

UMMA UpDate #81 – Christmas 2011

e-bulletin of the United Methodist Missionary Association

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For Membership of UMMA Steering Committee: see <www.umma-global.org/steering.html>

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

UMMA Facebook page: <<http://www.facebook.com/UMMAglobal>>

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(1) WORD FROM THE EDITOR ...

As new chair and old editor, I am actively seeking a number of persons to share the communications responsibilities, much as this responsibility has been shared with the Chair and other Administrative Council officers in the past. I am seeking (1) an Associate Editor who would share responsibility for determining and **gathering content** and preparing the text for proofreading and publication, (2) someone committed to **cultivating new members**, both by inviting and including newly commissioned missionaries of each class and by eliciting engagement with the larger issues of mission and missionary services by larger numbers of GBGM missionaries, (3) someone comfortable **maintaining the email database** for our Google groups, and (4) someone who would like to **enliven our Facebook presence** and invigorate our **Blogspot** page, as well as work together with the current communications task force to review potential innovation and updates which might make our

web page more useful and attractive. If you know of someone or want to talk about one task or another, please contact me! (Thanks for the first signs of interest in these tasks. If you don't hear from me soon, please jog my memory!)

As always, you may receive **UMMA UpDate** via e-mail from an "announcement-only" Google group — or find it online to read or download at <umma-global.org>.

Send input to <umma-update@umma-global.org> or by postal mail (*see above*), regarding reunions, death notices, or other matters of concern. And if you have information you'd like on our website, please submit it!

Other feedback is welcome via (1) our "feedback" Google group (see <umma-feedback@googlegroups.com>), (2) our blog at <umma-global.blogspot.com>, and (3) our Facebook page "**UMMA – United Methodist Missionary Association**" <<http://www.facebook.com/UMMAglobal>> (just "*like*" it — thumbs up — to keep up with changes). Ask for help!

For dues use mail or **PayPal™** cf. <umma-global.org/membership.html>.

(2)... AND FROM THE CHAIR

The year 2012 could become a bellwether for UMMA. GBGM's General Secretary Thomas Kemper is currently overseeing the work of Mission and Evangelism. He is, as I experience him, deeply committed to a renewal of the sense of mission of Global Ministries and The United Methodist Church and sees the sending of persons for longer or shorter terms into international, cross-cultural mission assignments as an essential part of our fulfilling of God's mission for us as a church. The call to "mission from everywhere to everywhere" is one irrevocable aspect of the sending of missionaries today which has become reality for GBGM, but has not yet adequately been reflected in the programs and policies affecting our practice of mission, even though a large percentage of GBGM missionaries are of non-U.S. origin and serving outside their home countries.

It is anticipated that Judy Chung, the Associate General Secretary for Missionary Services, will call together persons on behalf of Global Ministries to begin reflections on the future of the nature of missionary service within the first weeks of 2012. It is important for GBGM missionaries to share their reflections with one another and with Judy, Thomas and their staff about how missionary service may best be configured and what classes of missionary service might be appropriate to fulfill God's call in the twenty-

first century. Cathy Whitlatch, Missionary in Residence, is involved in a central way in ongoing discussions with Judy and Thomas in New York, and would also welcome any input you would like her to represent to the staff. UMMA will be endeavoring to gather your responses, too, and to share them in a coherent manner with staff and directors as we move forward to envision the future of mission in and beyond The United Methodist Church

Some issues which need addressing — some more obviously than others — include (1) salaries and salary scales for current missionaries, (2) retirement and health benefits for current and future retirees, (3) the need for appropriate conceptualization of missionary service which does not conform to the old pattern of predominantly white American or European involvement in mission in most usually non-white populations of the world, (4) ramifications of the previous US-centric patterns for persons who are ineligible for the usual U.S. retirement benefits of Social Security and Medicare, (5) patterns of recruitment and sending of missionaries which would allow U.S. and non-U.S. missionaries to serve in diverse settings without creating possible basis for resentment by other dedicated persons working alongside them, as well as many other aspects of missionary service we will discover as we talk together.

Please share your ideas on these matters with me and the UMMA Steering Committee. Any email you send to us at the following address will be forwarded on to the Steering Committee care of their Google group: future@umma-global.org. *It will greatly benefit the cause if each of us puts on our creative thinking caps, shares insights of the years and tries to envision how the future of mission may diverge from tried and true ways of previous centuries.*

(3) CALL OUT FOR YOUNG ADULTS TO ADDRESS INJUSTICE

Join in the call out! In a letter sent mid-December, Thomas Kemper, GBGM General Secretary, celebrated 60 years of short-term mission programs, and personally invited current young adults between the ages of 20 and 30 years to apply:

“The deadline for the 2012 class of mission interns and US-2s is February 5. Please share the application with those in your networks and communities between the ages of 20 and 30 throughout our global connection, who are committed to addressing the root causes of injustice. The application is available here: new.gbgm-umc.org/connections/youth/applications/”

Kara Crawford, a current Mission Intern whose email reached me a few days ago, begins her recent blog:

“Before I begin a review of what I've been up to since I arrived in Bogotá, Colombia, I [will] remind you what I'm doing here. I am a Mission Intern with The United Methodist Church, part of the Young Adult Missionary Program.... For my international placement, I am in Bogotá, Colombia, working with an organization called the Centro Popular para America Latina de Comunicación (People's Communication Center of Latin America — CEPALC).

