

# UMMA UpDate #98 – July 2015

## e-bulletin of the United Methodist Missionary Association

For archived PDF and online versions click [www.umma-global.org](http://www.umma-global.org) or [umma-global.info](http://umma-global.info)

Editor: Rev. James Dwyer, Ph.D. – [jamesdwyer@mac.com](mailto:jamesdwyer@mac.com)

USPS: 787 Plymouth Road, Claremont, CA 91711-4249, USA

Feedback welcome at – [umma-update@umma-global.org](mailto:umma-update@umma-global.org)

For Membership of UMMA Steering Committee: see [www.umma-global.org/steering.html](http://www.umma-global.org/steering.html)

Our blog is found at [umma-global.blogspot.com](http://umma-global.blogspot.com)

UMMA Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/UMMAglobal](http://www.facebook.com/UMMAglobal)

### — 2015 DUES NOW PAYABLE

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

(2) UMMA-AUTHORED BOOKS

(3) WELCOME TO NEW MIRS LARRY AND KRISTY SCHMITZ

(4) REGISTER NOW! 2015 GATHERING, NEWARK, OCTOBER 3-5

(5) CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR UMMA CHAIR

(6) REPORT FROM SPRING BOARD MEETING & SC SKYPE CALL

(7) QUESTIONNAIRES — THE FUTURE OF UMMA, BIRCHES'

(8) HIGHLIGHTS OF CONVERSATION ON FUTURE OF UMMA

(9) "TURN, TURN, TURN, THERE IS A SEASON..."

(10) NEWS FROM MEMBERS

(11) PASSINGS NOTED

(12) THE LAST WORD

<ON SCREEN CLICK YELLOW LINKS TO SEE CONTENT BELOW>



### — 2015 DUES NOW PAYABLE!

*A reminder that our new treasurer is DarEll T. Weist. Send him a check for your 2015 dues! Or go to [umma-global.info](http://umma-global.info) to link to our PayPal account to pay your dues. (Vice-Chair Katherine Parker [ktparker@gmail.com](mailto:ktparker@gmail.com)) will be experimenting with sending reminder invoices from PayPal to make dues payment even easier.)*

*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](mailto:dtw4940@gmail.com).*

## **(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.info](http://umma-global.info)> (In the interim, as we build a new website, you may also look to <[umma-global.org](http://umma-global.org)> for more historical information. At a future date, both URLs will find the same website.)

Print copies are distributed for those who need them. Just ask!

## **(2) UMMA-AUTHORED BOOKS**

If you have published a book which you would like to share with your missionary colleagues, please send title, description and ordering information to the editor <[jamesdwyer@me.com](mailto:jamesdwyer@me.com)> for inclusion in a future **UpDate** or bring a few copies with you to the Gathering! If you would like to recommend books offered by other Global Ministries missionaries, please submit those as well!

## **(3) WELCOME TO NEW MIRS LARRY AND KRISTY SCHMITZ**

Early in July Judy Chung provide this announcement of the appointment of a new couple to serve as Missionaries-in-Residence from a base in Atlanta, excerpted here:

*“Global Ministries is excited to announce that **Larry and Kristy Schmitz** will be serving as Missionaries in Residence as of September 1, 2015. They will be moving to Atlanta, GA but will be traveling to NY frequently to fully engage with staff at the Headquarters.*

*“Please see below for a biographical information about Larry and Kristy. Please be in prayer for them as they transition. Thank you.*

*“**Larry Schmitz** was raised as one of eight children in a loving Catholic family.... He earned a BA in science education with a minor in math from the University of Northern Iowa in 1975 and accepted a teaching job in Missouri. He and Kristy met during his first year of teaching and were married in 1977. After earning his MA in geology from the University of Missouri, Larry returned to teaching and taught science to eighth graders for 28 years at Maple Park Middle School in North Kansas City, Missouri. He retired in 2011, but was not finished teaching.*

*“**Kristy Schmitz** is the eldest of four children. {H}er family joined [The United Methodist Church] when she was two years old. She earned a BS in elementary education from Northwest Missouri State University and taught*

*for three years before moving with Larry to Columbia (MO) for his grad school. Their first child, Laura, was born in Columbia and Kristy was blessed to be able to stay home with their three children until their youngest, Brandon, was in kindergarten. She had always felt called to ministry, and earned an associate's degree in Christian education from Saint Paul School of Theology. She was consecrated a diaconal minister in 1999 and transitioned to a deacon in 2001. She served as director of Christian education at five churches in the Kansas City area.*

