

UMMA UpDate #97 – April 2015

e-bulletin of the
United Methodist Missionary Association

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Our blog is found at <umma-global.blogspot.com>

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— 2015 DUES NOW PAYABLE!

We welcome our newly elected treasurer, DarEll T. Weist, a retired member of the Cal-Pac Annual Conference and resident of Pilgrim Place.

Send him a check for your 2015 dues! Or go to <umma-global.org> to link to our PayPal account to pay your dues. Individual dues are \$30, while couples pay \$50. Ask about lifetime and affiliate memberships. Send checks to DarEll T. Weist, 619 Leyden Ln, Claremont, CA 91711-4236. His email address is <dtw4940@gmail.com>.

[And we express our renewed thanks to Dick Vreeland for his years of service as treasurer!]

(1) ABOUT THIS ISSUE AND UMMA'S PUBLICATION EFFORTS

UpDate is normally sent via *MailChimp*, where you can read it in HTML or text format in your email program. A PDF file will be posted at umma-global.org. Print copies are distributed for those who need them. Just ask!

(2) HOLD THE DATE! 2015 GATHERING IN NYC, OCTOBER 3-5

The final annual (fall) meeting of the General Board of Global Ministries Directors prior to the Global Ministries' move to Atlanta is scheduled for Thursday through Saturday, October 1-3, 2015. UMMA's tentative plans are that the final Gathering before the Board's move to Atlanta will take place in New York beginning October 3 and ending Monday, October 5. Exact location must still be arranged. All members and friends are welcome.

(3) CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR UMMA CHAIR

Jim Dwyer has previously announced his intention to leave office at the 2015 Gathering. We are seeking an appropriate candidate to succeed him from among our members. Qualifications would ideally include the following:

- Experience with various aspects of life as a missionary and in dealing with Global Ministries and the United Methodist Church at large.
- Residence in the U.S. is preferred.
- An active missionary or retiree with freedom to fulfill the needs of the chair and skills at recruiting coworkers and delegating responsibilities is desirable.
- Willingness to serve for a four-year term.
- Prior membership in UMMA's Steering Committee helpful.

Please share your willingness to serve or your nomination of another with the Nominating Committee at nominations@umma-global.info.

(4) 2015 END OF TERM IN THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Each of the persons listed below is serving a term on the Steering Committee which will expire with our 2015 Gathering. Each is eligible for reelection and will be asked if they would like to continue. Be in touch with them to thank them for their service and to encourage them to continue!

WECSA — Rukang Chikomb; **ENAME** — Alex and Brenda Awad;
ESAP — [name unpublished, ask chair]; **CCAM** — Belinda Forbes;
SA — Marilia Schüller; **USA** — Lyda Pierce

(5) BROOKS-HOWELL HOME OPENS ITS DOORS YET WIDER

Brooks-Howell Home (BHH), a project of United Methodist Women (UMW), is a non-profit retirement home originally established for retired deaconesses and missionaries of the former Women's Division. Some years ago it was opened to Church and Community workers, UMW staff and directors, and other retired United Methodist mission personnel and staff. A number of missionary couples have since moved in.

Now it has issued a warm welcome to several new categories of residents. These include: retirees of Scarritt-Bennett and United Methodist national mission institutions, Volunteers in Mission staff, VIM personnel with at least 10 years of service, retirees of other mission boards, and others, including pastors, approved on a case-by case basis.

Brooks-Howell is located in Asheville, NC, in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains. It provides comfortable accommodations for independent living, assisted living, and nursing care. The area offers a moderate climate, Appalachian culture, a diverse population, a rich variety of cultural opportunities, a range of spiritual resources, and quality health care.

Doug Wingeier, a BHH resident and UMMA member, comments: "After an extensive search for a retirement facility that was just right for Carol and me, we decided on Brooks-Howell. We made the right choice, and are exceedingly happy here. The rates are reasonable, the food is good, and the companionship warm and stimulating. Come join us!"

Interested persons may contact the BHH Marketing Director at 266 Merrimon Ave., Asheville, NC 28801. Phone: 828-253-6712. E-Mail: info@brooks-howell.org.