“Thank you for all of your support (financial, prayer, emotional, spiritual, etc.). Knowing that I have people around the US and around the world who are looking out for me is a beautiful sense. Looking back on my first few months in Colombia, I recognize how insanely busy they have been.... [A] taste of what I've been up to since moving to Bogotá [can be found in my blog: <revolucionaria.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/december-2011-newsletter1.pdf>”

All Mission Intern and US-2 missionaries are included on the GBGM bios pages <new.gbgm-umc.org/work/missionaries/biographies>. (You can search by Category of Service.) All of them are expected to raise support from friends and congregations. Everyone of us is invited to contribute! (Advance numbers for these programs are 13105Z (Mission Interns) and 982874 (US-2s). Each young adult also has an individual advance number.) (Kara's is #3021332.)

You may also want to check out <gbgm-umc.org/global_news/full_article.cfm?articleid=6150> or this video:<new.gbgm-umc.org/connections/youth/interns/> or contact <youngadults@gbgm-umc.org> or <elee@gbgm-umc.org> (Liz Lee).

(4) UMMA STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The following persons were newly elected to the UMMA Steering Committee via e-mail ballot in November. The newly-designated region they represent and their area of service is listed, along with their email contact address

****West, East, Central and Southern Africa — WECSA (2011-2015)**

Rukang Chitkomb (Congo) <rukangfresie@hotmail.com>

Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East — ENAME (2011-2015)

Alex and Brenda Awad (Palestine) <alexeawad@yahoo.com>

East and South Asia and the Pacific — ESAP (2011-2015)

Prumeh Kim (Kazakhstan) <prumeh@yahoo.com>

** The Caribbean, Central America, Mexico — CCAM (2011-2015)

Belinda Forbes (Nicaragua) <bafgag@ibw.com.ni>

South America — SA (2011-2015)

Marilia Schuller (Brazil) <lia.schuller@gmail.com>

USA (2011-2015)

Lyda Pierce — <lpierce@pnwumc.org>

Retirees (2011-2013)(to complete 8 year limit)

Hugh Johnson <hughjohnson@usa.net>

Representatives of Newly Commissioned Classes

2011 Mission Intern(s) (MI 2011-2014) (*up to 2 persons — 3 years*)

Adam Shaw (EAP — Philippines) <shawmish@gmail.com>

2011 US-2s (USA) (*up to 2 persons — 2 years*)

Zach Ferguson (US-2 2011-2013) <zrf.missions@gmail.com>

Rachel Michelle DeBos (US-2 2011-2013)<rdebos.gbgbm@gmail.com>

2011 “GBGM” Missionaries (*up to 2 persons — 2years*) (2011-2013)

Kristen Brown (Palestine/Israel) <revkristenbrown@gmail.com>

Rodney Aist (Italy) <rodney@rodneyaist.com>,
<raist@chiesavaldese.org>

***a second steering committee position for this region remains vacant*

(5) THOUGHTS ON (THE) MISSIONARY CALLING(S)

*(Carolyn Belshe, moved to interrupt her reading of Jim Gulley’s challenge to long-term missionaries to engage with Volunteers in Mission in **UpDate #79**, wrote a longer response. The following is based on her reflections. Apologies to Carolyn for anything which got lost in the editing!)*

Dealing with Parkinson's and its side effects, I interrupted reading **UMMA UpDate #79** to take care of a response that has been hanging in the cooling room for some seasoning time — maybe since the 1990's. Just recently I asked former UMMA chair Norma Kehrberg for reading suggestions on what is embedded so deeply in this calling as a long-term missionary / full-time religious person as opposed to the folk that do short-time stuff.

Two years ago already I took leave of my senses — and a leap of faith — and moved onto VIM turf. (It is pretty heavily populated here in Missouri.) I knew full well what I was doing. I was drawn like a fly to syrup with a

curiosity that has fueled me for nigh unto 72 years. The power of attraction of the question “Why?” always gets my generator started!

“God, why are there blessings from this — from these VIM'ers coming onto turf they don't know — turf that requires long-term patience, a kindred spirit for local culture, shepherds of nurture, and life-long examples of how to grow Christianity in Methodist greenhouses in the global context?”

“Just how, God, do you think this will work? They don't have a clue, God.

“Can't you see they just gather their vacation days, figure out how much they can write off as tax deductions and come up with a formula that is called ‘VIM-work,’ God?”)

For years, at particular times I had found myself racing around as a full-time missionary to prepare for VIM teams — finding the best prawn to feed them, getting extra help to wash their undies, and begging the local military to adjust their schedules so they could keep these dudes safe — so the group could go further into war zones — and that at hours that are not smart hours! It seemed to be necessary so these people could boost their adrenaline, in order to break up more rocks the next day and push another hour into their schedules so they could hold another orphan, or give another pint of blood for the war-wounded in surgery.

