

UMMA UpDate #64, July 15, 2009
e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association
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"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"

In this issue:

- [1] News and Introduction to REPORTS by Jim Gulley, UMMA chair
- [2] Governance Task Force by Joyce Hill
- [3] Location Task Force by Lyda Pierce
- [4] Implementation Task Force by Norma Kehrberg
- [5] Reclaiming Mission (Working Title) by Norma Kehrberg
- [6] Cuts in Health Care to Retired Missionaries by Richard Schwenk
- [7] Our Readers Write
- [8] Missionary Milestones
- [9] Treasurer's Tips by Richard Vreeland
- [10] This is your invitation to join or renew your membership

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[1] **News and Introduction to REPORTS by Jim Gulley, UMMA chair**

Annual Gathering & Mini-Consultation, October 11-13, 2009, Stamford CT - UMMA's Annual Gathering will be held in conjunction with the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) fall Board of Directors meeting (Oct 12-14, 2009). In addition, UMMA will meet with key GBGM staff and Board of Directors as a follow-up on key issues raised in conversations held June 2-3, 2009. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

UMMA has for years advocated for a more participatory approach to the life and work of GBGM, including greater missionary presence, voice and input in three focal areas: 1) GBGM board meetings; 2) mission conferences / forums; and 3) missionary presence, interpretation and hospitality in every annual conference. We believe that this is an opportune time for UMMA and GBGM to work together to utilize more fully the experience and expertise of the whole missionary community.

Some of these issues should be addressed in the three GBGM Board of Directors task forces in which UMMA representatives are participating (see reports below). At the annual gathering, we will receive reports from our task force representatives to gauge progress.

Other issues on the UMMA agenda include:

- * Ad hoc Committee on Re-considering Changes to the Collins Pension and Health Benefits Programs
- * Proposed revision of Missionary-in-Residence position description

- * Missionary letters of agreement, the "at will" clause and appeal procedure
- * The role of longer-term, cross-cultural missionaries
- * Perceived imbalance of domestic vs. international missionaries

GBGM Board of Director task forces: Bishop Bruce Ough, in consultation with GBGM leadership, accepted UMMA's nomination of three missionaries to serve on the Board of Directors task forces. Recognizing that discussions within the task forces are confidential, our three representatives offer below status reports of how their task forces mandates and how they are proceeding to carry out their work. Thanks to Joyce Hill, Lyda Pierce and Norma Kehrberg for taking on these responsibilities on behalf of the whole missionary community.

And to you, the rest of the UMMA Membership: Do not miss this opportunity to provide your input and perspective on the critical issues of GBGM's future governance, restructuring and location. Change is indeed coming to GBGM now. The question is, Will the changes made enable us United Methodists to be evermore faithful and effective in Christ's mission in the world? Let us contribute positively to the processes as best we can. Our task force representatives' names and email addresses follow their articles. Contact them with your input! Jim Gulley, UMMA Chair

[2] *Governance Task Force by Joyce Hill*

As follow-up of the Management Partners audit of Global Ministries, I was named by Bishop Bruce Ough as UMMA's observer (member with voice but no vote) to the Governance Task Force. In his communication as facilitator of the Task Force, Sam Dixon (Deputy Director General - UMCOR) has indicated that our responsibilities are "to address the governance structure of GBGM including the methodology and practice of the Board in accomplishing its task." And: "Some emerging questions to be answered through this process include: What is the best size for the board? How can gender, ethnic and geographical diversity of the church be represented? What impact would changes have on the relationship between the GBGM and the Women's Division? How should programmatic committees be established? What should be the role of the Executive Committee? What is the appropriate length and number of board meetings per quadrennium and Where should the board meetings be held?"

Members of the Governance Task Force are: Ms Imelda Gonzalez, Chair, Rev, Eduardo Bosson, Dr, Ellis Conley, Ms Gloria Holt, Bishop Janice Riggle Huie, Mr., Dan Moseler, and Mr., Richard Shinhoster. Bishop Bruce Ough, board president and Paul Bankes, Legal Counsel, were listeners. Rev. Sam Dixon, staff, was the facilitator with Jacquelyn McGray of Management Partners as assistant to the facilitator.