(6) 2014 UMMA GATHERING IN REVIEW, 2015 IN PLANNING

Approximately 30 people, roughly half of them residents of Pilgrim Place, participated in our belated 2014 Gathering in Claremont, CA, in January. Plans are already being made to hold the 2015 Gathering following the Directors' meeting of General Board of Global Ministries October 3-5.

The meetings were held at Claremont United Methodist Church, which kindly hosted us. Associate Pastor and Deacon Martha Morales greeted us on behalf of the congregation. Two meals were taken at Pilgrim Place with resident there. Prior to the Gathering during registration members of the Steering Committee who were present met at the DoubleTree Inn reception area. On the first morning a large portion of the group traveled by train to

the United Methodist Social Justice Museum, which provides an example of a church (LaPlaza UMC) attempting to keep itself relevant to the city in the face of commercial urban development. Museum exhibits address human issues vital to the city. The current exhibit, Exodus, explores why people take on great hardship to leave their homes for a strange country.

Opening and closing devotions were provided by Norma Kehrberg, who spoke on the call to long-term missionary service, and Pat Patterson, who used a number of her moving poems to inform and challenge us. President Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan brought greetings from Claremont School of Theology and addressed the importance of international insights for seminary education. Many UMMA members attended church on Sunday morning at Claremont UMC or other local churches before heading off to near and distant destinations.

Much of the plenary was devoted to business as usual. Amendments and updates to the Constitution and ByLaws begun in 2010 were finalized. They will soon be posted online. Various other issues were addressed and plans again made to interact in new ways through the UpDate. The article by Marty Collier in this issue is one result.

(7) MISSION ON BEHALF OF OUR EARTHLY HOME

Every Wednesday since before "Shock and Awe," Carol and I have joined a small group of activists in a peace vigil in front of our local courthouse. Recently, in place of signs like "All Wars Are Civil Wars," "Health Care Not Warfare," "War Is Not the Answer," and "Beware the Military-Industrial Complex," I have started holding a sign reading "Carbon Free or Die!" When my fellow vigilers questioned why the change of focus from world peace to the environment, I replied that climate change is the greatest threat to global security the world has ever faced.

Reflecting on my years as a missionary teacher at Trinity Theological College in Singapore, and then on the Garrett-Evangelical faculty, -I now realize that during all those years I completely missed out on addressing the most crucial mission issue of all time — saving the planet. Only recently have I belatedly become a climate activist. Of course, we recycle, hang out our laundry, use CFL bulbs, and drive a hybrid. We've even installed 20 solar panels on our roof. Also, every year we spend a couple of weeks in our 150-year-old log cabin situated in central Minnesota which has no electricity or running water. There we enjoy a very simple life — reading by oil lamp and

candlelight, outhouse comfort, vegetarian diet, sleeping sundown to sunup. (Of course, it does take fossil fuel to get us there.)

Our nearby daughter and son-in-law live a simple life year-round — eating vegetarian, growing their own food, tapping maple trees, baking bread, making beer and apple cider, heating by wood stove, buying organic eggs and raw milk from their Amish neighbors, using a composting toilet. By choice they have adopted a "resilient" lifestyle — organic gardening, drying laundry in the sun, cutting firewood, minimizing reliance on fossil fuels, living close to the land.

But these life-style changes won't really touch the enormity of the crisis that faces what Bill McKibben calls our "**EAARTH**" — this spelling to emphasize that we now live on a different planet than the one we were born into. Australian environmentalist Paul Gilding, in his book **The Great Disruption**, has described "why the climate crisis will bring on the end of shopping and the birth of a new world." Now, in her 2014 blockbuster book, **This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate**, Naomi Klein contends that confronting climate change is "no longer about changing lightbulbs; it's about changing the world. We've been told that the market will save us when in fact the addiction to profit and growth is digging us in deeper. Getting off fossil fuels requires breaking every rule in the 'free market' playbook: reigning in corporate power, rebuilding local economies, reclaiming our democracies."

"Climate change," she says, "is a civilizational wake-up call, a powerful message delivered in the language of fires, floods, storms, and droughts that are rapidly increasing in intensity and frequency. Ideological climate deniers, corporate "extractivists," market fundamentalists, postmillennial biblicists elevating "faith" over stewardship, green billionaires promoting fanciful geo-engineering "miracle" solutions, and the ill-conceived alliance of Big Business and Big Green are all exposed and debunked as illusory, diversionary tactics which may seek to postpone while actually hastening the inevitable End.