*While teaching, Larry was very involved in the National Education Association, where one of his responsibilities was helping to resolve conflicts between building administration and staff. He also served on state boards, and as a representative to several national conventions. It was at one of those NEA conventions that he heard Greg Mortinson's story of building schools in Afghanistan. This experience inspired Larry's call to teach in the developing world.*

*As Kristy and Larry looked at Larry's retirement from public school teaching, they applied to Global Ministries as a couple in hopes of answering the call to serve in Africa which Kristy had first felt as a youth. They were chosen in 2012 to serve as teachers at **The English-speaking School of Lubumbashi (TESOL)**. They enjoyed three successful years at TESOL before applying to serve as Missionaries in Residence.*

#### **(4) REGISTER NOW! 2015 GATHERING, NEWARK, OCTOBER 3-5**

##### **UMMA IN NEWARK**

The direct reservation deadline for hotel accommodations is **Friday, September 18, 2015**. Please send a simultaneous reservation to UMMA at [ummadwyer@mac.com](mailto:ummadwyer@mac.com) (a working address!) or [jamesdwyer@me.com](mailto:jamesdwyer@me.com).

A registration fee of \$110 will cover meeting room in Newark, NJ, travel to and from the Commission on Archives and History in Madison, NJ, and a common meal there. All other meals are at each individual's expense. Nearer the date, direct payment of registration through PayPal will be possible.

Rooms are available at **Newark Liberty International Airport Marriott Hotel**, located at 1 Hotel Road, Newark, NJ 07114-3513, Phone (973) 623-0006 at the special rate of \$129 per night for the following nights:

*Friday, October 2, 2015*

*Saturday, October 3, 2015*

*Sunday, October 4, 2015*

*Monday, October 5, 2015*

The Gathering itself will begin at or around 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 3. Plans are to provide a Skype connection for those who cannot attend.

On October 5, the group will travel to Madison, NJ, for a visit to the archives of The United Methodist Church and the offices of the General Commission on Archives and History, where General Secretary Fred Day will host us. (Our treasurer, DarEll Weist, is a member of the General Commission.) We will plan to return to the hotel around 9:00 p.m.

You should plan your departure for Tuesday morning (or very late Monday night).

It is assumed that most participants will arrive early Saturday and leave early Tuesday.

***Please register directly with the hotel's national reservations line before Friday, September 18th, to be assured a room at this price. (Rooms have one King or two Double Beds at the same price.) If you do not have an internationally valid credit card, skip this information for the paragraph below. The hotel's registration instructions follow:***

Have guests call Marriott Reservations at 1 (800) 228-9290 or (973) 623-0006 on or before **Friday, September 18, 2015**, (the "CutOff Date") to make their sleeping room reservations. Please advise guests to identify themselves as part of the United Methodist Missionary Association group staying at the Newark Liberty International Airport Marriott, located at 1 Hotel Road, Newark, NJ 07114-3513.

Credit card information will be required.

***If you do not have an internationally valid credit card, please contact Jim Dwyer ([ummadwyer@mac.com](mailto:ummadwyer@mac.com) or [jamesdwyer@me.com](mailto:jamesdwyer@me.com))*** with your plans and he will contact the hotel directly to reserve the room on his own credit card to be reimbursed by you in cash or check at the Gathering.

Steering Committee members please ask for specific details.

If you drive your car, overnight parking will cost \$25. Day parking is \$7 for the meeting.

The hotel is within the inner circle of the airport complex. Regular complimentary airport shuttle service is provided to the airport where the "Airtrain" connection to Newark Penn Station also stops, for those who may arrive by train.

So far, I have recorded the names of the following persons hoping to attend. (Please let me know if you have let me know and I have failed to add your name or if you plan to come but are not on my list.) They are, in no particular order: DarEll Weist, Fred and Lanie Price, Becky Harrell, Marilia Schüller, Mary Escobar, Katherine Parker, Jim Dwyer, Dick Vreeland, Hugh and Fritz Johnson, Dakin Cook, Jack Turner, Larry Schmitz, Kristy Schmitz, Scott Atnip (possibly), Judy Chung, Alina Saucedo.

### ***GBGM IN NEW YORK CITY***

Those of you wishing to attend as guests at the Global Ministries Board of Directors meeting from Thursday noon to Saturday noon, October 1-3, should register your intention to attend with Jim Dwyer so that your names will be included in the official guest list for acknowledgment in the meeting and recording in the minutes. The Board is unable to help with overnight housing in New York.