In the first meeting (Conference Call) on July 8, we reviewed the responsibility of the Task Force, confirmed the timeline and began to determine goals and the areas of work. Our next conference call is on August 4. We will have another conference call on August

12, a face-to-face meeting at Sager Brown August 17-18, a Conference Call September 1 and submit a report to the GBGM Cabinet for review on September 8.

Note of interest: During the call one of the directors expressed his appreciation for the reflections on the board meeting that Lyda and I had written for the June UMMA Update. None of the others had seen it and all of them asked for copies. I forwarded it to Sam Dixon after the call, and it was sent to everyone the following morning. Joyce Hill, Joyceiva@optonline.net

[3] Location Task Force by Lyda Pierce

I was appointed as the UMMA representative on the director's committee to consider whether or not GBGM should consider moving the main offices to another location, buying a building either in New York City or some other city. The question arose out of the operational audit done by the consulting firm, Management Partners, which suggests that GBGM would save lots of money if it owned a building rather than rented at the current location. The report also mentions that there are, of course, other issues besides finances which must be considered in determining location.

The task force was given a summary document from the consulting firm which lists some of the issues and the financial analysis they did. The first conference phone call will be held on Monday, July 20. I would be glad to receive comments and questions from the UMMA membership to help deepen my participation on the committee. While not a voting member, I have voice and hope to raise concerns and perspectives of the UMMA membership.

Members of task force: Tim Bias - Chairperson, Josephine Deere, Robert Lockaby, Joyce Miller, Thomas Kemper, Bishop John Innis, Marilyn Zehring, Nichea Ver Veer Guy, Lyda Pierce-UMMA Representative; Roland Fernandes is Staff liaison. Lyda Pierce, lydapierce@earthlink.net

[4] Implementation Task Force by Norma Kehrberg

I am a member of the Implementation Task Force as a representative from UMMA with voice but no vote. This Task Force is one part of the Operational Audit Report. GBGM Director Denise Honeycutt is the chair of the Implementation Task Force. The 231 page Operational Audit report containing recommendations was made available to directors July 7, 2009. On July 9, 2009, Denise Honeycutt outlined the work of the implementation Task Force: "be a resource for the organization with issues that will evolve during the implementation process and be a mechanism for accountability for the board in the implementation of the "audit".

Unfortunately, I only received a copy of the Operational Audit report on Friday, July 10 and did not have time to clear with the chair regarding whether information in the

report could be shared outside the directors, staff and task force members. Therefore, I will not give details from the report. It is my assumption that details will not be available until the directors are informed in October.

However, there are two pieces of information that are public which will give an idea of the radical change ahead for GBGM, especially relating to mission personnel. In an Executive Summary of a proposed plan of restructuring of the Women's Division, two items will make changes in mission personnel. The Women's Division will 1) be responsible for the administration of the Deaconess and Home Missioner program and 2) no longer provide funds for missionaries as they did in the past to the Mission Personnel Program Department (which will also be changed).

Also at the April GBGM board meeting, the Board indicated that they would be working into a structure organized into five areas: UMCOR, General Treasury, Mission and Evangelism, Communication and Development and the Women's Division. In mid-June, Lois Dauway was appointed executive of the Mission and Evangelism Unit. This is the unit which would care for the area of mission personnel plus it seems from the original press release in late April, for most of the mission programs of GBGM.

Based on the two external pieces of information cited, GBGM will be radically restructured. If I can share details of the implementation of the Operation Audit, I will do so at a later time.

Be in prayer for the staff, the directors, the work of the task force and, as always, for our colleague active and retired missionaries. These are difficult times.

Please let me have your ideas, questions and concerns based on any information that you have at present or from this brief report. Our Task Force work is expected to be completed within three months. Norma Kehrberg, kehrbergn001@hawaii.rr.com

[5] RECLAIMING MISSION (Working Title) by Norma Kehrberg
Missionary Conference: Reflection and Action on Issues of Edinburgh 2010

What: Three day mission and missionary conference focusing on mission in the United Methodist Church
Where: Scarritt Bennett Center, Nashville, Tennessee
When: October 15-17, 2010
Why: Provide an opportunity to reclaim the vision and passion of the mission and the missionary movement in the United Methodist Church

Background

On the occasion of the one hundred year anniversary of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, mission engagement events are being planned in every region of the world to reflect on mission activities of the past and to seek direction for Christian mission in the 21st century.

