionary presence to promote mission programs and priorities.
- Establish a fellowship with all missionaries who would provide a broader and deeper pool of missionary experience that could be tapped and utilized in every district and, over time, every congregation within the Methodist Connection.

- Link missionaries with others engaged in mission close to home, including District Mission Coordinators, UMW Mission Education and Interpreters and UM Volunteer-in-Mission Coordinators.
- Provide a network of hospitality with former missionaries as the core group to solicit, welcome, facilitate and accompany non-US missionaries within annual conferences.

Conclusion

Global Ministries, with a renewed vision of **missionaries from everywhere to everywhere**, has an opportunity to mobilize its whole missionary community. UMMA – and possibly our sister missionary associations – is ready to mobilize its membership to re-engage former and retired missionaries as resources, interpreters and hospitality providers with their brother and sister missionaries currently on assignment at home and abroad. We need Global Ministries to be captured by the same vision and spirit of renewed engagement! – Jim Gulley, UMMA Chair

[3] OUR READERS WRITE

Dear Jim and Ric: The “Re-engaging...in Mission” [above] paper is right on target as Richard Vreeland and other leaders stated in their recent emails. Thank you Jim for taking the time (on your way to Haiti) to summarize succinctly action over the past few years. I agree with the points. Ric, please include in the UPDATE. – Norma Kehrborg

Thank you for the full report in *UMMA UpDate*. I do want to keep in touch with all that is going on. UMMA meetings are always held at places so far away from where I live that I don't get to attend. I still correspond with Malaysians. Will UMMA have a rep. at the S.E. Asia reunion at Scarritt-Bennett College in Nashville in June? Best wishes to you, Mrs. Bob Lundy ("Wiz") [Wife of the late Bishop Robert Lundy.]

Dear Ric: I have just read the recent *UMMA UpDate* issue #60, Tops, Many thanks. Yes, as Jim Gulley writes "Times are a changing" Forward movement after so many years. – Elizabeth Clarke, Pilgrim Place, Claremont, CA

Richard, Thanks for including the young adult program description in your Update. I appreciate the support provided. Peace to you my brothers and sisters, Alycia J. Capone, Missionary In Residence for Young Adult Programs: <http://gbgm-umc.org/youth>

Thank you, will fill the form after I get back from Zimbabwe. - Dr. Kalindi Thomas,

Dear Richard & Caring, Your UMMA UpDagte #60 was very impressive. I'll stick it in a UMMA file on my computer, but I printed out pages 7 & 8, and will send \$'s; I'm very happy to be able to do so. Peace/prayers/HOPE. - Earlene Hamel Hawley [served as P-3 in Manila]

Dear Ric, As usual Excellent. Thanks. Glad to read about pension and dental increase.
Yours truly, - Frances Bray, served in Japan, retired at Pilgrim Place, Claremont, CA

Ric, thank you for your detailed report, as always, of UMMA. One day perhaps I will be able to attend a meeting in conjunction with the GBGM Board Meeting. For many years I was there – what a privilege to be present for the discussions and gatherings of people from all over the world. I will send my dues to Dick Vreeland. Hope to see you in June in Nashville for SE Asia Reunion. – Camille Anders, [served in Sarawak, Malaysia]

Thank you for putting me on your email list. Very helpful information. Many blessings for your important work as UMMA. - Thomas Kemper, UMC in Germany, Board of Mission & International Church Cooperation, Wuppertal, Germany:
www.emkweltmission.de

Richard, Thanks for the *UMMA UpDates*. The new GBGM missionaries now serving in Lviv, Ukraine. David and Shannon Goran. Be blessed, Fred Vanderwerf

Richard, Thank you for the update, which I will pass on to all our retired missionaries to Brazil. - Jane Spencer [*That's the spirit, we need more who will spread the news! – ed.*]

Richard, Thanks for keeping us informed of UMMA meeting I sent in my subscription form and fee for the year. – Randy Webster, Honduras

Dear Ric & Caring, Thanks for the missionary update, addresses and all the information. I have just written an article on the terrible human rights violations in the Philippines, with the happy note that one of our former UTS students, Pastor Berlin Guerrero, was finally released. I discovered in writing letters for his release that one of my former parishioners at Knox UMC, Reynaldo Puno, is now Chief Justice of the Supreme Court! And it was great to know he is a strong advocate for human rights. Anyway, I sent the article off to the *Christian Century*. Thanks again for all you are doing. Blessings, Richard Deats
deatspeace@verizon.net

Dear Richard, Greetings from The **Advance**! Thanks for sending me in these *UMMA UpDates*. Lyda Pierce mentioned that I could become a "member". I work with Covenant Relationships so I want to keep informed as a missionary advocate. I am a former US-2 missionary, as well. Thanks, Rachael Barnett, rbarnett@gbgm-umc.org Mission Support Liaison, The Advance www.advancinghope.org General Board of Global Ministries