Some places people have stayed are the Landmark (at Union Theological Seminary), the Hotel Newton, Seafarers and International House. All of these are in high demand. Other hotels typically cost \$300-400 a night. Act immediately if you want to book a New York City room for this period. Public transportation to 116th and Broadway (subway or bus) or 120th Street and Riverside Drive (bus) is easily available with advance-purchase tickets from vending machines required. UMMA will arrange transportation via shuttle or public transit from 475 Riverside Drive to the Newark site if you have registered your intention to be present as a guest for the Directors' meeting.

### **(5) CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR UMMA CHAIR**

**UMMA is looking for a new chair to begin at the close of the 2015 Gathering. We are seeking an appropriate candidate 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.**
- **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.**

**Please share your willingness to serve or your nomination of another with Katherine Parker [ktparker@gmail.com](mailto:ktparker@gmail.com).**

## **(6) REPORT FROM SPRING BOARD MEETING & SC SKYPE CALL**

Thirteen members of the UMMA Steering Committee engaged in conversation about their respective work at their places of assignment and about the future of the United Methodist Missionary Association in two separate conversations at 13:00 hours and 6:30 hours GMT/UTC (6:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. PST) on June 23. Among matters they reviewed was this report of the April luncheon meeting in New York.

Vice-chair Katherine Parker brought a systematic review of the Administrative Council's conversations as luncheon guests of Global Ministries elected staff and Scott Atnip, one of the directors designated as a UMMA Liaison by the Board. Secretary Nan McCurdy reported how concerns from regional gatherings were also presented.

***Q (UMMA asking): How are new salary and CoLA provisions functioning and being received?***

A (Global Ministries reps answering): Cost of Living data projections are made available earlier during the recruitment, selection, and discernment process. Making compensation information available earlier in the discernment process allows missionaries to make a more informed decision about accepting a missionary assignment.

***Q: How is the Global Mission Fellow (GMF) program working out? Does the program feed into opportunities for long term missionary service?***

A: Although GMFs are offered the opportunity to apply for long term service, the goal of the program is not to recruit long-term missionaries but that GMF alums see whatever vocation/career they choose as an expression of mission, incorporating the core values of the program.

***(Hilary Taylor commented in the Skype conversation: Her class was told they could apply for long-term service but that being chosen depends on placement availability. She noted that average college loans for U.S. students total \$30,000, focusing their attention on more lucrative post-service jobs to pay off loans although those jobs are often not as fulfilling as mission work.)***

***Q: How are Companions in Mission (CIM) and Missionary Care developing?***

A: CIM has been offered to three of the incoming classes of missionaries with few signing up. An offer of regular counseling sessions around birthdays has been made and only 16% of those eligible took advantage of this during first three months of 2015.

***Q: What is the current policy on finding missionary assignments for both spouses?***

A: It is not current policy to seek to place both spouses. Missionaries are selected on an individual basis and their assignment depends on the individual placements available.

**(Jim Dwyer commented in the Skype conversation:** This is a significant recent change. Historically (30 years ago) couples were sent out as one unit (with one salary), with single persons' salaries regulated differently. Later the one salary was divided into two equal (half) salaries, but it was assumed both were sent. (Single persons received more, aside from specific family-related benefits.) In an intermediate stage, there was an attempt to remove spouses without defined assignments to a reduced salary for maintaining the family. With the long-overdue re-ordering of missionary salaries in 2015, the current salaries are intended for individuals, not couples or family units. As in other matters, general policy and specific practice may differ, as when two positions can be found at one location for a couple – a potential source of a sense of inequality.)

***Q: Has any progress been made to address the different treatment of U.S. and non-U.S. missionaries regarding Social Security.***

A: Roland Fernandes, Global Ministries treasurer, reported that the Board is still assessing the overall salary structure for missionaries and other international workers [e.g., UMCOR or Global Health] and *Birches Group* has been contracted to look at this and related questions (e.g., CoLA). *Birches* will be consulting with a number of missionaries.

**(Jim Dwyer added in the Skype call** that a proposal has been made to Roland Fernandes which may be discussed at the Pensions Sub-Committee meeting of the Board in August, when Dakin Cook and Jim Dwyer will be present.)

***Q: Has progress been made on the Directors' goal for missionaries to be helped to increased financial literacy since it was set?***

A: EY (formerly Ernst and Young) is available at no cost for consultation to persons under Board of Pension plans. No additional plans have been developed at this time.

***Q: The concern conveyed from the Latin American regional missionary gathering regarding retirement housing and a desire of some for a housing allowance to allow for home purchase was presented.***

A: Global Ministries does not currently have this question on the table, but it may be addressed by the *Birches* consultation work.

***Q: What about Board relocation and hints of regional offices?***

A: Thomas Kemper, General Secretary, raised the hope for development of regional offices, but said that no final concept has been adopted, despite initial steps to establish a few transitional regional offices.