From October 15-17, 2010, the “Reclaiming Mission Conference” will be held at the Scarritt Bennett Resource Center in Nashville, Tennessee, the historic center for mission and Christian education training.

The reflection will include discussion on the theme of Edinburgh: Christian mission among people of other faiths, mission and power, mission and post-modernity, foundations of mission, forms of missionary engagement, theological education and formation. The “Reclaiming Mission” conference comes at a time when the world needs more cross cultural, committed people engaging with the world in sharing Christ’s message of hope, love and peace.

Dr. Dana Robert, long time Professor of World Christianity and History of Mission at Boston University will give the opening address at the “Reclaiming Mission Conference” in October 2010 at Scarritt Bennett Center. Dr. Robert will also give an address at the opening of the official Edinburgh Conference in June 2010 in Edinburgh and is the author of the study book for the Schools of Christian Mission in 2010, entitled “World Mission in an Age of Global Christianity”.

Participating groups in the planning include: the National Association of Deaconess and Home Missioners, the Church and Community Workers Association, the United Methodist Missionary Association, Professors of Mission in the United Methodist Church, representatives of the General Board of Church and Society, the General Board of Global Ministries and the Scarritt Bennett Center.

Registration details will be available in September 2009. For more information contact Norma.Kehrberg@gmail.com [Information Released July 2, 2009]

[6] **Cuts in Health Care to retired missionaries by Richard Schwenk**

Excerpts from a letter to: Linda Bloom, UM New Service Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2009
Subject: Thanks for giving some voice to missionaries

Dear Linda,

Thanks for giving voice to missionaries on the United Methodist News Service Daily Digest website today [June 30, 2009], Re: the abrupt changes in our health benefits and pensions, with us as one of the examples along with others like Jim and Helen Dwyer...
<http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=lwL4KnN1LtH&b=2072525&ct=7162639&tr=y&auid=5032151>

In addition, [to what appeared in your fine article] may I point out that under the new system, Nursing Home Care for retired missionaries would be reduced by \$300.00 per month for those with 20 years and more of service. That would be a \$3,600.00 reduction per year for Nursing Home Care, at the same time that costs for Nursing Home Care are skyrocketing. Missionaries with 20 to 24 years of service would receive \$600.00 per month (instead of the previous \$900.00 per month). Those with 25 or more years of service would receive \$900.00 per month (instead of the previous \$1,200.00 per month)

The so-called "increase" in dental coverage mentioned by Edith Gleaves from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year was **not** an increase [for us old-timers.] The Collins Health Benefits Plan for Retirees booklet, effective Jan. 1, 1992. Stated on page 1 that: "Dental Care: Eligible charges covered up to an annual maximum of \$2,500." It was an arbitrary cut for many years without any warning nor justification. That happened before Edith's time at the Board and she is probably not aware of that decrease in dental care coverage.

Regards and Best Wishes, Richard Schwenk, editor of UMMA UpDate

P.S. Just for the record and for what it is worth, our service as commissioned missionaries with the GBGM was 36+ years for Caring and 39 years and 9 months for Richard. As Jim Dwyer pointed out, in the same Daily Digest, missionaries were satisfied with less salary than State-side pastors and mission staff because we would have the Collins Pension and Health Benefits in our retirement. What hope do we have for restoration of those commitments after the economy improves? We hope it will not be like the so-called dental "increase."

Note: An UMMA Ad Hoc Committee on Retirement Benefit Changes was formed and had an inconclusive conference call with GBGM leadership. Dakin Cook serves as chair/convener. The committee needs some additional members to broaden its perspective and experience. If you have an interest, contact Dakin Cook directly: dakin@earthlink.net. – Editor

[7] OUR READERS WRITE

UMMA UpDate #63 for May was SUPER GOOD. I know many former missionaries that did not return to the foreign field, but have continued their missionary ideals in the U.S.A. Those ideas would revitalize missions in our country. Many of the returned missionaries are never asked to speak of their years in the field. They often have more time and more funds than those of us who worked there until retirement...and are willing to visit groups and churches and tell of their work and the needs in missions. Thanks & Shalom, Delaine De Hainaut

Thank you for this detailed report. Do you have any idea where I could find out the official GBGM information about how many years of service I have? – name withheld
You may write to Christine Lee CLee@gbgm-umc.org for that information. Also write to her if you have served 25+ years and credited with only \$48.20 for Medicare Non Taxable (the 50% rate). It should be \$72.60 (the 75% rate). – ed.