“You know, Lord, that patient's family is afraid to give blood; they don't think they have enough for themselves much less for their brother. Just doesn't make sense Lord, why are you bringing these folks in here thinking they can fix it all — and in just two days?!”

“But you know, God, I do remember that one lady — from Missouri, no less: when she was packing to leave, she gave me \$200 to buy ducks to eat the snail eggs in order to break the cycle that creates schistosomiasis down at the river where the kids bathe and the women do their laundry. She just handed it to me like she could trust me to do what she thought was right because some native had told her. We bought ducks — and all the while I was thinking of starving babies and \$200 — but I made a commitment. Her investment begin to work within weeks — just like the local said it would!”

“And someone from Germany had just sent a message telling me to take my tape recorder and go and assess what the war damage was on each building in a mission station. Guess who showed up to fix the guest house? Yes, Lord, you knew what you were doing — here was a short-term group to

tear into that worn out, broken-down house and ready it for other teams to come to do other work on the mission station — one building at a time.”)

And just today, I am writing from my chair by day and bed by night, as a broken-down, worn-out long-termer. I am co-writing morning devotionals for a short-term group that left yesterday for three weeks to see about some orphans in an orphanage that started because of war, about twenty years ago. It started because a short-term volunteer — retired at that — a pediatrician — dared to lead a staff in a pediatric unit always filled and running over out under the shade trees in ways that headed orphans of the war toward healing! They had no home to go to. (Well, we don't really know that: they were so traumatized, and much too little to tell us who they or their families were. So we called them orphans.) Short-termers came, built and painted buildings, bought shoes and rice and medicine, and began paying seminary students to sit with them and teach them in head-start programs so they would be as ready for school in the rebuilt schools (built, by the way — you guessed it — by short-termers) — as ready as kids with parents, now that war is over and peace is holding.

Yes, here in Missouri I live with these folks who call themselves Volunteers-in-Mission. Two different theologies, two different lifestyles. They have money, they have energy, they have influence. ***They have a calling!*** Yes, I am learning. There is more than one calling!

What is so marvelously, graciously, merciful is that we all have one Creator who sees beyond just “**my**” calling. You know!? That Scripture about the whole body of different parts working together!? Now, I can finish reading where Jim Gulley’s challenge caused me to leave off. Now I can return to my task of completing tomorrow's devotional. Why? Because a VIM did today's, that's why. You know, we have to take turns.

(“Thanks, God!”)

[Carolyn Belshe <carolyn.belshe@gmail.com>](mailto:carolyn.belshe@gmail.com)

Saint Paul School of Theology + Research & Study of Orphans

(6) PASSINGS NOTED —(No recent news.)

(7) COMMENTS AND THANKS FROM OUR READERS

***** Claudia L. Webster** writes from Hawaii: *“Just finished reading the UMMA Update. It gave me my laugh for the day. Probably not [so] intended by The article saying that...the computer service was not yet up and running for the [UMMA Gathering]. . . . made me think of [our] years in*

the 1960's on San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines: ... no electricity, not a municipal water or sewage system, no telephones! We used an Olivetti manual typewriter to write ... all ... correspondence. All announcements were made in church on Sunday and you had to remember them yourself! I read bedtime stories to our children under the Coleman lamp. Amazing how far [things] have advanced ...!"

***** Howard Parker, California-Nevada Conference, wrote: "I had time today to read your update.... A pleasure to read and well worth the effort."**

(8) REUNIONS ANTICIPATED IN 2012

Southeast Asia Missionary Reunion — June 29 - July 1, 2012, Lake Junaluska, NC. Contact **David** or **Shirley Wu** <dcwu2002@yahoo.com> or <Shirleyawu@yahoo.com> for details or download information here: <umma-global.org/pdf/sea_reunion12.pdf>

Pakistan (Ecumenical) Reunion — July 26-29, 2012, Zion, IL. Contact: **Linda McQuinn** <lmcquinn@comcast.net>

Servants of Sierra Leone Biennial Reunion — Summer 2012, Sioux Falls, SD.

Nigeria Reunion — September 28 - October 1, 2012, United Methodist Canyon Camp located west of Oklahoma City, OK. Contact: **Lon Labumbard** <lonlabumbard@centurytel.net>

(9) LINKS OF INTEREST

Verses <www.versedaily.org> <blog.sojo.net/category/verse-of-the-day>

(10) CLOSING WORD

Quote of the day [Sojourners "Daily Digest" on 19 December 2011]:
"In [South] Africa the theme was the fight against Aids. Here we must spread the culture of peace and disarmament. We are still the country that most kills with firearms." — *Renan Filho, Brazilian Member of Parliament, on a proposal for the 2014 Brazilian World Cup to give free or reduced-price tickets to fans who surrender guns, which would be destroyed and used to make goalposts for World Cup matches.*
([Guardian](#))

"Linking mission workers worldwide and moving forward"