***Q: The main focus of our conversations was Missionary Care. Both UMMA and Global Ministries had contributions in six areas of potential enhancement for missionary care, summarized here:***

In the relationship between staff and those around the Globe (missionaries), ensure regular communication with Regional Executives to build “familiarity” in the relationships for the time when difficult issues may need to be addressed; continue to use the itineration visit at Global Ministries HQ to this end, while providing clear articulation of alternative communication channels (e.g. MIR, or the chain of responsibility) is also helpful and needed.

Relationships among us as missionaries is definitely strengthened by regional gatherings (UMMA requested Global Ministries’ commitment for such opportunities to continue. How can UMMA support future such gatherings?); continuing Education and Professional Development (An example could be webinars to discuss UMC-GBGM Theology of Mission (also with receiving agencies); Cross-cutting issues (climate change, gender, children, migration, health issues, etc.). Additionally thematic gatherings are happening, e.g., in Zambia for UMCOR, Global Health missionaries, and staff.

Other points at which care is or could be offered:

The new policy for funding professional development was shared.

Material support, e.g., the fact that missionaries can now largely depend on receiving salary on time; accessibility to healthcare, childcare and education support; provision for pension, etc.

Pastoral Counseling and mentoring (CIM — see above)

(The availability of these programs needs to be publicized more successfully.)

(Nan reports: More counselors are now available, either male or female, on request. Some counselors are available to counsel in languages other than English.)



An inclusion of missionaries in strategic planning on principle, especially on regional and country-specific plans, would both assist the success of the planning and allow the missionaries more of a feeling of being valued and cared for.

## **ACTIONS**

Growing out of our conversations, two UMMA points of action were decided.

**ACTION:** Request Global Ministries to allow people to pay dues to UMMA through payroll deduction. (The request has been forwarded to Roland Fernandes, who is giving the idea consideration.)

**Ongoing ACTION:** Plan for more UMMA regional conversations — via Skype or Google group or Oovoo. Consideration should be given to include language-specific conversations (which may be cross-regional) in Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.

Other topics of the Skype conversation which may find their place in our next UpDate included HIGHLIGHTS OF GENERAL CONVERSATION ON FUTURE OF UMMA; NOMINATIONS; BROADER CONCERNS FOR THE WORLD WE LIVE IN AND OUR INDIVIDUAL WORKING CONTEXTS (EARTHQUAKES, MONSOONS, DROUGHTS ...)

## **IN CLOSING**

A few quotes from the conversation may be useful: From Brazil: “If we did not have UMMA we’d have to invent it.” From the chair: “UMMA depends on the dues of its members to allow officers to represent missionaries.” From Congo: “I can’t imagine what might have happened without UMMA to advocate for us.”

Thanks were expressed to Gordon Greathouse as he leaves his MIR role to return to Brazil to resume work with “Shade and Fresh Water” — an after-school program of the Methodist Church of Brazil for children.

## **(7) QUESTIONNAIRES — THE FUTURE OF UMMA, BIRCHES’**

Thanks to all who responded to the lengthy questionnaire about the future of UMMA. Some response is evident in the report above. Efforts will be made to compile your responses before our October Gathering. Meanwhile Curtis Grund, representing the consultancy *Birches LLC* on behalf of GBGM, has begun a survey regarding perceptions of global Human Resources (HR) and compensation policies of GBGM. The chair was

scheduled for an interview and provided with a preview of the questions to be discussed. In consultation with Curtis Grund the questions were shared with the Steering Committee and many responses very much to the point and others of equal value but to broader issues were received right up to the hour before the interview. A preliminary summary of that input was provided to Curtis. A follow-up summary including all input will also be sent and shared with the Steering Committee.

Thanks again for the input!

## **(8) HIGHLIGHTS OF CONVERSATION ON FUTURE OF UMMA**

The Skype conversation with the Steering Committee which received the report from the Spring Board meeting also spent substantial time addressing the issue of the future of UMMA. Here are some thoughts from that conversation:

1. All agree that a “new direction” or some sort of “rallying call” is needed to draw missionaries’ attention to the value of UMMA. Shrinking missionary population and growing diversification within the group make for challenges in identifying shared experiences. UMMA has a strategic role to play and should at least persist as a listening body at board meetings even as a new direction is being discerned.
2. Past UMMA efforts and accomplishments (especially recent ones regarding salary and pensions) are widely appreciated.
3. Fellowship and getting to know one another is a significant benefit of Steering Committee membership.
4. Many enter missionary service naïvely; UMMA’s advocacy has helped to clarify for some new missionaries what they are getting into.
5. Many people are still unfamiliar with the different functions and structures of UMMA despite the strategic role it plays for all, or that it is structurally independent of GBGM.
6. We need to continue to address the challenges presented by generational differences in how missionaries communicate best: in-person gatherings, email, Skype, Facebook, or other technologies we don’t yet know about. How do we hear the concerns of and engage the variety of missionaries given these different styles?
7. Missionaries are encouraged to raise voices and contact Global Ministries directly with concerns, to be aware of the next level in whatever chain of command they are working and to enlarge the conversation, if necessary. MIRs and UMMA are available to support in advocacy (MIR on an individual

basis, UMMA on collective issues), but missionaries must take the initiative to share concerns with MIR and UMMA. Due to concerns to maintain confidentiality, those employed as staff do not feel able to inform the MIR when there is a challenging situation where the MIR could play a supportive role.

8. The recent regional gathering in Japan highlighted common experiences among missionaries and possible areas for sharing and collaboration across countries of assignment, including discussion of GBGM Theology of Mission with representatives of host organizations.

### **(9) "TURN, TURN, TURN, THERE IS A SEASON..."**

Here in Claremont we had the remarkable occurrence (into several years of deepening drought) of 8/10ths of an inch of rain in just three days of July (normally the driest month). Storms just "hanging" over mountain towns and interstate highway bridges did massive damage both east and west of us. John York, performing in a benefit concert for Claremont Homeless Advocacy Program (CHAP) sang the Byrds' famous song from Ecclesiastes, "There is a season, turn, turn, turn ... for every purpose under heaven." And the lectionary from which I am preaching on August 30 includes the hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness ... There is no shadow of turning with thee."

But which is it? Faith in an immutable God who is apparently no longer in control of a world rapidly changing due to global warming, or acknowledgment that God gives us human agents relatively free hand to make or break the inherent system of global ecology? Increasingly, Evangelical Christians, including in a recent interview on CBN with Professor Katherine Hayhoe of Texas, are recognizing, along with "progressive Christians" and Process theologians, that human action can cause (has caused) ecological disaster, and our only obvious hope for the environment is that human agency will also be set to work at all levels and in all parts of the world to combat the results of our own nest-sullying. Despite Americans' sense of "exceptionalism" (or because of it) it is persons in the poorest parts of the world and on islands and coastal plains who have been the first to sound the alarm the loudest. Are we listening?

What does our calling as Christian missionaries tell us about a possible response? (You may want to check out GBGM's Theology of Mission and Pope Francis' "Laudate Si" ("Praised Be"). The latter is only the second Papal Encyclical ever to be address to all the world's peoples, and not just to Catholics.)

## **(10) NEWS FROM MEMBERS**

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary has called former UMMA Steering Committee member Dr. **Philip Wingeier-Rayo** as associate professor of evangelism, mission, and Methodist studies, effective August 1, 2015. He comes to Austin Seminary from Perkins School of Theology of Southern Methodist University (SMU) where he has been professor of mission and intercultural studies and director of the Mexican American and Hispanic-Latino/a Church Ministries program for the past year. Previously Phil served on the faculty of Pfeiffer University in Misenheimer, North Carolina, for eleven years.

Jeannie Heacock reports via the mailing list for friends of **Bill and Jerri Savuto** that your prayers are solicited for both of them. Updates on their respective health issues may be found on their blog at <http://valleyviewmethodist.org/Jerri.html>.

## **(11) PASSINGS NOTED**

Betty Swain writes with the news of the death of **David Swain**, age 87, on June 5, 2015. His obituary can be read at [www.grocefuneralhome.com/obituary/David-Lowry-Swain/Asheville-NC/1516748](http://www.grocefuneralhome.com/obituary/David-Lowry-Swain/Asheville-NC/1516748) web site, and in the Asheville Citizen-Times. [www.legacy.com/obituaries/citizen-times/obituary.aspx?pid=175058719](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/citizen-times/obituary.aspx?pid=175058719)

Anna Morford and DarEll Weist report the death of **Metra R. Heisler**, age 94, on May 14, 2015, in Mechanicsburg, PA. Metra studied nurse-midwifery in Harrisburg School of Nursing and in England. She served the Evangelical United Brethren Church as a nurse missionary in Sierra Leone, Africa. Her obituary can be viewed online at [www.zrgfuneralhomes.com/obituary/Metra-R.-Heisler/Mechanicsburg-PA/1509651](http://www.zrgfuneralhomes.com/obituary/Metra-R.-Heisler/Mechanicsburg-PA/1509651)

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

*"You don't think your way into a new kind of living. You live your way into a new kind of thinking."*—**Henri J.M. Nouwen**

"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"