To Shirley Wu [and other reunion organizers], Please make copies of the UMMA Registration Form and encourage those attending the SEA Reunion to join UMMA. If you have a copy of UMMA UpDate please show them the quality and the kind of information that is provided. By the way, we had only one bid on our house since it was in the market last April... We can't move unless the house sells. – Lionel Muthiah

Hey, can someone find a buyer of a nice house in Mandan, ND so the Muthiahs can retire near their son? - ed

Thanks Dr. Richard for the updates. Hope to see you and Maám again in the near future. God bless, Bishop Rudy Juan, Baguio, Philippines

Ric, Thanks for an outstanding issue of the UpDate. Grateful for your fine work in putting this together and sharing with all of us. – Wilson Boots

Thank you for the update. My dues for two years are in the mail. - Kay Twilley

Your update, Richard, helps us feel included when we don't get to the meetings. We are impressed with the active forward progress of UMMA, directing the mission of our church in positive direction; With thanks, Everett and Vera Woodcock

Dear Richard, Thank you very much for all information you are sharing with us. We understand that God is always providing new structures to improve the Task in His will. God bless. - Ombaku Onema L, Sierra Leone, Africa

Thanks, Ric, for including us with a copy of your message. Right on! May I forward that to other UM missionaries, especially here at Pilgrim Place? Will you include something on the same subject in the next Update? Hope so. - Stan E. Moore, communicator at PP

Thanks for allowing Stan to share your letter. It was well stated. - Frances Bray, Pilgrim Place

Ric, Thanks so much for your email to Linda Bloom. It expresses so well the concerns and frustrations of many of us. And thanks for the reminder about the dental care history! I am grateful to Linda Bloom for bringing the problems/issues to the fore. I wonder how widely they will be read. - Laura Fukada, Pilgrim Place

Thanks Laura, UMMA UpDate e-bulletins and on our website reaches several thousands. UMNS Report has a far greater outreach. For a free subscription UMNS Report, click: <http://www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4KnNlLh/b.4513281/apps/ka/ct/contactcustom.asp> – ed.

[8] MISSIONARY MILESTONES

Morse Saito, UMMA member, returned to his Maker on April 27, 2009. He served 44 years and 10 months in Japan.

Ulysses S. Gray, UMMA member, passed on to glory on May 29, 2009 after serving 27 years and 5 months as a missionary to Liberia.

Philip E. Beal, UMMA member, went to rest with God on June 30, 2009. He and his wife served 9+ years in Singapore and Korea.

[9] **TREASURER'S TIPS** by Richard Vreeland

Happy "Mid-summer dreams!" 2009 is beyond the half way point and many have not as yet paid their dues for this year. Please review your check register to see if you have paid. If not, you may use the form below to provide the necessary information when sending your remittance. If you have any questions as to the status of your account, please contact me at: RLVreeland@sbcglobal.net Your e-mail address is especially important as it provides the fastest and least expensive way of acknowledging your check. Thanks for your promptness.

[10] **THIS IS YOUR INVITATION to Join or Renew your Membership**

We hope you will include the work of UMMA in your prayers and consider one of the following **new options for membership**: If you are not yet a member, we hope you like this ***COMPLIMENTARY COPY*** of *UMMA UpDate* and will want to join or keep up your professional membership dues. If you have paid already, Many Thanks.

--- Please fill in this form, cut off here, and send to Richard Vreeland with 2009 dues ---

Your Name (Given, SURNAME):

Spouse's Name (Given, SURNAME):

Address:

City:

State/Province:

Zip:

Country:

Email:

Phone:

Please list the country(s) where you served as a GBGM missionary, including USA:

Professional membership dues payment options. Check one [box]

[] Membership for a couple: \$40.00; [] Lifetime membership for a couple: \$800

[] Individual membership: \$25.00; [] Lifetime membership for an individual: \$500

Affiliate membership (no vote—just interested in mission work & UpDates): \$15.00

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

Richard Vreeland
182 Ameren Way - Apt. 752
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