Thank you for your prayers, your letters and your financial support. In these difficult economic times, we are aware of the significance and sacrifice behind your gifts to support us. In the Peace of the Christ-child, David & Kristin Markay, The Chiesa

Evangelica Metodista di Milano's English web site: <http://www.methodistchurchofmilan.com>

Roy and I have updated our web page, <http://www.momotidae.net>. We hope you will enjoy its new look. Don't forget to go over to Amazon.com and place your order for Portraits! At Amazon, search for Janet May Portraits. These inspiring testimonies will make wonderful Christmas-time reading! – Janet & Roy May

Prejudices are what fools use for reason. – Voltaire

[4] **Job Opportunity as Assistant General Secretary/ Mission Personnel**

Description: The primary responsibility of the person in this position is to provide administrative and programmatic leadership for the Mission Personnel Program Area, including supervision of assigned staff, dimensioning operational tasks for programs and projects, and fiscal management. Must be a good team leader and member.

Requisites: Education: Master's Degree or equivalent. Other specialized knowledge: Some theological studies and business administration courses desirable. Familiarity with United Methodist Church structure and policies preferred. Experience: Minimum of five years, particularly in the area of personnel management. Preferred candidates will have experience in marketing. You may also submit your application via email at hrjobs@gbgm-umc.org or via fax at 212-870-3834, Attn: Ebony Cody.

Upload Application Documents; Build your resume online; Download Application Document; Code: AGSMP102708EC; Salary: Level 17; Unit: Mission Personnel; Level: Executive; Location: NYC; Date Posted: 10/27/2008

[5] **The Theology and Practice of Commissioning in the Wesleyan Tradition** by Philip Wingeier-Rayo

Introduction

I would like to thank the organizing committee and NADAM (National Association of Deaconesses and Missionaries—formerly home missionaries) for convening this forum on the “Theology of Commissioning.” I feel very honored and humbled to be invited to share my reflections, yet I do so knowing that my voice is only one perspective in an ongoing discussion. Any type of theology is a community endeavor in which we reflect on God in dialogue with one another and the sources of our tradition. I welcome your comments and feedback throughout this forum as together we deepen our understanding of the “theology of commissioning.”

The word “commissioning” is a word that is used in many different contexts and that can create confusion around its meaning. Commission has been used in other contexts, for example to commission a ship for use, a new officer for duty or a task force for a new responsibility. In the context of the church, other similar words like consecrate and ordain are often used interchangeably to add to the confusion. Do we ordain, consecrate or commission a deacon? An elder? A deaconess? A bishop? The United Methodist Church

has confused the term further when the 1996 General Conference created the permanent deacon and began commissioning candidates for elder's orders. This is a very different meaning of the word for a transitional status from a layperson toward ordination. This paper will trace the history of commissioning in the Wesleyan tradition, but before I delve into our past, I would like to begin with three vignettes of my personal experience of commissioning. *[Because of space limitations, only part of the paper will be printed in the next two issues. The full text including footnotes will be in a book. - ed.]*

[6] MISSIONARY REUNIONS

April 17-20, 2009 Stony Point Reunion Winter Class 1967 (the 5th since 2001)

Atlanta, Georgia, Contact: Jo and Warren Harbert, Email: warren@harbertnet.com

June 26-28, 2009 Malaysia/Singapore/Indonesia Missionary Reunion at Scarritt-Bennett, Nashville, Contact: David & Shirley Wu, shirleyawu@yahoo.com

July 17-19, 2009 Liberia Reunion of former missionaries, students & friends of Methodist institutions in Liberia at Lambuth Inn, Lake Junaluska, Contact: Wilfred & Stella Boayue, Tel. 770-649-9373 wsboayue@gmail.com

September 25-28, 2009, Nigeria Missionary Reunion, UMC Canyon Camp, west of Oklahoma City. Contact: Delphine Jewell, 14901 N. Penn Ave. - Apt. 379, Oklahoma City, OK 73134; Phone: 405-753-9035; Email: edjewell@juno.com

October 20-23, 2009 Brazilian Missionary Reunion, Lake Junaluska. Contact: Jane Spencer, jane.robert@verizon.net

“Retiring does not mean one stops dreaming”

[7] TREASURER'S TIPS by Richard Vreeland

As we enter this Advent time of year, we recall again the wonderful gift from God given to all of mankind. Sharing that knowledge with the world is what the missionary community is all about. Helping to enable the missionary community is what UMMA is all about.

Thanks to all of you who have participated with UMMA this past year to help enable us to function by paying your 2008 membership dues. We have heard from 233 of you during the first 11 months and hope that December responses will bring our membership close to the 329 of last year. There is still time!

If you haven't yet paid your dues for 2008, please complete the following form and send it to me along with your check. If you have any questions, please e-mail me for clarification: RLVreeland@sbcglobal.net .

When completing the form, please print clearly, especially your e-mail address. This is the quickest way to acknowledge receipt of your check. Thank you.