While never minimizing the desperate nature of the environmental crisis, Klein does offer signs of hope: not from politicians, plutocrats or parliamentarians, but from grassroots movements, uprisings, marches, blockades, and divestment.campaigns:

- a struggle against a gold mine in Greece,
- a showdown over shale gas exploration in Romania,
- a demonstration against seismic testing for fracking by the Mi'kmaq First

Nation in New Brunswick,

- a Greenpeace protest in the Russian Arctic against drilling under the Arctic ice,
- multiple local efforts to stop the Keystone XL pipeline,
- Appalachia residents rising up to prevent mountain top removal from destroying their land, health, and culture,
 - local community ordinances banning fracking, and — of course
- the 400,000 who marched through Manhattan on September 21, 2014, to speak out passionately for the natural world and the human family.

In the face of imminent global catastrophe, our top mission priority can be nothing else but to join this growing mass movement now emerging from below to confront the Powers, keep fossil fuels in the ground, develop and use alternative sources of energy, and create a life-enhancing, people- and earth-friendly system and way of life before it is too late. It is the people rising up who have brought about the abolition of slavery, the eight-hour day, the enfranchisement of women, Third World independence from colonial powers, the overthrow of dictators in the Near East, and the legalization of marriage equality. In the words of Klein's closing challenge: **Now is the time "...not only to denounce the world as it is, and build fleeting pockets of liberated space. [We] must be the catalyst to actually build the world that will keep us all safe. The stakes are simply too high, and time too short, to settle for anything less."**

If "the Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it" (Psalm 24:1), will we stand idly by and let it be destroyed?

If "God so loved the world that he gave...", (John 3:16), will we join with God in this utter loving and giving?

I write this during the National Preach-In on Global Warming, Feb. 13-15, 2015. May our prayers and efforts be blended in the spirit of these words composed for this observance:

"We hold the Earth. We hold brothers and sisters who suffer from storms and droughts intensified by climate change.

"We hold all species who suffer. We hold world leaders delegated to make decisions for life. We pray that the web of life may be mended through courageous actions to limit carbon emissions world wide. We pray for right actions for adaptation and mitigation to help our already suffering earth community. We pray that love and wisdom might inspire my actions and our actions as communities so that we may, with integrity, look into the eyes of

brothers and sisters and all beings and truthfully say we are doing our part to care for them and the future of the children. May Love transform us and our world with new steps toward life."

— Reflections by **Doug Wingeier**, member of the Steering Committee
and resident of Brooks Howell Home

This reflection appears on our blog: <<http://umma-global.blogspot.com>>

(8) A SEASON FOR HOPE THAT RESURRECTION TOUCHES EARTH

Holy Week can be a difficult time. It begins with an incredibly celebrative parade and ends on a downer: Jesus is dead, crucified by a convergence of self-interest by Roman and Jewish leaders who knew his ministry was a threat to the status quo of vindictive rule and thereby to their own lives. Typically Christians in many cultures point to family reunions in heaven and eternal life (or immortality, from some points of view) as the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Others have seen in the empty tomb the evidence with allowed the earlier followers of Jesus to rally to become the church when the Holy Spirit descended upon them at Pentecost (the "50 Day" harvest after Passover in the Jewish calendar).

For those of us aware of the threatened death of the Earth as we know it (see Doug Wingeier's reflection), Jesus' death and resurrection may take on a different meaning.

The powerful social message is that we may share in the courage Jesus showed in opposing the plenitude of power of the Roman Empire to proclaim a different way of thinking. Not terror over all, but care for all persons and all creation, should prevail. While that exercise of courage may have cost him his life, God's power for Life trumps human, royal, imperial and corporate economic power for Death.

With our courageous engagement to confront the "Extractive Powers" of this world which seek to redistribute all wealth and power into the hands of a few, even at the cost of death to many — even the death of entire peoples and civilizations if not of the life of the human species and any number of other endangered species, we can move forward knowing that, whether we should prevail or not, God has been at our side in our struggle and our suffering and, we would hope, in New Life, even in the face of Death.

At our Holy Thursday service in Claremont UMC we sang a Brian Wren hymn "Lord God, Your love has called us here." Verse two expresses a hint

of the social dimension of Resurrection which may remind us that “all creation is groaning for redemption,” even as we yet seek “hope for human kind.” A few of the lines from that hymn follow. Look it up online for the complete text, e.g., <<http://en.adventisthymns.com/1985/lyrics/396-lord-god-your-love-has-called-us-here>>:

Lord God, Your love has called us here,
As we, by love, for love were made.
Your living likeness still we bear
Tho’ marred, dishonored, disobeyed.
We come, with all our heart and mind
Your call to hear, Your love to find.

We come with self inflicted pains
Of broken trust and chosen wrong,
Half free, half bound by inner chains,
By social forces swept along,
By powers and systems close confined,
Yet seeking hope for human kind.

Lord God, in Christ You call our name,
And then receive us as Your own,
Not thro’ some merit, right, or claim,
But by Your gracious love alone.
We strain to glimpse Your mercy seat,
And find You kneeling at our feet.

Then take the towel, and break the bread,
And humble us, and call us friends.
Suffer and serve till all are fed
And show how grandly love intends
To work till all creation sings,
To fill all worlds, to crown all things.

Lord God, in Christ You set us free
Your life to live, Your joy to share.
Give us Your Spirit's liberty
To turn from guilt and dull despair
And offer all that faith can do,
While love is making all things new.

Bryan Wren, "Lord God, Your Love Has Called Us Here"
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(9) THANKS TO THOSE WHOSE TERMS END OR ROLES CHANGE

With the end of our Gathering in January, terms of office set to expire in 2014 ended. We rejoice in the commitment and fellowship also of those whose terms have expired and look forward to their involvement in the work of UMMA in other ways or in another later term of office on the Steering Committee or in the Administrative Council.

Thanks to the following persons, who have changed roles or ended their terms on the Steering Committee: **Katherine Parker** (previously also representing ESAP, continuing as vice chair), **DarEll Weist** (previously also representing USA, now treasurer), **Becky Harrell** (previously representing CCAM, now USA), **Mary Escobar** (previously representing the new class of 2012, now SA). Both **Adam Shaw** (Mission Interns 2011-2014) and **Billie LaBumbard** (retirees) leave the Steering Committee with our thanks for their participation during their terms.

(10) MANAGING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENTS

The UMMA task force dealing with pension issues and our Administrative Council and Steering Committee have been acutely aware that the new Defined Contribution plan for missionary pensions places much greater responsibility on missionaries to understand both what their pension accounts under management of General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits are designed to do and what an individual's options there are, as well as the larger picture of appropriate planning for retirement through savings and investments. GBGM Directors and the Board of Pensions have acknowledged our need for "financial literacy" and offer assistance through Ernst and Young (more recently just "EY").

*Our secretary Nan McCurdy has enlisted the assistance of **Marty Collier** to help us reflect on these questions. Marty with her husband Carter Garber is a former UMC missionary to Central America and a member of UMMA. She did a crash course on investing in 2011 when she took over the finances of her elderly parents and that of her own family. In the following paragraphs she is dealing with options for so-called "SRI."*

Socially responsible investing (SRI), sometimes called “impact investing” means you look for both financial and social gain. Consideration of these issues is possible today through a wide variety of companies and services. SRI companies avoid irresponsible investments (such as in alcohol, weapons, big oil, sweat-shops, etc.) and include responsible ones (renewable energy, affordable housing and community development, good governance at the companies invested in, etc.).

For most investors, mutual funds —which are a collection of stocks, bonds or other investments — are the simplest and least expensive way to access wide swaths of the stock and bond markets. There are SRI mutual funds. Exchange-traded funds, which are essentially mutual funds that you can trade just like a stock, are also useful in certain circumstances, and may employ SRI criteria. You can read a description of the fund manager’s approach, or ask a company representative how they screen investments.

There are terms you need to know, for example: “no load” is good because there is no initial fee to get into it. [In such funds, manager’s fees are taken by another process than upfront loading. Wikipedia provides an article on “Mutual Fund Fees and Expenses.”]

There are also helpful platforms, or brokerage services, where you park the investments (once decided upon) that can provide consolidated reports on earnings, have opportunity to pull cash out if you need it, and consolidated tax reports at the end of the year. If you are a member of AARP, you can get a year’s worth of investment advisory services for free at Schwab Investments (a discount brokerage service that we use) and try them out. For that go to www.aarp.org or call them and ask about it. [AARP, formerly Association of American Retired Persons, has both for-profit and non-profit divisions, and is open for a moderate membership fee to persons over 50 years of age, without regard to retirement status.]

If you don’t want to invest in the stock market, there are plenty of alternative investments to consider that are safe, such as credit unions, community development credit unions, worker-owned businesses, and vacant land in areas likely to appreciate. Money invested in credit unions is insured up to a certain amount by the credit union guaranty fund of the federal government, much like the FDIC insures bank deposits up to a certain amount. Keep some money in those that are insured, even if they pay little.

If you are likely to amass over \$250,000 in your portfolio, and your time to watch what it is doing is limited, you should probably get a financial

advisor who is certified and recommended by a friend to help you get the right mix of investments. I can refer ones I have used/researched for my family. If you want any additional information, please let me know at 2mcollier@comcast.net. [Marty has also provided a chart of suggestions from the Collier-Garber family's financial advisor which can be viewed on our website at umma-global.info [Investment-Suggestions](#) The chart also shows relative rankings, costs and returns for various funds.]

[The church has its own standards for socially responsible investments. Check out these pieces of information: <http://www.gbophb.org/assets/1/7/3554.pdf> "Socially Responsible Investing for a Sustainable Future," and <http://www.gbophb.org/si/> "Sustainable investment" webpages, as well as the most recent revisions in the light of insights in human rights and climate change: <http://www.gbophb.org/news/release/pr20150122/> "GBPHB Implements Human Rights and Climate Change Investment Guidelines."]

(11) PASSINGS NOTED

***Bodo Schwabe**, aged 72, died December 17, 2014. His wife Catherine survives him in Oberursel, Germany. Bodo was head of the Germany Central Conference's mission board "EMK-Welmission" prior to Thomas Kemper's term there. Many Global Ministries missionaries will remember Bodo for his supportive relationships with 48 German colleagues at their places of assignment in eight countries of Africa, South America or Southeast Asia. Bodo also served as pastor of the German congregation in Washington, DC, and in several congregations in Germany, lastly before retirement as a colleague of Jim Dwyer in a neighboring congregation in Hamburg, Germany. German readers may read the official "Nachruf" here: <<http://www.emk.de/meldungen-2014/emk-trauert-um-bodo-schwabe.html>>*

***Nancy Miller Garrison**, aged 90, died May 29, 2014. at Arbor Acres United Methodist Retirement Community in Winston-Salem, NC. She and her husband John William Garrison became missionaries of the United Methodist Church and served in Brazil from 1954 until 1986 where they continued living following retirement. He preceded her in death in 2005. Five children and ten grandchildren survive her in Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Brazil and Mexico. For a more detailed obituary see www.hayworth-miller.com.*

***Noel D. Osborn**, aged 86, died October 2, 2014 at Otterbein Lebanon Retirement Community, Lebanon, OH. He was born on Christmas Day 1927. He earned a BFA degree from the Ohio State University, an MDiv from*

Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, IL (now Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, from which he was honored with the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2009), and the PhD degree from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN. He was an ordained elder of the United Methodist Church (previously the Evangelical United Brethren Church). He and his wife, Emma Ruth (Anderson) served as missionaries in the Philippines for 37 years, in positions teaching at a college of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines for 10 years, before serving as a translation consultant for the Philippine Bible Society and United Bible Societies (UBS), during which time the Bible was translated into the eight major languages of the Philippines for both Protestants and Roman Catholics. He authored A Handbook on Exodus, and used by Bible translators. He also taught during home assignment at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH. He is survived by a son, a daughter, a granddaughter and several siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews. For a more detailed obituary see <www.hoskinsfh.com>

(12) THE LAST WORD (FROM SOJOURNERS VOICE AND VERSE)

“It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world.”

— Mary Wollstonecraft

“Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward”